

# Wiltshire County Council

## State of Wiltshire

**March 2008**

**Report prepared by:**  
Corporate Research Centre  
Development Services  
Department of Community Services  
[www.intelligencenetwork.org.uk](http://www.intelligencenetwork.org.uk)

### Population

The current age structure of Wiltshire's population is broadly in line with the nation and region. Since 1982 the percentage of young people (0-14 year old) has declined, whilst the percentage of **older population has increased**. This trend is set to continue in the longer term.

### Unemployment

Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) statistics show that Wiltshire has one of the **lowest unemployment rates in the country** at just 0.9%. However, there are a fair number of people who are not in receipt of JSA but who are technically unemployed and regard themselves as available for work should the right job opportunity arise. This includes a significant number of disabled people, older people or female 'returners' who would like to work after having children but have increased needs for childcare and flexible working. These 'hidden unemployed' represent a potentially underutilised source of labour and talent.

### Average Earnings

There is a marked difference between Wiltshire workplace and residence based earnings. Residence based data tells us what the residents of Wiltshire earn – they may work within the County's boundaries or they may commute outside the area to work e.g. to Bath, Bristol, Swindon. Workplace based data tells us about the economy of Wiltshire - it gives an indication of the earnings of people who work in the County but who may or may not live in the area. **In Wiltshire, residence based earnings are higher than workplace based earnings.** A lot of people commute out of the County for work and presumably in search of higher earnings.

### Household Income

Wiltshire is a relatively prosperous County; in fact, average disposable household income (in other words, the money that is available to households to spend or save after taking into account taxes, pension contributions, mortgage interest payments, etc) is not only **higher than the national average but is also the highest in the South West**.

### Deprivation

The Indices of Deprivation (ID) use a group of statistical indicators to rank areas which have a minimum population of 1,000 and an average population of 1,500, in terms of aspects of their deprivation. The latest ID (2007) shows that there are currently none in Wiltshire within the most deprived 10% nationally in terms of overall deprivation. However, there are pockets of deprivation which very often remain hidden because the individuals/families concerned are either dispersed or concentrated in small spatial scales. **The most prevalent form of deprivation in Wiltshire relates to rural isolation** i.e. geographic distances to services.

## House Prices

**House prices in Wiltshire are relatively higher** than the regional and national averages. Housing affordability is becoming an issue of concern for many Wiltshire residents.

## Single Households

In accordance with the national trend, about **17% of the total population in Wiltshire will live in one person households by 2026**. One person households, in general, produce more waste and use more energy than an equivalent member of a multi-person household.

## Educational Attainment

In terms of educational attainment, at **Key Stage 2, Wiltshire performs well** compared with the national averages for both English and Mathematics. Between 2001 and 2007, the literacy levels in Wiltshire consistently improved. Although numeracy levels have fluctuated, there has been steady progress since 2004. The County also has relatively high attainment rates for GCSE: the 2007 results reveal that a **higher proportion of pupils achieved at least five GCSE or equivalent at grades A\* to C** including English & Mathematics than the national average.

## Qualifications

Wiltshire has a **relatively well qualified workforce** when compared to the national averages. Nearly 30% of working age residents have degree level qualifications several percentage points above the national figure. Only 9% have no qualifications at all, compared to the national figure of nearly 14%.

## Employment

Wiltshire has a fairly diverse economic base although **Wholesale/Retail Trade and Real Estate Renting & Business Activities** are the sectors with the largest shares of total workplace employment, with 17% and 18% respectively. Manufacturing, Health & Social Work, Education and Hotels & Restaurants also have a significant presence in the County. Agriculture & Horticulture has very a small share of workplace employment with just 4%.

## Crime

Wiltshire has one of the lowest rates of recorded crime in the country; it is the **4<sup>th</sup> safest County in England & Wales** across 43 police forces (iQuanta, 2007).

## Public Consultation

The People's Voice (Nov 2007) found that there is a wide variation in satisfaction with services. **Respondents are most satisfied with Public Libraries** (78% say they are satisfied or very satisfied) and recycling centres and waste disposal (67%) and **least satisfied with Social Services for vulnerable children or families** (14%) and Youth Services (14%).

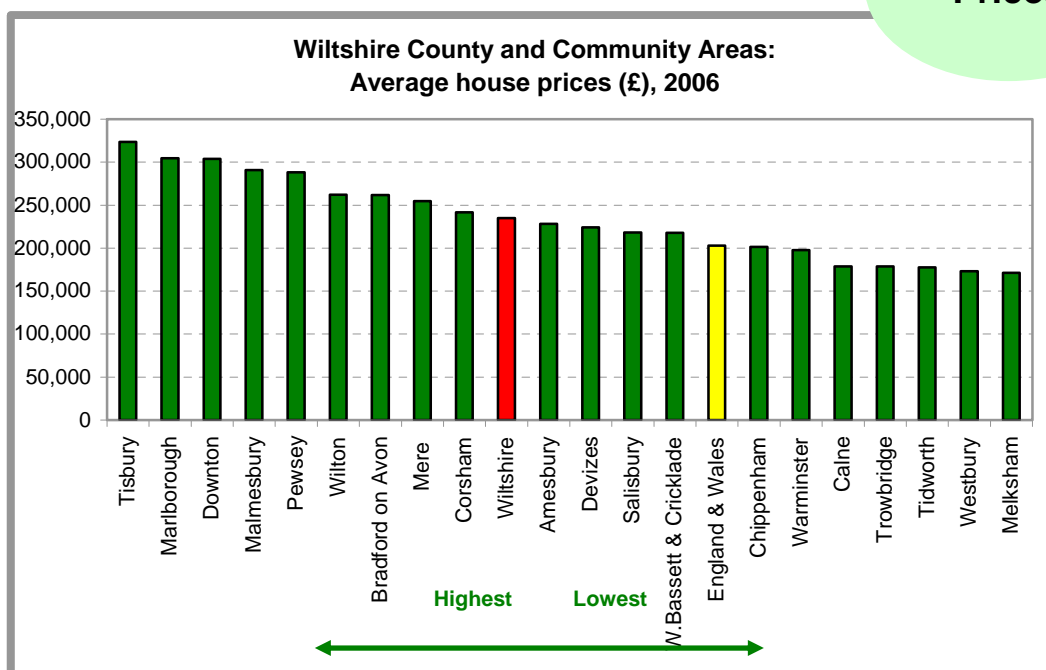
The July 2007 People's Voice asked how respondents think the services in their local Community Area compare with those in other areas of Wiltshire. **Respondents from Wootton Bassett and Cricklade were the most positive and those in Tidworth are the most negative** about their areas.

