



National Oversight and Audit Commission

Local Authority Satisfaction Survey 2018

NOAC Report No 18 - July 2018



NOAC

Local Authority Satisfaction Survey 2018

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A close-up photograph of a hand holding a silver pen, about to write on a document. The background is blurred, showing greenery. The right side of the image is overlaid with a teal gradient.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Methodology

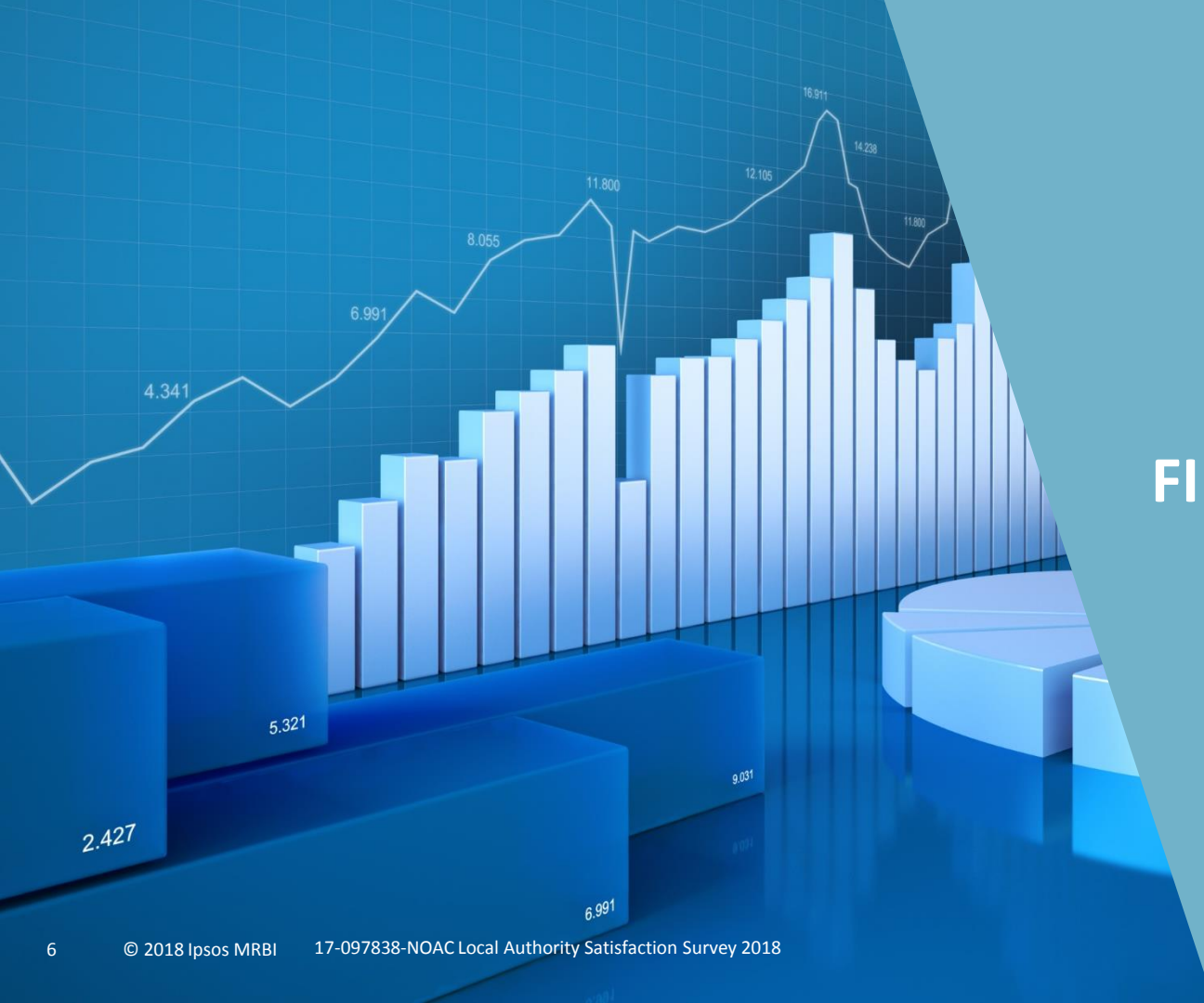
- NOAC Commissioned Ipsos MRBI to conduct a survey of the general public to establish their level of satisfaction with their experience of engaging with their local authority.
- A face-to-face in-home CAPI (Computer Aided Personal Interviewing) methodology was utilised.
- Stratified random sampling was 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 10 LA's in 2018; Dublin City, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, South Dublin, Cork County, Limerick, Galway County, Kildare, Meath, Tipperary.
- 100+ interviews were completed per Local Authority. A total of 1030 interviews were completed this wave.
- Interviewing took place in March 2018.
- Margin of error for total sample of 1030 interviews is approx. +/-3%. Margin of error for individual LA results of 100 interviews is approx. +/- 10%.



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 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

Executive Summary

Just over half of respondents (53%) are satisfied with their local council.

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

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

The most important services provided by the council fell into three main categories; roads and road safety, housing and amenities, parks and playgrounds.

Although affordable housing was considered the most important service, satisfaction levels were lowest with this service at 25%.



Executive Summary

Knowledge of the council and awareness of the services provided is generally low. Just 4% 'know a great deal' about their council. Spontaneous awareness of council services is low for all services except road maintenance, which 58% of respondents mentioned.

The majority know 'just a little' (51%) about their council and satisfaction levels increase in line with knowledge levels; from 40% amongst those with no knowledge to 55% amongst those with some knowledge.

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 72% compared to 40% amongst those who were uninformed.



Executive Summary

In light of the lack of knowledge about their council and it's services, less than half of respondents believe that their council is doing a good job at providing services (47%) and just over a quarter (27%) 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 (52%). Those who contacted their council in the last five years tended to be less satisfied with their council than those who didn't (31% vs 13% dissatisfied).

This is likely to be a result of the overall outcome of the how their query was handled, with 90% of those who had a positive experience indicating that they are satisfied with their council overall, compared to 11% of those who were unhappy with how their query was handled.





Satisfaction and Perceptions of Council

53% OF RESPONDENTS ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR COUNCIL

Overall Satisfaction

53%

Net Satisfied

Average

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown

57%

Dublin City

53%

Cork Co.

46%

Meath

44%

Kildare

43%

Tipperary

40%

Galway Co.

57%

Fingal

58%

South Dublin

61%

Limerick

69%

Above Average

Below Average

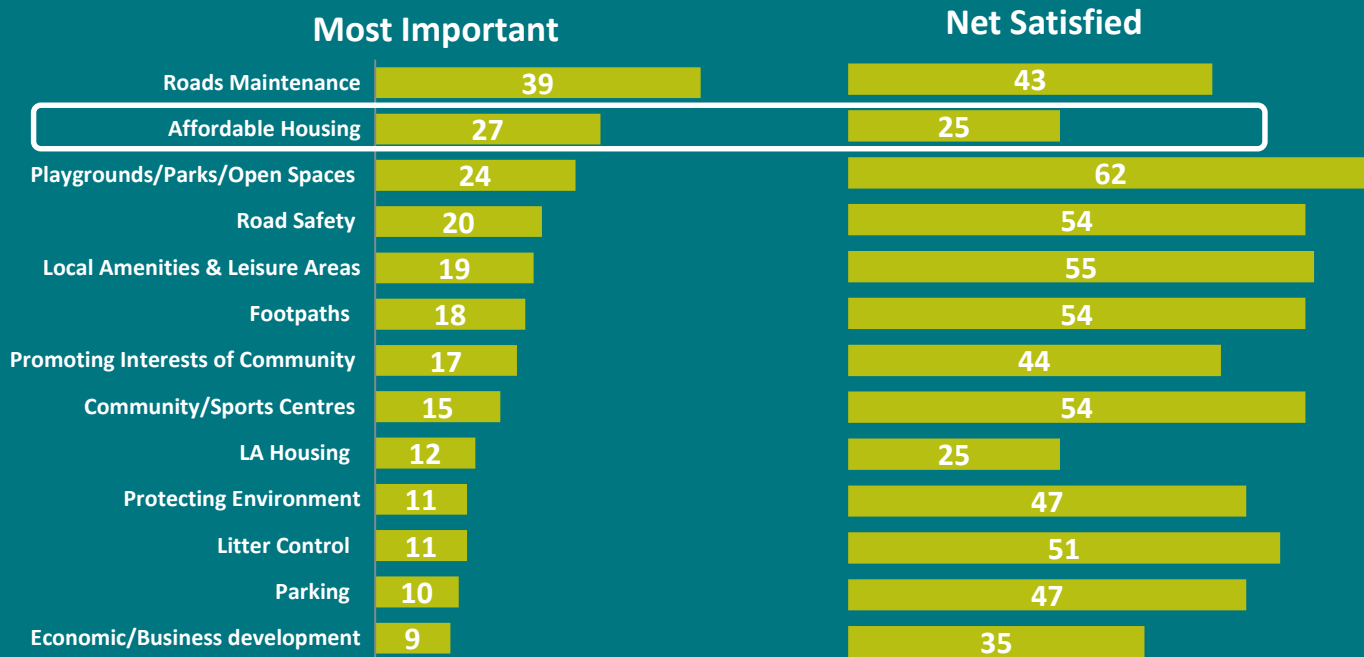
Q.30 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with [Local Council]?
Base: All Respondents: 1,030

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING WAS IDENTIFIED AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SERVICES, HOWEVER JUST 25% OF RESPONDENTS ARE SATISFIED WITH THE AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING IN THEIR AREA

Most Important Services and Satisfaction Levels

– All Local Authorities



Q.12 Looking at this list of services provided by [Local Council], please choose the most important services to you personally.
Base: All Respondents: 1,030

5 Most Important Services x Satisfaction Levels

Average % Satisfaction

1) Roads Maintenance

43

2) Affordable Housing

25

3) Playgrounds/Parks

62

4) Road Safety

54

5) Local Amenities/Leisure

55

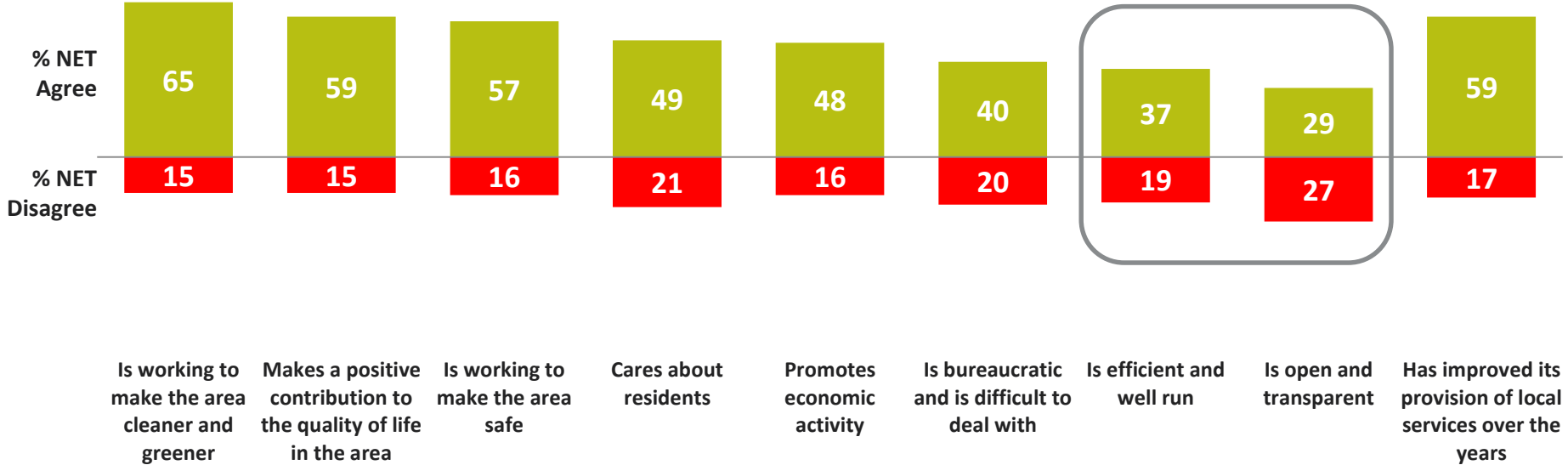
Dublin City	Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown	Fingal	Sth Dublin	Cork County	Limerick	Galway County	Kildare	Meath	Tipperary
47	46	45	55	37	55	36	57	30	25
11	17	19	18	29	27	30	36	38	25
57	66	71	67	58	69	87	57	37	56
54	61	58	62	40	73	56	58	43	38
48	60	55	53	56	66	81	48	38	46

