

National Oversight and Audit Commission

Local Authority Satisfaction Survey 2019

NOAC Report No. 21 – July 2019



NOAC

Local Authority Satisfaction Survey 2019

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INTRODUCTION

Background

- In 2018, Ipsos MRBI was commissioned by NOAC to conduct a survey among the general public to establish their satisfaction with their Local Authority.
- The first survey, conducted in 2018, surveyed the 10 largest LA's. The second survey, completed in March 2019, was conducted with the 10 medium sized LA's and Galway City. The remaining 10 Local Authorities will be surveyed in 2020.

2018	2019	2020
Dublin City	Kilkenny	Westmeath
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown	Louth	Laois
Fingal	Wexford	Offaly
South Dublin	Wicklow	Cavan
Cork County	Clare	Sligo
Limerick	Cork City	Roscommon
Galway County	Kerry	Monaghan
Kildare	Waterford City and County	Carlow
Meath	Galway City	Longford
Tipperary	Mayo	Leitrim
	Donegal	



Methodology

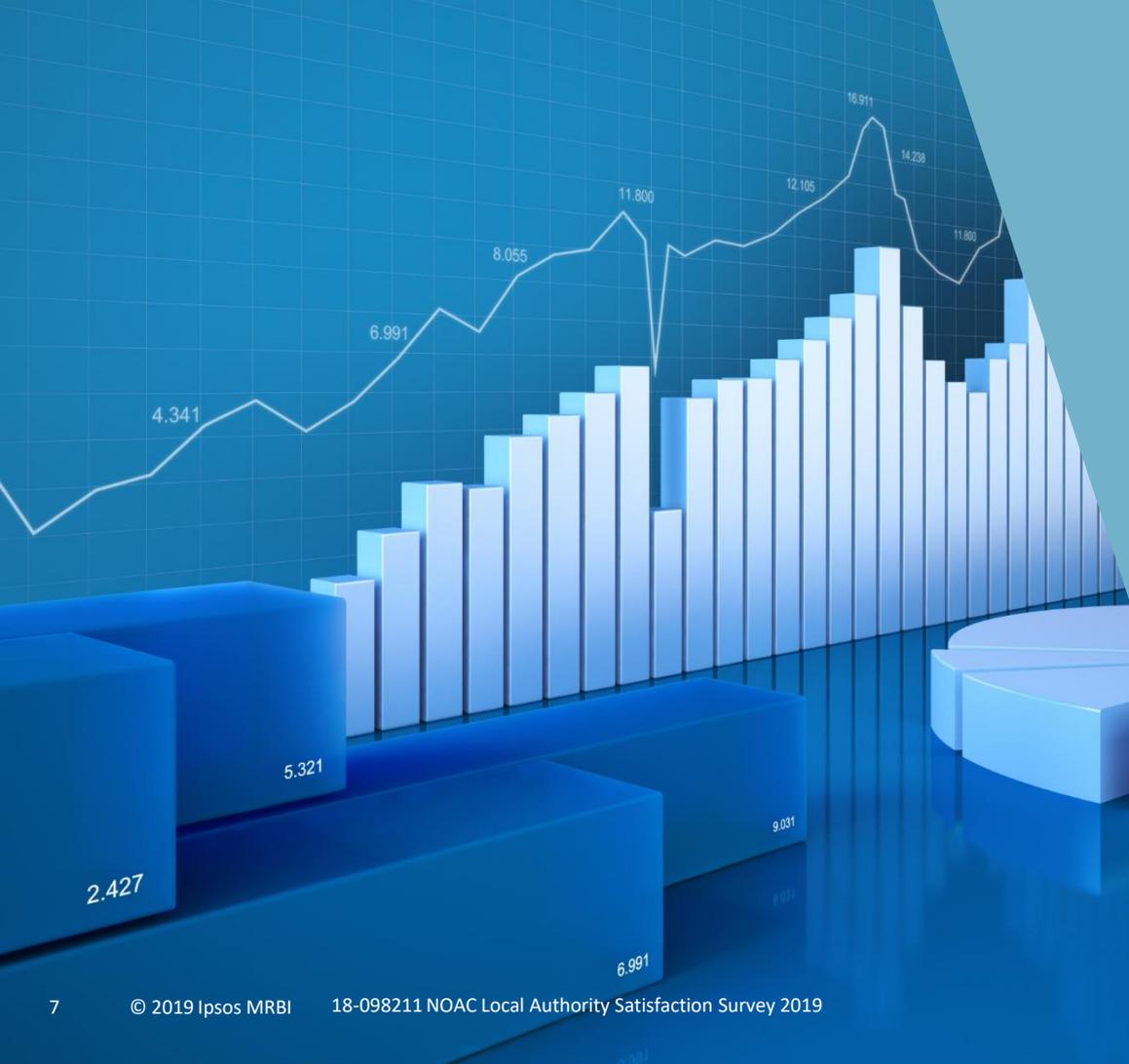
- A face-to-face in-home CAPI (Computer Aided Personal Interviewing) methodology was utilised.
- Stratified random sampling was used to ensure that the sample points selected were distributed across the local authority area according to population.
- Quota controls ensured that participants were representative of the Local Authority population by age, gender and social class.
- Interviewing took place in 11 LA's in March 2019; Kilkenny, Louth, Wexford, Wicklow, Clare, Cork City, Kerry, Waterford City and County, Galway City, Mayo and Donegal.
- 100+ interviews were completed per Local Authority. A total of 1144 interviews were completed this wave.
- **Margin of error for total sample of 1144 interviews is approx. +/-3% and is statistically robust.** Margin of error for individual LA results of 100 interviews is approx. +/- 10%.
- **Once all 3100 interviews are complete, the total results will be statistically robust and provide a benchmark for all future surveys.**



Sampling

- The geographic makeup of each local authority area was first stratified by urbanisation levels (large towns, medium and small towns and rural areas). This stratification formed the basis of the control of each local area sample. Within each of these cells, all wards, towns and EDs (Electoral Divisions) were listed with their populations and the required sampling points were selected proportional to their population, utilising a random, systematic selection process. This framework ensured a spread of interviewing across all urban and rural dimensions, and further ensured that all households had an equal opportunity for selection regardless of the size of the ED in which a household is situated.
- Once the selected wards / EDs were identified within the local authority area, a unique household address was selected at random from the full list of addresses within that ED. This address was issued to the interviewer as a starting address.
- Quotas based on age, gender and social class of the population of the LA were applied.
- From this identified starting address, interviewers followed a strict random route procedure to fulfil their full quota of interviews. The interviewer made contact at the starting address and attempted to achieve an interview in that household. From that house, the interviewer called to every 5th house in urban areas (following a zig-zag route) and every ¼ mile in rural areas. At each house on this route an interview was conducted if a person in that household matched the demographic quota controls set for that sampling point (age, gender and social class) and was willing to participate.



