

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The present survey asked about panel members’ experience of and views on The Moray Council. This included views on the range of services that the council provides, and priorities for The Moray Council and the Community Planning Partnership.
- 1.2. Analysis has also considered the extent of variation in views expressed across key groups including age, location and gender – although the scope for this more detailed analysis is limited where services are used by a minority of survey respondents. This report highlights significant variations in views across these groups, based on 95% confidence interval statistical significance tests.

Survey Response

- 1.3. The survey fieldwork took place from late August to early October 2016. A total of 456 responses were received by fieldwork close, an overall response rate of 50%. This is a good level of response to a survey of this kind, and is consistent response to other panel surveys over the last year. Figure 1 over the page provides a profile of survey respondents.

Figure 1: Profile of survey respondents

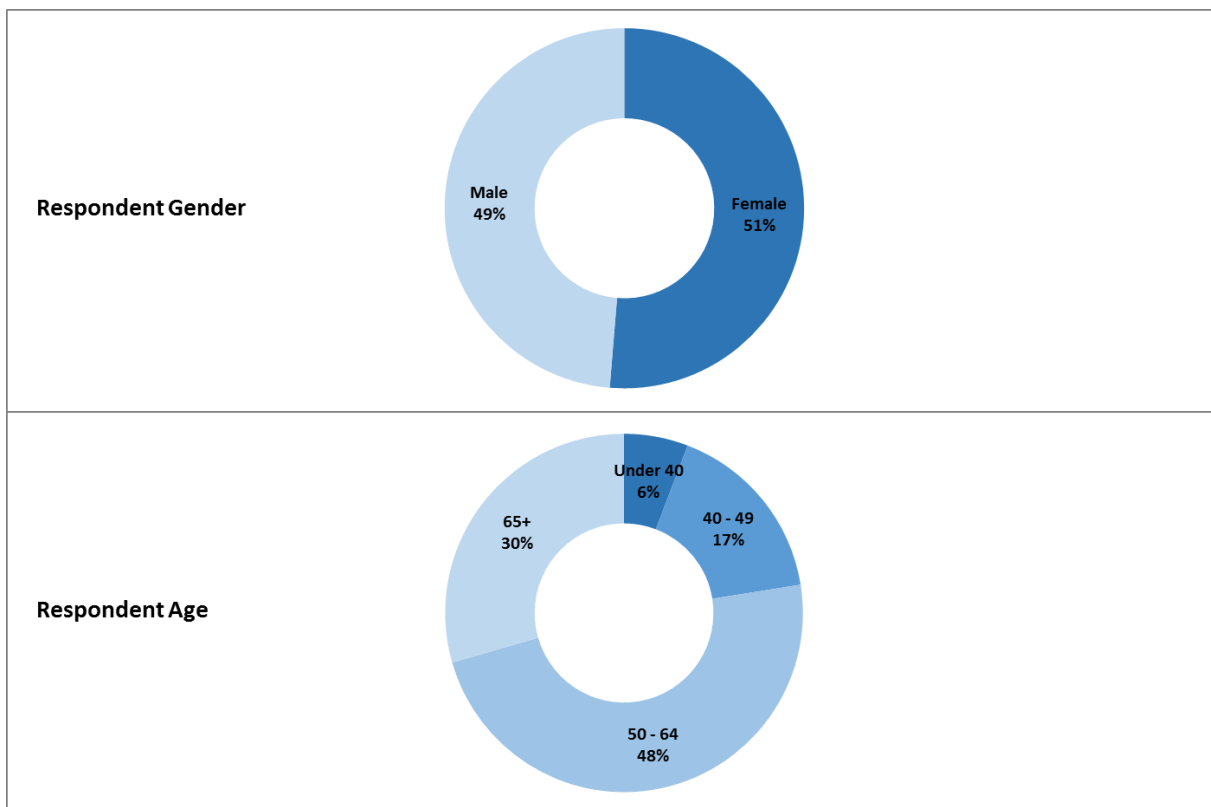
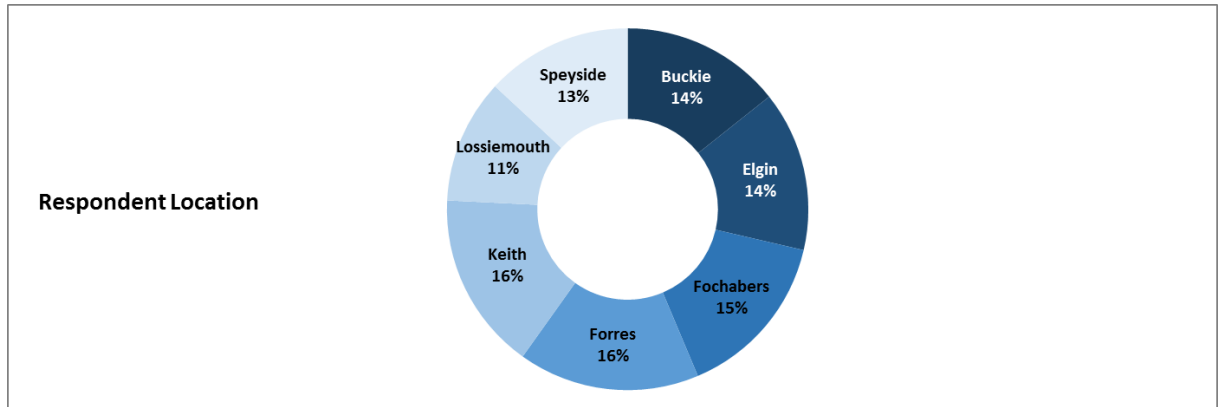


