Rossendale Borough Council - making ends meet survey 2013

Report produced on behalf of Rossendale Borough Council by Kris Barker

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1 Executive Summary

The 'making ends meet' resident survey 2013 was undertaken with members of the citizen's panel and promoted more widely on the council's website. The aim of the survey was to determine views on proposed measures to save money and generate income, in order to fund the expected shortfall of £1.5m by 2016/17.

An eleven page survey was posted to 369 panel members and an electronic version of the survey was e mailed to 385 panel members on 8 August 2013. A reminder was sent by post to all those who hadn't responded on 23 August 2013. The survey closed on 4 September 2013. In total 403 questionnaires were returned.

To help summarise the reaction to the proposed measures that were presented to residents in the survey, the table below attempts to compare the level of agreement and impact that each of these measures would have.

Proposed measure	Agreement*	Most likely to agree	Impact**	Biggest impact on
1. Changes to the Town Centre caretaker service	**67%**	Under 40	**23%**	40-49
2. Changes to the contribution towards Whitworth Town Council caretaker	**65%**	Men, 40-49	**8%**	Men, 40-59
3. Reduction in the number of street litter bins	**52%**	Under 40	**39%**	40-59
4. Removal of recycling bring sites	**59%**	Under 40	**23%**	40-49
5. Garden waste collections in the summer	**68%**	Men, 50+	**22%**	40-49
6. Garden waste collections – service charge	**30%**	Men, 40-49	**46%**	Disabled, 40-59
7. Street sweeping – pavement sweepers	**72%**	Under 40, 60+	**18%**	Men, 40-49, 60+, disabled
8. Street sweeping – road sweepers	**52%**	Under 40	**29%**	40-49, disabled
9. Develop a more flexible policy on returning for missed bins	**74%**	-	**19%**	40-49, 50-59
10. Maintenance of parks and open spaces	**62%**	50+	**27%**	40-49, 60+, disabled
11. Grants to external groups/ organisations	**46%**	Men	**19%**	Under 40, 40-49

* The reported % includes those who strongly agree or agree with the proposed measure
** The reported % includes those who feel it would have a significant or moderate impact

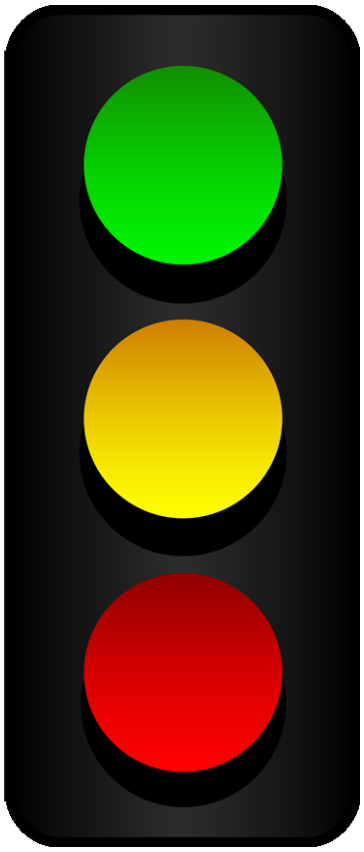
2 Implications

So what does this survey tell us in terms of next steps and required actions? To help to summarise the potential implications from this survey, a very simple traffic light diagram is presented below.

Overall, 50% are very or quite satisfied with the package of proposals – an effective 'green light' to proceed

Note that the impact of each measure varies and so attempts can be made to minimise the potential impact of any of the measures

But agreement with the individual measures varies and consideration might be given to these to balance the saving against the social cost



3 Background and Methodology

3.1 Background

Councils all over the country are faced with decisions about reducing many of their services and whether to charge for others, as a result of reductions in government funding.

To help make decisions about where limited resources should be targeted, Rossendale Council undertook a survey to gather residents' views on a number of proposed measures. In particular, this focussed on the level of agreement with each measure and the impact it would have on the resident/ the resident's immediate family. The information from the survey will be used to help the Council decide upon the appropriate measures to introduce.

3.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the survey are as follows:

- Understand reaction to the proposed measures and their acceptability;
- Understand the impact that each measure may have on certain sections of the community;
- Understand overall views on the collective 'package' of measures;
- Identify any additional ideas for making savings or increasing income.

3.3 Methodology

The citizen's survey was sent by post to 369 households and electronic invites sent by e mail to 385 households on 8 August 2013. A reminder was sent on 23 August 2013, with a final closing date of 31 August 2013. The survey was distributed to all 754 members of the citizen's panel and also promoted on the front page of the Council's website.

In total 403 questionnaires were returned. Of this total, 224 responses were received by post while 179 online responses were received.

In order to ensure that the survey reached people in all sections of the community, respondents were asked to provide information about themselves including gender, age, disability, ethnicity and current employment status. The breakdown of respondents by these demographic groups is provided in section 3 below.

All data is weighted by age, gender and disability to reflect the overall population of Rossendale, and figures are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated.

3.4 Robustness of the data

How well the sample represents the population is gauged by two important statistics – the survey's margin of error and confidence level. For example, this survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.9% at a 95 percent level of confidence. This means that if the survey was conducted 100 times, the data would be within 4.9 percentage points above or below the percentage reported in 95 of the 100 surveys (see figure 2.1 below). Typically 3% is considered to be a 'good' margin of error and in the case of this consultation, the 4.9% margin of error is slightly higher. As a result, the findings of the survey have real value but they should not be seen as a completely accurate reflection of the borough.