**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: 1,030

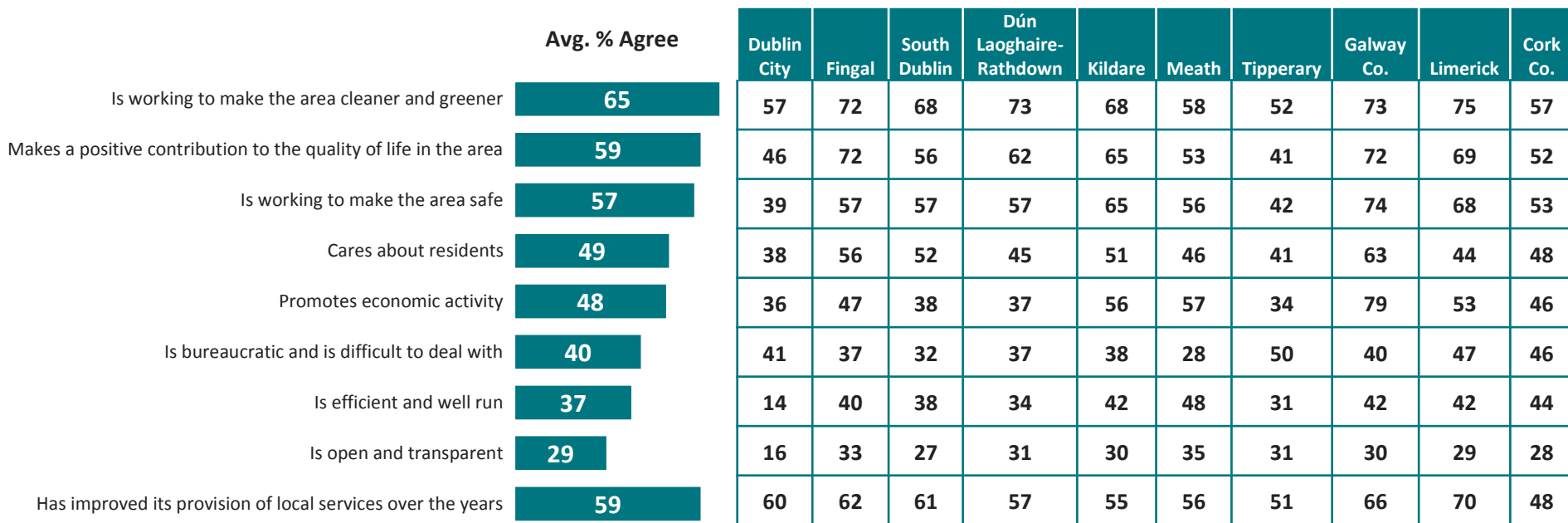
THE MAJORITY (59%) AGREE THAT THEIR COUNCIL MAKES A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THEIR LOCAL AREA. HOWEVER, JUST 29% CONSIDER THEIR COUNCIL OPEN AND TRANSPARENT

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: 1,030

Agreement with Statements About Council



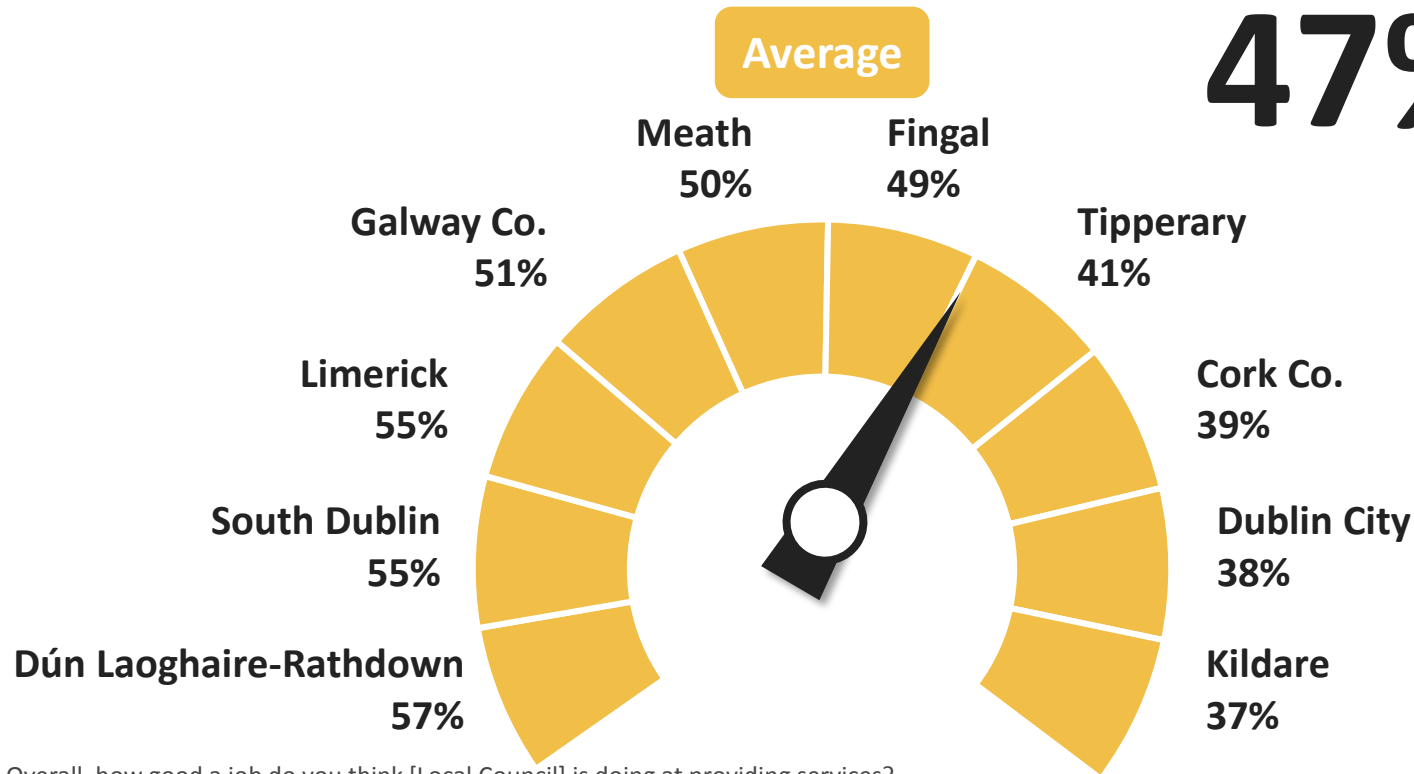
**Caution Base Sizes Small at LA level (100 respondents per LA)*

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: 1,030

LESS THAN HALF OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVE THEIR COUNCIL IS DOING A GOOD JOB

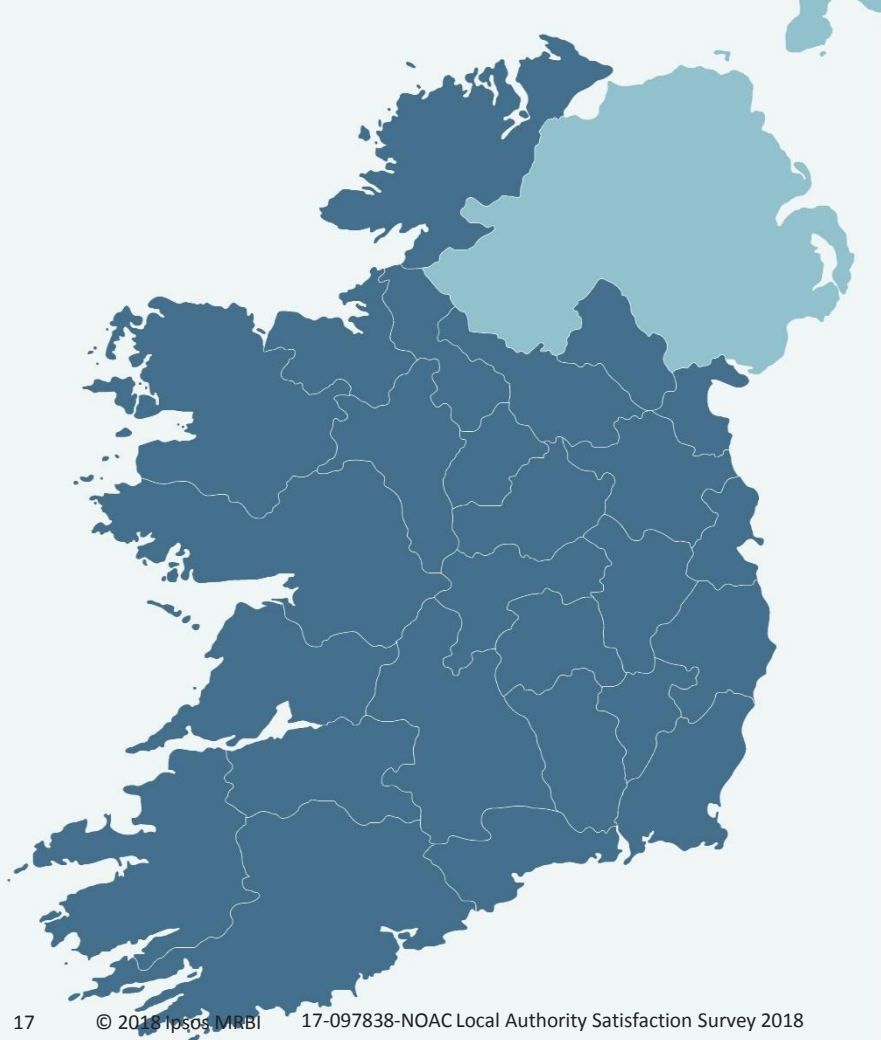
How Are Local Councils Doing

47% Net Good



Average range +/- 10%
of average score

Q.11 Overall, how good a job do you think [Local Council] is doing at providing services?
Base: All Respondents: 1,030



LOCAL AREA

Local Area

92%

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

76%

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

84%

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

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

TOP 5 FOR EACH AUTHORITY	Average %	Dublin City %	Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown %	Fingal %	Sth Dublin %	Cork County %	Limerick %	Galway County %	Kildare %	Meath %	Tipperary %
Job prospects/Wage Levels + Cost of Living	78	85	71	82	75	85	69	92	78	74	67
Affordable decent housing	52	57	65	42	56	44	44	59	56	47	49
Shopping facilities	35	38		34	42	48	38		37		37
Parks and open spaces	34	40	39			40	40				40
The level of traffic congestion	34	38	41	52	45				42	33	
Parking facilities			41	41	35	48			36		
Facilities for young children							42	28			
Road and pavement repairs								42		31	40
Community activities								33			

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: 1,030

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

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

TOP 5 FOR EACH AUTHORITY	Average	Dublin City	Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown	Fingal	Sth Dublin	Cork County	Limerick	Galway County	Kildare	Meath	Tipperary
Job prospects/Wage Levels + Cost of Living	3.2	3.2	2.9	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.3	2.5
Affordable decent housing	2.8	2.1	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.2	2.9
Shopping facilities	3.6	3.7		3.8	3.9	3.7	4.3		3.2		2.6
Parks and open spaces	3.8	3.5	4.0			3.6	4.0				3.5
The level of traffic congestion	2.6	2.2	2.7	2.8	2.7				2.3	2.8	
Parking facilities			2.9	3.1	3.6	3.4			2.7		
Facilities for young children							3.2	3.7			
Road and pavement repairs								2.3		3.5	2.4
Community activities								3.7			

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?
 Q.1c How would you rate [Local Authority Area] on each of these? Very good, fairly good, average, fairly poor, very poor.
 Base: All Respondents: 1,030

*Mean score out of 5.