Figure 1: Profile of survey respondents



2. PRIORITIES FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING & COUNCIL FINANCES

- 2.1. The final section of the survey asked panel members about priorities for their family at present, and for views on how Community Planning Partners should work to engage communities in the planning and delivery of services, and to balance council finances.

Priorities for panel members and their families

- 2.2. Looking first at the issues facing panel members and their families, the main themes emerging from written comments are summarised at Figure 19. Respondents referred to a broad range of specific issues, and it is notable that a number of these related to specific services provided by Moray Council and partners. To some extent, written comments from panel members appeared to identify the local services which are most important to their families.
- 2.3. Transport emerged as by some margin the most common issue for panel members – this was mentioned by more than half of those providing written comment, and included a particular focus on the condition of roads in Moray. In terms of other issues for panel members and their families, these include health and healthcare services, the quality of waste and recycling services, education, community safety, and the quality of environment in Moray.

Figure 2: Main issues for respondents and their families at the moment¹

Transport and roads	1 st
Health and healthcare	2 nd
Waste and recycling services	3 rd
Education	4 th
Community safety, antisocial behaviour	5 th
Quality of environment	6 th
Sports, leisure and libraries	7 th
Care and support for older people	8 th
Housing	9 th
Financial issues and cost of living	10 th
Employment and the economic outlook	11 th

¹ Based on free text responses, percentages based on those providing written comment.

Priorities for Community Planning Partners in Moray

- 2.4. Panel members were also asked a series of questions around the issues that they felt should be a focus for Moray Council and other Community Planning Partnership (CPP) partners. The survey placed these questions in the context of two overarching themes for the Community Planning Partnership:
- how partners can work with communities more to plan and deliver services; and
 - the need to balance Moray Council finances in the context of further funding reductions.
- 2.5. In relation to each of these themes, panel members were asked to identify the ways in which they feel CPP **partners can do things differently**, things that **partners should stop doing**, and things that **partners should start doing**. We summarise the main issues raised by respondents over the following pages.

Doing things differently

- 2.6. Looking first at views on how the council and partners should work differently, respondents raised a number of specific points in relation to the two themes of working with communities to plan and deliver services, and balancing council finances (see Figure 20 over the page). The main points for respondents in relation to **planning and delivering services with communities** were:
- The most common suggestion was more meaningful engagement with residents to identify needs and to shape service deliver. This included a recognition that needs vary across communities, and that residents' knowledge can be better harnessed to shape services.
 - Better coordination and communication between service providers was also suggested as a way of ensuring a coherent approach to meeting local needs – and potentially providing an opportunity for input from communities to inform a broader range of services.
 - Helping residents to do more and supporting local community groups were also relatively common suggestions. This included reference to ensuring access to training and adult education to develop the capacity of communities to plan and deliver services, and CPP partners providing more support to local community groups that can help to shape services.
 - Respondents also suggested a need to raise awareness of how communities can contribute to the planning and delivery of services – both in terms of specific available opportunities, and more widely raising awareness of the importance of communities input to service planning and delivery.

