

Results: Planning- how would you like to be consulted?

This report presents results regarding "Planning – how would you like to be consulted?" from Survey 9 of the People's Panel West Lancashire, carried out in Winter 2005/06.

The survey involved 1,123 members of the People's Panel West Lancashire: a response rate of 82.6% on the current membership of 1,360.

The results are based on the 1,123 questionnaires returned, and exclude the members who failed to respond to the survey. The label "no-response" used in some tables indicates the % of respondents to the survey who failed to answer an individual question or part question. As a result of rounding and weighting, some results might not precisely tally between tables.

The People's Panel is generally representative of the total population of West Lancashire in terms of ward populations, ethnicity and gender. However, there is some under-representation of specific age groups. Therefore, to ensure that the distribution of responses is representative of the West Lancashire electoral population as a whole, the survey results have been weighted, based on age within gender population.

The People's Panel West Lancashire was recruited in Summer 2003 using probability (random) sampling, stratified by ward, which means that it has a good standard of statistical validity. The Panel was "refreshed" in summer 2005 when around a third of members were retired, and other residents were recruited to replace them. The reliability of the survey is enhanced by the high number of respondents.

The survey results are estimates of the figure in the whole population which would have given a particular response if everyone had been asked. There is, therefore, always a 'margin of error' which depends, for each question, on the size of the percentage and the number of people who answered the question. The greater the number of respondents, the smaller is the margin of error.

In order to assist with the interpretation of the results, a table is given overleaf which enables the margin of error for each individual result to be calculated.

Margin of error

The table below is an approximate guide to the margin of error appropriate to a specific result percentage and size of base (weighted number of members that question applies to) and based on a 95% confidence level (this is the same high level demanded by Government for Performance indicator surveys, and means that we can be 95% certain that we did not arrive at the result by chance.) The formula used to calculate the margin of error is a widely used one but generally assumes that the sample which was drawn was a simple random one. However, this formula is often used as a rule of thumb for all types of sample. As can be seen, the margin of error for any particular percentage given in the survey analyses depends both on the size of the percentage and the weighted base.

How to use the table

In the left hand column, select the figure closest to the 'size of base' (i.e. the number of people who answered the question: these figures are given at the bottom of each of the results tables.) On the top row, select the column with the percentage closest to your % result. The margin of error is the figure where the row and column intersect.

For example: results show that 90.0% of Panel member thought adverts and articles in local newspapers were an important method for informing and consulting people about planning policies. The weighted base was 1166. Therefore the margin of error is 1.7%. This means that the true % is 90.0% +/- 1.7% i.e. it lies between 88.3% and 91.7%.

Size of base*	Percentage with the characteristic :									
	95 or 5	90 or 10	85 or 15	80 or 20	75 or 25	70 or 30	65 or 35	60 or 40	55 or 45	50
	+/- %									
50	6.0	8.3	9.9	11.1	12.0	12.7	13.2	13.6	13.8	13.9
100	4.3	5.9	7.0	7.8	8.5	9.0	9.3	9.6	9.8	9.8
150	3.5	4.8	5.7	6.4	6.9	7.3	7.6	7.8	8.0	8.0
200	3.0	4.2	4.9	5.5	6.0	6.4	6.6	6.8	6.9	6.9
250	2.7	3.7	4.4	5.0	5.4	5.7	5.9	6.1	6.2	6.2
300	2.5	3.4	4.0	4.5	4.9	5.2	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.6
350	2.3	3.1	3.7	4.2	4.5	4.8	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.2
400	2.1	2.9	3.5	3.9	4.2	4.5	4.7	4.8	4.9	4.9
450	2.0	2.8	3.3	3.7	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.6
500	1.9	2.6	3.1	3.5	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.4
600	1.7	2.4	2.9	3.2	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.0
700	1.6	2.2	2.6	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.7
800	1.5	2.1	2.5	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.5
900	1.4	2.0	2.3	2.6	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.3
1000	1.4	1.9	2.2	2.5	2.7	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.1
1100	1.3	1.8	2.1	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0
1200	1.2	1.7	2.0	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.8

* weighted number of members answering the question

Planning- how would you like to be consulted?