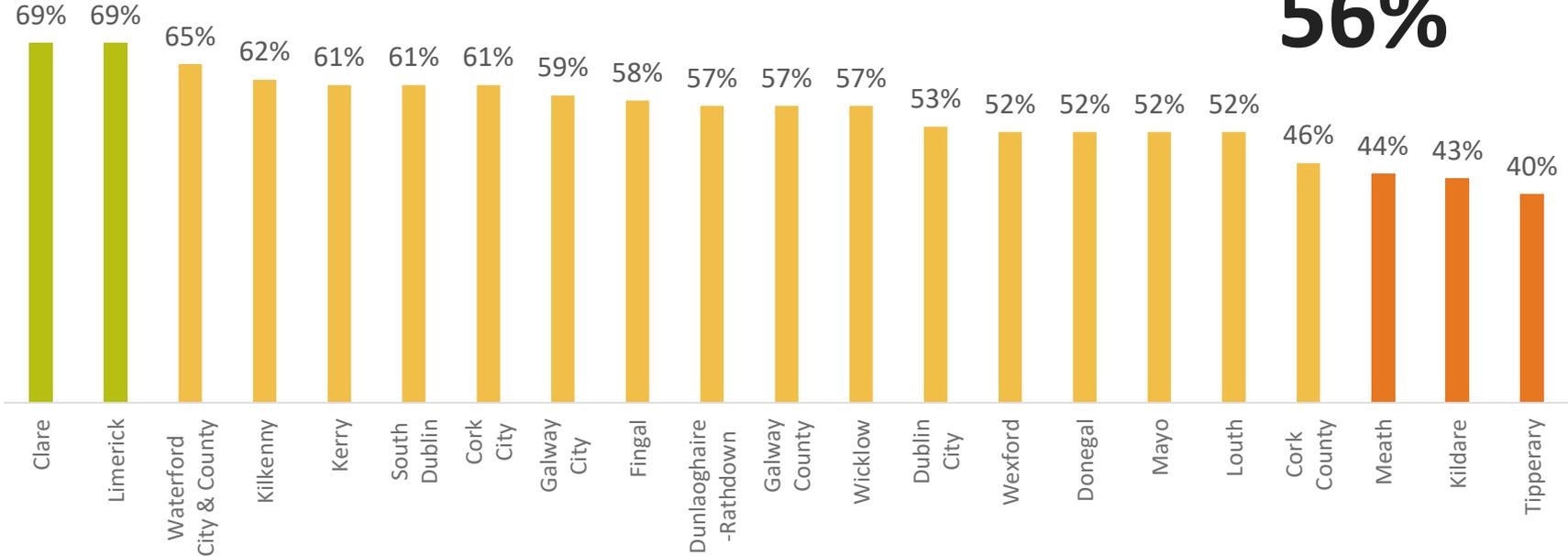


FINDINGS 2018 + 2019 COMBINED

Satisfied With Local Council

Net Satisfied

56%



Above Average: 67% +

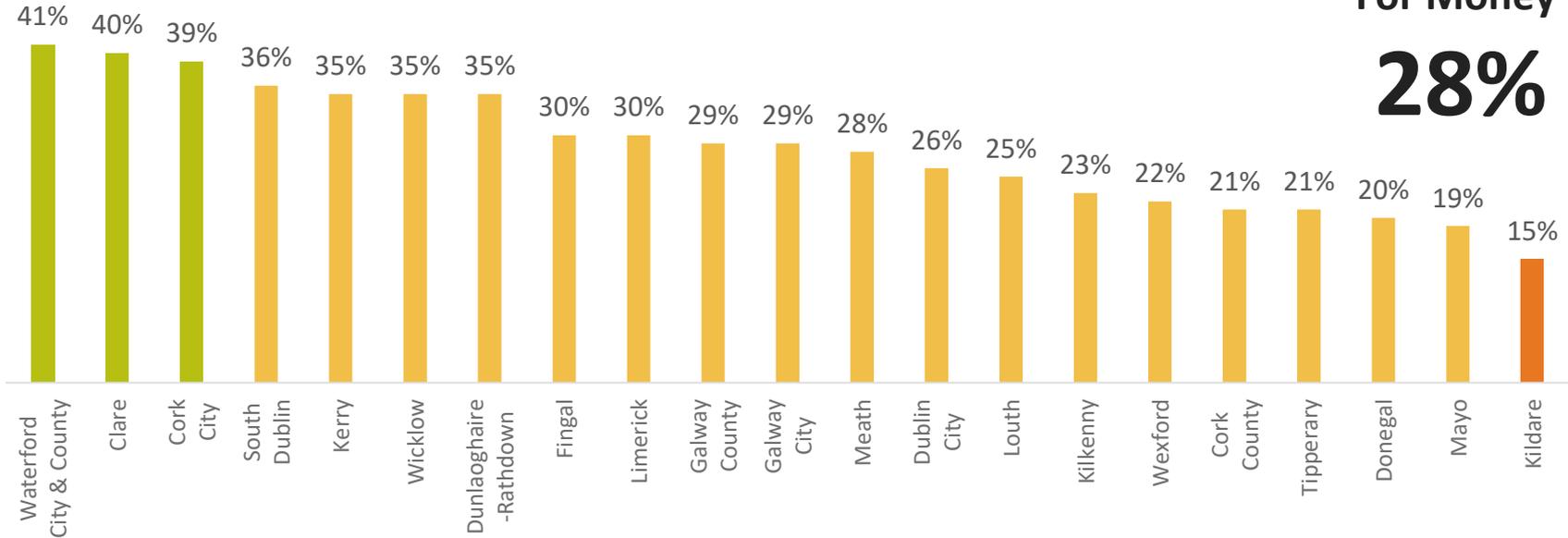
Average: 46% - 66%

Below Average: 45% or less

Local Council Provides Value for Money

Good Value
For Money

28%

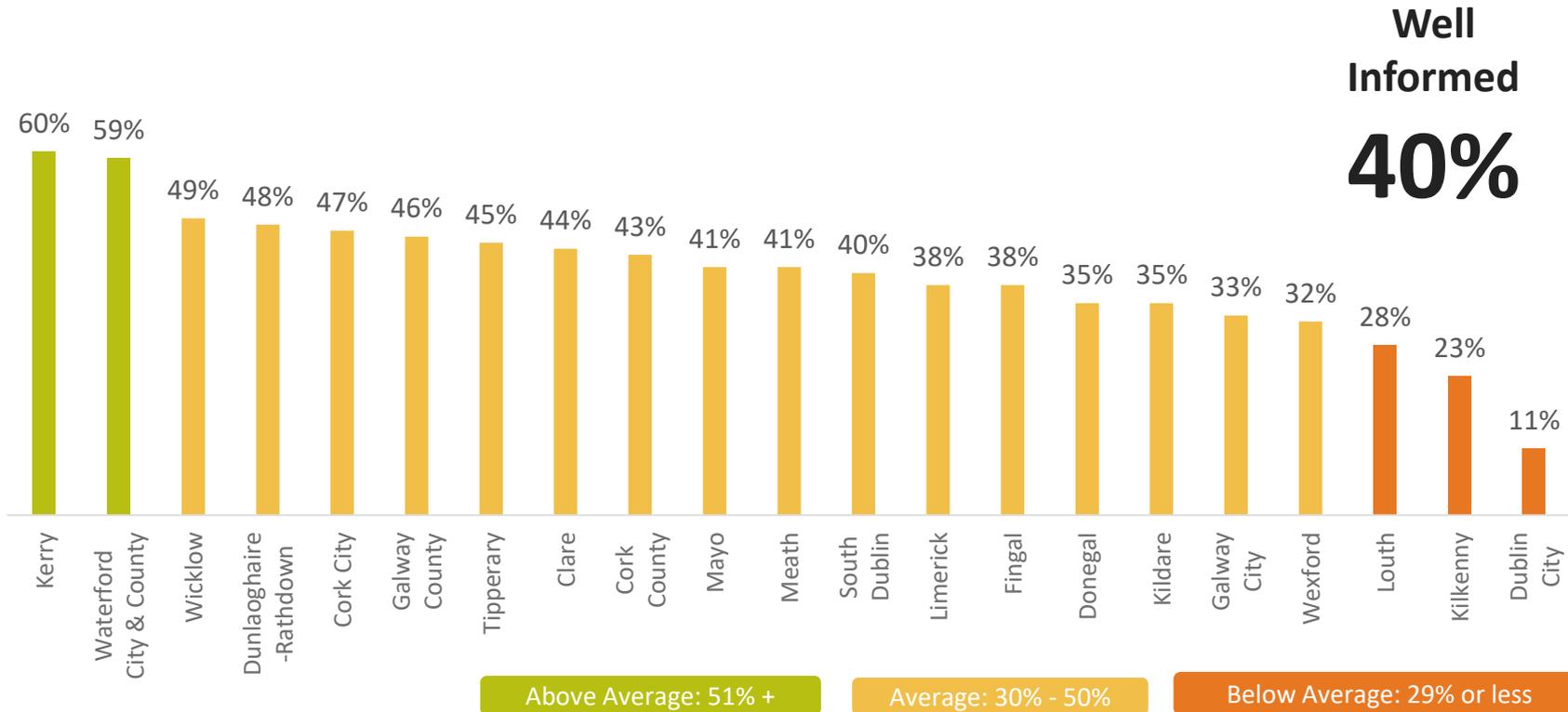


Above Average: 39% +

Average: 18% - 38%

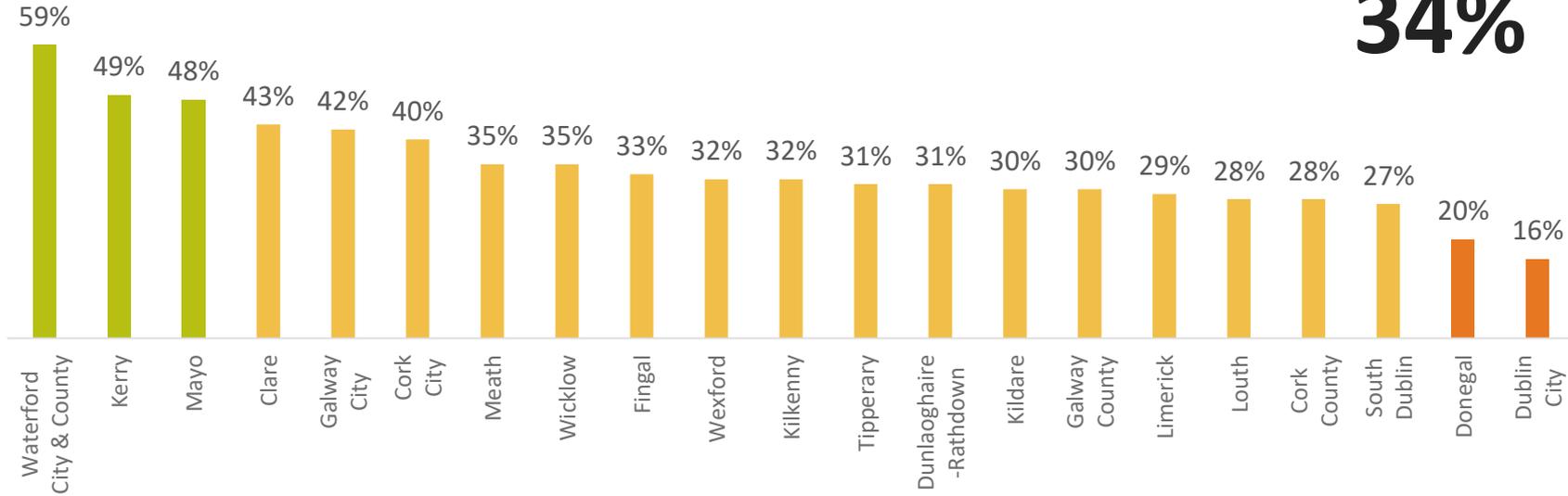
Below Average: 17% or less

Informed By Local Council



Local Council is Open and Transparent

Net Agree
34%



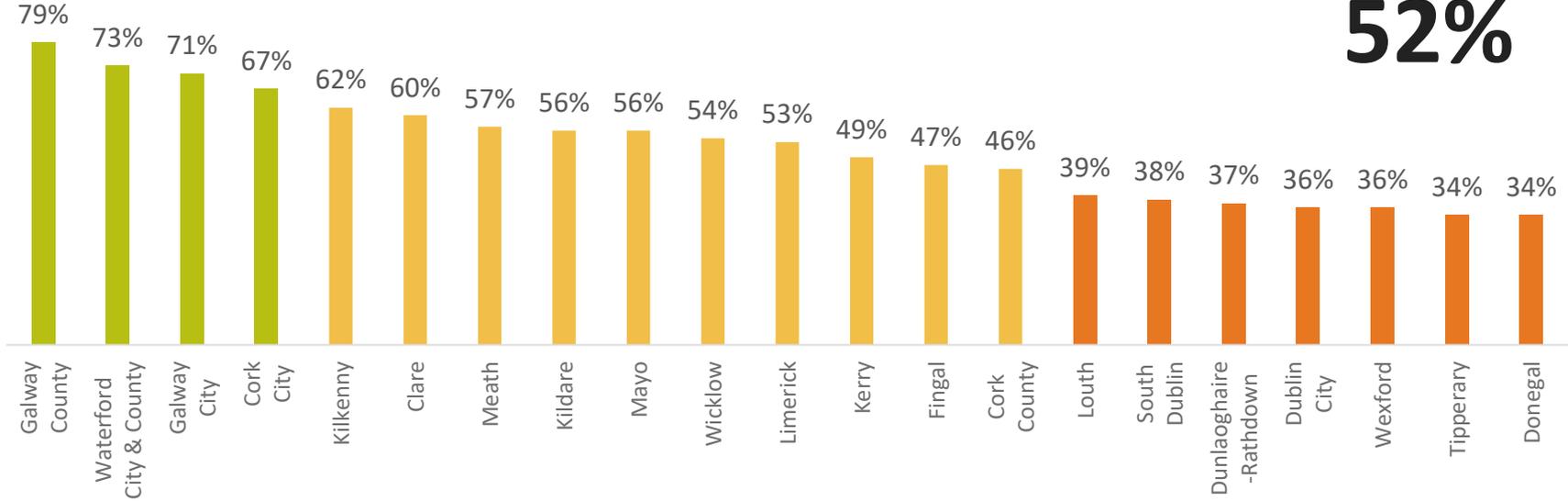
Above Average: 45% +

Average: 24% - 44%

Below Average: 23% or less

Local Council Promotes Economic Activity

Net Agree
52%



Above Average: 63% +

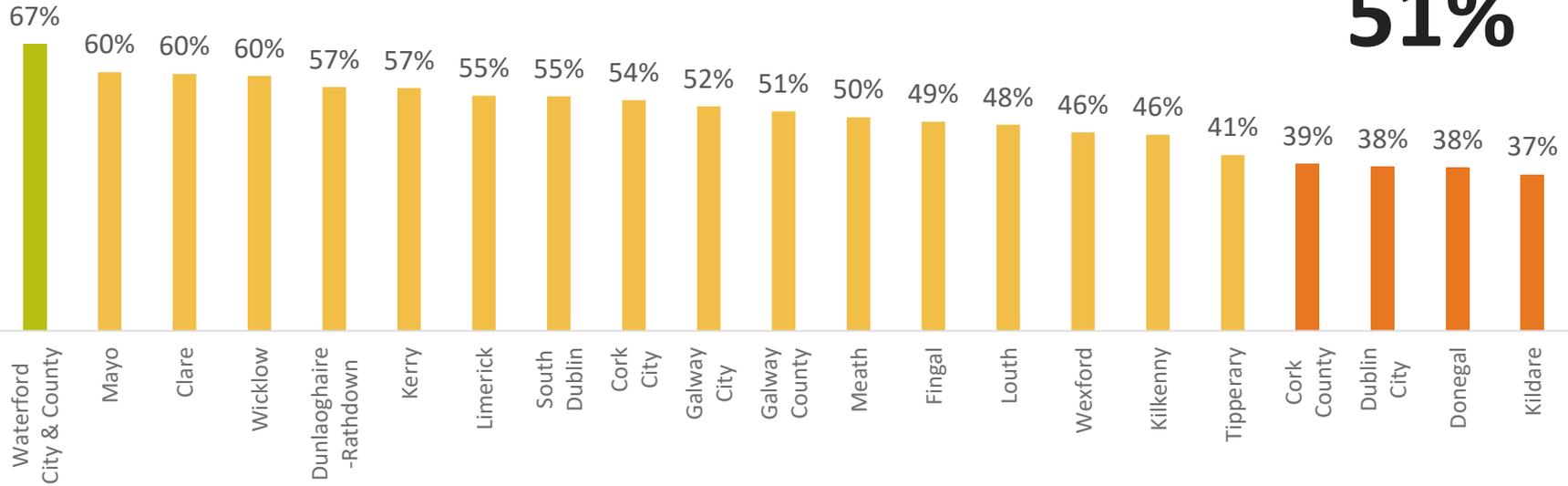
Average: 42% - 62%

Below Average: 41% or less

Local Council Doing a Good Job

Net Agree

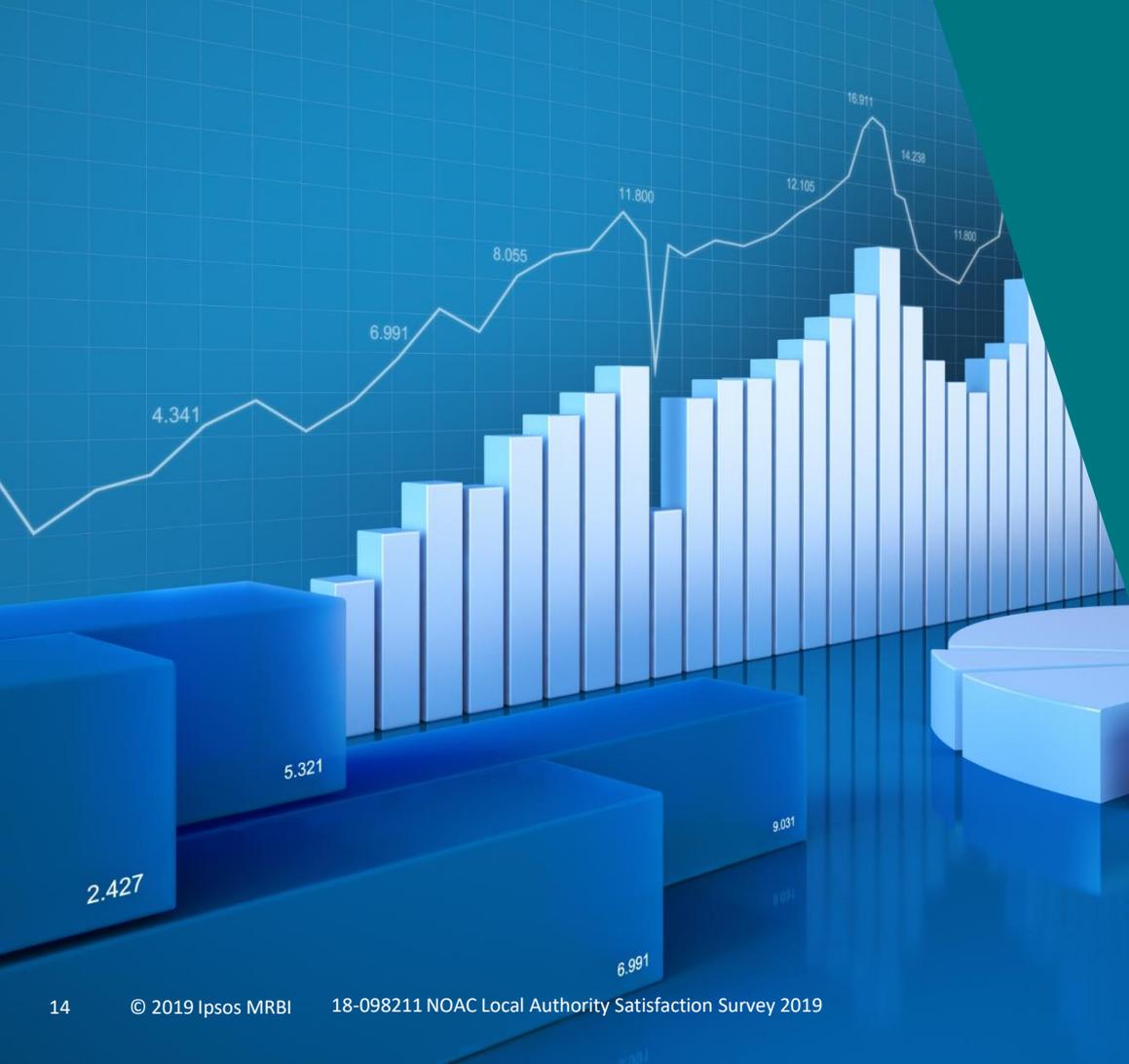
51%



Above Average: 62% +

Average: 41% - 61%

Below Average: 40% or less



FINDINGS 2019

Executive Summary I

The majority of respondents (58% vs 53% in 2018) are satisfied with their local council and agree that they are doing a good job (54%).

Perceptions of councils are generally positive, the majority (63% vs 59% in 2018) believe that their council is making a positive contribution and that services have improved over the years (63%).

However, perceptions of transparency (39% agree that council is transparent vs 29% in 2018) and efficiency (47% agree that council are efficient vs 37% in 2018) are less positive.

The most important services provided by the council fell into four main categories; roads and road safety, housing, amenities and environmental protection.

Please note that ten different local authorities were surveyed in 2018 than in 2019



Executive Summary II

The majority (84%) have at least some knowledge of their local council. Just 5% 'know a great deal' about their council, while the majority know 'just a little' (51%).

Younger people were least knowledgeable about their local council (72% aged 18-34 years VS. 93% aged 65+ years had some knowledge of their council) and least satisfied with their council (51% of 18-34 year olds VS. 67% of 65+ year olds).

Spontaneous awareness of council services is low for all services except road maintenance (66%) and local authority housing (58%).

In line with this lack of knowledge, the majority do not feel informed by their local council however, those who feel informed were more likely to be satisfied at 76% compared to 46% (vs. 72% and 40% in 2018) amongst those who were uninformed.



Executive Summary III

In light of the lack of knowledge about their council and it's services, just 30% (27% in 2018) believe that they are getting good value for money.

About 1 in 3 contacted their council in the last 5 years, with housing topping the list of reasons for this contact.

Overall, over half were satisfied with how their query was handled (51%). Those who contacted their council in the last five years tended to be less satisfied with their council than those who didn't (30% vs 7% dissatisfied).

This is likely to be a result of the overall outcome of how their query was handled, with 87% of those who had a positive experience indicating that they are satisfied with their council overall, compared to 13% of those who were unhappy with how their query was handled.