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



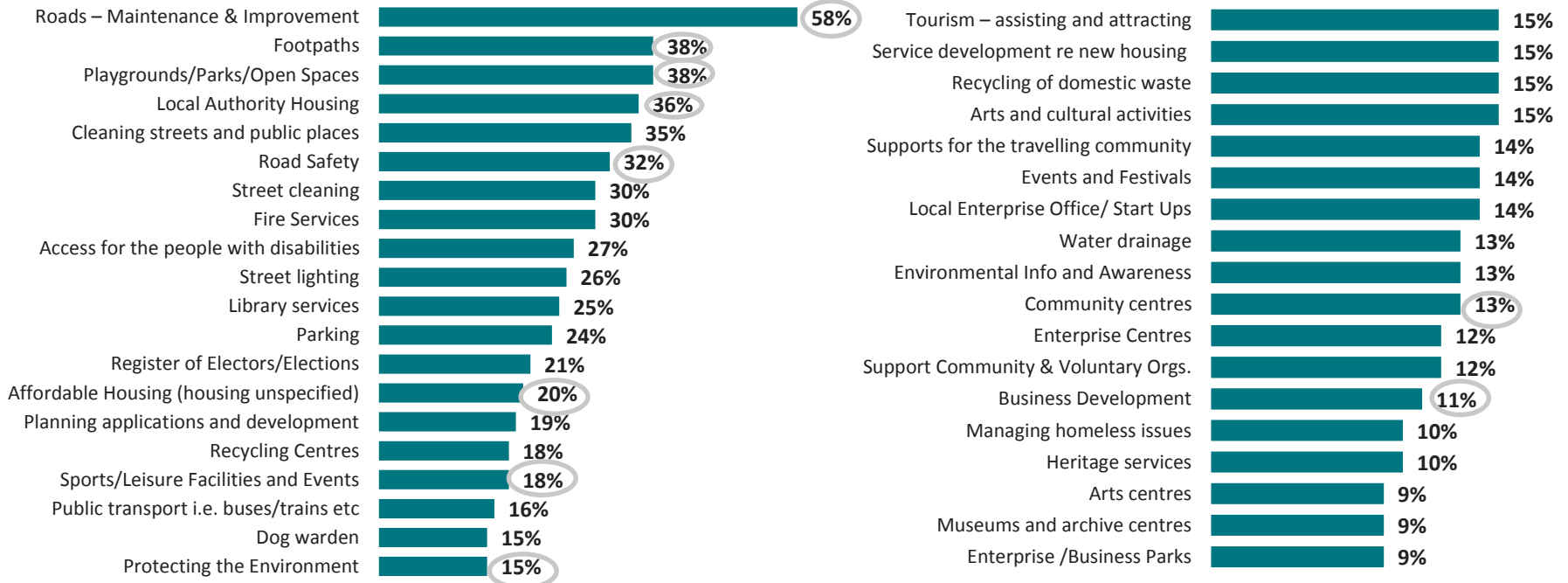
Communication, Awareness and Engagement With Local Council

A WIDE RANGE OF AWARENESS LEVELS OF COUNCIL SERVICES WERE RECORDED

Awareness of Services of Local Council

 *Rated Among Most Important Services*

All Respondents

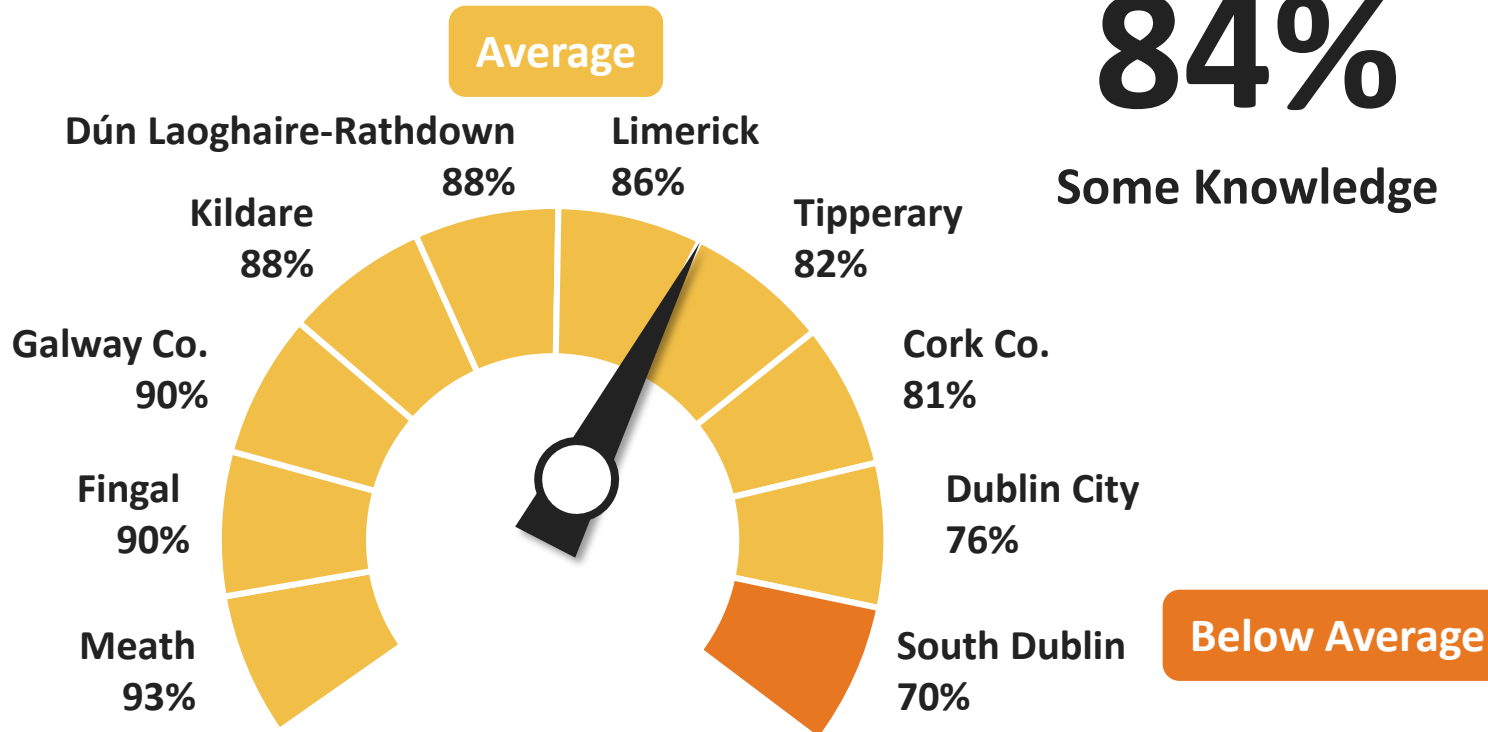


Q.10 What services do you think [Local Council] provides or are responsible for?

Base: All Respondents: 1,030

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

Knowledge of Local Council



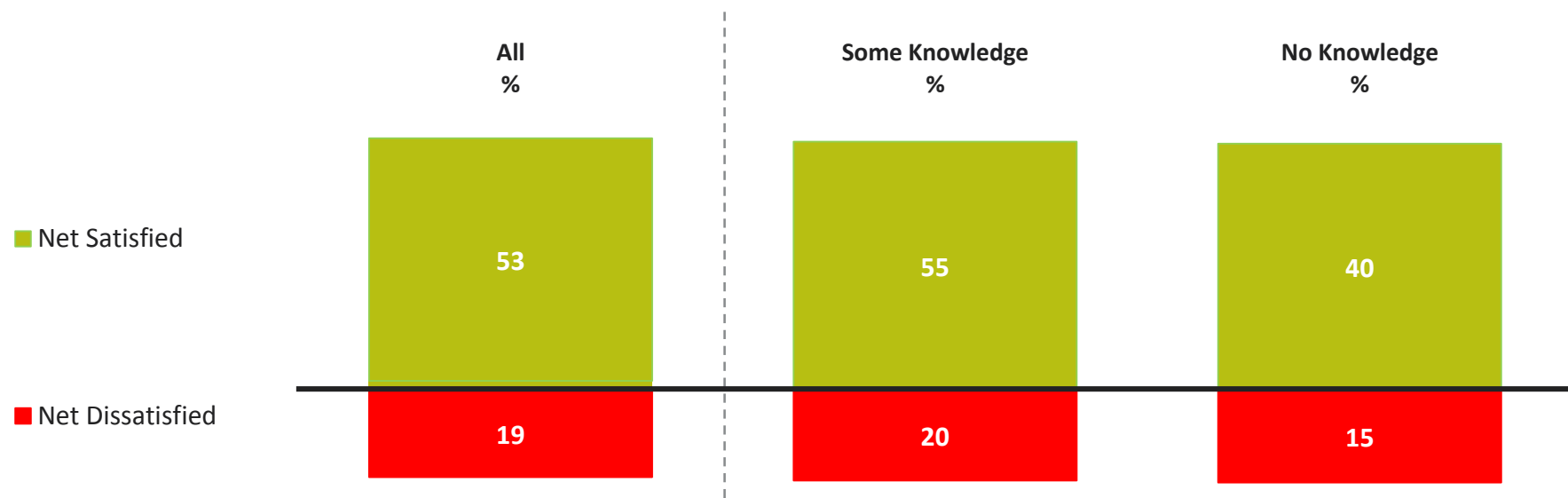
Average range +/- 10%
of average score

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: 1,030

40% OF THOSE WITH NO KNOWLEDGE ARE SATISFIED OVERALL WITH THEIR COUNCIL,
COMPARED TO 55% OF THOSE WHO HAVE SOME KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge of Local Council x Satisfaction



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?
Q30 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with [Local Council]?
Base: All Respondents: 1,030

**Some knowledge includes those who know a great deal, a fair amount and just a little*
**% Neither/Nor and Don't know not shown*