Panel members were informed that one of the Council's most important duties is Planning which involves deciding how much new development is needed in the District, and where new buildings such as houses, offices, warehouses and factories should be built. The Council prepares planning policy documents against which individual planning applications put forward by individuals, private developers and other organisations are assessed.

West Lancashire District Council appreciates that people care very deeply about development and knows that residents have strong views about what should, or should not, be built within the District. The Council consults local people about proposals for new developments and about planning policies whilst, at the same time, trying to ensure that this is done in ways which make it easy for people to respond and get involved.

Members were therefore being asked about the best ways they can be consulted and involved in planning matters. The results of this survey will then be used to help draw up a new Statement of Community Involvement for the District, which will set out the Council's standards for consultation in the future.

1. Importance of methods of informing and consulting

Members were first informed that when the Council wants to find out residents' views on its proposals for new planning policies, it uses a variety of methods to inform and ask for comments from them. Members were given a list (set out in Table 1) and asked to tick ALL those they thought were important.

Table 1 shows that a substantial majority (90.0%) of members who completed Survey 9 thought placing adverts and articles in local newspapers was an important method for informing and consulting residents about new planning policies. Almost three-quarters of members (74.7%) said sending letters and leaflets to residents was important whilst nearly two-thirds (65.6%) indicated posters in community centres etc. Each of the other specified methods was indicated as important by less than half of members.

Table 1

	% of members ticking option :
Adverts and articles in local newspapers such as the Advertiser and the Champion	90.0%
Information and on-line forms to complete on the Council's website	38.8%
Sending emails to people who have previously shown an interest in Planning matters and have asked to be kept informed	36.7%
Sending letters and leaflets to residents in the District	74.7%
Giving talks to local community groups and residents' groups	47.4%
Posters in community centres/ post offices/ churches/ schools/ libraries etc	65.6%

(Weighted base- completing survey = 1166)

Table 2 overleaf shows these responses broken down by age, gender, disability and area of residence. It should be noted that these breakdowns involve smaller numbers of people and therefore the margin of error may be greater.

A significant majority (over 86%) in each sub-group thought adverts and articles in local newspapers to be important for informing and consulting residents on planning policies. Similarly, more than 69% of members in each sub-group (except unknown disability - a very small group) believed sending letters and leaflets to local residents to be important.

Putting up posters in community centres etc was seen as important by more than half of members in all groups except for those aged 16-24, and a much lower than average proportion of this same age group attached any importance to giving talks to local groups.

There was significant diversity in opinion with regard to the use of either the Council's website or sending emails to those who had previously expressed an interest in Planning matters. For example, whereas more than half (52.6%) of members aged 25-44 thought it important that residents be informed and consulted by means of the Council's website, only 17.8% of members aged 65+ thought so. Members living in Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes were more likely to think this method important than those from Skelmersdale/Up Holland (44.0% and 33.8% respectively). Both this area and age split also applied in respect of sending emails. Higher proportions of Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes members (40.8%) and ones aged 25-44 (43.0%) thought this method important. than members from Skelmersdale/Up Holland (31.6%) or aged 65+ (20.2%).

Table 2 : Importance of methods for informing and consulting about new planning policies- by age, gender, disability and area of residence