Figure 2.1: Margins of error at 95% confidence

Survey Sample Size	Margin of Error Percent
403	**+/- 4.9**
400	+/- 4.9
300	+/- 5.7
200	+/- 6.9
100	+/- 9.8

For each question in the survey, comparisons have been made between different sub-groups of respondents (namely gender, age and disability) to look for statistically significant differences in opinion. Statistically valid differences between sub-groups are described in the main body of the report. Some groups cannot be included in the sub-group analysis as there were too few respondents to allow statistically significant results (e.g. ethnic minorities).

In charts or tables where responses do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple responses or computer rounding.

4 Demographic composition

Please note that for the purpose of identifying the borough composition in the tables below, data has been taken from the 2011 census.

4.1 Gender

The un-weighted split of male and female respondents was identical to the actual borough split. The impact of weighting the data has held these %'s at the same level.

Figure 3.1: Gender

Gender	Un-weighted	Weighted	Borough actual
Male	49%	49%	49%
Female	51%	51%	51%

Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q49

4.2 Age

Given the low numbers of younger respondents, it was not possible to weight the under 40 age group in line with the actual borough percentage (to have done so would have led to unreliably high weightings being applied to a small group of respondents). As a result, after the weighting, the youngest age group account for just over a quarter of all responses whilst the influence of the oldest age group has been suppressed to 37%. The impact of the weighting here has ensured that the analysis by age is much more reliable (as the weighted column is much closer to the actual borough column).

Figure 3.2: Age

Age group	Un-weighted	Weighted	Borough actual
Under 40	9%	27%	40%
40-49	12%	15%	14%
50-59	26%	21%	18%
60+	53%	37%	28%

Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q50

4.3 Disability

The un-weighted split of disabled and non disabled respondents was very close to the actual borough split. The impact of weighting the data has helped to bring this split more in line with the borough.

Figure 3.3: Disability

Disability	Un-weighted	Weighted	Borough actual
Yes	16%	20%	20%
No	84%	80%	80%

Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q51

4.4 Ethnicity

Very few responses were received from residents from a BME ethnic background. Given the low response, it was not possible to weight the data by ethnicity to bring the representation more in line with the borough. The impact of the eventual weighting has had no effect on the ethnic split.

Figure 3.4: Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Un-weighted	Weighted	Borough actual
White	99%	99%	94%
BME	1%	1%	6%

Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q52

4.5 Current employment status

The impact of weighting the data by gender, age and disability has helped in most cases to bring the listed employment status' closer to the borough actual.

Figure 3.5: Status

Status	Un-weighted	Weighted	Borough actual
FT work	34%	43%	40%
PT work	10%	10%	14%
Self employed	6%	5%	10%
Govt scheme	0%	0%	n/a
FT education	1%	2%	3%
Unemployed but available for work	1%	2%	4%
Carer	3%	3%	n/a
Unable to work due to health/ disability	1%	3%	5%
Retired	49%	36%	15%
Looking after the home	2%	2%	4%
Other	0%	0%	5%

Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q53

5 Detailed Research Findings

5.1 Changes to the Town Centre caretaker service

The proposal itself is as follows:

We currently have one Town Centre Caretaker in each of the town centres of Haslingden, Rawtenstall, Waterfoot and Bacup, in addition to a part-time litter picker in Stacksteads. It is proposed that this service is reduced and re-configured so that one team would cover all the town centres, rather than having one member of staff dedicated to one area. There would be fewer staff, but this change will allow greater flexibility of deployment of staff to cover holidays and sickness. It is further proposed that consideration be given to giving this team environmental enforcement responsibilities. They would also be able to issue promotional materials to takeaways, nightclubs etc with regards to the promotion of cleanliness.

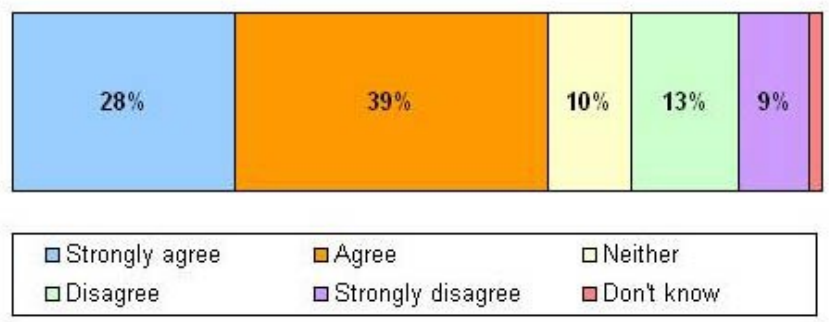
This change could generate savings of around £30,000 - £50,000 per annum.

Q1 – How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

67% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this proposal. This is higher for those aged under 40 at 73%.

22% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this proposal. This level of disagreement is higher for those aged 40-49 at 28%.

Figure 4.1: Level of agreement with changes to the Town Centre caretaker service

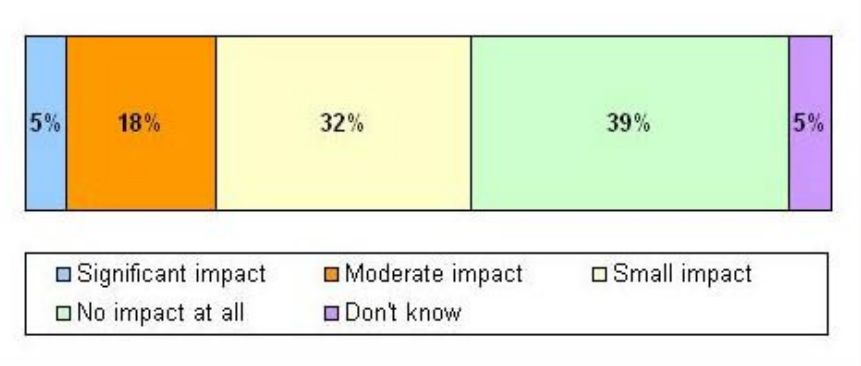


Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q1 Base: 374

Q2 – What impact, if any, would this have on you or your family?