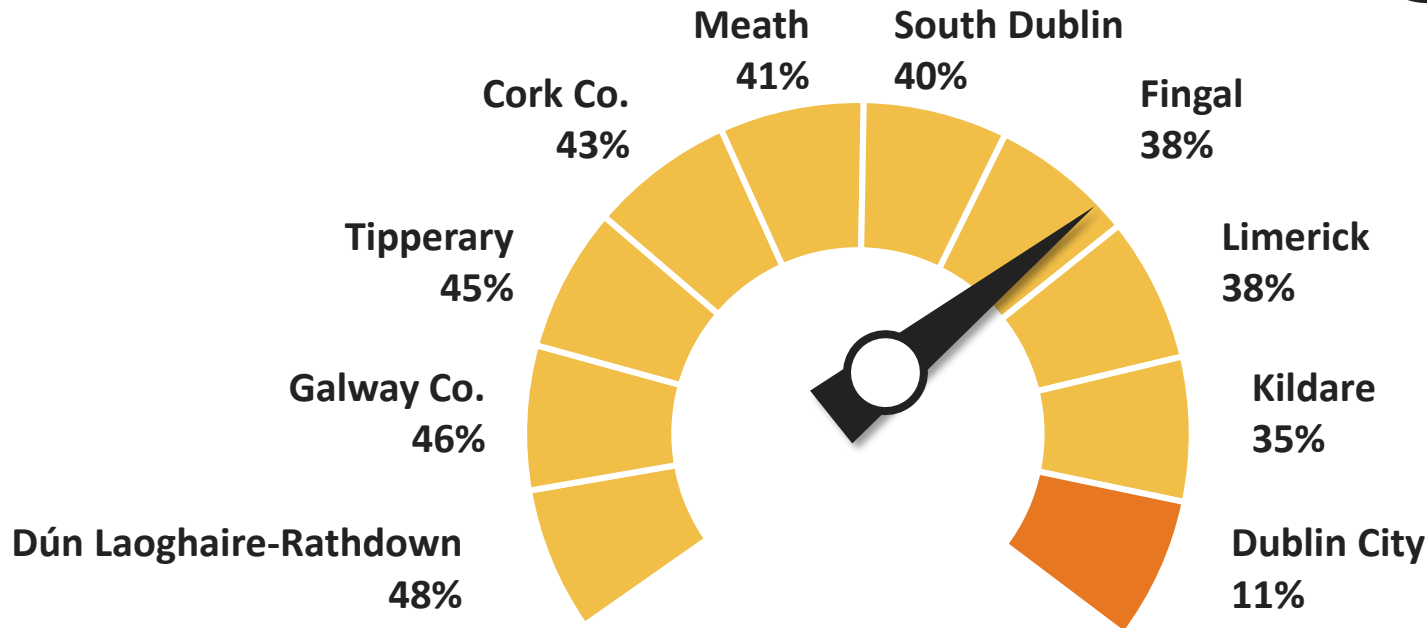
LESS THAN 4 IN 10 RESPONDENTS FEEL INFORMED BY THEIR COUNCIL

Residents Informed by Council

38%

Informed

Average



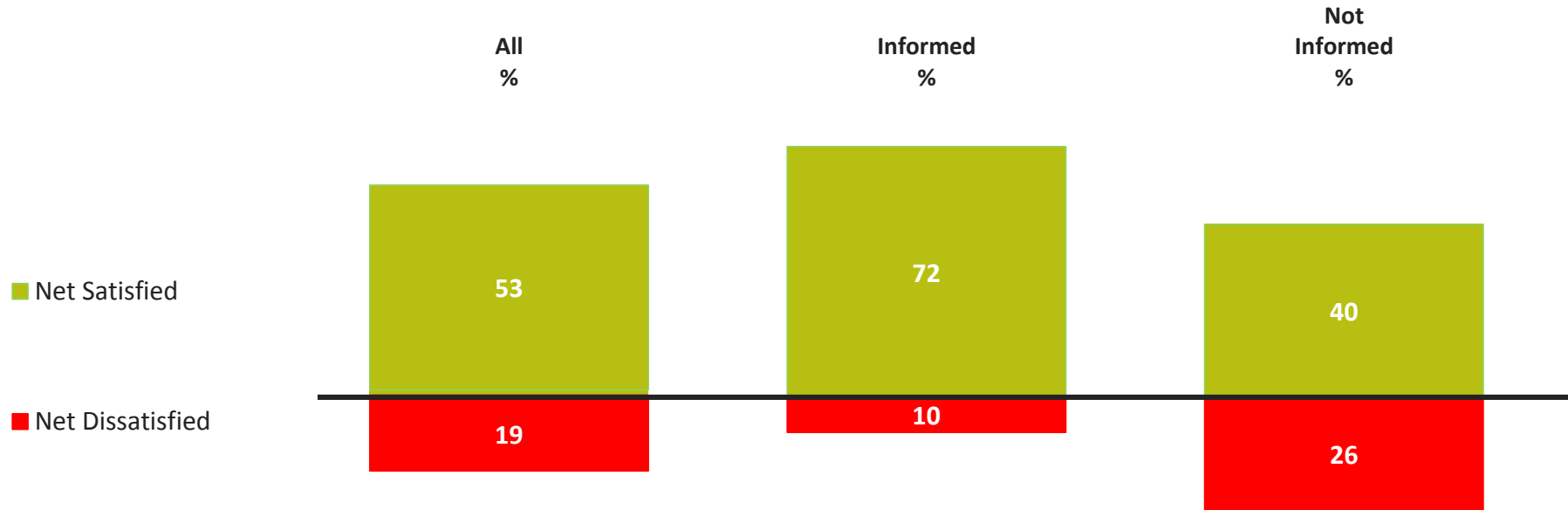
Below Average

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: 1,030

72% OF THOSE WHO ARE INFORMED ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR COUNCIL, THIS COMPARES TO 40% OF THOSE WHO ARE NOT INFORMED

Residents Informed by Council x Satisfaction

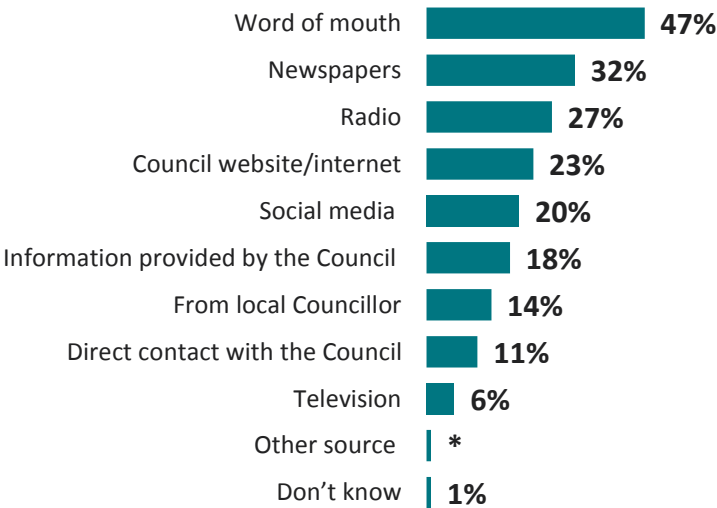


Q.15 Overall, how well informed do you think [Local Council] keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides ...
Q30 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with [Local Council]?
Base: All Respondents: 1,030

WORD OF MOUTH IS THE MOST COMMON WAY 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. 31% OF ABC1'S FIND OUT ABOUT THEIR LOCAL COUNCIL THROUGH THE INTERNET, COMPARED TO 15% OF C2DEF'S

How Find Out About Local Council

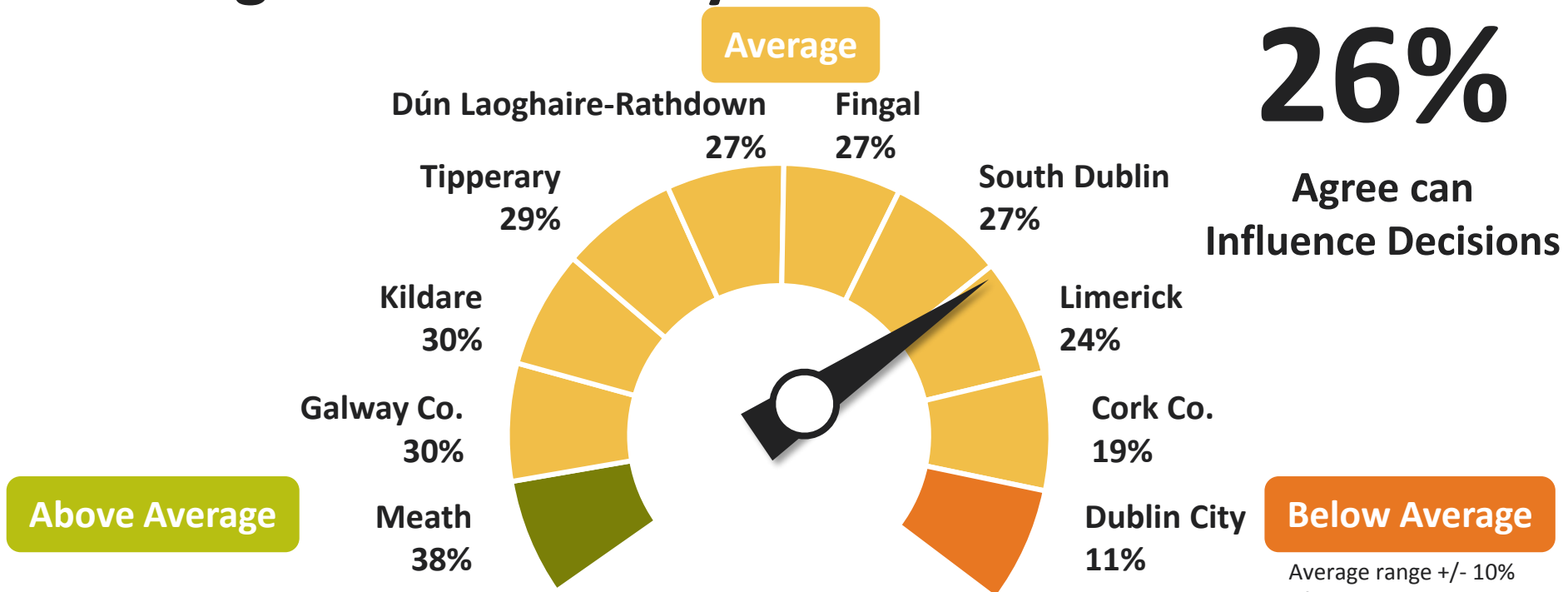
All with Some Knowledge



GENDER		AGE				SOCIAL CLASS	
Male	Female	18-34	35-44	45-64	65+	ABC1	C2DEF
(433)	(442)	(213)	(201)	(301)	(160)	(415)	(460)
44	49	45	44	48	48	43	50
36	29	23	32	35	40	31	33
31	23	18	24	32	32	23%	30
24	22	25	32	22	9	31	15
17	23	36	22	13	6	22	18
19	18	19	18	19	17	21	17
14	13	10	16	13	17	14	14
9	12	6	9	13	16	8	13
6	5	6	4	7	6	6	5
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1

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

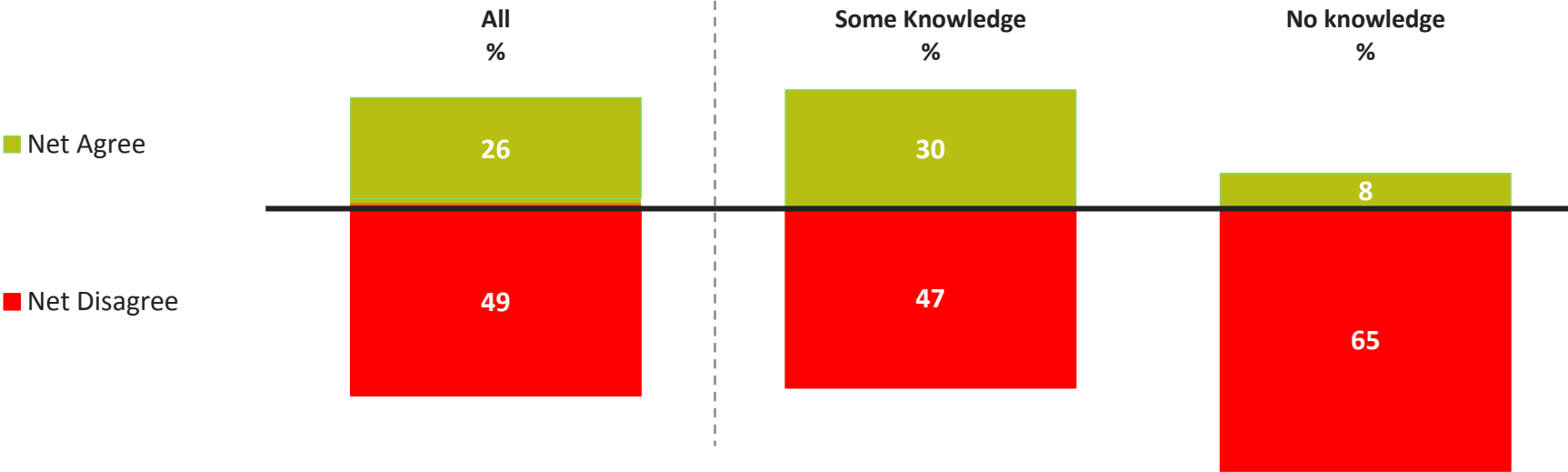
Agreement with Ability to Influence Decisions Affecting Local Authority Area



Q.6 To what extent do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting [local authority area]?
Base: All Respondents: 1,030

JUST 8% OF THOSE WHO HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR LOCAL COUNCIL AGREE THAT THEY CAN INFLUENCE DECISIONS AFFECTING THEIR LOCAL AREA COMPARED TO 30% 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: 1,030