- 2.7. In relation to **balancing council budgets**, the main points for respondents were:
- The most common suggestions were increasing efficiency of council services, and change to council structures and staffing. Suggested efficiencies included better auditing of performance to inform budget savings, and some felt that services could learn from private sector services. Suggestions for organisational change were primarily focused on shifting the balance from management and administrative staff to more operational staff, reducing salaries for senior staff, and reducing numbers of elected members.
 - Improving revenue collection was also a common suggestion. This included reference to maximising collection of existing revenues (e.g. reducing rent and Council Tax arrears), and options to increase revenue (the most common suggestion being an increase to Council Tax levels).
 - A number of respondents objected to specific spending items, citing these as examples of where further savings can be achieved. The most common here were the Elgin ring road project, funding to leisure trusts, use of consultants, and expenses to staff and elected members.

Figure 3: Things that Moray Council and partners should do differently²

Planning & delivering services with communities

Asking residents views, more meaningful engagement	1 st
Better coordination and communication between service providers	2 nd
Helping residents to do more, skills development, training	3 rd
Raising awareness of how communities can contribute	4 th
Supporting local groups and events to build capacity	5 th
Providing clear objectives/strategy for communities' contribution	6 th
More locally based services, concerns regarding centralisation	7 th

Balancing council finances

Operate more efficiently, better auditing of performance	1 st
Organisational change, staffing levels, salaries	2 nd
Better revenue collection, increase Council Tax	3 rd
Objection to specific spending items	4 th
Rationalisation of under-occupied schools	5 th
Better engagement with staff/communities on where to reduce spend	6 th
Focus on "core" services, support communities/agencies to provide other services	7 th
Reduce social care spend	8 th

² Based on free text responses

Partners should stop doing...

- 2.8. In terms of views on what partners should stop doing, respondents again made a number of specific suggestions in relation to working with communities and balancing council finances (see Figure 21 over the page). However, it is notable that panel members gave a more limited set of suggestions for things that partners could stop doing – and that there was some overlap with points raised in relation to things that partners should do differently.
- 2.9. The main suggestions in relation to **planning and delivering services with communities** were:
- Respondents made a number of suggestions relating to specific services. This included reducing the frequency of waste collection, reducing numbers of under-occupied schools, reducing spend on social care services for those with lower needs levels, maintenance of road verges, school crossing patrols, libraries, and the Elgin ring road.
 - Reducing bureaucracy was also a relatively common suggestion, and appeared to reflect concerns noted at Figure 20 above in relation to the balance between management and administrative costs, and “front-line” budgets.
 - Working more collaboratively across services and partners was also suggested by several respondents, who suggested that a tendency for services to “work in silos” remains an issue.
- 2.10. In relation to **balancing council budgets**, the main points for respondents were:
- The most common suggestions were for changes to specific services provided by Moray Council and partners. This included reference to reducing numbers of under-occupied schools, rationalising less used libraries, reducing halls and community centres outwith main settlements, reducing less used public transport routes, reduce funding to leisure services, reduce one-off projects (e.g. Elgin ring road), and reduce levels of street lighting.
 - Reducing bureaucracy was again mentioned here, and respondents also mentioned scope to reduce inefficiencies across council services. This latter point included potential duplication of services also being delivered by other sectors.
 - Several respondents suggested a need for stronger budget controls to avoid over-spending across council services.

Figure 4: Things that Moray Council and partners should stop doing³**Planning & delivering services with communities**

Service-specific suggestions	1 st
Reduce bureaucracy, management and admin costs	2 nd
Work collaboratively across services and partners (stop working in silos)	3 rd
Reduce costs associated with consultants and subcontractors	4 th
Stop inefficiencies in delivery of services	5 th
Stop closing services and facilities	6 th

Balancing council finances

Reduce specific services	1 st
Reduce bureaucracy, management and admin costs	2 nd
Reduce inefficiencies	3 rd
Control budgets (no more overspend)	4 th
Reduce costs associated with consultants and subcontractors	5 th
More services provided by 3 rd sector, private sector and communities	6 th

Partners should start doing...