	% of members ticking option :					
	Adverts and articles in local newspapers	Information and on-line forms to complete on the Council's website	Sending emails to people who have asked to be kept informed	Sending letters and leaflets	Giving talks	Posters in community centres etc
Broad age group						
16-24	88.4%	38.8%	42.6%	69.0%	38.8%	49.6%
25-44	89.7%	52.6%	43.0%	74.9%	45.3%	65.8%
45-64	91.7%	37.8%	37.8%	77.1%	47.7%	68.6%
65+	86.8%	17.8%	20.2%	71.2%	53.9%	66.7%
No response	92.7%	41.5%	39.0%	80.5%	51.2%	72.0%
Gender						
Male	87.8%	38.3%	36.9%	73.3%	44.3%	62.5%
Female	91.9%	39.1%	36.5%	75.9%	50.0%	68.4%
Disability						
With a limiting disability	92.0%	30.2%	32.7%	78.4%	51.2%	66.0%
With a non limiting disability or no disability	89.6%	40.2%	37.4%	74.2%	46.8%	65.7%
No response	100.0%	33.3%	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%	50.0%
Area of residence						
Skelmersdale/Up Holland	90.9%	33.8%	31.6%	70.5%	48.8%	66.5%
Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes	90.8%	44.0%	40.8%	77.6%	45.8%	61.2%
Northern Parishes	88.2%	38.2%	37.3%	75.9%	47.8%	69.5%
TOTAL	90.0%	38.8%	36.7%	74.7%	47.4%	65.6%

(Weighted base - completing survey = 1166. Age : 16-24 = 129, 25-44 = 351, 45-64 = 385, 65+ = 219, no response = 82. Gender : male = 539, female = 627. Disability : with a limiting disability = 162, with a non-limiting disability or no disability = 998, no response = 6. Area of residence : Skelmersdale/Up Holland = 374, Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes = 402, Northern Parishes = 390)

2. Factors preventing people from getting involved in planning issues

Members were informed that some residents have told the Council they find it difficult to get involved in planning issues. Members were therefore asked to indicate what they felt were the TWO biggest factors preventing people from getting involved in planning for their local area. They were shown a list of eleven factors (as set out in Table 3 below) and asked to tick two only.

Table 3 shows that more than half of members (55.5%) indicated that they felt their views on planning issues won't matter as decisions have already been made. This was the factor chosen by the highest proportion of members whilst the second highest (selected by 33.8%) related to the lack of information in general. A slightly lower proportion of members (33.0%) highlighted the complexity of the planning process and documents whilst over a quarter (27.5%) thought that people were not aware that they could put their views to the Council.

Relatively small proportions of members (less than 15% in each case) indicated other factors.

Table 3:

	% of members ticking option :
Lack of time to respond	11.2%
Inconvenient location of meetings and presentations	7.4%
Lack of information in general	33.8%
The complexity of the planning process and planning documents in general	33.0%
A feeling that my views won't matter as decisions have already been made	55.5%
People are not aware that they have the opportunity to put their views to the Council	27.5%
Council staff have an unhelpful attitude	3.6%
The Planning documents are too expensive to buy so people can't take them home to read them	10.0%
Lack of internet access at home	6.0%
Inconvenient timing of meetings and presentations	10.8%
I am unable to contact anyone when needed to discuss planning matters	3.2%

(Weighted base- completing survey = 1166)

Table 4 overleaf shows a breakdown of these responses by age, gender, disability and area of residence. It should be noted that these breakdowns involve smaller numbers of people and therefore the margin of error may be greater.

The feeling that people's views won't matter as decisions have already been made was shared by the highest proportions of members in all sub-groups although there was some variation by age - 46.1% of members aged 16-24 compared with 58.0% of those aged 45-64. Similarly, a much higher than average proportion of members with a limiting disability (61.1%) indicated this factor.

The two factors which were selected by the second and third highest proportions of members overall i.e. lack of information and the complexity of the planning process/documents respectively, showed some variation by particular groups of members. For example, higher proportions of members aged 25-44 or 65+ indicated the complexity of the planning process than they did for lack of information; this also applied to women, members with a limiting disability and those from Northern Parishes.

Much higher than average proportions of members aged 65+ indicated the expense of buying planning documents and also the lack of internet at home, whilst almost a fifth of younger members aged 16-24 highlighted the inconvenient timing of meetings and presentations. A higher than average proportion of members with a limiting disability indicated the inconvenient location of meetings and presentations.