Summary 2019 VS 2018 Results

	2019	2018
Satisfaction with Local Council	58%	53%
Agree Local Council is Doing a Good Job	54%	47%
Agree Local Council is Open & Transparent	39%	29%
Agree Local Council Promotes Economic Activity	55%	48%
Are Well Informed by Local Council	41%	38%
Local Council Provides Good Value for Money	30%	27%

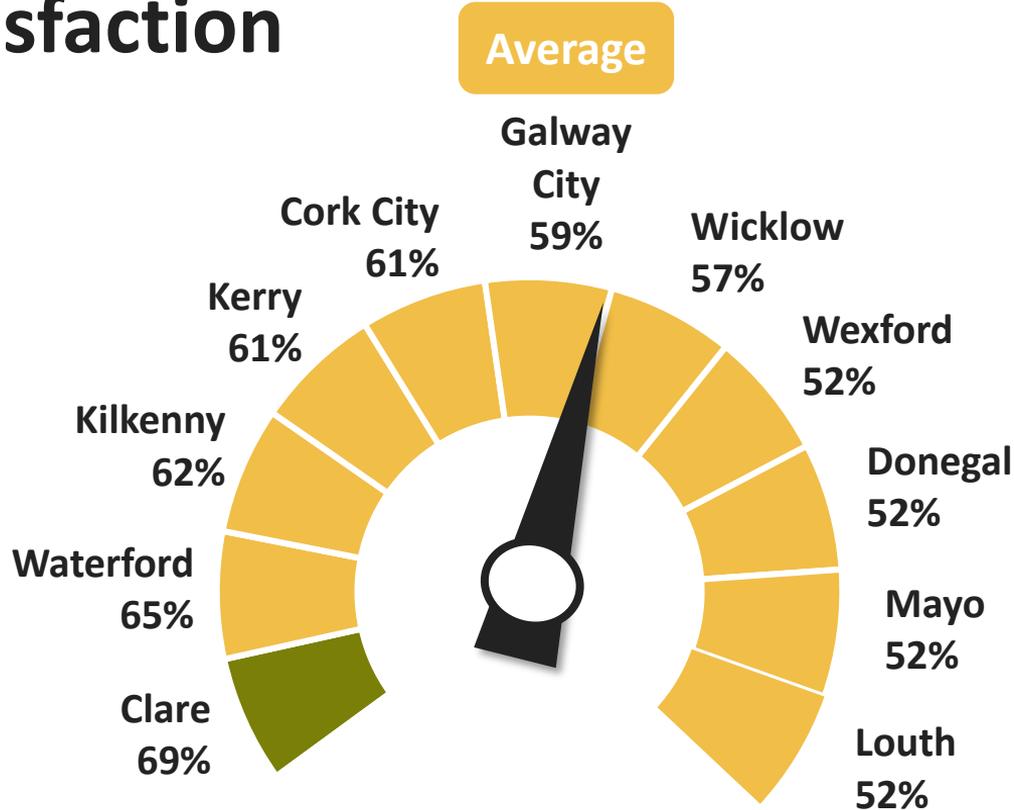




Satisfaction and Perceptions of Council

58% OF RESPONDENTS ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR COUNCIL

Overall Satisfaction



58%

Net Satisfied

*(vs. 53% in 2018
Range 40% - 69%)*

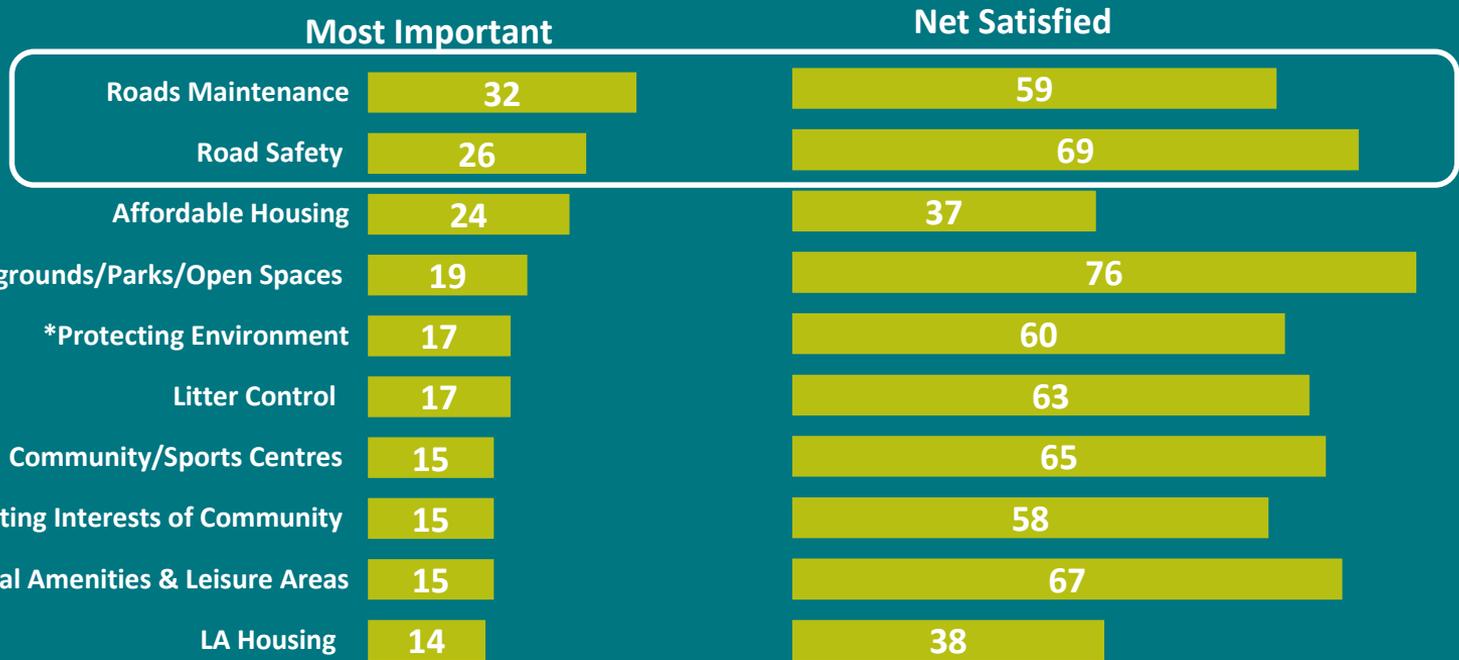
Above Average

Below Average

Q.30 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with [Local Council]?
Base: All Respondents: 1,144

ROAD MAINTENANCE (32%) AND SAFETY (26%) WERE IDENTIFIED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT SERVICES, AND THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS WERE SATISFIED WITH BOTH (59% & 69%)

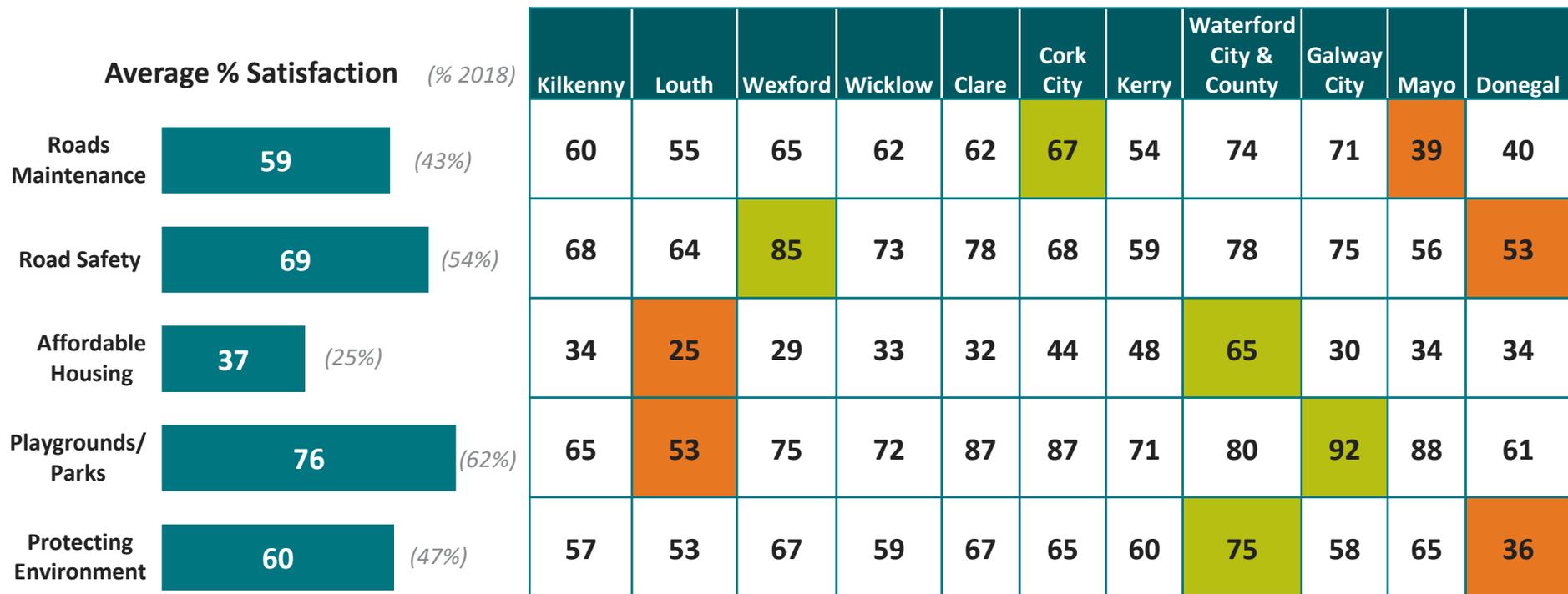
Most Important Services and Satisfaction Levels – All Local Authorities



*10th Place
in 2018

Q.12 Looking at this list of services provided by [Local Council], please choose the most important services to you personally.
Base: All Respondents: 1,144

5 Most Important Services x Satisfaction Levels

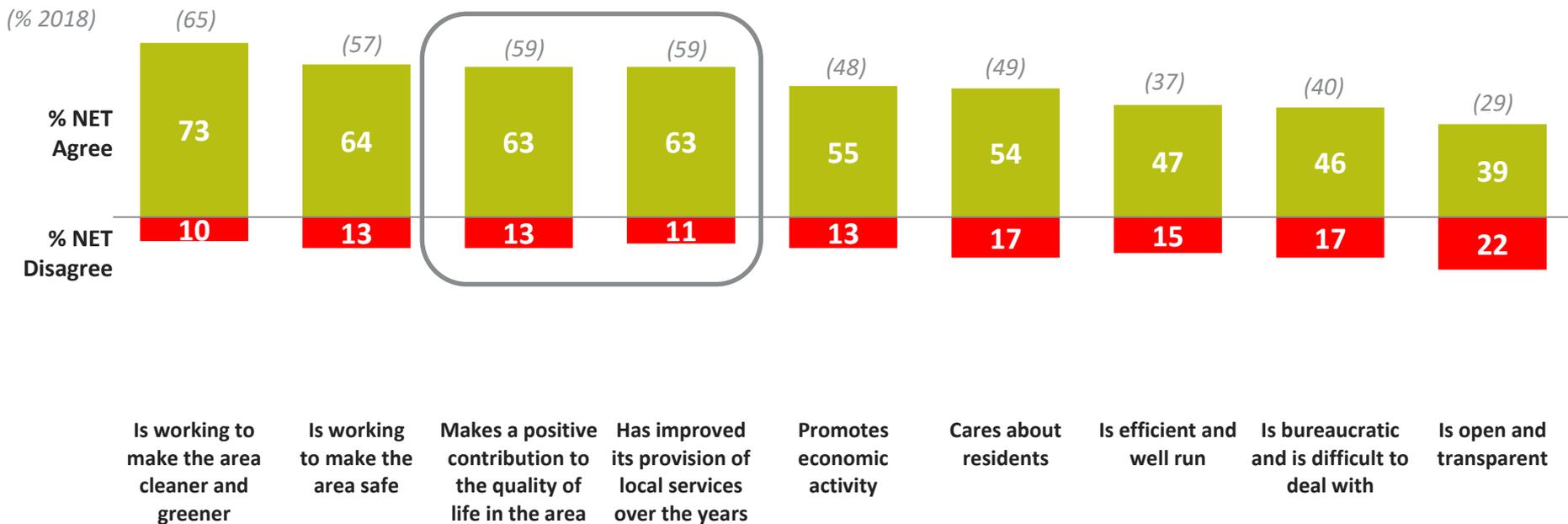


*Caution Base Sizes Small at LA level (100 respondents per LA)

Q.12 Looking at this list of services provided by [Local Council], please choose the most important services to you personally.
 Base: All Respondents: 1,144

THE MAJORITY (63% VS 59% IN 2018) AGREE THAT THEIR COUNCIL MAKES A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION AND HAS IMPROVED OVER THE YEARS. HOWEVER, LESS THAN 4 IN 10 (39% VS 29% IN 2018) AGREE THAT THE COUNCIL IS OPEN AND TRANSPARENT

Agreement with Statements About Council



Q.9 Here are some things that other people have said about their Local Council. To what extent do agree or disagree these statements apply to your [Local Council]?
 Base: All Respondents: 1,144

Agreement with Statements About Council

Avg. % Agree (2018)

Is working to make the area cleaner & greener **73** (65%)

Is working to make the area safe **64** (57%)

Has improved its provision of local services over the years **63** (59%)

Makes a positive contribution to the quality of life in the area **63** (59%)

Promotes economic activity **55** (48%)

Cares about residents **54** (49%)

Is efficient & well run **47** (37%)

Is bureaucratic & is difficult to deal with **46** (40%)

Is open & transparent **39** (29%)

	Kilkenny	Louth	Wexford	Wicklow	Clare	Cork City	Kerry	Waterford	Galway City	Mayo	Donegal
Is working to make the area cleaner & greener	74	71	74	66	77	73	73	73	83	76	60
Is working to make the area safe	68	51	56	55	72	69	70	68	73	71	53
Has improved its provision of local services over the years	61	60	59	59	68	62	66	74	67	66	51
Makes a positive contribution to the quality of life in the area	66	58	47	51	75	69	63	65	77	67	52
Promotes economic activity	62	39	36	54	60	67	49	73	71	56	34
Cares about residents	56	59	46	40	64	48	54	68	58	57	42
Is efficient & well run	55	32	39	45	46	61	57	63	38	50	29
Is bureaucratic & is difficult to deal with	47	30	42	52	44	50	47	66	34	54	43
Is open & transparent	32	28	32	35	43	40	49	59	42	48	20

Q.9 Here are some things that other people have said about their Local Council.
To what extent do agree or disagree these statements apply to your [Local Council]?