23% of respondents state that this proposal would have a significant or moderate impact on them or their family. As you would expect given the relatively high levels of disagreement at Q1 above, this impact is seen to be higher for those aged 40-49 at 31%.

Figure 4.2: Impact on you or immediate family



Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q2 Base: 367

5.2 Changes to the contribution towards Whitworth Town Council caretaker

The proposal itself is as follows:

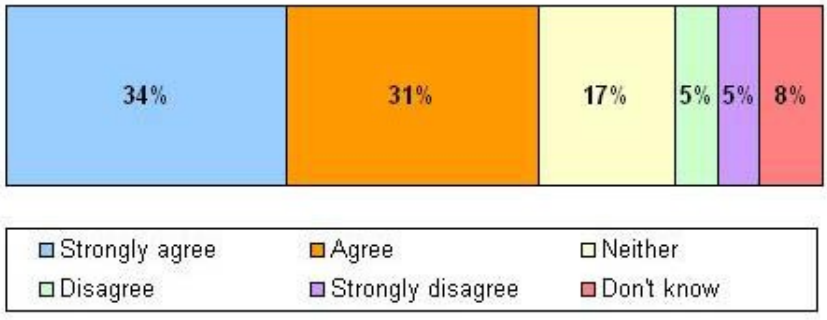
In Whitworth, the litter picking service is managed by Whitworth Town Council (WTC), to which Rossendale Borough Council (RBC) currently contributes £15,975. It is recommended that RBC reviews the amount that it contributes to this service.

Q5 – How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

65% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this proposal. This is higher for men (71%) and those aged 40-49 (83%).

Only 10% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this proposal.

Figure 4.3: Level of agreement with changes to the contribution towards Whitworth Town Council caretaker

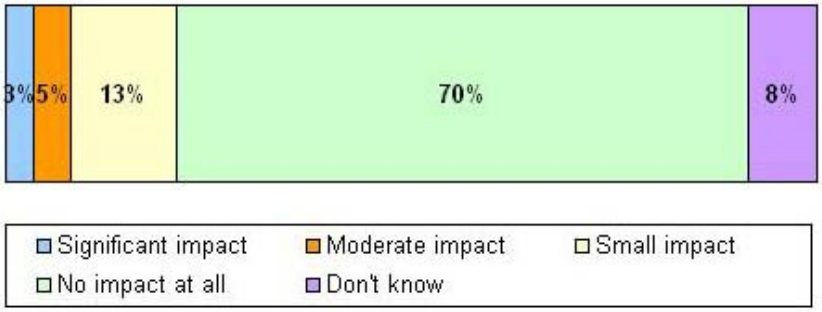


Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q5 Base: 369

Q6 – What impact, if any, would this have on you or your family?

8% of respondents state that this proposal would have a significant or moderate impact on them or their family. This is higher for men (11%) and those aged 40-59 (13%).

Figure 4.4: Impact on you or immediate family



Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q6 Base: 358

5.3 Reduction in the number of street litter bins

The proposal itself is as follows:

Another proposal is to look at removing one staff post and a cage truck which are currently used for collecting litter from street litter bins. We could achieve this if we reduced the number of litter bins, through prioritising hotspot areas, removing bins which are under used, and replacing a number of small bins with a smaller number of larger bins. Most bins would still be emptied twice per week.

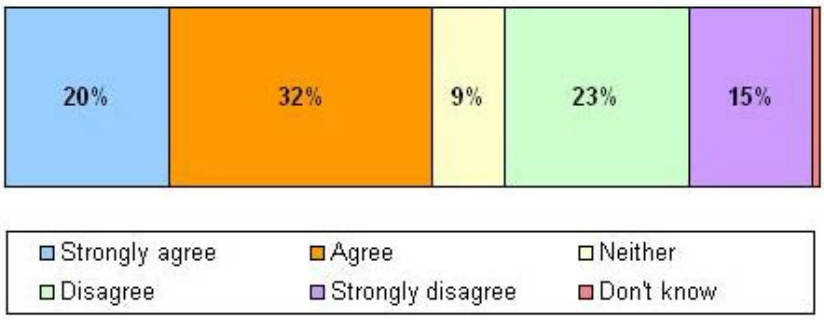
This change could generate savings of around £30,000 per annum.

Q9 – How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

52% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this proposal. This is higher for those aged under 40 at 65%.

38% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this proposal. This level of disagreement is higher for those aged 40-49 at 46%.

Figure 4.5: Level of agreement with a reduction in street litter bins

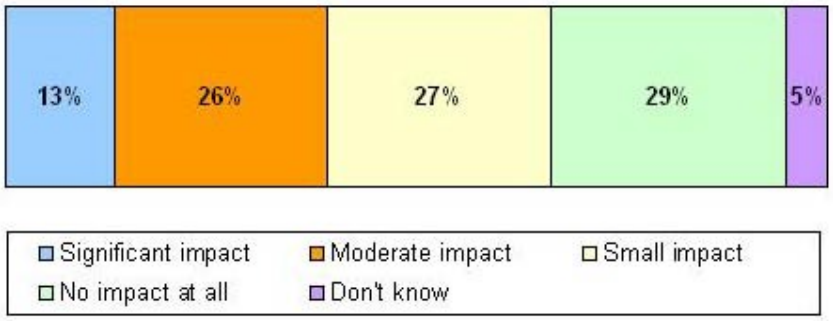


Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q9 Base: 367

Q10 – What impact, if any, would this have on you or your family?