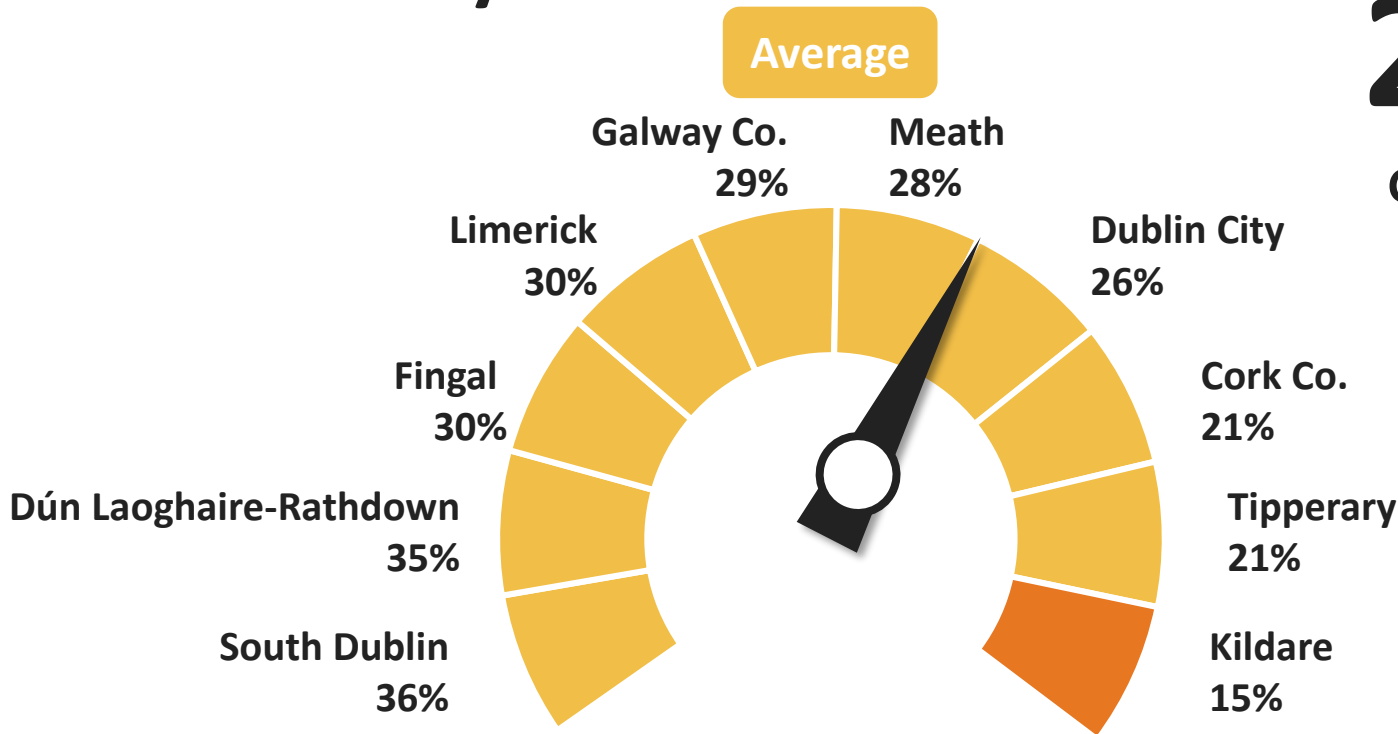
Value for Money

27% OF RESPONDENTS THINK THAT THEIR COUNCIL PROVIDES GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY

Value For Money

27%

Good Value



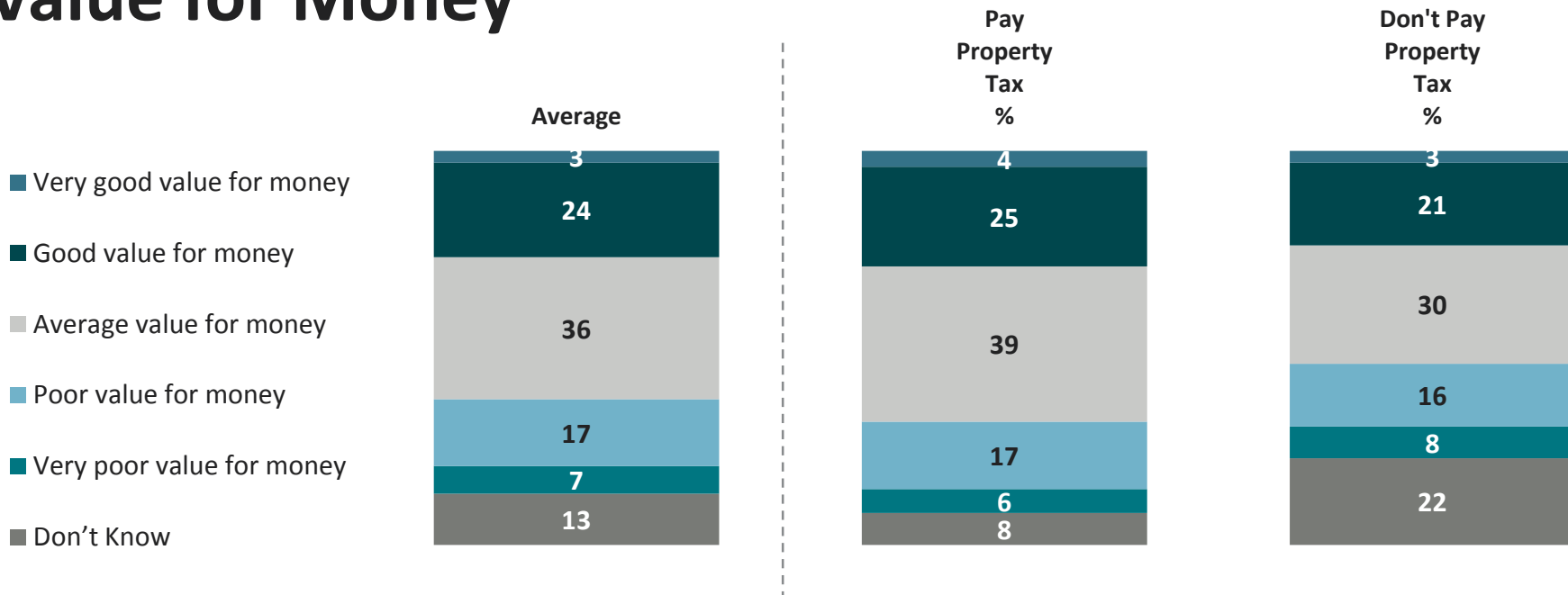
Below Average

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: 1,030

THOSE WHO PAY PROPERTY TAX ARE SLIGHTLY MORE LIKELY TO STATE THAT THEIR COUNCIL PROVIDES GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY. HOWEVER, 22% OF THOSE WHO DON'T PAY PROPERTY TAX STATED THAT THEY DON'T KNOW IF THE COUNCIL PROVIDES GOOD VALUE OR NOT. THIS COMPARES TO 8% OF THOSE WHO PAY

Value for Money

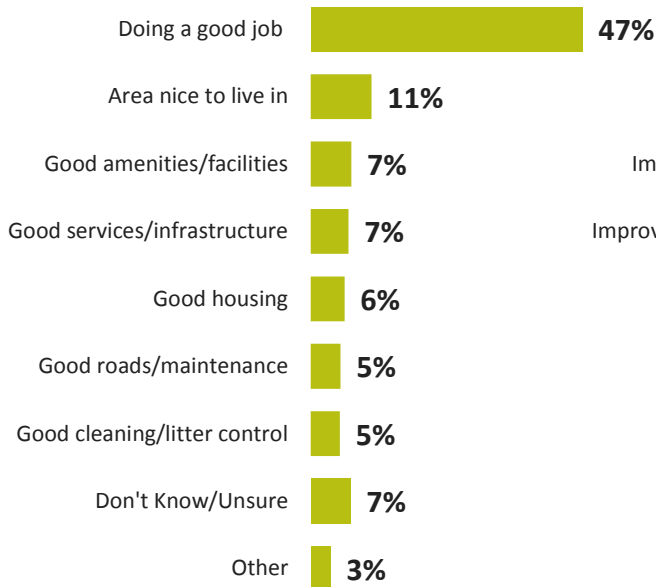


Q.18 Taking everything into account, would you say [Local Council] provides good value for money or not?
Base: All Respondents: 1,030

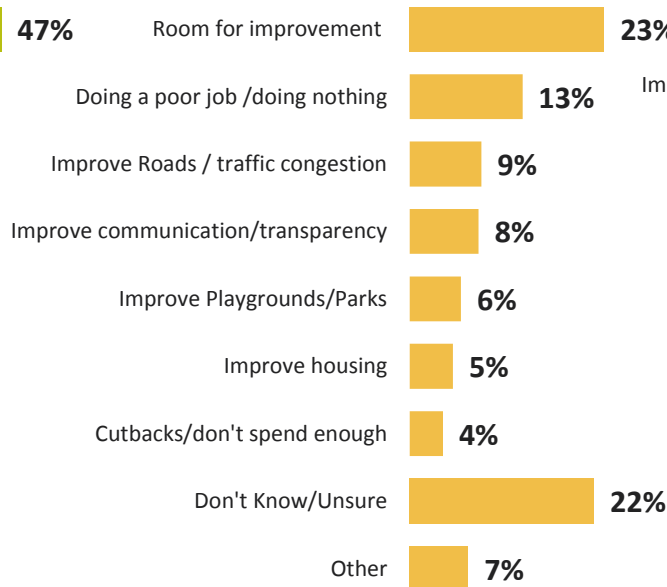
1 IN 5 OF THOSE WHO THOUGHT THEIR COUNCIL OFFERED POOR VALUE FOR MONEY CITED
TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION ISSUES