Base: All Respondents: 1,144

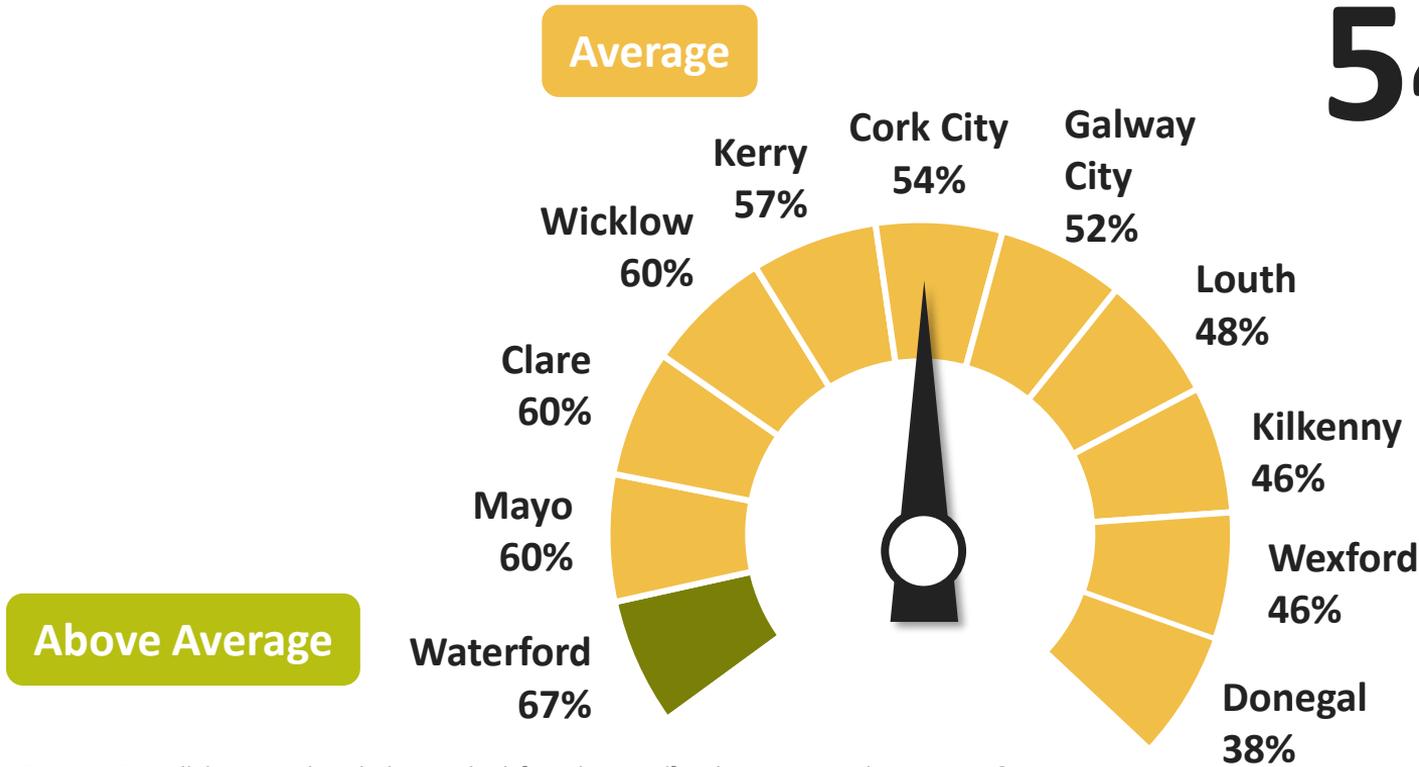
*Caution Base Sizes Small at LA level
(100 respondents per LA)

OVER HALF OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVE THEIR COUNCIL IS DOING A GOOD JOB

How Are Local Councils Doing

54% Net Good

*(Vs. 47% in 2018
Range 37% - 57%)*



Q.11 Overall, how good a job do you think [Local Council] is doing at providing services?
Base: All Respondents: 1,144



LOCAL AREA

Local Area

(92%)

94%

Agree that
their 'Local
Area Is A Good
Place To Live'

(76%)

83%

Agree that
their 'Local
Area Is A Good
Place To Work'

(84%)

90%

Feel a fairly
strong or very
strong 'Sense
of Belonging to
their Local
Area

(2018 figures in brackets)

JOB PROSPECTS/WAGE LEVELS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING ARE IDENTIFIED AS IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR MAKING SOMEWHERE A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE/WORK ACROSS ALL LA'S

Most Important Factors for Making Somewhere a Good Place to Live/Work

Wage Levels/Job Prospects



81% (78%)

The level of traffic congestion



31% (34%)

Shopping facilities



30%
(35%)

Affordable decent housing



55% (52%)

Facilities for young children



31% (29%)

**Caution Base Sizes Small at LA level
(100 respondents per LA)*

Q.1a Thinking generally, which of these things would you say are most important in making somewhere a good place to live?
Q.1b And, which are most important in making somewhere a good place to work?
Base: All Respondents: 1,144

Most Important Factors for Making Somewhere a Good Place to Live/Work

		Kilkenny	Louth	Wexford	Wicklow	Clare	Cork City	Kerry	Waterford City & County	Galway City	Mayo	Donegal
Wage Levels/Job Prospects	81%	86	82	96	79	89	70	76	55	80	93	85
Affordable decent housing	55%	56	46	59	56	58	59	61	32	68	58	53
The level of traffic congestion	31%	34	25	27	29	32	41	29	24	45	36	23
Facilities for young children	31%	33	30	28	32	31	35	22	28	28	37	34
Shopping facilities	30%	19	18	45	32	27	38	37	27	26	35	25

*Caution Base Sizes Small at LA level
(100 respondents per LA)

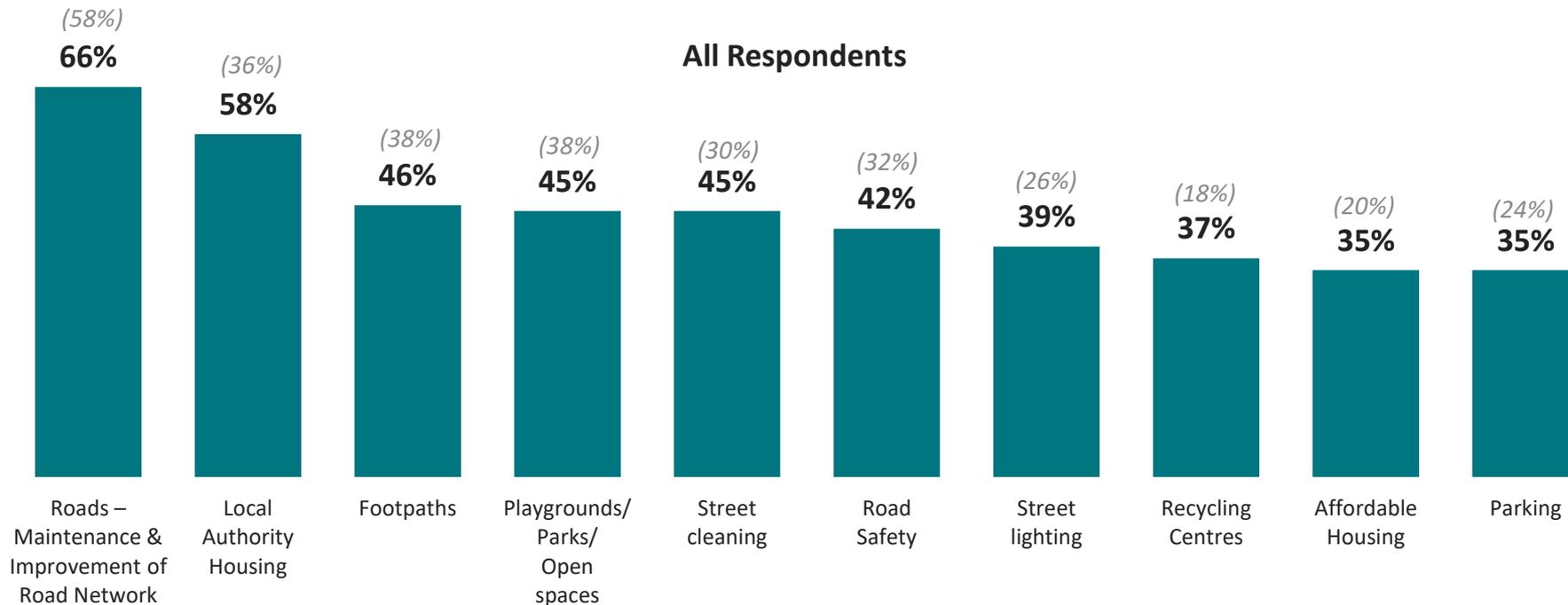
Q.1a Thinking generally, which of these things would you say are most important in making somewhere a good place to live?
 Q.1b And, which are most important in making somewhere a good place to work?
 Base: All Respondents: 1,144



Communication, Awareness and Engagement With Local Council

ROADS, HOUSING, RECYCLING AND PLAYGROUNDS WERE AMONG THE TOP TEN LOCAL COUNCIL SERVICES THAT RESIDENTS ARE AWARE OF

TOP 10 – Awareness of Services



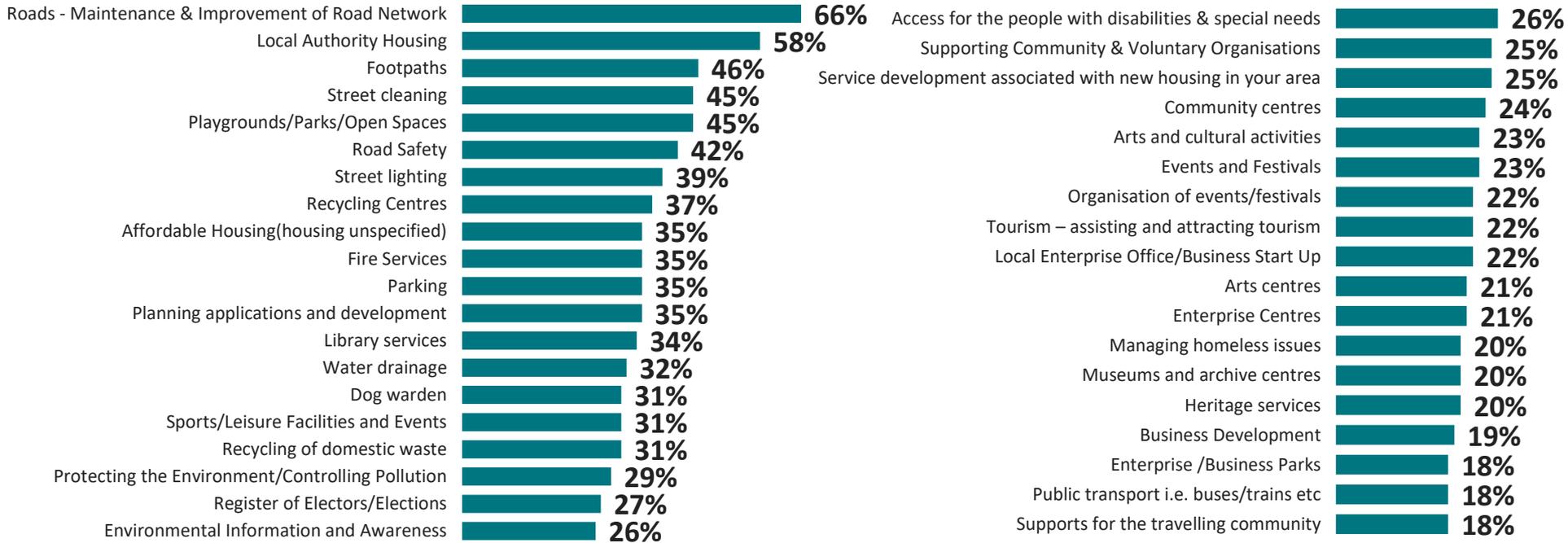
Q.10 What services do you think [Local Council] provides or are responsible for?

Base: All Respondents: 1,144

A WIDE RANGE OF AWARENESS LEVELS OF COUNCIL SERVICES WERE RECORDED

Awareness of Services of Local Council

All Respondents



Q.10 What services do you think [Local Council] provides or are responsible for?

Base: All Respondents: 1,144

84% OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVE THAT THEY KNOW AT LEAST 'A LITTLE' ABOUT THEIR COUNCIL

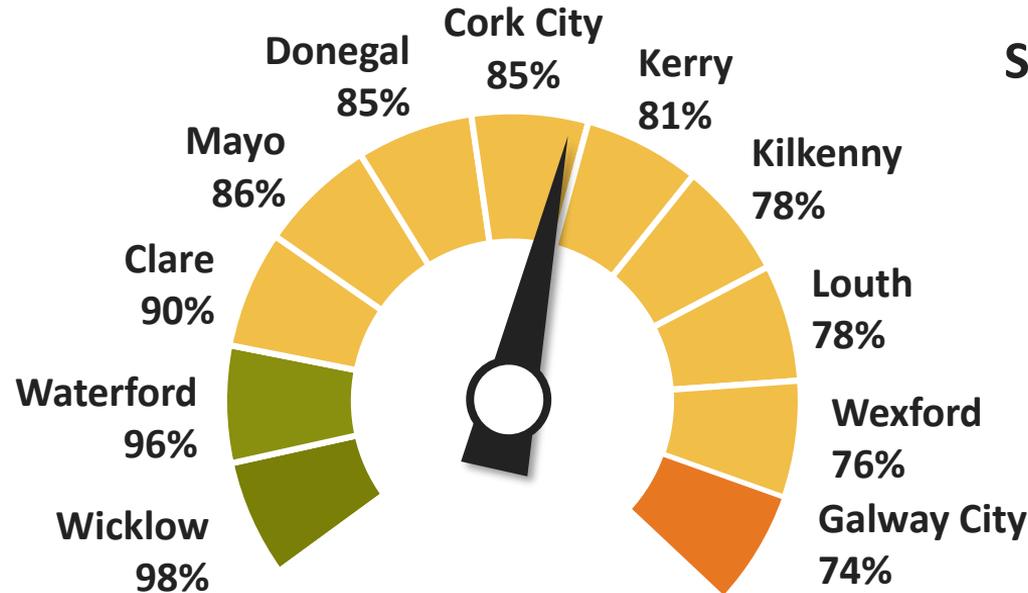
Knowledge of Local Council

Average

84%

Some Knowledge

(Vs. 84% in 2018
Range: 70% - 93%)



Above Average

Average range +/- 10%
of average score

Below Average

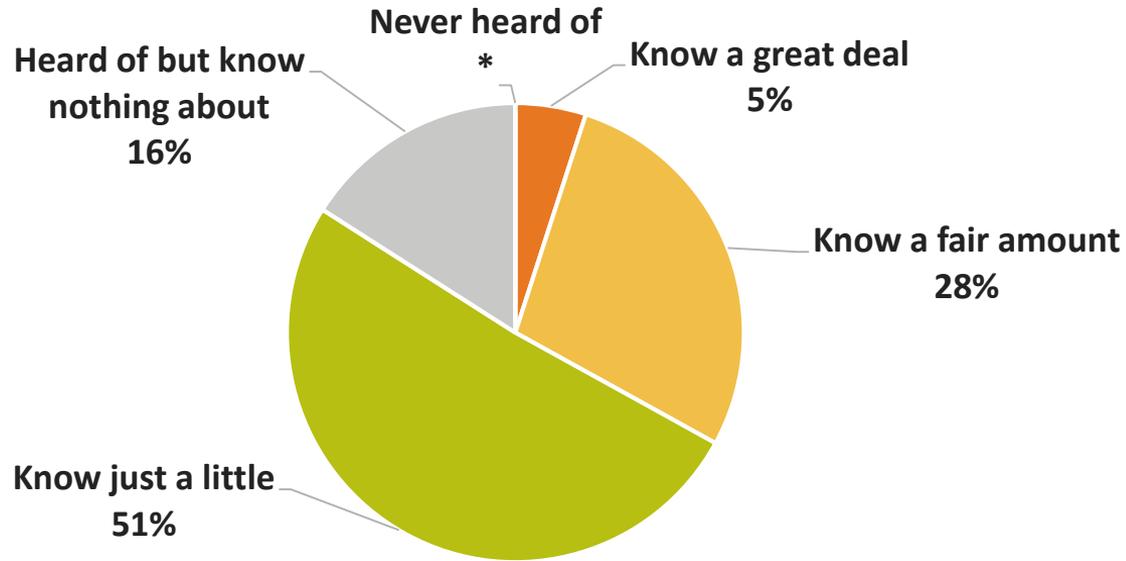
72% 18-34 years
93% 65+ years

Q.8 How much, if anything, do you feel you know about [Local council], taking into account anything you have heard or read about it, any contact you have had or any people you know of who work there? A great deal, a fair amount, just a little, heard of but know nothing about, never heard of.