39% of respondents state that this proposal would have a significant or moderate impact on them or their family. Again this is higher for those aged 40-59 at 46%.

Figure 4.6: Impact on you or immediate family



Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q10 Base: 359

5.4 Removal of recycling bring sites

The proposal itself is as follows:

This is being considered because all residents now have a doorstep recycling collection service, and because many of the 'bring sites' are abused by fly tippers who do not dispose of their waste responsibly and who contaminate the recycling bins. This is unsightly for those residents living in the vicinity of these 'bring sites'. A number of these facilities which were on private land have already been removed at the request of the land owner for these reasons. It is proposed that the remaining 'bring sites' are now also removed. This change would contribute towards allowing us to remove one Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV). This needs to be considered alongside the proposal on garden waste.

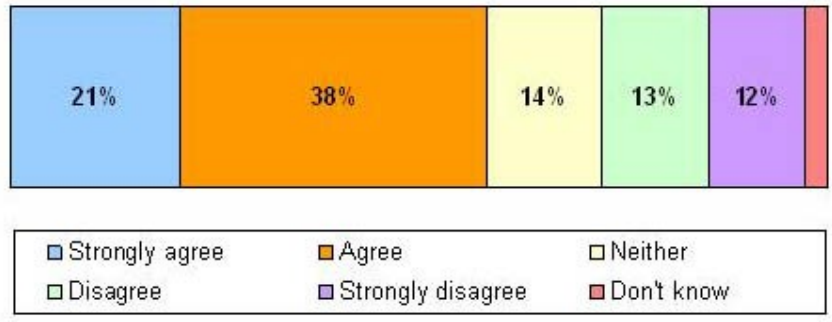
Together with the proposal around garden waste collections in summer, this would contribute to savings of around £90,000 per annum.

Q13 – How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

59% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this proposal. This is higher for those aged under 40 at 69%.

25% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this proposal. This level of disagreement is higher for those aged 40+ at 28%.

Figure 4.7: Level of agreement with removing recycling bring sites

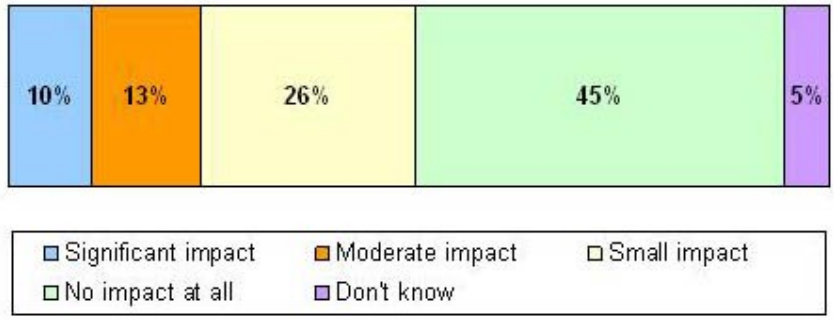


Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q13 Base: 367

Q14 – What impact, if any, would this have on you or your family?

23% of respondents state that this proposal would have a significant or moderate impact on them or their family. This is higher for those aged 40-49 at 37%.

Figure 4.8: Impact on you or immediate family



Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q14 Base: 357

5.5 Garden waste collections in summer

The proposal itself is as follows:

This proposal needs to be considered alongside the proposal on removing bring sites. The volume of garden waste that we collect in summer is such that we cannot fit it onto one refuse collection vehicle (RCV). In order to contribute to the reduction of one RCV, we need to reduce the amount of garden waste collected and the time that it takes to make those collections. It is therefore proposed that the policy for providing a garden waste collection service is reviewed and modified, to include:

1. Limit of one brown bin per property;
2. No garden waste collections for properties with back-yards only;
3. Reduced or no garden waste collections for 'outlying' properties (where the crew would have to travel a distance to collect a small number of bins, for example)

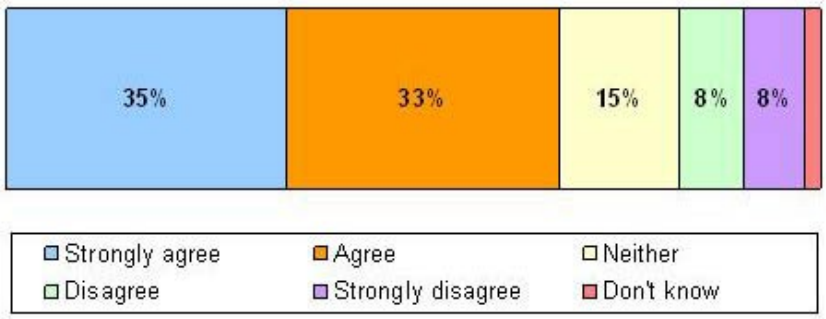
Together with the proposal to remove bring sites, this would contribute to savings of around £90,000 per annum.

Q17 – How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

68% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this proposal. This is higher for men (73%) and those aged 50+ (74%).

16% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this proposal. This level of disagreement is higher for those aged 40-49 at 26%.