Table 4 : Factors preventing people from getting involved in planning issues- by age, gender, disability and area of residence

	% of members ticking option :					
	Lack of time to respond	Inconvenient location of meetings and presentations	Lack of information in general	Complexity of the planning process/ planning documents	Views won't matter as decisions have already been made	People are not aware can put their views to the Council
Broad age group						
16-24	7.8%	3.9%	42.6%	34.9%	46.1%	31.0%
25-44	12.0%	7.4%	31.3%	35.0%	54.1%	30.2%
45-64	13.0%	7.8%	36.0%	33.0%	58.0%	26.2%
65+	6.4%	9.2%	28.8%	30.6%	56.4%	23.7%
No response	18.3%	7.3%	32.9%	28.0%	61.0%	28.0%
Gender						
Male	11.1%	8.5%	36.3%	32.7%	54.7%	26.5%
Female	11.3%	6.5%	31.6%	33.3%	56.1%	28.4%
Disability						
With a limiting disability	9.9%	12.3%	25.9%	34.0%	61.1%	28.4%
With a non limiting disability or no disability	11.4%	6.6%	35.1%	32.9%	54.6%	27.4%
No response	0.0%	16.7%	40.0%	33.3%	50.0%	33.3%
Area of residence						
Skelmersdale/Up Holland	13.1%	9.7%	33.2%	26.5%	52.1%	30.3%
Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes	9.2%	5.0%	36.8%	35.0%	58.0%	27.9%
Northern Parishes	11.3%	7.9%	31.2%	37.3%	56.0%	24.6%
TOTAL	11.2%	7.4%	33.8%	33.0%	55.5%	27.5%

(Weighted base - completing survey = 1166. Age : 16-24 = 129, 25-44 = 351, 45-64 = 385, 65+ = 219, no response = 82. Gender : male = 539, female = 627. Disability : with a limiting disability = 162, with a non-limiting disability or no disability = 998, no response = 6. Area of residence : Skelmersdale/Up Holland = 374, Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes = 402, Northern Parishes = 390)

continued overleaf

Table 4 continued

	% of members ticking option :				
	Council staff have an unhelpful attitude	Planning documents are too expensive to buy to take home	Lack of internet access at home	Inconvenient timing of meetings and presentations	Unable to contact anyone when needed to discuss planning matters
Broad age group					
16-24	0.0%	3.9%	7.8%	19.4%	3.9%
25-44	4.0%	10.8%	4.8%	10.5%	2.8%
45-64	4.2%	8.3%	3.4%	10.4%	2.1%
65+	3.7%	14.2%	11.9%	6.4%	5.9%
No response	3.7%	13.4%	6.1%	11.0%	1.2%
Gender					
Male	3.0%	10.4%	4.8%	11.7%	2.2%
Female	4.1%	9.7%	7.0%	10.0%	4.0%
Disability					
With a limiting disability	4.9%	13.6%	6.2%	8.0%	3.1%
With a non limiting disability or no disability	3.4%	9.5%	6.0%	11.2%	3.2%
No response	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%
Area of residence					
Skelmersdale/Up Holland	5.4%	9.9%	6.1%	12.3%	4.0%
Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes	3.0%	11.2%	6.5%	9.0%	1.7%
Northern Parishes	2.3%	9.0%	5.6%	11.0%	3.8%
TOTAL	3.6%	10.0%	6.0%	10.8%	3.2%

(Weighted base - completing survey = 1166. Age : 16-24 = 129, 25-44 = 351, 45-64 = 385, 65+ = 219, no response = 82. Gender : male = 539, female = 627. Disability : with a limiting disability = 162, with a non-limiting disability or no disability = 998, no response = 6. Area of residence : Skelmersdale/Up Holland = 374, Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes = 402, Northern Parishes = 390)

3. Usefulness of methods for providing information about major planning applications

Panel members were told that the Council consults residents about all planning applications (such as house extensions, superstores etc) once they have been submitted, through sending letters to neighbours who may be affected by the proposal and placing site notices close to the site. Members were asked to indicate which were the TWO methods most useful to them for the Council providing information and inviting people to comment about MAJOR planning applications. They were shown a list of eight methods (as set out in Table 5 below) and asked to tick two only.

Table 5 shows that more than half of members (52.9%) indicated that letters/questionnaires sent by post were the most useful for them. This was the method chosen by the highest proportion of members whilst the second and third highest (selected by 33.4% and 33.3% respectively) were placing information in local papers/on notice boards and circulating a specially prepared leaflet.