Base: All Respondents: 1,144

THE MAJORITY (51%) STATE THAT THEY 'KNOW JUST A LITTLE' ABOUT THEIR LOCAL COUNCIL

Knowledge of Local Council



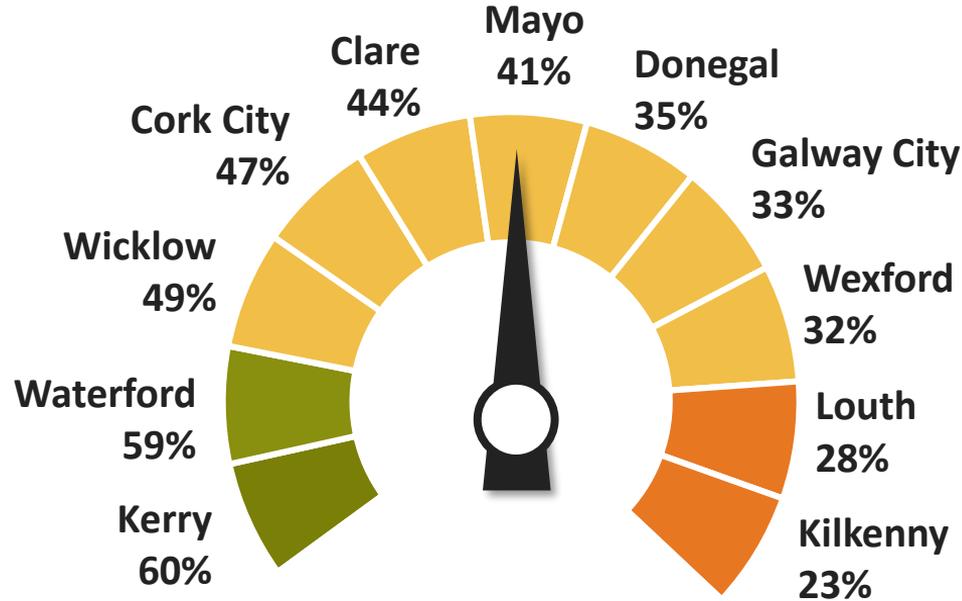
Q.8 How much, if anything, do you feel you know about [Local council], taking into account anything you have heard or read about it, any contact you have had or any people you know of who work there?

Base: All Respondents: 1,144

4 IN 10 RESPONDENTS FEEL INFORMED BY THEIR COUNCIL

Residents Informed by Council

Average



Above Average

41%

Informed

(Vs. 38% in 2018
Range: 11% - 48%)

54% Not Informed

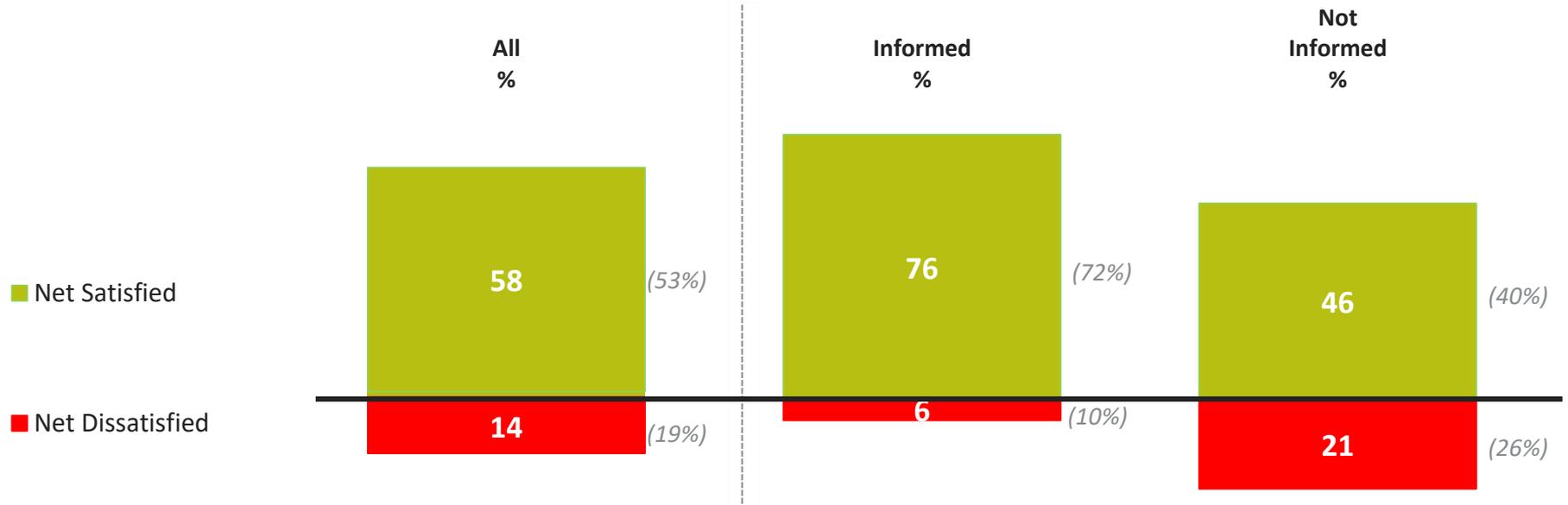
Below Average

Average range +/- 10%
of average score

Q.15 Overall, how well informed do you think [Local Council] keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides ...
Base: All Respondents: 1,144

76% (VS 72% IN 2018) OF THOSE INFORMED ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR COUNCIL, THIS COMPARES TO 46% (VS 40% IN 2018) OF THOSE WHO ARE NOT INFORMED

Residents Informed by Council x Satisfaction



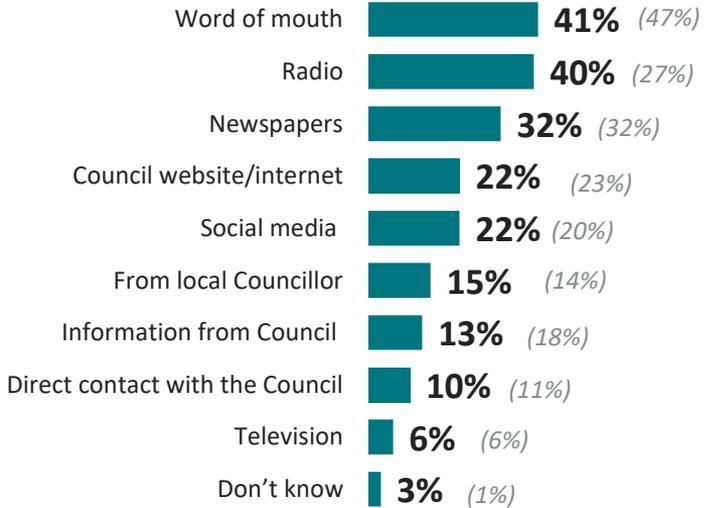
Q.15 Overall, how well informed do you think [Local Council] keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides ...
Q.30 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with [Local Council]?

Base: All Respondents: 1,144

WORD OF MOUTH AND RADIO ARE THE MOST COMMON WAYS TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE COUNCIL ACROSS THE BOARD. YOUNGER AGE GROUPS ARE MORE LIKELY TO UTILISE SOCIAL MEDIA, WHILE OLDER AGE GROUPS USE NEWSPAPERS AND RADIO. 32% OF ABC1'S FIND OUT ABOUT THEIR LOCAL COUNCIL THROUGH THE INTERNET, COMPARED TO 16% OF C2DEF'S

How Find Out About Local Council

All with Some Knowledge



GENDER		AGE				SOCIAL CLASS	
Male	Female	18-34	35-44	45-64	65+	ABC1	C2DEF
(557)	(587)	(314)	(205)	(396)	(229)	(458)	(686)
41	40	42	38	40	41	39	42
40	40	31	33	45	52	38	41
32	32	19	32	39	42	35	31
23	22	25	27	24	12	32	16
22	22	35	25	17	8	26	19
15	14	8	15	19	18	16	14
14	11	11	16	13	11	14	12
11	9	8	9	13	9	9	10
6	6	6	5	7	6	8	5
3	2	5	1	2	2	4	2

Q.16 How do you find out about [Local Council]?
 Base: All Respondents: 1144



26% OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVE THAT THEY CAN INFLUENCE DECISIONS AFFECTING THEIR AREA

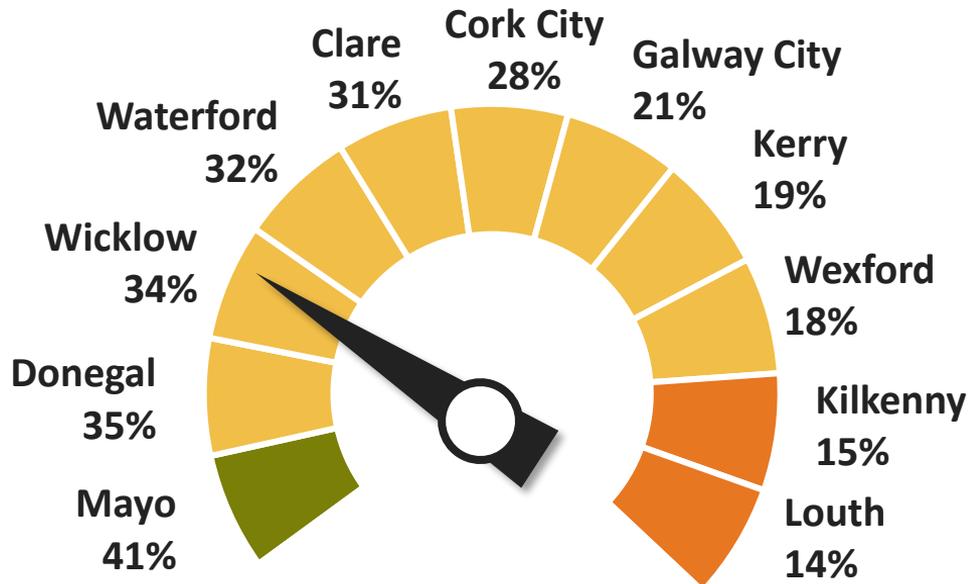
Agreement with Ability to Influence Decisions Affecting Local Authority Area

26%

Agree can Influence Decisions

(Vs. 26% in 2018
Range: 11% - 38%)

Average



Below Average

Average range +/- 10%
of average score

Ipsos MRBI
GAME CHANGERS

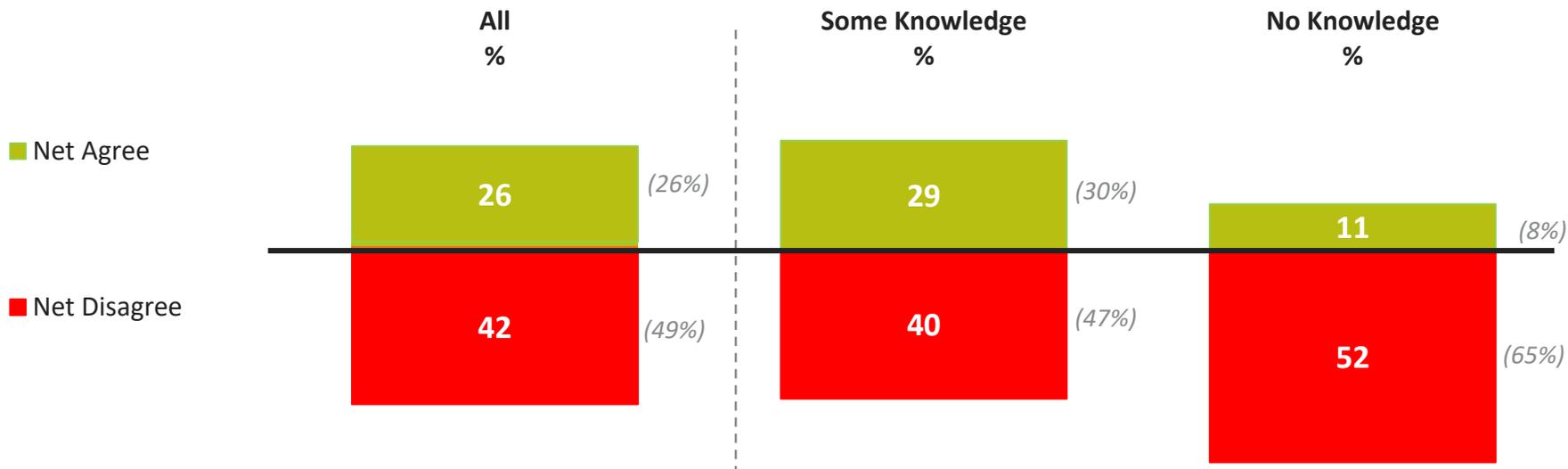
70% of those who agree are overall satisfied vs 52% overall sat among those who disagree

Above Average

Q.6 To what extent do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting [local authority area]?
Base: All Respondents: 1,144

JUST 11% OF THOSE WHO HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR LOCAL COUNCIL AGREE THAT THEY CAN INFLUENCE DECISIONS AFFECTING THEIR LOCAL AREA, COMPARED TO 29% OF THOSE WITH SOME KNOWLEDGE

Agreement Can Influence Decisions Affecting Local Authority x Level of Knowledge



Q.8 How much, if anything, do you feel you know about [Local council], taking into account anything you have heard or read about it, any contact you have had or any people you know of who work there?

Q.6 To what extent do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting [local authority area]?

Base: All Respondents: 1,144

(2018 figures in brackets)



Value for Money

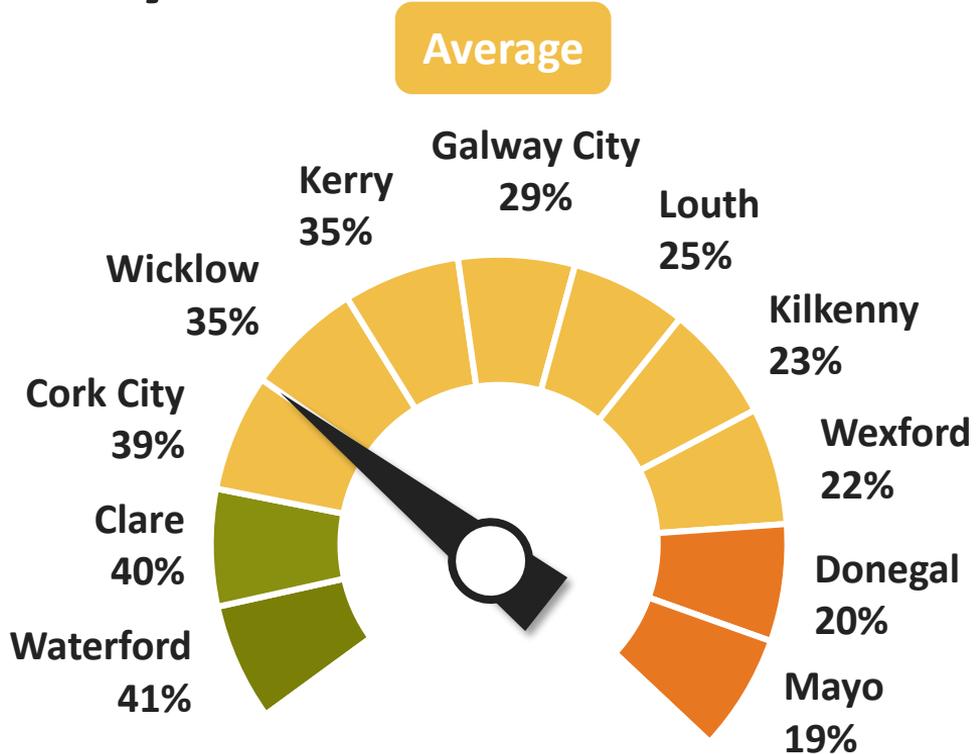
30% OF RESPONDENTS THINK THAT THEIR COUNCIL PROVIDES GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY

Value For Money

30%

Good Value

(Vs. 27% in 2018
Range: 15% - 36%)