Figure 4.9: Level of agreement with changes to the summer garden waste collection

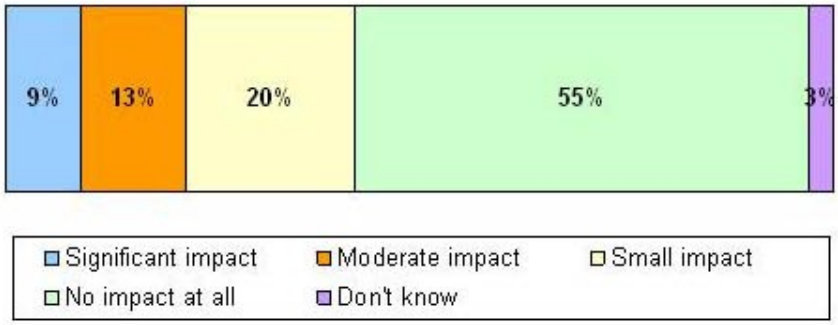


Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q17 Base: 370

Q18 – What impact, if any, would this have on you or your family?

22% of respondents state that this proposal would have a significant or moderate impact on them or their family. This is higher for those aged 40-49 at 30%.

Figure 4.10: Impact on you or immediate family



Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q18 Base: 355

5.6 Garden waste collections – service charge

The proposal itself is as follows:

As an alternative to the above proposal, there is an opportunity for income generation from garden waste collections. A number of Local Authorities charge from around £25 to £80 per year for the service. If we introduced a charge of around £35 per year, around £11,000 in income could be generated for every 1% of properties who took up the service. This means that, for example, if 20% of properties took up the service, around £220,000 income could be generated. This money would be used to protect other services against further budget

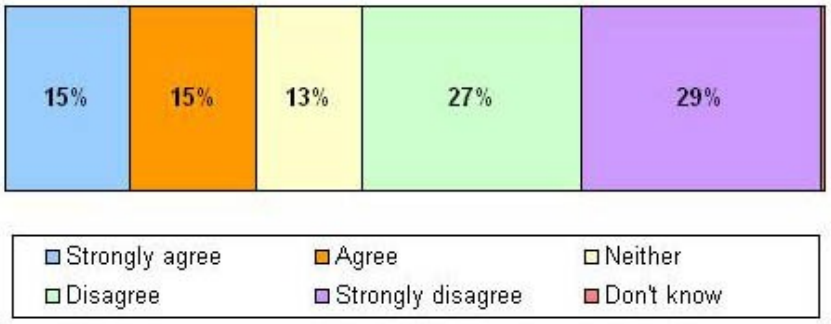
cuts.

Q21 – How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

30% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this proposal. This is higher for men (36%) and those aged 40-49 (40%).

56% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this proposal. This level of disagreement is higher for those aged 50-59 at 60%.

Figure 4.11: Level of agreement with charging for garden waste collections

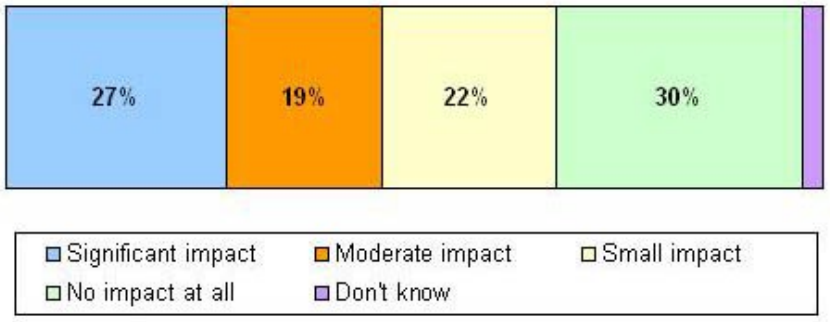


Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q21 Base: 368

Q22 – What impact, if any, would this have on you or your family?

46% of respondents state that this proposal would have a significant or moderate impact on them or their family. This is higher for those with a disability (54%) and those aged 40-59 (53%).

Figure 4.12: Impact on you or immediate family

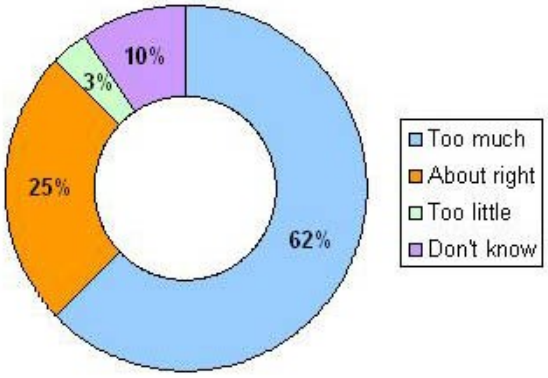


Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q22 Base: 359

Q23 – Do you think the proposed charge of £35 per year is…?

In line with the finding that the majority disagree with the proposal (see Q21 above), 62% believe that the proposed charge of £35 per year is too much. This is higher for those with a disability at 78%.

Figure 4.13: Level of agreement with the proposed charge

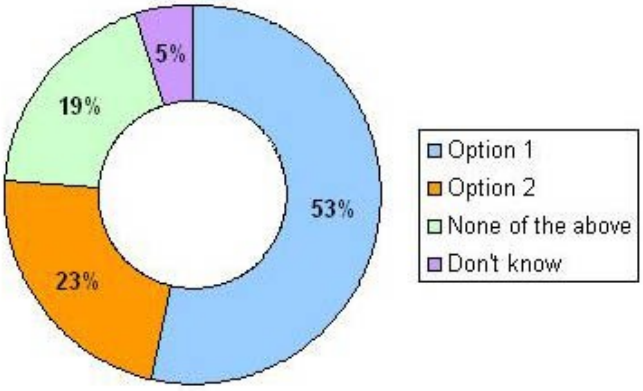


Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q23 Base: 336

Q26 – Thinking about the two options for the future of our garden waste collection, which of the two (if any) do you prefer?