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

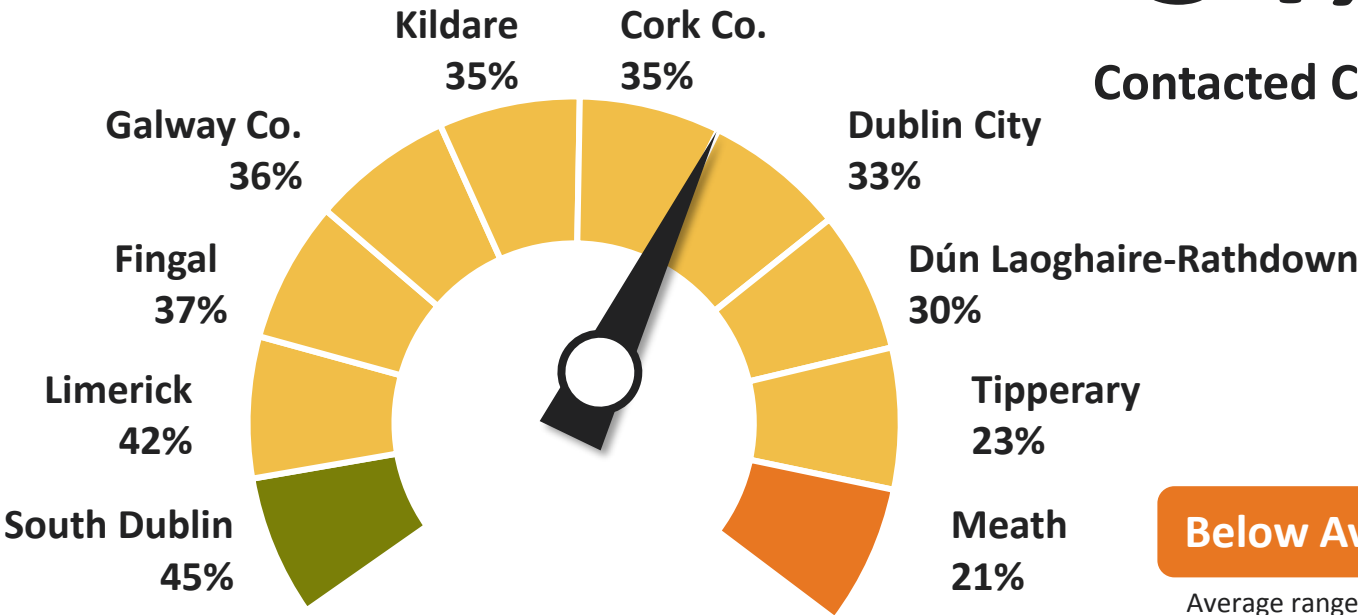
34% CONTACTED THEIR COUNCIL IN THE LAST 5 YEARS

Contact with Local Council in Last 5 Years

34%

Contacted Council

Average



Above Average

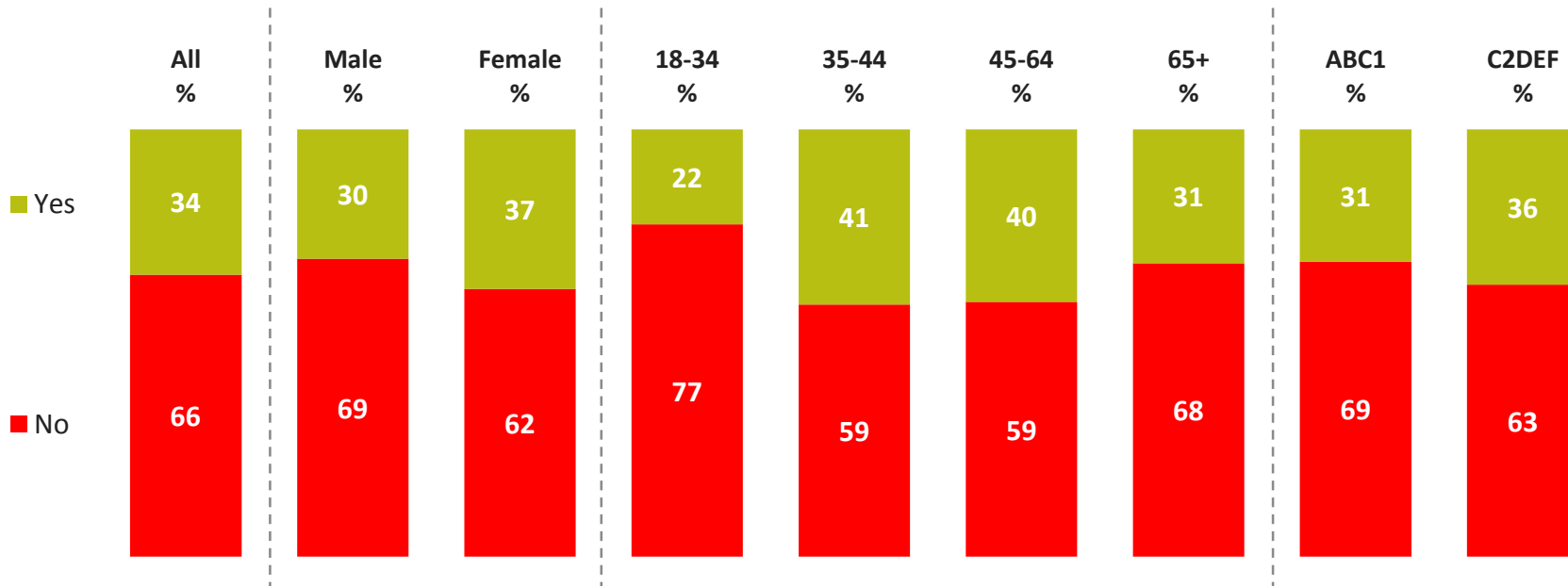
Below Average

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: 1,030

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

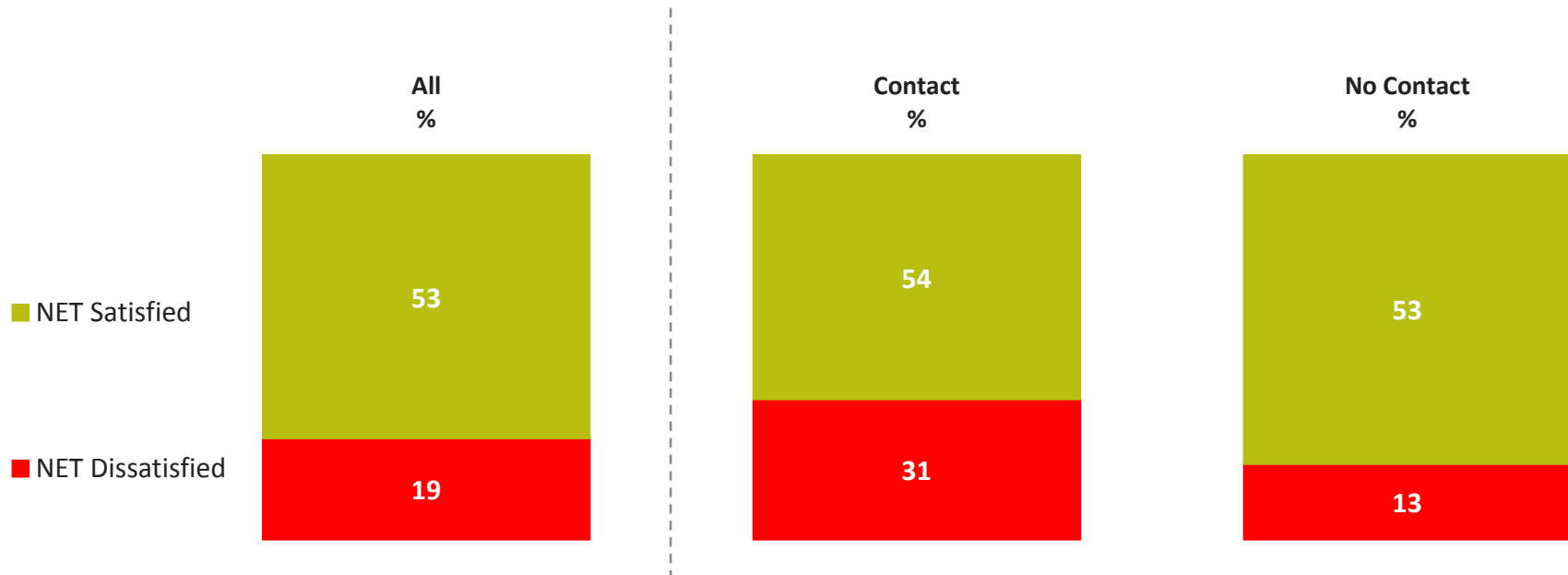
Contact with Local Council in Last 5 Years



Q. 21 Have you personally made contact with [Local Council] for any reason in the past 5 years?....
Base: All Respondents: 1,030

31% OF RESPONDENTS WHO CONTACT THEIR COUNCIL IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS WERE DISSATISFIED OVERALL WITH THEIR COUNCIL, THIS COMPARES TO 13% OF NON-CONTACTERS

Contact with Local Council in Last 5 Years



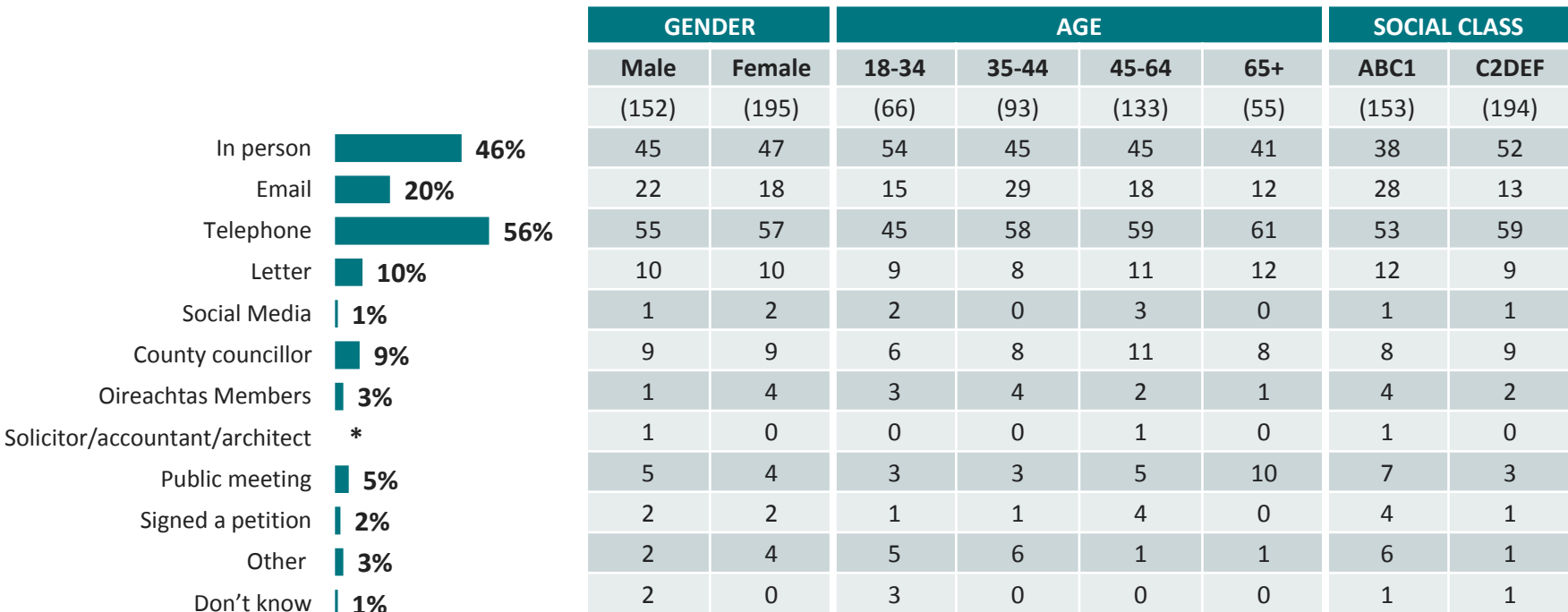
Q. 21 Have you personally made contact with [Local Council] for any reason in the past 5 years?....

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

Base: All Respondents: 1,030

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

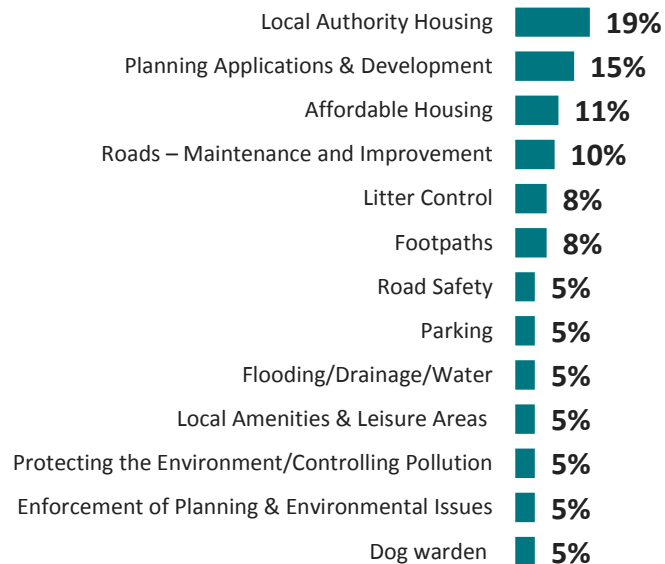


Q.22 How did you contact [Local Council] (in the past five years)?

Base: All who contacted Local Council: 347

HOUSING AND ROADS WERE THE TOP REASONS FOR CONTACTING THEIR COUNCIL

Reasons for Contact

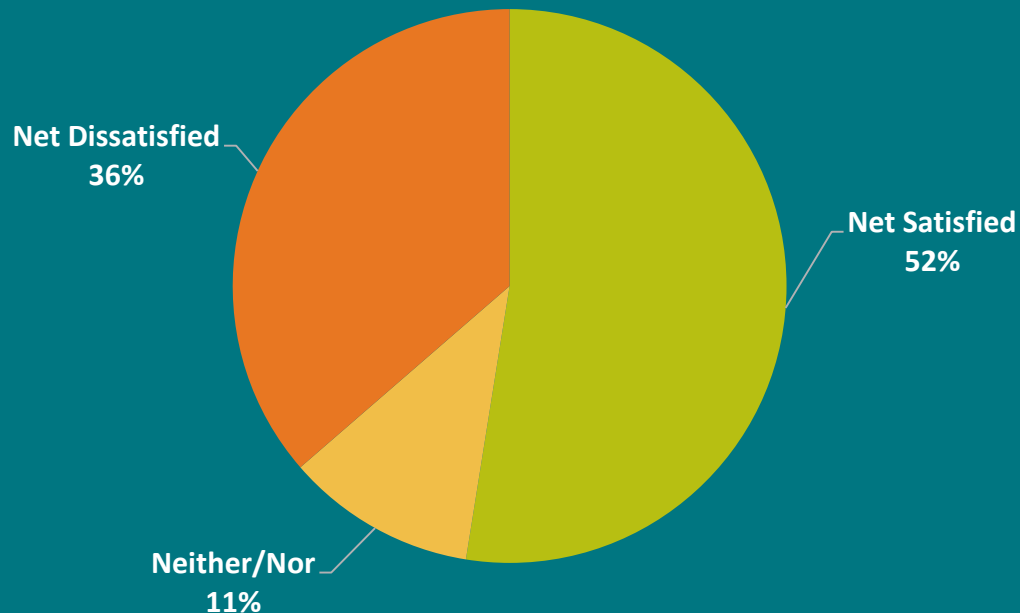


GENDER		AGE				SOCIAL CLASS	
Male	Female	18-34	35-44	45-64	65+	ABC1	C2DEF
(152)	(195)	(66)	(93)	(133)	(55)	(153)	(194)
11	25	24	26	18	6	8	27
17	13	9	18	17	13	24	9
14	9	22	13	8	3	7	15
9	11	3	10	13	10	12	9
7	9	5	10	7	10	6	9
9	6	0	6	9	17	11	6
4	7	3	10	6	0	9	3
5	5	3	4	7	4	8	3
6	4	2	4	3	13	3	6
6	4	4	4	6	5	8	3
4	5	3	6	4	7	6	4
6	4	0	5	5	8	7	3
1	7	3	3	5	7	5	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 : 347