Above Average

Average

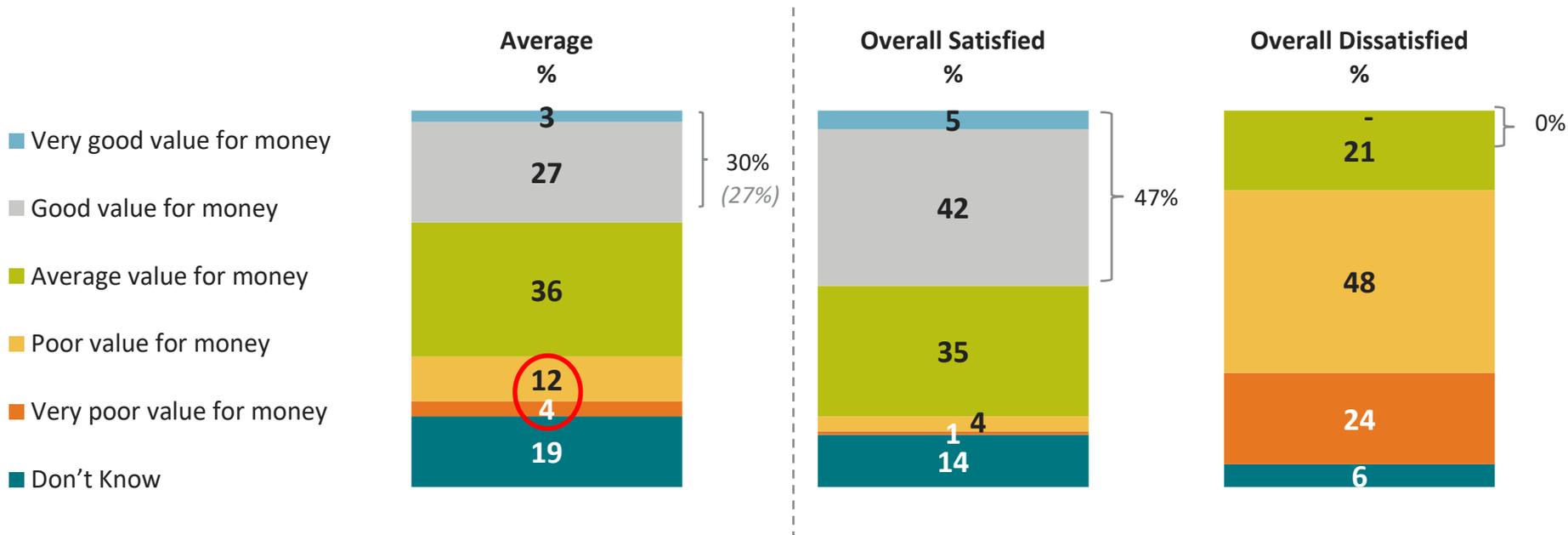
Below Average

Average range +/- 10% of average score

Q.18 Taking everything into account, would you say [Local Council] provides good value for money or not?
Base: All Respondents: 1,144

THE MAJORITY BELIEVE THAT THEIR COUNCIL PROVIDES AVERAGE OR GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY (66% VS 63% IN 2018). JUST 16% BELIEVE THEY ARE RECEIVING POOR VALUE FOR MONEY.

Value for Money

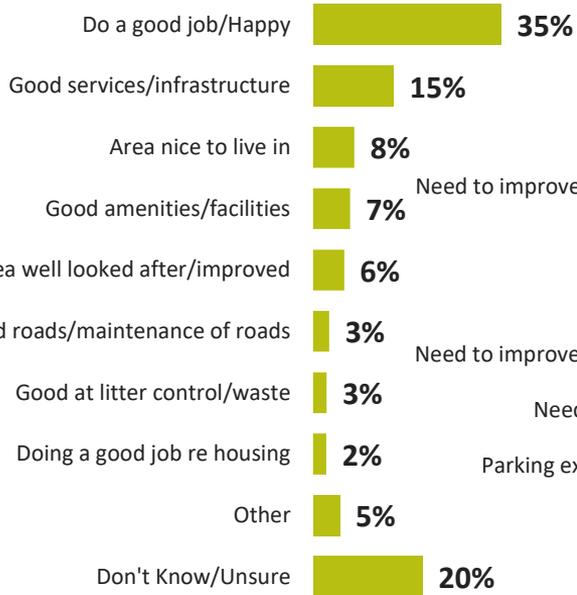


Q.18 Taking everything into account, would you say [Local Council] provides good value for money or not?
 Base: All Respondents: 1,144

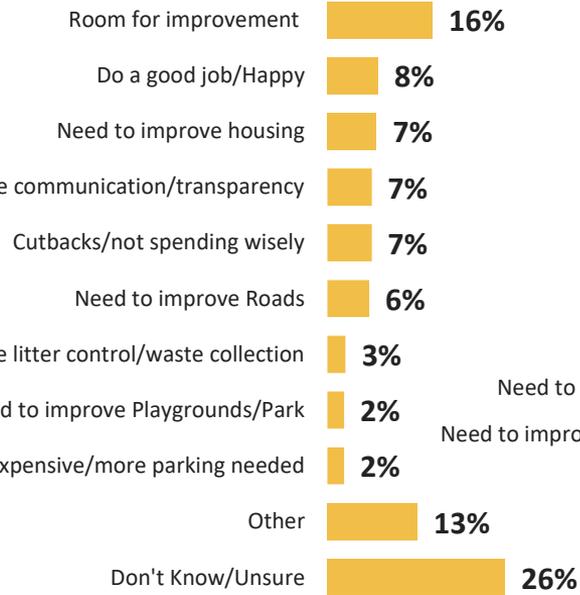
1 IN 5 OF THOSE WHO THOUGHT THEIR COUNCIL OFFERED POOR VALUE FOR MONEY CITED TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION ISSUES

Reasons For Value For Money

Good Value



Average Value



Poor Value



Q.19 Why do you say that?
 Base: All Answered Value for money: 896

*Multiple answer allowed, only top answers shown



Direct Experience

31% CONTACTED THEIR COUNCIL IN THE LAST 5 YEARS

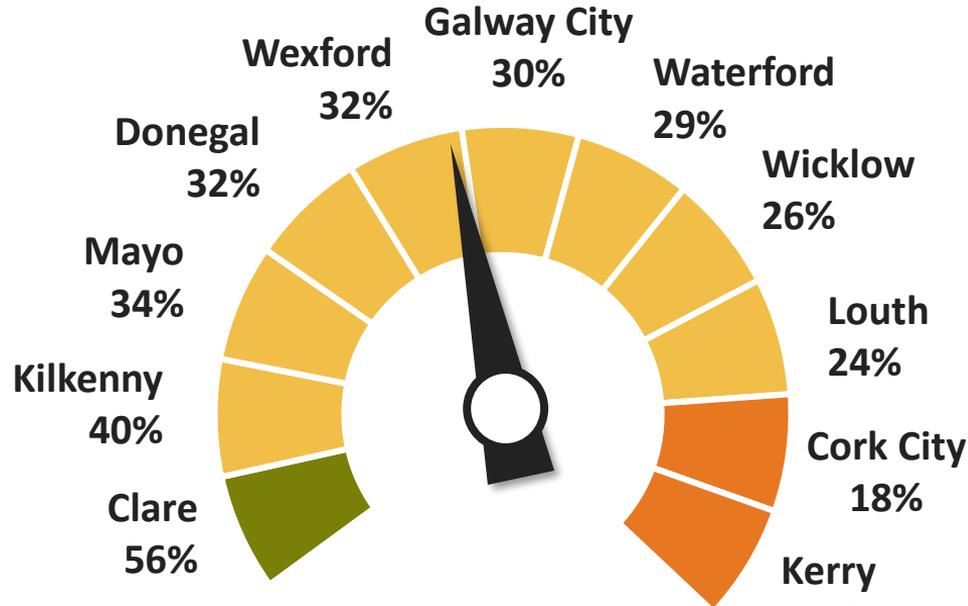
Contact with Local Council in Last 5 Years

Average

31%

Contacted Council

(Vs. 34% in 2018
Range: 21% - 45%)



Above Average

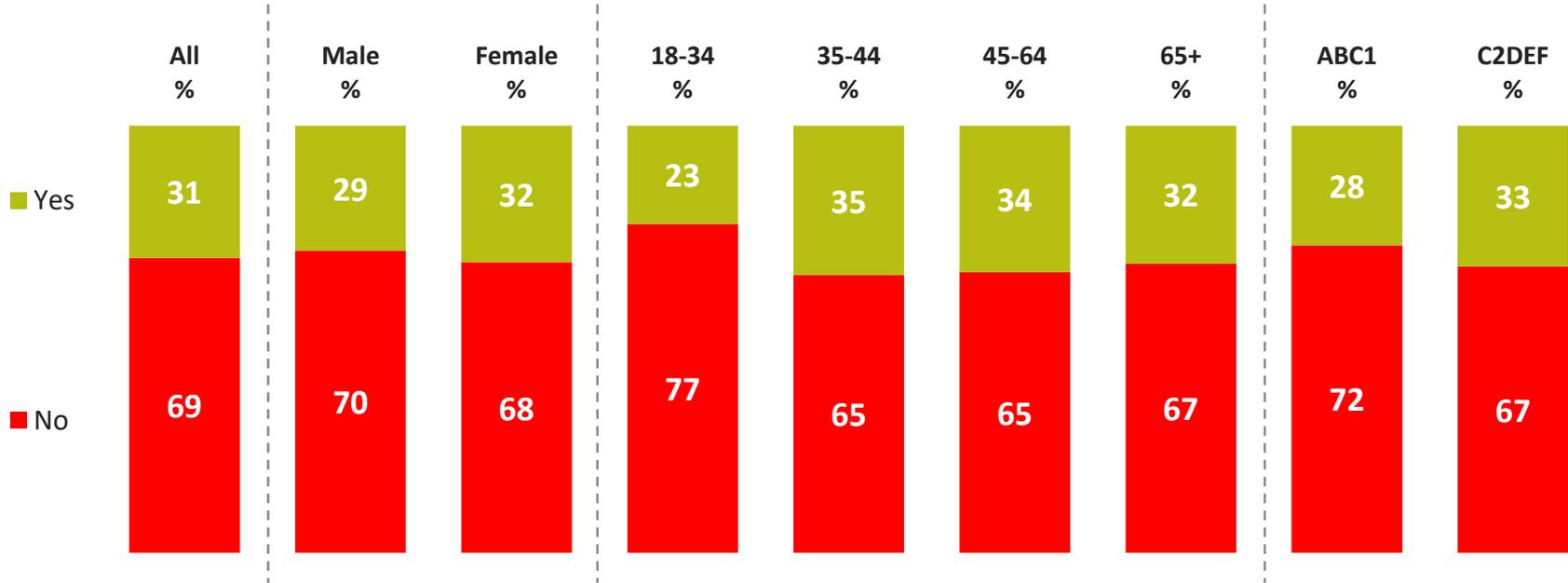
Below Average

Average range +/- 10%
of average score

Q.21 Have you personally made contact with [Local Council] for any reason in the past 5 years?....
Base: All Respondents: 1,144

AS WITH 2018, A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF FEMALES, THOSE AGED 35-64 AND C2DEF'S CONTACTED THEIR COUNCIL IN THE LAST 5 YEARS

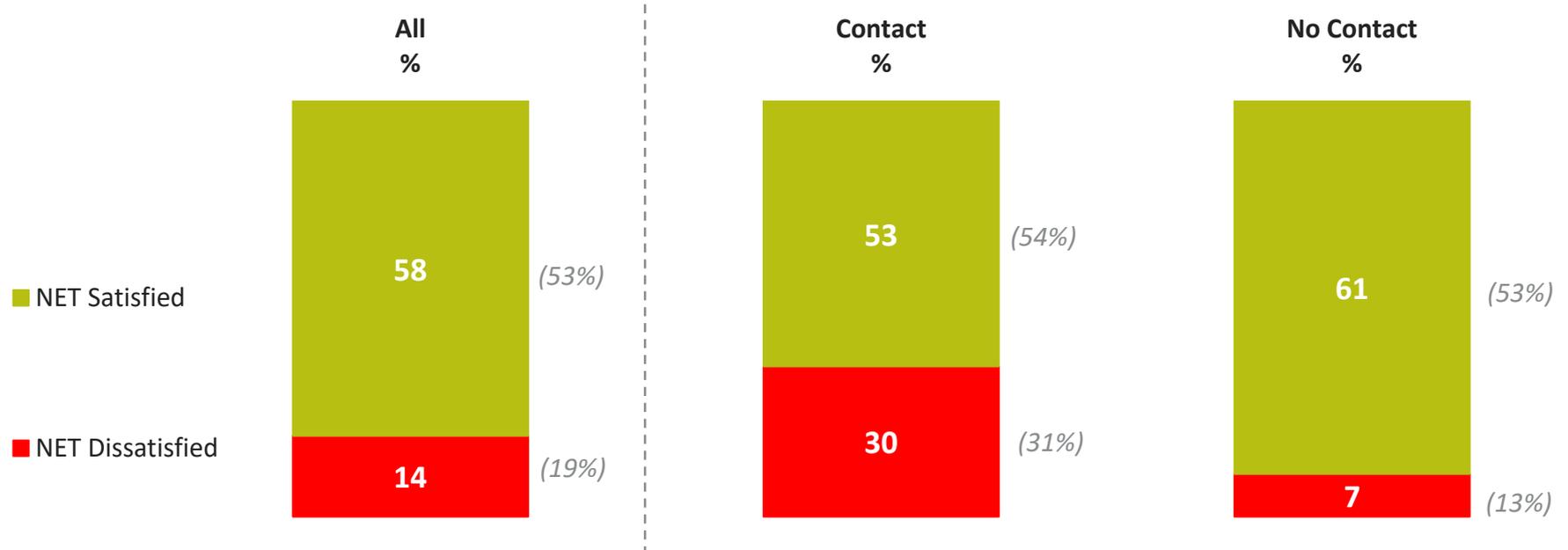
Contact with Local Council in Last 5 Years



Q. 21 Have you personally made contact with [Local Council] for any reason in the past 5 years?....
Base: All Respondents: 1,144

53% OF RESPONDENTS WHO CONTACTED THEIR COUNCIL IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS WERE SATISFIED OVERALL. THIS COMPARES TO 61% OF THOSE WHO HAD NO CONTACT.