As the results from Q17 and Q21 might suggest, 53% of respondents prefer option 1 (reducing the number of garden waste collections). This is higher for women (63%) and those aged under 40 (63%).

Figure 4.14: Preference between the two proposals relating to garden waste collection



Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q26 Base: 350

5.7 Street sweeping – pavement sweepers

The proposal itself is as follows:

It is proposed that the number of the mechanical sweepers be reviewed, with the possibility of reducing from three to two pavement sweepers.

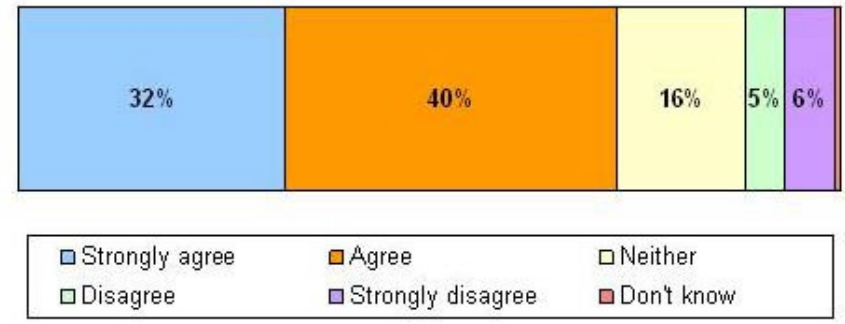
Operating with two pavement sweepers would generate savings of around £34,000 per annum. Due to staff illness, we re-profiled routes and have been operating with two pavement sweepers for the past few months, with no reported impact to the service provided. This change means that most pavements would therefore continue to be swept on a six-weekly basis and the town centres would continue to be swept weekly, as they are now.

Q27 – How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

72% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this proposal. This is higher for those aged under 40 (77%) and those aged 60+ (75%).

Only 11% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this proposal. This level of disagreement is higher for those aged 40-49 at 22%.

Figure 4.15: Level of agreement with the proposal to reduce street sweepers

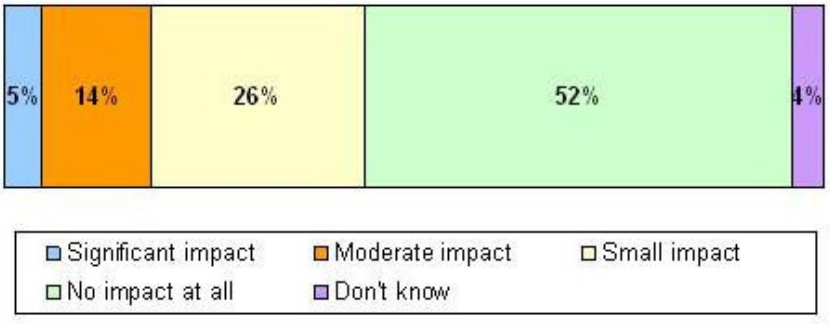


Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q27 Base: 370

Q28 – What impact, if any, would this have on you or your family?

19% of respondents state that this proposal would have a significant or moderate impact on them or their family. This is higher for men (23%), those aged 40-49 (32%), those aged 60+ (23%) and residents with a disability (27%).

Figure 4.16: Impact on you or immediate family



Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q28 Base: 355

5.8 Street sweeping – road sweepers

The proposal itself is as follows:

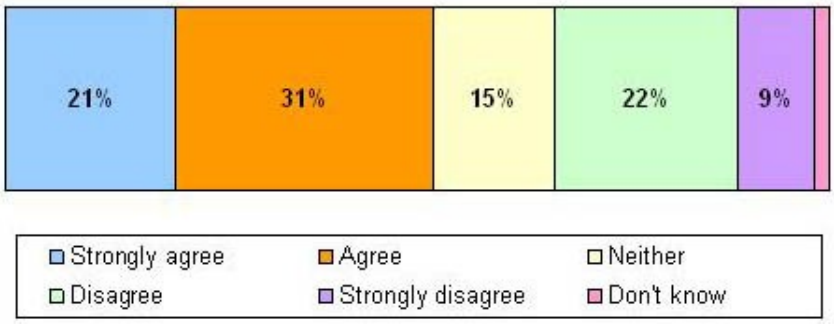
Removing one large road sweeper could generate an additional saving of up to £64,000 per annum. Main roads are currently swept weekly or fortnightly. This change would mean that all main roads would move to fortnightly and monthly. Roads around housing estates would be swept every two months.

Q31 – How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

52% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this proposal. This is higher for those aged under 40 (59%).

31% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this proposal. This level of disagreement is higher for men (38%) and those aged 40-49 (44%).

Figure 4.17: Level of agreement with the proposal to remove one road sweeper

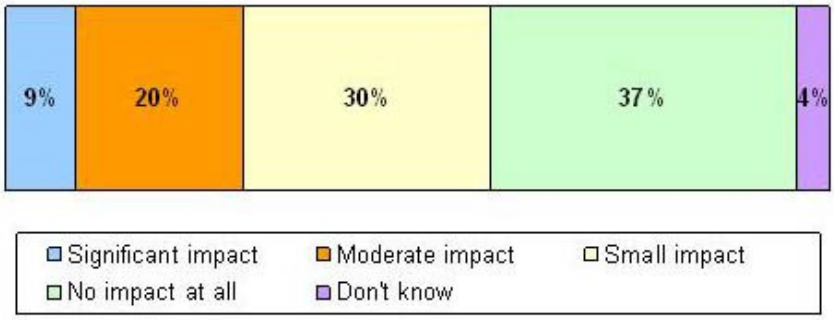


Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q31 Base: 371

Q32 – What impact, if any, would this have on you or your family?