Approximately a fifth of members in each case indicated formal public meetings or local exhibitions whilst relatively small proportions of members (less than 20% in each case) indicated other methods.

Table 5 : Usefulness of methods for providing information about major planning applications

	% of members ticking option :
A formal public meeting at a local venue	20.0%
A letter/questionnaire sent by post to local people	52.9%
Discussions at meetings of local community groups and residents' associations	10.3%
Exhibitions at a local venue with planning officers and the applicant present to answer your questions	22.0%
Making the plans available at the Council offices so that anyone interested can come in and look at them and give their views	18.4%
Information on the Council's website and providing facilities for you to give your views through the website	9.9%
Circulating a specially-prepared leaflet	33.3%
Placing information in the local papers, and on a notice board at the application site	33.4%

(Weighted base- completing survey = 1166)

Table 6 overleaf shows a breakdown of these responses by age, gender, disability and area of residence. It should be noted that these breakdowns involve smaller numbers of people and therefore the margin of error may be greater.

Posting letters or questionnaires was the method seen as useful by the highest proportions of members in all sub-groups (except unknown disability- a very small group). However, there was some variation by age – 65.6% of members aged 16-24 compared with 42.0% of those aged 65+ highlighted this method.

Members living in Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes were more likely to find information in local papers or on notice boards useful than those living in the Northern Parishes (37.6% and 28.1% respectively). A higher than average proportion of Northern Parishes members highlighted local exhibitions (30.4%).

A much higher proportion of younger members aged 16-24 favoured specially prepared leaflets (38.8%) compared with those aged 65+ (26.5%) whereas higher than average proportions of older members tended to prefer information in local papers/on notice boards or discussions at local meetings.

Table 6 : Usefulness of methods for providing information about major planning applications- by age, gender, disability and area of residence

	% of members ticking option :							
	Formal public meeting	Letter/questionnaire	Discussions at meetings	Local exhibitions	Making plans available at the Council offices	Information on the Council's website	Leaflet	Information in local papers/on notice board
Broad age group								
16-24	11.6%	65.6%	11.6%	11.6%	23.3%	11.6%	38.8%	31.0%
25-44	19.1%	56.4%	6.0%	25.1%	17.1%	14.5%	32.5%	33.6%
45-64	21.5%	52.2%	10.4%	23.3%	15.0%	9.1%	34.5%	33.2%
65+	21.5%	42.0%	16.0%	22.8%	21.5%	4.6%	26.5%	37.9%
No response	26.8%	51.2%	11.0%	18.3%	24.4%	6.1%	41.5%	25.6%
Gender								
Male	22.8%	52.1%	10.6%	23.4%	18.1%	12.1%	31.7%	32.5%
Female	17.6%	53.6%	10.2%	20.9%	18.7%	8.1%	34.8%	34.2%
Disability								
With a limiting disability	21.6%	48.1%	17.3%	18.5%	21.0%	5.6%	27.2%	39.8%
With a non limiting disability or no disability	19.7%	53.8%	9.2%	22.5%	17.8%	10.6%	34.3%	32.3%
No response	33.3%	33.3%	16.7%	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%	20.0%	33.3%
Area of residence								
Skelmersdale/Up Holland	18.8%	56.4%	13.9%	16.9%	15.8%	8.6%	37.8%	34.5%
Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes	19.1%	53.3%	7.7%	18.7%	23.3%	9.5%	29.8%	37.6%
Northern Parishes	22.3%	49.1%	9.7%	30.4%	15.9%	11.8%	32.7%	28.1%
TOTAL	20.0%	52.9%	10.3%	22.0%	18.4%	9.9%	33.3%	33.4%

(Weighted base - completing survey = 1166. Age : 16-24 = 129, 25-44 = 351, 45-64 = 385, 65+ = 219, no response = 82. Gender : male = 539, female = 627. Disability : with a limiting disability = 162, with a non-limiting disability or no disability = 998, no response = 6. Area of residence : Skelmersdale/Up Holland = 374, Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes = 402, Northern Parishes = 390)

4. Consultation on large-scale development proposals

Members were told that when large-scale developments are proposed - such as new housing or industrial/business premises - the Council currently consults people AFTER a planning application has been submitted so that people's views can be taken into account before a final decision is made. However, sometimes developers are encouraged to undertake consultation BEFORE they submit a planning application. Such genuine engagement with the local community can be beneficial to all people involved. Panel members were therefore asked whether people should be consulted before or after an application for large-scale development has been submitted.