Contact with Local Council in Last 5 Years



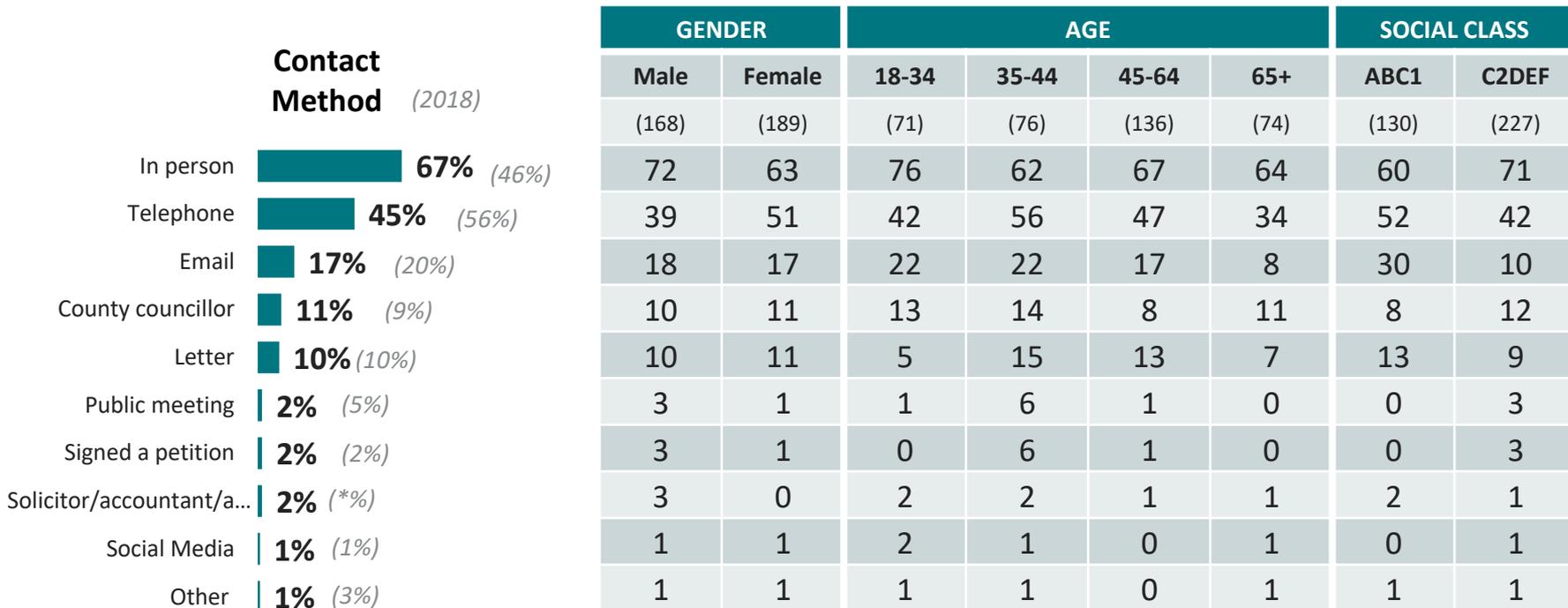
Q. 21 Have you personally made contact with [Local Council] for any reason in the past 5 years?....

Q. 30 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with [Local Council]?

Base: All Respondents: 1,144

THE MAJORITY CONTACT THEIR COUNCIL BY PHONE OR IN PERSON. ONE IN FIVE CONTACT THEIR COUNCIL THROUGH EMAIL

How Contacted Local Council in Last 5 Years



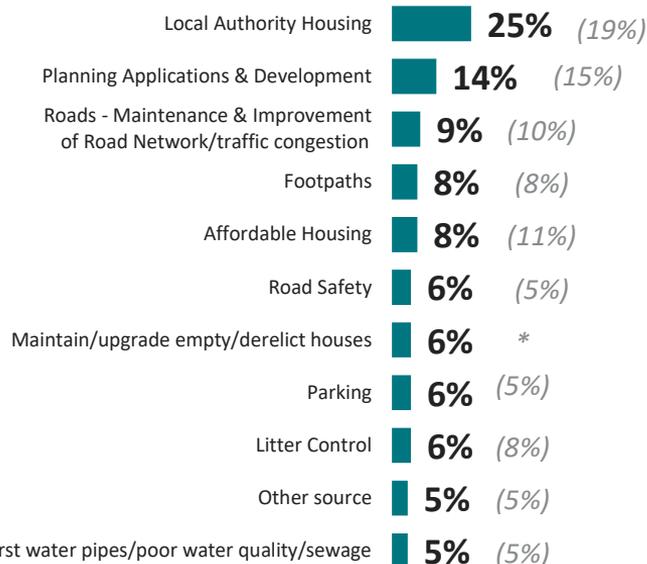
Q.22 How did you contact [Local Council] (in the past five years)?

Base: All who contacted Local Council: 357

HOUSING AND ROADS WERE THE TOP REASONS FOR CONTACTING THEIR COUNCIL

Reasons for Contact

Reasons for Contact (2018)



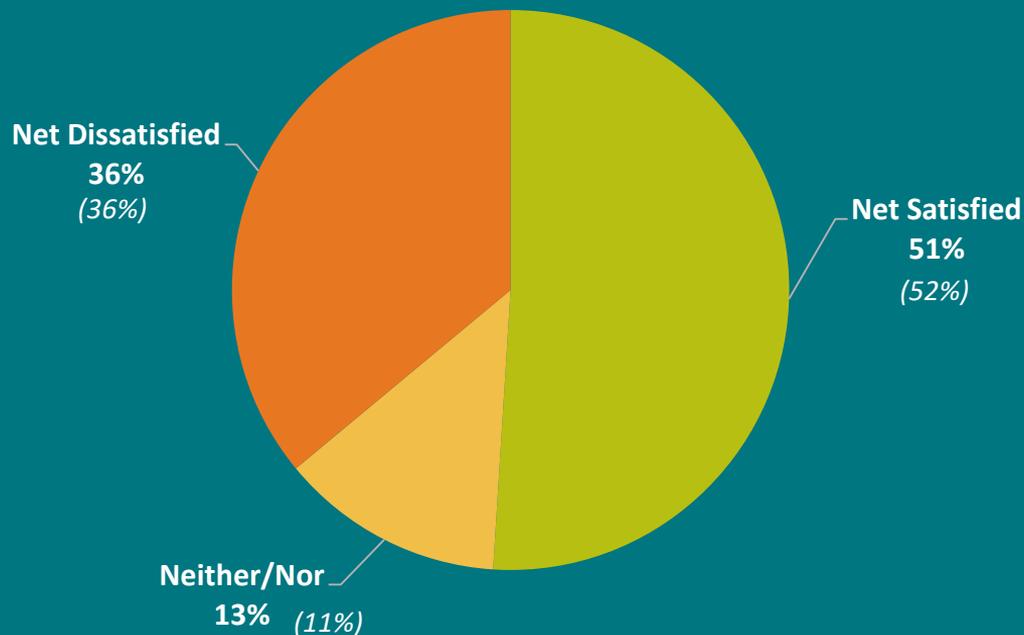
GENDER		AGE				SOCIAL CLASS	
Male	Female	18-34	35-44	45-64	65+	ABC1	C2DEF
(168)	(189)	(71)	(76)	(136)	(74)	(130)	(227)
20	29	39	28	23	8	12	31
16	11	10	20	14	10	22	9
8	9	6	5	10	12	8	9
6	9	3	7	6	17	12	6
9	6	16	12	3	4	10	7
7	6	3	3	10	7	8	6
4	8	6	1	9	8	2	8
5	6	7	6	5	4	9	4
6	5	2	5	7	6	9	4
6	4	5	3	7	2	6	4
6	3	4	4	7	2	6	4

Q.23 For which of the following reasons did you contact [Local Council] in the last 5 years?
 Base: All who contacted Local Council : 357

4% or less not shown

51% OF RESPONDENTS WHO CONTACTED THEIR COUNCIL WERE SATISFIED WITH HOW THEIR QUERY WAS HANDLED

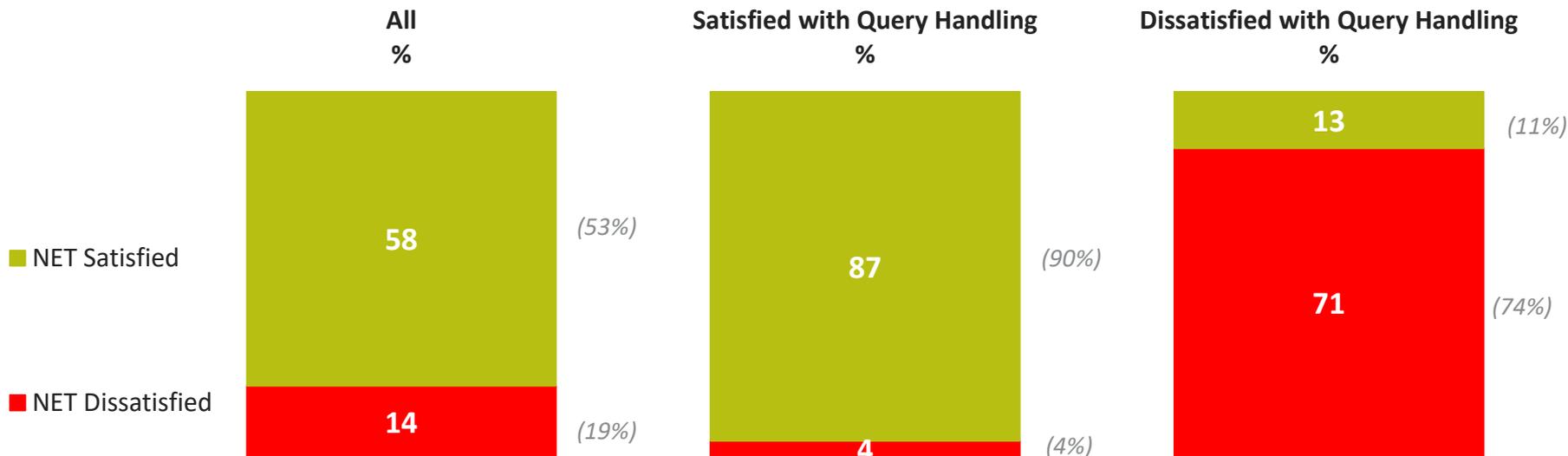
Satisfaction with Local Council Handling of Last Query



Q.27 How satisfied were you with how [Local Council] handled your most recent query
Base: All Respondents Contacted in Past 5 Years: 357

87% OF THOSE WHO WERE SATISFIED WITH HOW THEIR QUERY WAS HANDLED WERE ALSO SATISFIED OVERALL WITH THEIR COUNCIL. IN CONTRAST, 71% OF THOSE WHO WERE DISSATISFIED WITH HOW THEIR LAST QUERY WAS HANDLED REPORTED THAT THEY WERE DISSATISFIED OVERALL WITH THEIR COUNCIL.

Satisfaction with Local Council Handling of Last Query

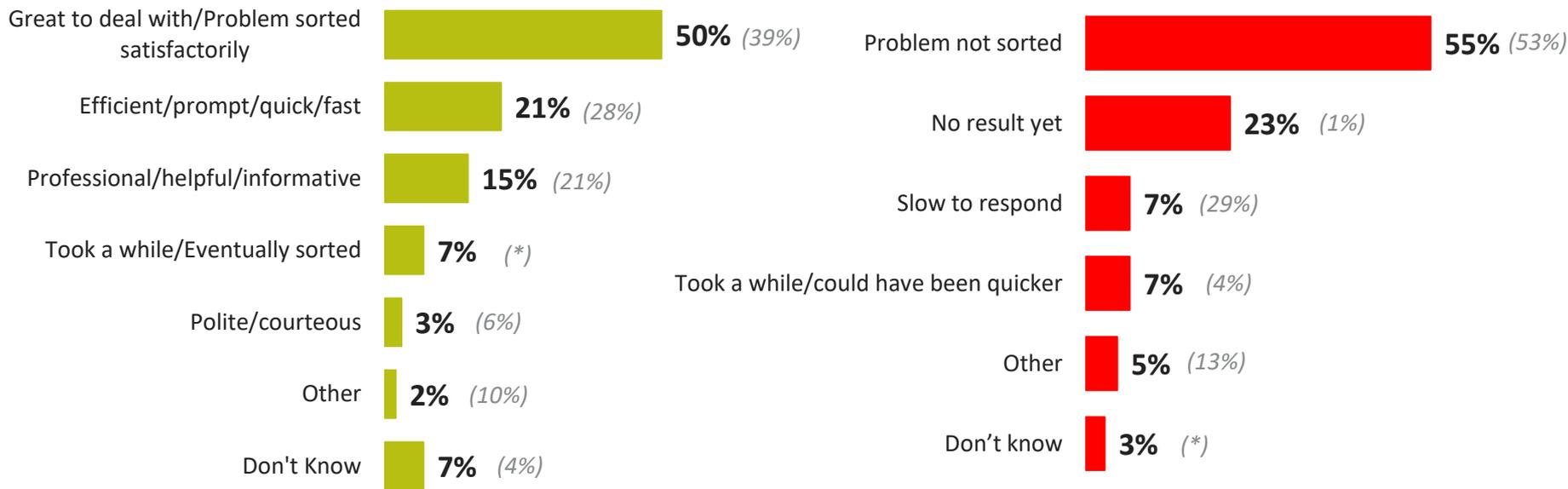


Q.27 How satisfied were you with how [Local Council] handled your most recent query?

Base: All Respondents Contacted in Past 5 Years: 357

PROFESSIONAL MANNER, QUICK RESPONSE AND HAVING THEIR PROBLEM SORTED WERE THE MAIN REASONS FOR SATISFACTION AMONG RESPONDENTS

Reasons for Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with Handling of Query



(2018 figures in brackets)

Q.28 Why were you [INSERT ANSWER FROM Q27] with how [Local Council] handled your last query?

Base: All Satisfied: 183 / All Dissatisfied: 129

Reasons For Satisfaction

Prompt and professional
in their dealings with me.

Did it in a timely
manner and kept us
updated as they did it

They tried their best and
explained their situation
well to my satisfaction

We received very good
advice and assistance
from council

I find the council helpful
and sympathetic enough
to the needs of our parish
and community here

The individual in
question did as much
as she could to help
me but in the final
analysis her hands
were tied

Q.28 Why were you [INSERT ANSWER FROM Q27] with how [Local Council] handled your last query?
Base: All Satisfied: 183

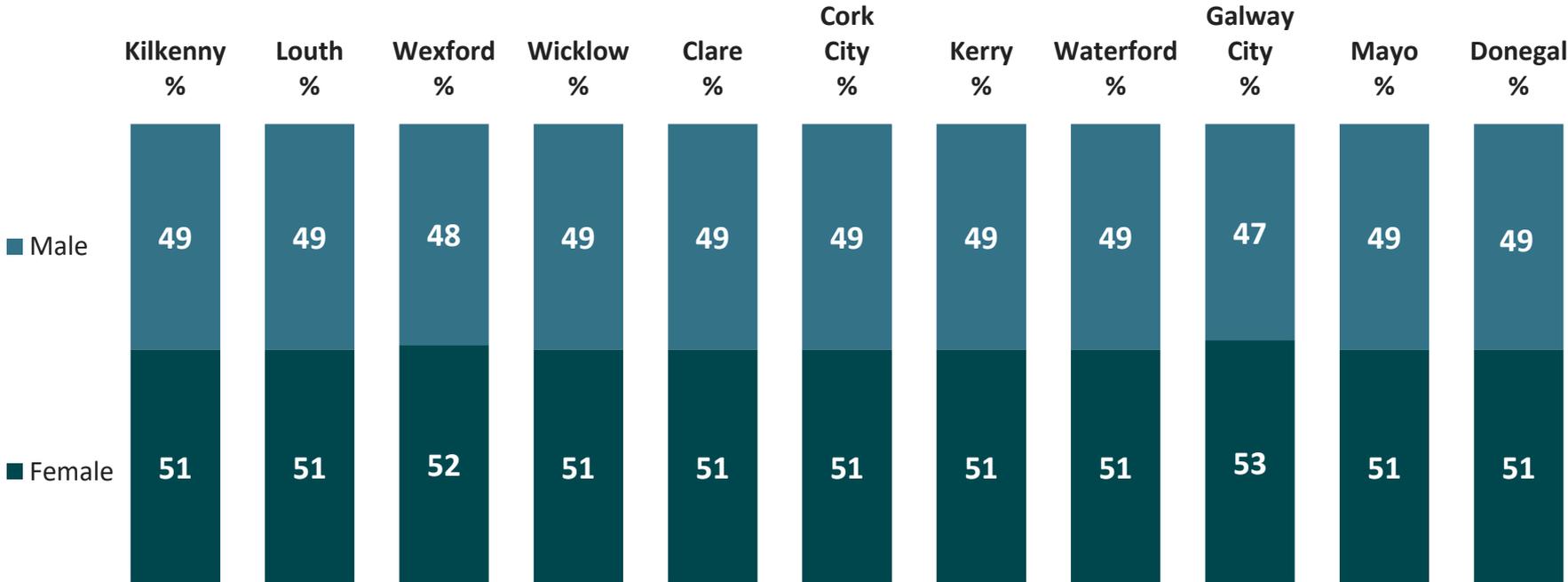
Reasons For Dissatisfaction



Q.28 Why were you [INSERT ANSWER FROM Q27] with how [Local Council] handled your last query?
Base: All Dissatisfied: 129