29% of respondents state that this proposal would have a significant or moderate impact on them or their family. This is higher for those aged 40-49 (35%) and residents with a disability (39%).

Figure 4.18: Impact on you or immediate family



Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q32 Base: 352

5.9 Develop a more flexible policy on returning for missed bins

The proposal itself is as follows:

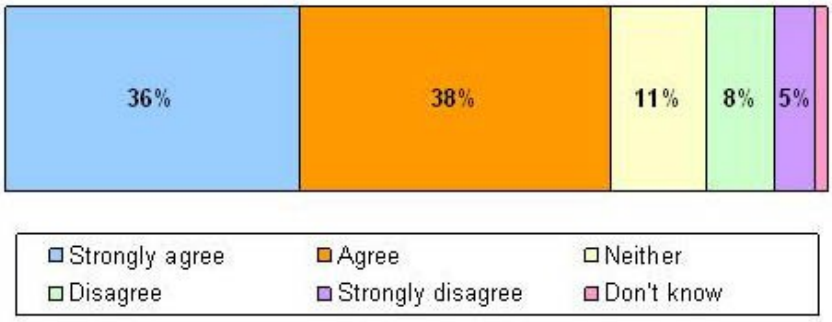
RBC currently has a policy whereby if a resident tells us that their bin hasn't been collected, irrespective of the reason, a Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) is deployed to make a special trip to collect that bin. This usually occurs during or at the end of the day if there is enough time to make the trip, or the next day, even if a RCV is not due to be in that area that day. We would now like to review and update the policy to make it more flexible, so that we would collect the missed bin as soon as possible with available resources.

Q35 – How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

74% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this proposal.

13% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this proposal. This level of disagreement is higher for those aged 40-49 (27%), those aged 50-59 (18%) and residents with a disability (18%).

Figure 4.19: Level of agreement with the proposal to develop a more flexible policy for missed bins

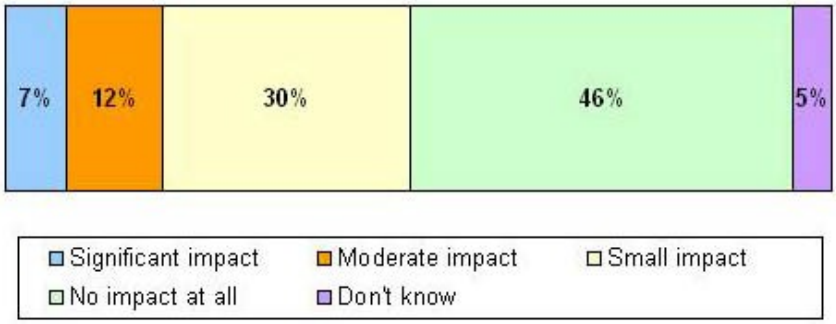


Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q35 Base: 371

Q36 – What impact, if any, would this have on you or your family?

19% of respondents state that this proposal would have a significant or moderate impact on them or their family. This is higher for those aged 40-49 (28%) and those aged 50-59 (25%).

Figure 4.20: Impact on you or immediate family



Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q36 Base: 355

5.10 Maintenance of parks and open spaces

The proposal itself is as follows:

Alongside other service reviews, we are reviewing our parks and open spaces service. We are looking at the way we work with a view to reducing the amount we spend. Some staff may choose to leave or retire soon, and we are considering changes we would have to make if we did not replace them. Considerations include all of the following:

1) Reduce the number of formal flower displays;

2) More use of shrubs and perennials instead of bedding plants;
3) Vary the amount of maintenance in each park, in consultation with local parks groups;
4) Consider options for self-management for allotments and bowling greens;
5) Remove some areas from the grass cutting schedule to support wildflowers and insects;
6) Reduce the area cut on verges to 1 or 2 metre strips.

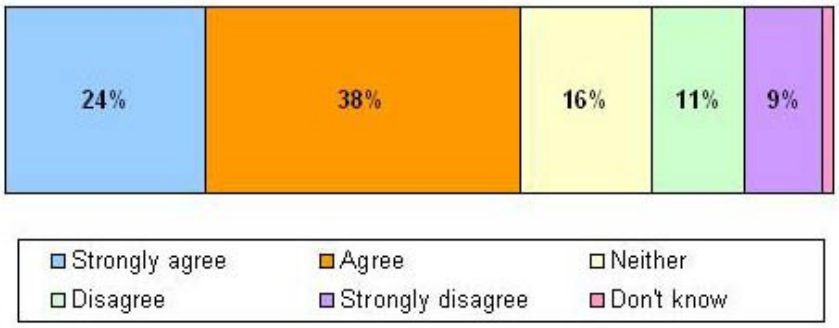
We will continue to give priority to cemeteries, memorials, park frontages and gateway and town centre sites. We can make savings of around £100,000 from these proposals.

Q39 – How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

62% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this proposal. This is higher for those 50+ (66%).

20% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this proposal. This level of disagreement is higher for those aged 60+ (24%).