- 2.11. Respondents made a range of suggestions for what partners should start doing, both in terms of working with communities and balancing council finances (see Figure 22 over the page). A number of these suggestions reflected issues raised earlier in relation to doing things differently – indeed some respondents noted that their suggestions for working differently highlighted the things that partners should stop doing.
- 2.12. The main suggestions in relation to ***planning and delivering services with communities*** were:
- Again, the most common suggestions related to how CPP partners deliver specific services. This included suggestions relating to recycling and waste services, health services, community safety, transport and roads, environmental services, and social housing.
 - A number of respondents suggested better collaborative working across services and agencies. This included reference to sharing of skills and resources (including sharing systems such as procurement), and sharing of innovative and good practice.
 - Doing more to enable communities to contribute to the planning and delivery of services was also a common theme. This included a perceived need for greater transparency and better communication with communities, and supporting local community organisations.

³ Based on free text responses

- More localised spending and services was also suggested by a number of respondents, including some who perceived a focus on larger towns across Moray.

2.13. In relation to **balancing council budgets**, the main points for respondents were:

- More efficient working, including a greater focus of resources on front-line staff, was again a common suggestion in relation to balancing budgets. This included a mix of broad suggestions to reduce staffing levels, and more specific suggestions for efficiency savings.
- Increasing revenues was also a common suggestion, including a range of specific suggestions for revenue raising (the most common being an increase to Council Tax).
- Better engagement with communities, local community groups and other agencies was suggested specifically in relation to identifying local needs. Several respondents suggested that this is vital to ensure that resources can be focused on the most important services.

Figure 5: Things that Moray Council and partners should start doing⁴

Planning & delivering services with communities

Service-specific suggestions	1 st
Better collaborative working - sharing of skills, good practice and resources across agencies	2 nd
Greater transparency with communities, encouraging residents to do more, supporting local groups	3 rd
More efficient working	4 th
More localised spending and services	5 th
Better communication/awareness raising	6 th

Balancing council finances

Greater efficiencies, organisational change to make savings	1 st
Better revenue collection, increase Council Tax	2 nd
Engagement with communities to focus on local needs	3 rd
Focus on “core” services	4 th
Communities provide greater support to service delivery	5 th

⁴ Based on free text responses

Residents getting involved in their local area

- 2.14. The final survey questions asked panel members about getting involved in service provision in their local area. This included the extent to which panel members would feel able to do more to support service planning and delivery, and panel members' views on what could encourage more residents to get involved.
- 2.15. Around a third of respondents provided further comment in relation to getting more involved in local services and organisations. More than 1 in 4 of these respondents indicated that they already contribute to local groups or organisations in some way, and felt unable to do more. This included reference to a broad range of groups including voluntary sector services, church groups, and sports and leisure groups.
- 2.16. Around a third of respondents indicated that they **may be interested in getting more involved**. This included some respondents who supported the principle of residents contributing more to local services and organisations, but were unclear on what opportunities may be available in their area. However, most of those expressing an interest in getting more involved referred to specific types of services or group where they felt that they could contribute. This included reference to:
- Activities for children and families;
 - Cafes;
 - Community Councils and other representative bodies;
 - Parks, open areas and improving the local environment;
 - Home maintenance, 'odd jobs'; and
 - Providing advice or support to local people.
- 2.17. More than a third of those providing comment here felt unable to get involved in planning and delivery of local services. This was most commonly related to respondents' health, including some referring to their age and frailty. However, this group also included some respondents with prior experience of contributing to local organisations who suggested that this experience had left them disillusioned, and unconvinced as to the benefit of this work.

2.18. In relation to ***changes that might encourage more residents to get involved***, it is notable that several respondents indicated that they were unsure of what could be done to improve this. To some extent, this appeared to reflect scepticism around how many residents may be willing to get more involved. Nevertheless, respondents did make a number of specific suggestions here:

- Wider promotion of available opportunities was the most common suggestion. Several respondents noted that they were unaware of available opportunities in their local area, and suggested that this may be the case for large parts of local communities. A small number of respondents also suggested that by actively soliciting input from communities, the council and others can demonstrate to residents that they value their input – and that this may encourage participation.
- Respondents also suggested doing more to support local groups and organisations, including voluntary organisations (e.g. reduced hire rates for facilities) and representative bodies. Several respondents suggested that these bodies can help to encourage and coordinate input from local residents.
- Several respondents suggested that changes could be made to local services to make it easier for residents to volunteer – such as changes to opening time to enable more working people to get involved, provision of transport to enable volunteers to get to services, and ensuring that those with disabilities or long-term conditions are supported to get involved.
- Dedicating resources to support local communities to contribute to service planning and delivery was also suggested by a number of respondents. This included suggestions that a Development Officer role and/or dedicated budget could be made available.

* _ * _ *