Table 7 below sets out their views and shows that a substantial majority (85.0%) were in favour of consultation before an application is submitted.

Table 7: Consultation on large-scale development proposals

	Preferred type of consultation
Where possible, developers should carry out consultation with local people BEFORE an application for a large-scale proposal is submitted	85.0%
Local people should only be consulted on a large-scale proposal AFTER it has been submitted	9.8%
No response	5.3%
Total	100.0%

(Weighted base- completing survey = 1166)

Table 8 overleaf sets out members' views on consultation as broken down by age, gender, disability and area of residence.

Generally, there was not much variation with a significant majority of members in all sub-groups indicating preference for consultation on large-scale proposals before submission of an application.

Table 8: Consultation on large-scale development proposals – by age, gender, disability and area of residence

	Preferred type of consultation :			
	Where possible, developers should carry out consultation with local people BEFORE an application for a large-scale proposal is submitted	Local people should only be consulted on a large-scale proposal AFTER it has been submitted	No response	Total
Broad age group				
16-24	88.4%	7.8%	3.9%	100.0%
25-44	86.9%	10.3%	2.8%	100.0%
45-64	86.5%	8.8%	4.7%	100.0%
65+	79.5%	10.5%	10.0%	100.0%
No response	79.3%	13.4%	7.3%	100.0%
Gender				
Male	82.4%	12.4%	5.2%	100.0%
Female	87.2%	7.5%	5.3%	100.0%
Disability				
With a limiting disability	87.7%	7.4%	4.9%	100.0%
With a non limiting disability or no disability	84.5%	10.1%	5.4%	100.0%
No response	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Area of residence				
Skelmersdale/Up Holland	84.7%	8.8%	6.4%	100.0%
Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes	84.3%	10.9%	4.7%	100.0%
Northern Parishes	86.2%	9.2%	4.6%	100.0%
TOTAL	85.0%	9.8%	5.3%	100.0%

(Weighted base - completing survey = 1166. Age : 16-24 = 129, 25-44 = 351, 45-64 = 385, 65+ = 219, no response = 82. Gender : male = 539, female = 627. Disability : with a limiting disability = 162, with a non-limiting disability or no disability = 998, no response = 6. Area of residence : Skelmersdale/Up Holland = 374, Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes = 402, Northern Parishes = 390)

5. Response of Council to comments on planning applications

Members were asked how they thought the Council should respond to any comment they sent on a planning application: in writing once a decision is made, by email or by publishing all comments on the Council's website along with the Council's response. Members were asked to tick ALL that applied and their views are set out in Table 9 below.

More than two-thirds of members (69.4%) thought the Council should respond to their comments by writing to them once a decision is made. Just over a third (36.5%) indicated that their and other people's comments should be published on the Council's website along with the Council's response whilst only 15.7% wanted the Council to send them an email.

Table 9: Response of Council to comments on planning applications

	% of members ticking option :
The Council should write to me once a decision is made	69.4%
The Council should send me an email	15.7%
My comments, along with those made by everyone else, should go on the Council's website along with the Council's response	36.5%

(Weighted base- completing survey = 1166)

Table 10 overleaf shows a breakdown of these responses by age, gender, disability and area of residence. It should be noted that these breakdowns involve smaller numbers of people and therefore the margin of error may be greater.