Figure 4.21: Level of agreement with the proposal to reviewing spend on parks and open spaces

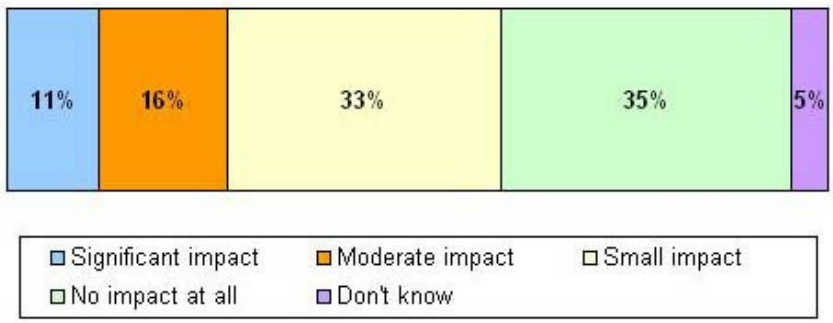


Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q39 Base: 368

Q40 – What impact, if any, would this have on you or your family?

27% of respondents state that this proposal would have a significant or moderate impact on them or their family. This is higher for those aged 40-49 (37%), those aged 60+ (33%) and those with a disability (33%).

Figure 4.22: Impact on you or immediate family



Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q40 Base: 351

5.11 Grants to external groups and organisations

The proposal itself is as follows:

Providing grants to external groups is not a statutory service, however in June 2011, RBC announced that a Rossendale Council Grants pot of £115,650 per annum would be allocated to groups in Rossendale. These grants were allocated to a number of organisations for the following reasons:

1) Increased support for people in debt;
2) Support to victims of domestic violence;
3) Growth of membership of a credit union;
4) Increase in number of volunteers;
5) Community planting schemes;
6) Support to victims of sexual abuse;
7) Support for families and young people; and
8) Increased participation in basketball.

It is proposed that in future, groups are signposted to other organisations who can provide funding or work in partnership with them to achieve their aims. Because it is a key issue for the Borough, it is proposed that RBC would contribute £6,000 to Lancashire County Council to allow them to purchase services for survivors of domestic abuse in Rossendale.

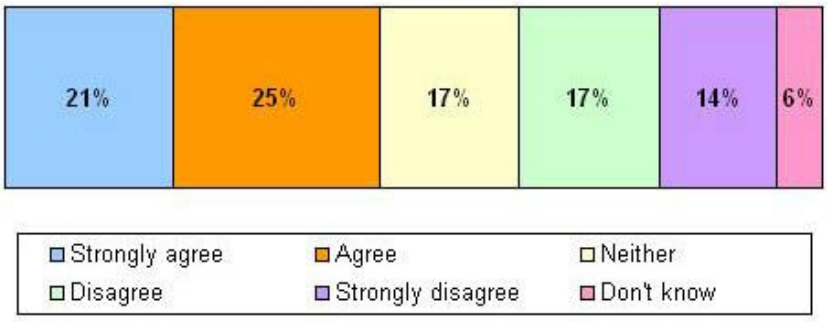
This change means that RBC would then only have grants available to support debt advice and credit unions, and that the amount of funding available for those grants may be reduced.

Q43 – How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

46% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this proposal. This is higher for men at 53%.

31% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this proposal. This level of disagreement is higher for those aged under 40 at 38%.

Figure 4.23: Level of agreement with the proposal to reduce grants

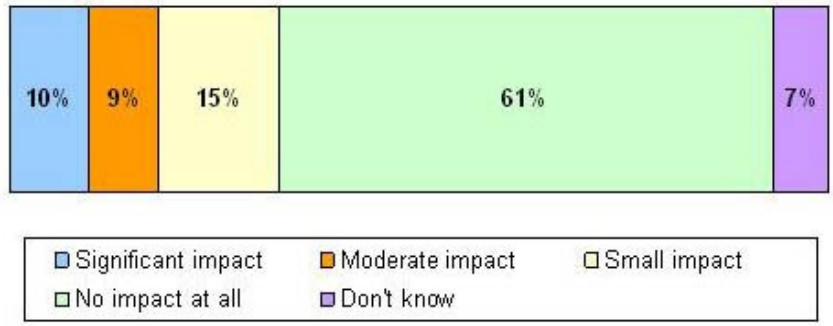


Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q43 Base: 372

Q44 – What impact, if any, would this have on you or your family?

19% of respondents state that this proposal would have a significant or moderate impact on them or their family. This is higher for those under 40 (26%) and those aged 40-49 (23%).

Figure 4.24: Impact on you or immediate family



Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q44 Base: 351

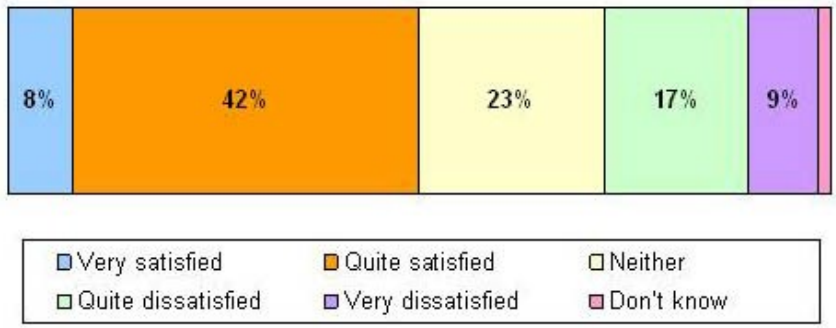
5.12 The overall package of measures

Q47 – Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the package of measures The Council is proposing to take to reduce spending, generate income and improve efficiency?

50% of respondents state that they are very or quite satisfied with the overall package of measures. This is higher for those aged under 40 (64%).

26% of respondents state that they are very or quite dissatisfied with the overall package of measures. This level of dissatisfaction is higher for those aged 40-49 (39%).

Figure 4.25: Level of satisfaction with the overall package of measures



Source: Making ends meet survey 2013, Q47 Base: 364

6 Citizen Survey 2013 infographic