52% OF RESPONDENTS WHO CONTACTED THEIR COUNCIL WERE SATISFIED WITH HOW THEIR QUERY WAS HANDLED

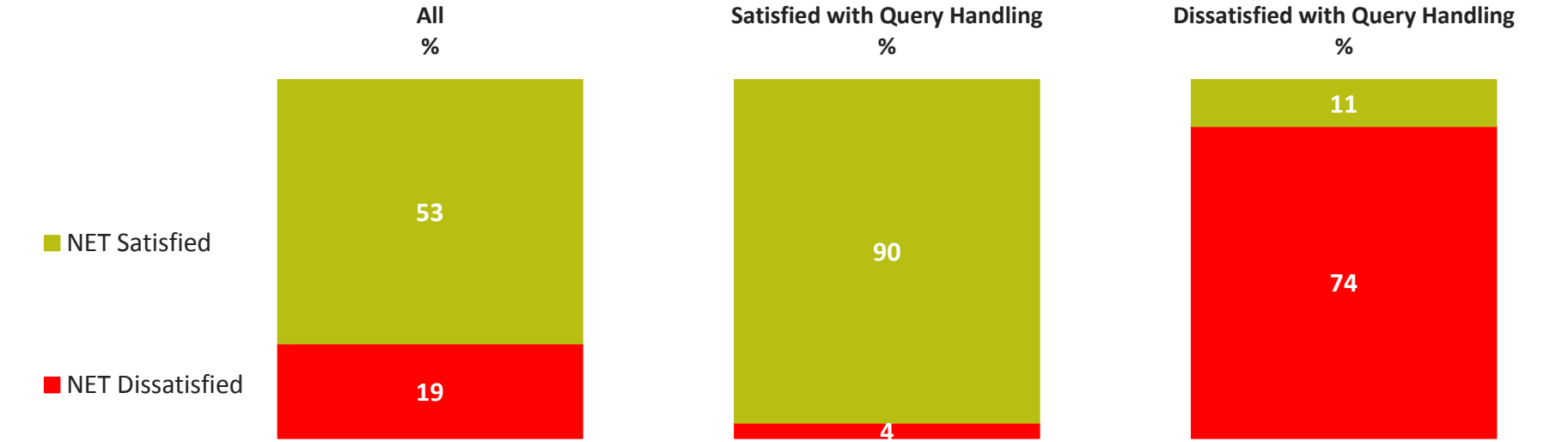
Satisfaction with Local Council Handling of Last Query



Q.27 How satisfied were you with how [Local Council] handled your most recent query
Base: All Respondents Contacted in Past 5 Years: 347

90% OF THOSE WHO WERE SATISFIED WITH HOW THEIR QUERY WAS HANDLED WERE ALSO SATISFIED OVERALL WITH THEIR COUNCIL. IN CONTRAST, THREE QUARTERS (74%) OF THOSE WHO WERE DISSATISFIED WITH HOW THEIR LAST QUERY WAS HANDLED REPORTED THAT THEY WERE DISSATISFIED OVERALL WITH THEIR COUNCIL.

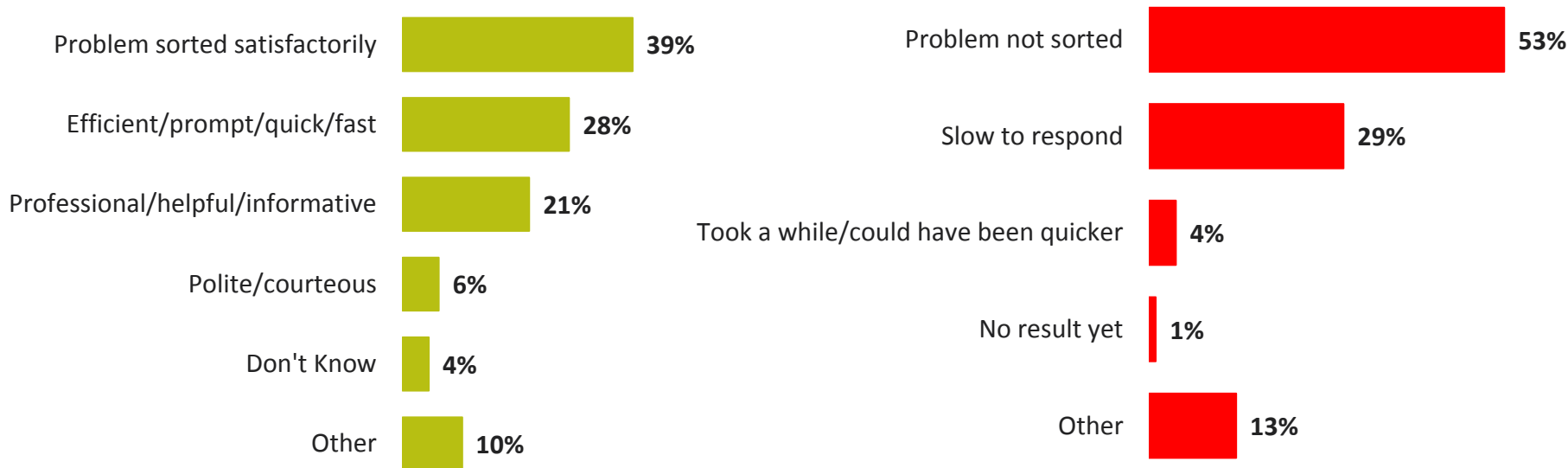
Satisfaction with Local Council Handling of Last Query



Q.27 How satisfied were you with how [Local Council] handled your most recent query?
Base: All Respondents Contacted in Past 5 Years: 347

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



Q.28 Why were you [INSERT ANSWER FROM Q27] with how [Local Council] handled your last query?
Base: All Satisfied: 181 / All Dissatisfied: 122

Reasons For Satisfaction



Q.28 Why were you [INSERT ANSWER FROM Q27] with how [Local Council] handled your last query?
Base: All Satisfied: 181

Reasons For Dissatisfaction

Just trying to get info from them, always a different person dealing with, keep passing a decision to be made

We never got a reply from them and we still have the problem

Because they were being awkward about my planning application and the planning officer was not a very knowledgeable person and showed poor understanding of the issues and the process

They do not tell you what's happening

No reply or action apart from routine acknowledgement

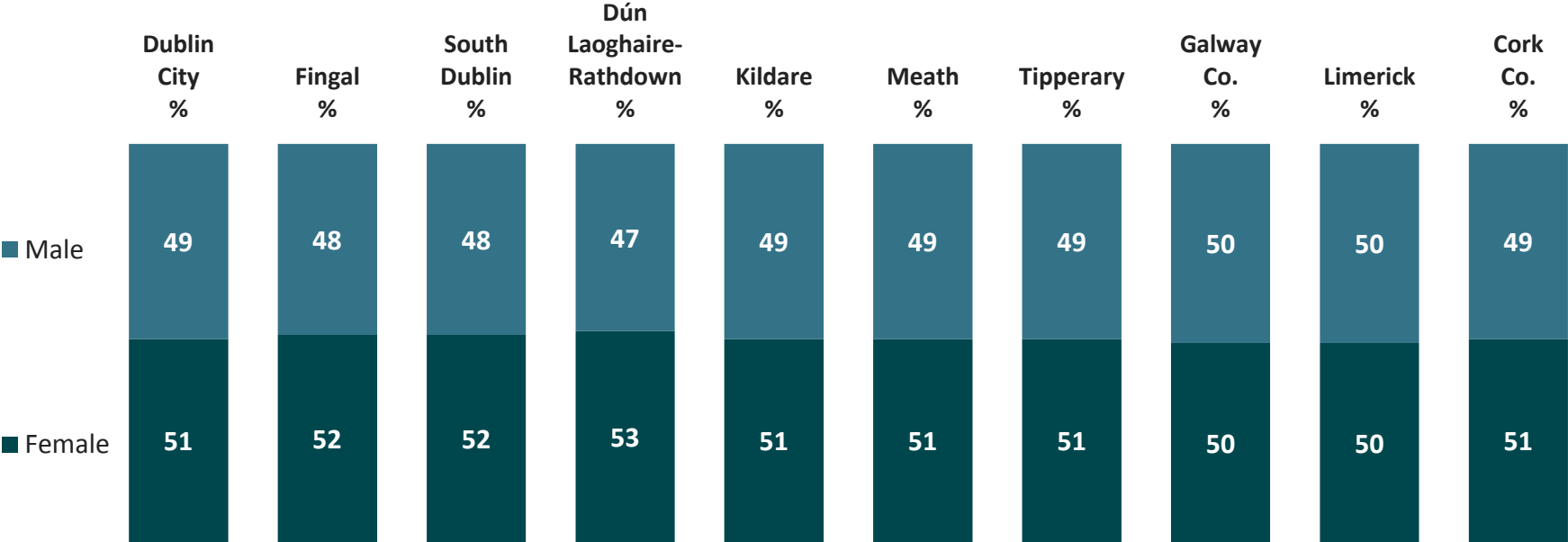
Never did anything still having same problems all the time

Q.28 Why were you [INSERT ANSWER FROM Q27] with how [Local Council] handled your last query?
Base: All Dissatisfied: 122