Members' views on how the Council should respond to their comments on planning applications appear to vary quite substantially by age. For example, whereas 76.7% in each case of members aged 16-24 and 65+ thought the Council should write to them, for members aged 25-44 the comparative proportion was 60.4%. Conversely, a much higher proportion of members of this latter age group wanted both their comments and the Council's response to be published on the Council's website (42.9%) compared with older members aged 65+ (25.6%).

Members aged 16-24 were more likely to want an email response than members aged 65+ (23.3% and 6.0% respectively).

Table 10: Response of Council - by age, gender, disability and area of residence

	% of members ticking option :		
	The Council should write to me once a decision is made	The Council should send me an email	My comments, along with those made by everyone else, should go on the Council's website along with the Council's response
Broad age group			
16-24	76.7%	23.3%	42.2%
25-44	60.4%	21.0%	42.9%
45-64	70.1%	14.8%	34.5%
65+	76.7%	6.0%	25.6%
No response	74.4%	11.0%	37.8%
Gender			
Male	67.2%	17.6%	38.9%
Female	71.3%	14.0%	34.3%
Disability			
With a limiting disability	72.2%	9.3%	34.0%
With a non limiting disability or no disability	69.0%	16.7%	36.8%
No response	66.7%	16.7%	50.0%
Area of residence			
Skelmersdale/Up Holland	73.0%	11.8%	35.6%
Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes	66.9%	17.6%	38.3%
Northern Parishes	68.7%	17.6%	35.4%
TOTAL	69.4%	15.7%	36.5%

(Weighted base - completing survey = 1166. Age : 16-24 = 129, 25-44 = 351, 45-64 = 385, 65+ = 219, no response = 82. Gender : male = 539, female = 627. Disability : with a limiting disability = 162, with a non-limiting disability or no disability = 998, no response = 6. Area of residence : Skelmersdale/Up Holland = 374, Ormskirk/Aughton & Western Parishes = 402, Northern Parishes = 390)

6. Suggestions for improving Council consultation about planning issues

Panel members were finally asked if they had any suggestions about how the Council could improve the way it consults local people about planning issues.

Suggestions were made from only 13% (weighted) of members completing Survey 9. These suggestions covered a very wide range of subjects and these have been summarised into specific categories as set out in Table 11 overleaf.

Please note that this table excludes the 87% of members who did not make a suggestion and therefore involves only a very small number of members (151 weighted) so the margin of error may be greater.

17.1% of members who made suggestions wanted the Council to carry out more local consultation with several of these also indicating that consultation should be extended to residents in a wider catchment area and not just those living in properties adjoining a proposal site.

Just over a tenth (10.3%) of suggestions concerned the need for the Council to provide more or fuller information about any proposals.

Several of the suggestion categories cover methods of consultation already addressed earlier in the Survey e.g. the need to include information about planning issues in the local newspapers as well as consulting with the local community before applications are submitted.

Table 11: Suggestions for improving Council consultation about planning issues

	% of suggestions made
More publicity regarding planning issues is required	3.2%
More/fuller information should be made available about specific planning applications/issues	10.3%
More/improved consultation is needed with more of the community (not just immediate neighbours)	17.1%
More time to respond to planning applications etc is needed	1.8%
Acknowledgements/responses to residents' letters, emails etc should be made by the Council	3.4%
Need to inform/consult before a planning application submitted	4.4%
Information and consultation by means of personal letters is preferred	2.9%
More/improved coverage of planning applications/issues in newspapers (including the Council's own newspaper) is required	6.0%
More distribution of leaflets/circulars/notices to homes, supermarkets, local shops etc is required	4.0%
More participation by the public at conveniently held meetings/events/planning committee is required	5.8%
More contact between officers and residents by means of phone calls and visits would be useful	1.1%
There should not be too much reliance on IT as not everyone has access to it	3.3%
Basic guidance on the planning system should be published to help/guide residents	3.6%
Need to demonstrate that the views of residents do matter	4.3%
More openness/accountability is required from the Council	3.1%
Suggestions relating to procedures already in place in the planning system	2.4%
Other suggestions for improving planning consultation	13.8%
Suggestions not relating to improving planning consultation	9.6%
Total	100.0%

(Weighted base- members making comments = 151)