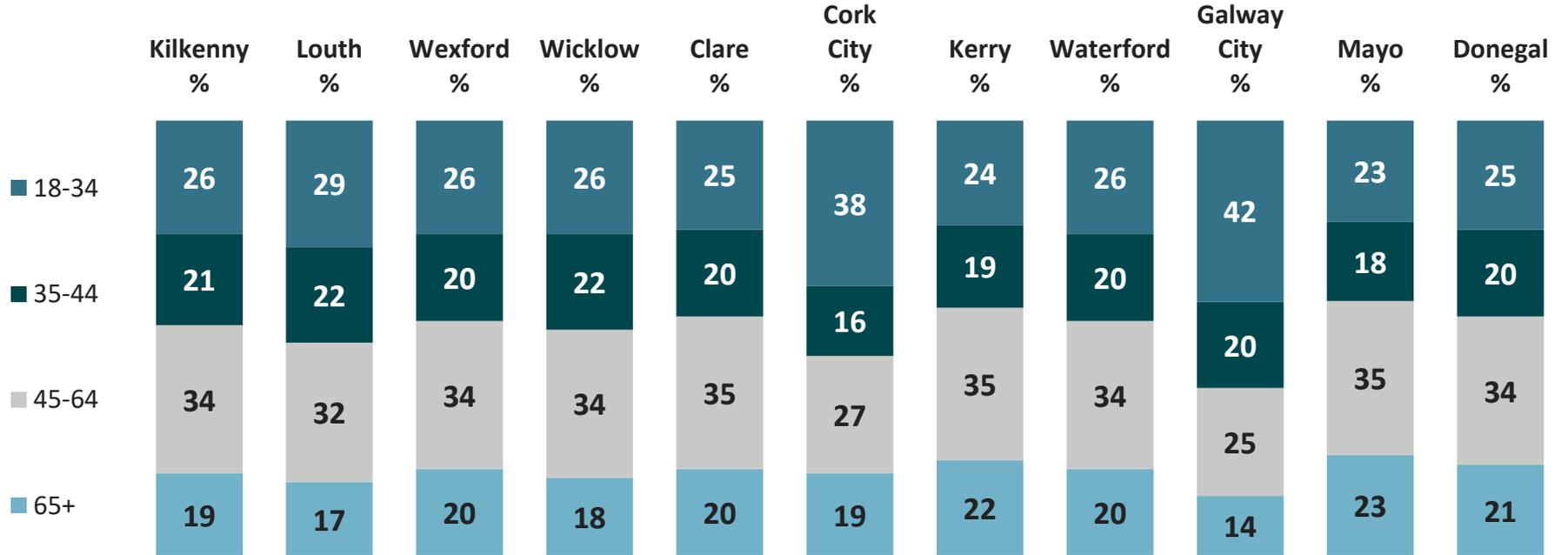
APPENDICES: Sample Profile

Gender



Base: All Respondents: 1,144

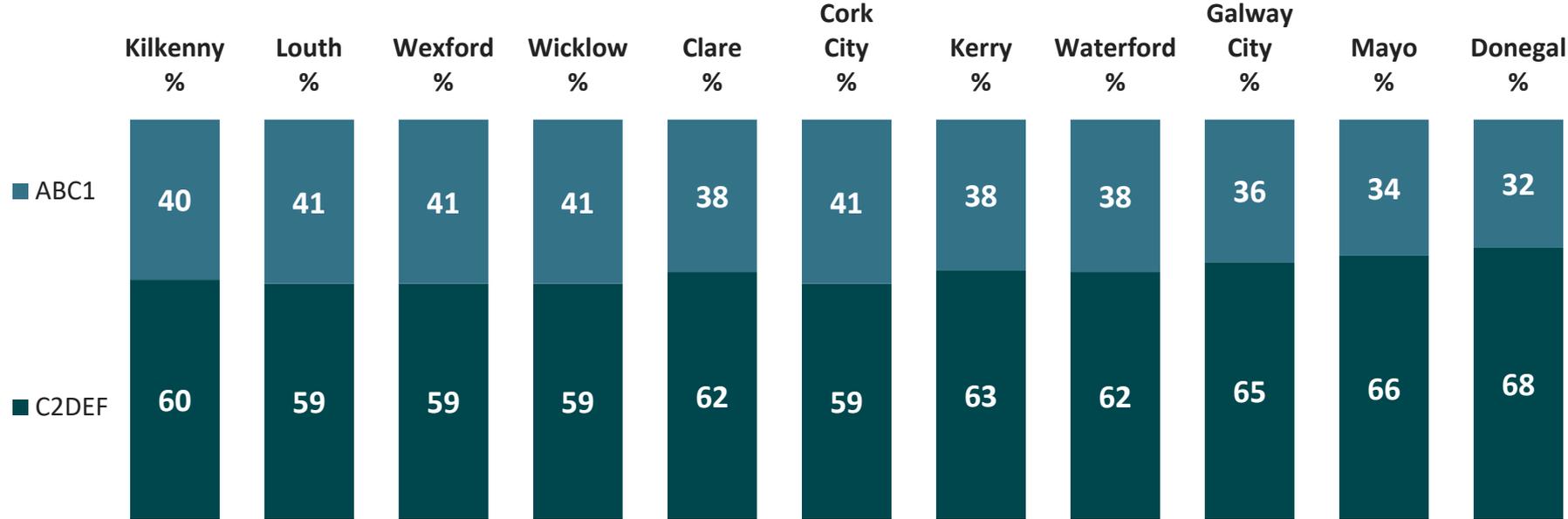
Age



Where results do not add to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, don't knows/refusals

Base: All Respondents: 1,144

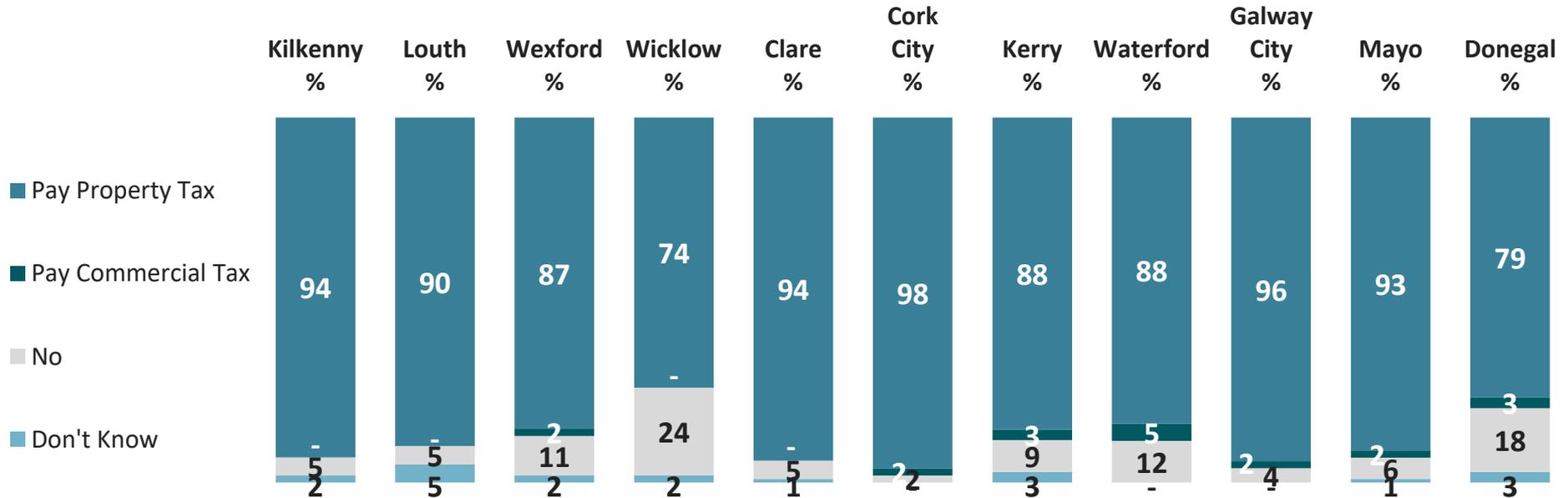
Social Class



Where results do not add to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, don't knows/refusals

Base: All Respondents: 1,144

Pay Local Property Tax



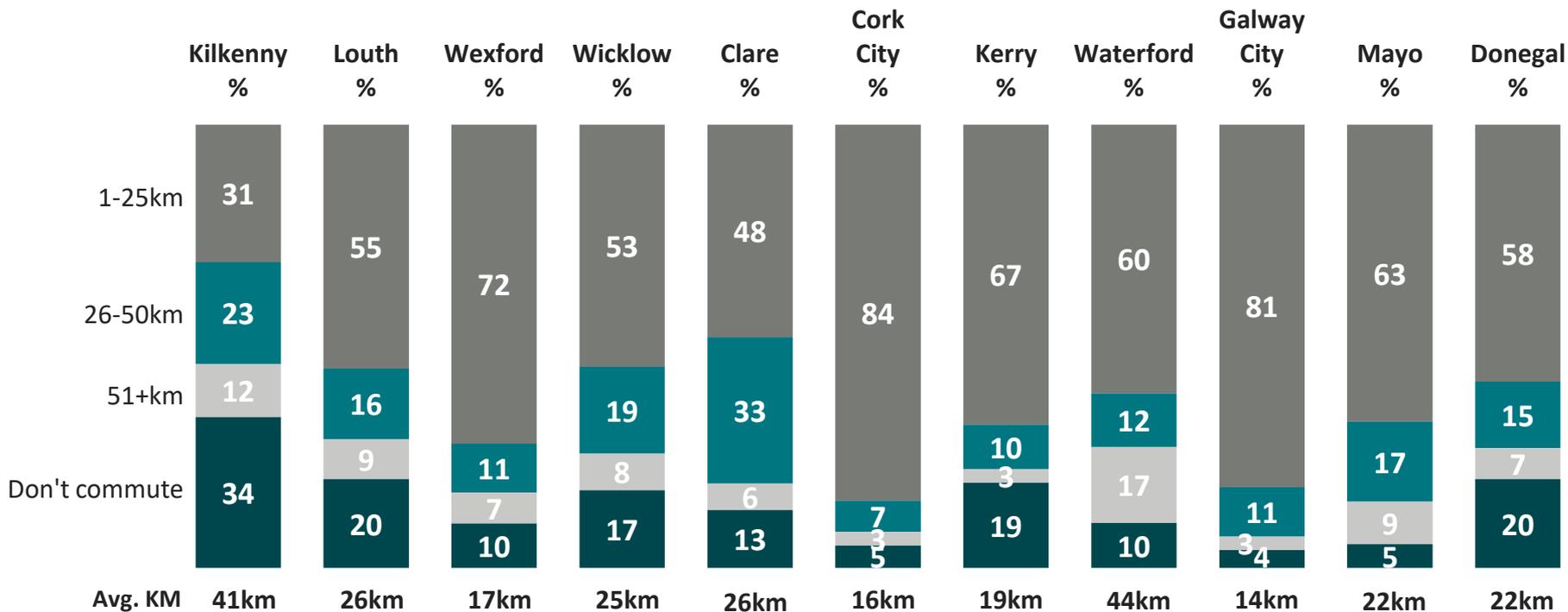
Q.D Do you currently pay local property tax and/or commercial property rates in [local authority area]?

Base: All Respondents who own house: 685

Where results do not add to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, don't knows/refusals

Average Commute

Avg. 24km
vs 27km in 2018

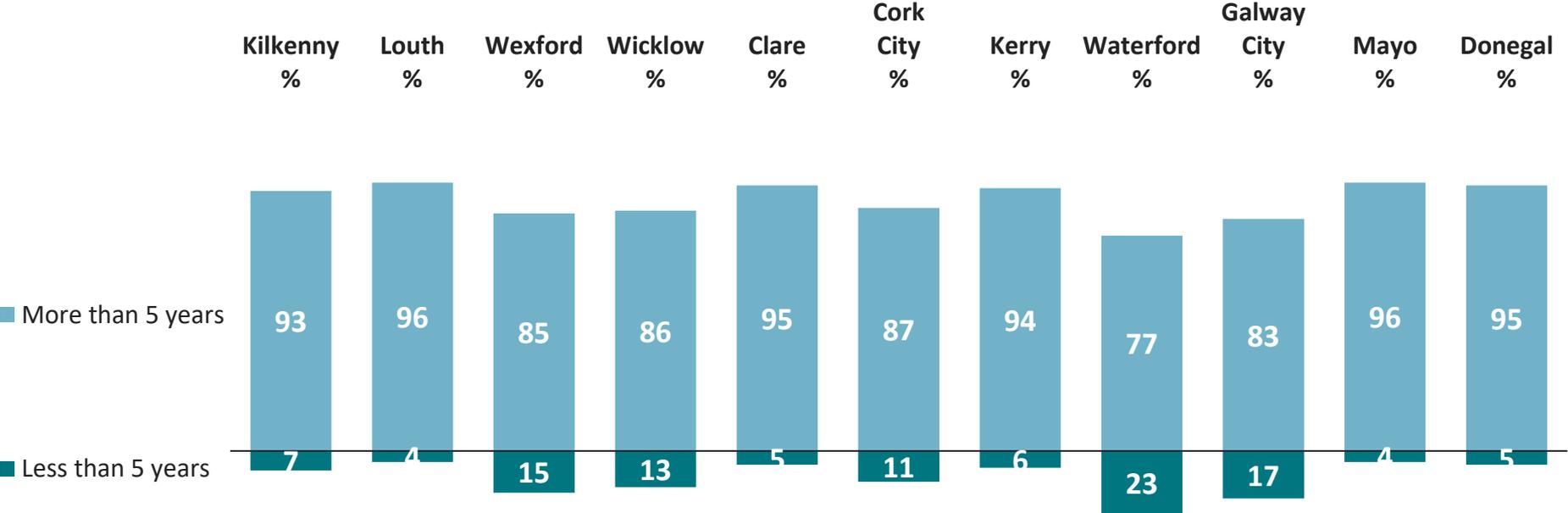


C.8 What is your average commute each day?

Base: All Working/Studying: 646

Where results do not add to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, don't knows/refusals

Length Continuously Living in Local Authority Area



Where results do not add to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, don't knows/refusals

Q.4 How many years have you been continuously living in [Local Authority Area]?
 Base: All Respondents: 1,144