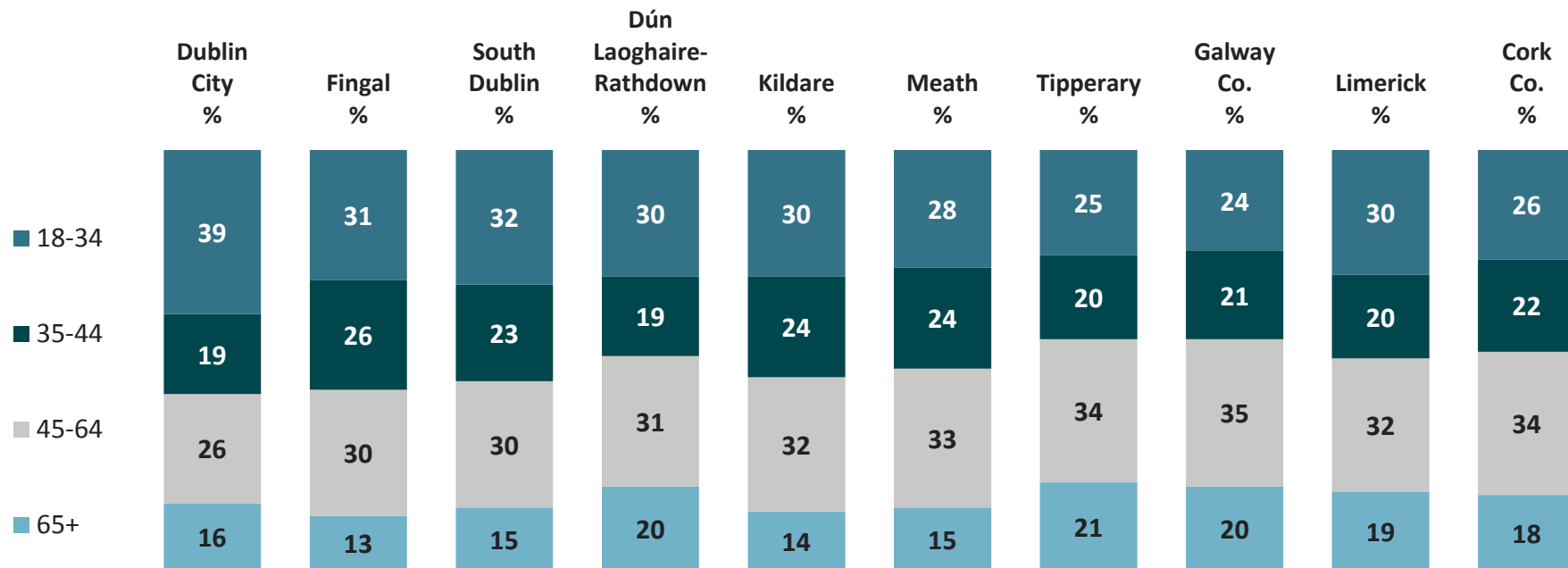


APPENDICES: Sample Profile

Gender

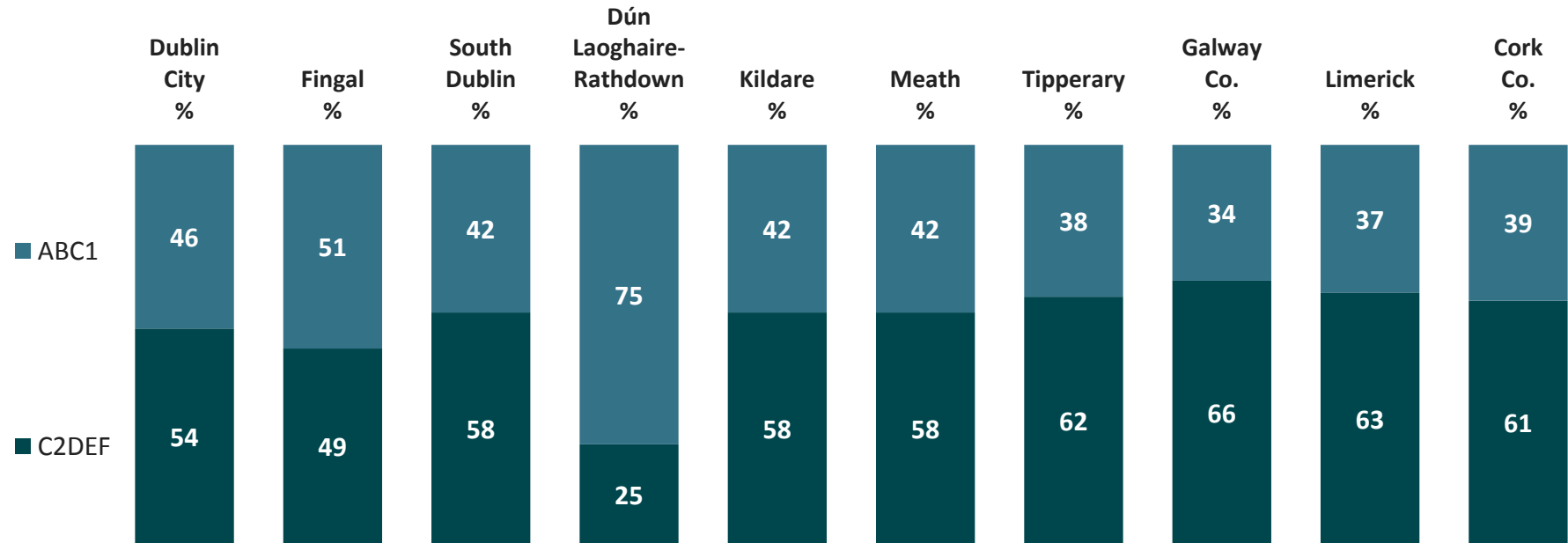


Age

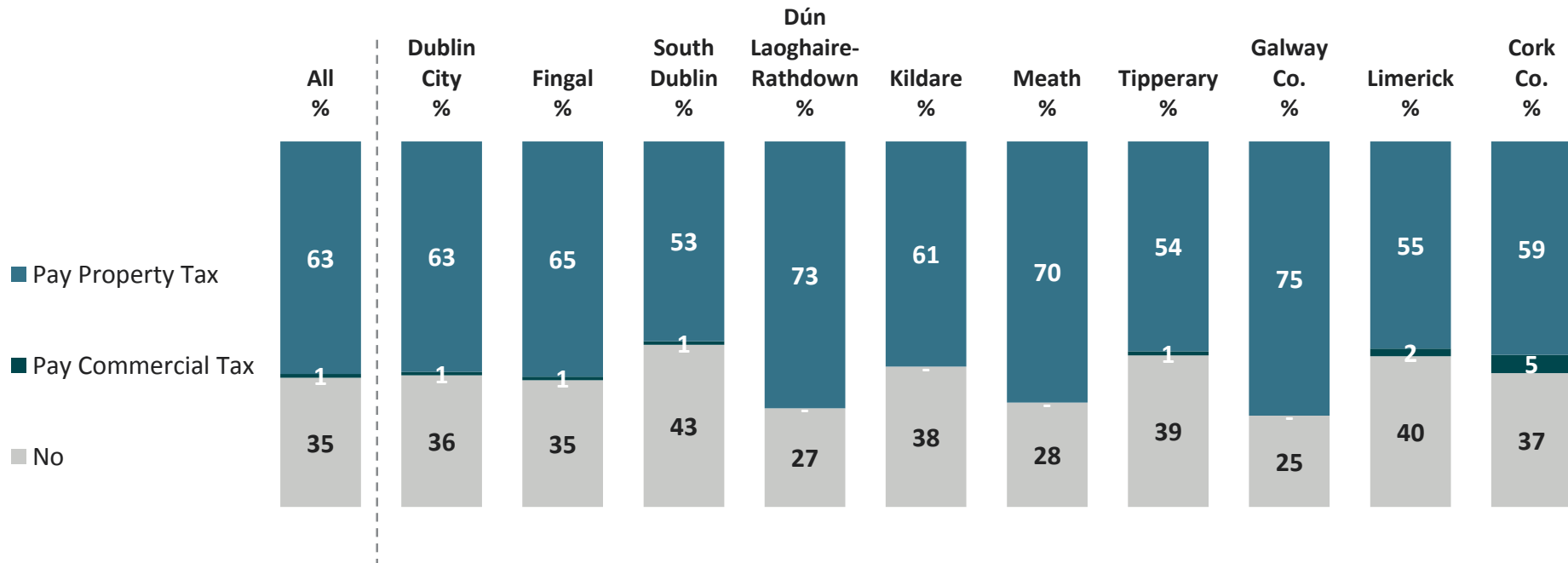


Base: All Respondents: 1,030

Social Class

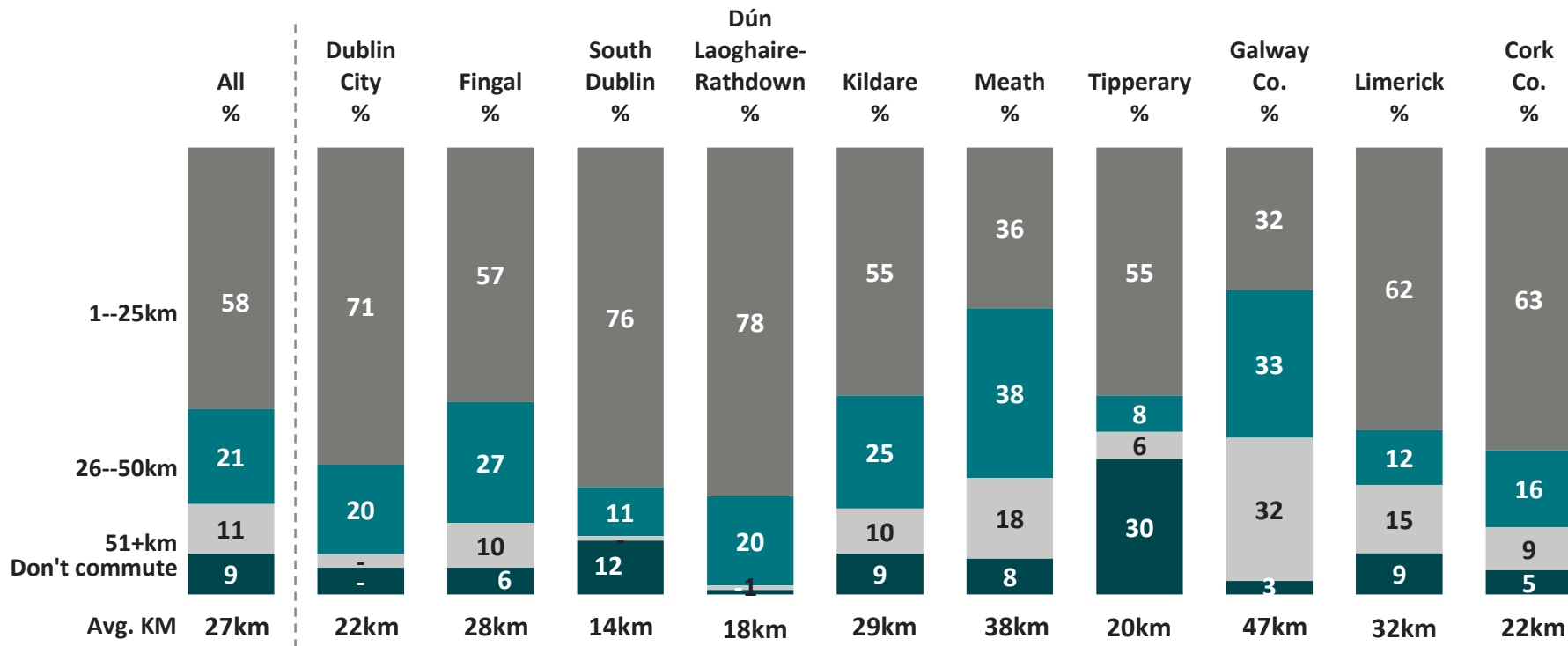


Pay Local Property Tax



Q.D Do you currently pay local property tax and/or commercial property rates in?
 Base: All Respondents: 1,030

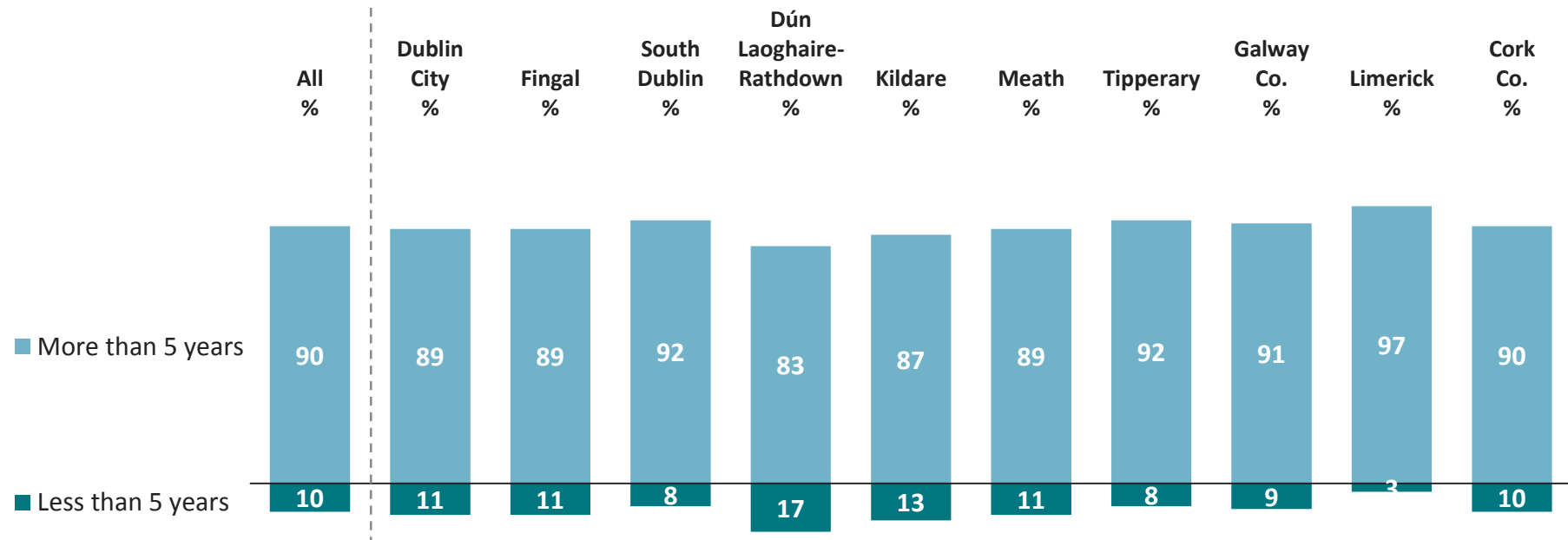
Average Commute



C.8 What is your average commute each day?

Base: All Working/Studying: 646

Length Continuously Living in Local Authority Area



Q.4 How many years have you been continuously living in [Local Authority Area]?
Base: All Respondents: 1,030