The Autumn 2007 Tomorrow's Voice survey found that **young people are very concerned about climate change** (53% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement); they also agreed that the actions of individuals can make a big difference in reducing the impact of climate change (65%) and that **walking or cycling to school or college could help reduce the impact of climate change** (75%).

The Tomorrow's Voice (Autumn 2007) found that **only 7% of respondents would consider applying for a job in a local council**. The main reasons given for not considering local government as a career choice were that the **"work is boring"** (49%) and that they "don't know what jobs are available" (45%).

## Issue: High House Prices

### House Prices

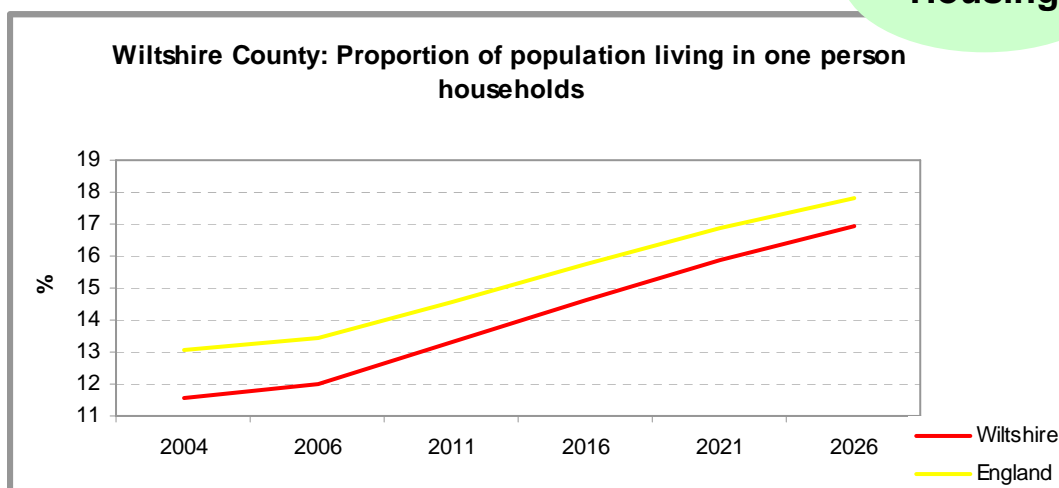


Source: Land Registry, 2007

- The average house price in Wiltshire in 2006 was £234,895, which was nearly 16% higher than the England & Wales figure of £203,024.
- Average house prices increased by around 230% from 1995 to 2006 and the gap with the regional and national averages has been widening steadily during this period.
- Higher than average house prices, coupled with lower than average workplace earnings, has resulted in high house price to earnings ratios. Housing affordability is therefore now a real concern for many Wiltshire residents who are contemplating entering the housing market for the first time.
- Of all Wiltshire Community Areas, Tisbury, Marlborough, Downton, Malmesbury, Pewsey, Wilton, Bradford on Avon, Mere and Corsham all had higher house prices than the Wiltshire average.

## Issue: Growth in single households

### Housing



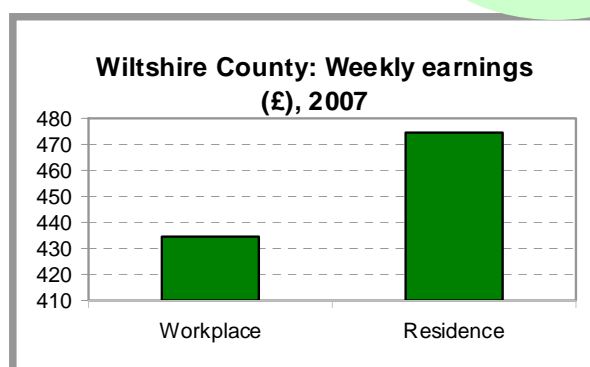
Source: Office for National Statistics, 2007

- In Wiltshire about 17% of total population will live in one person households by 2026.
- Taking one person households as a percentage of all types of households, then in Wiltshire this will be 36.8% by 2026. Nationally it will be 38.3%
- The increase in one person households has a number of implications for the delivery of services

## Issue: Gap between resident and workplace earnings

### Earnings

- There is a significant gap between residence and workplace median earnings.
- This is mainly down to highly skilled out-commuters who are able to earn higher salaries by working outside the County.
- These out-commuters probably have a higher living standard which in turn helps stimulate the local economy.

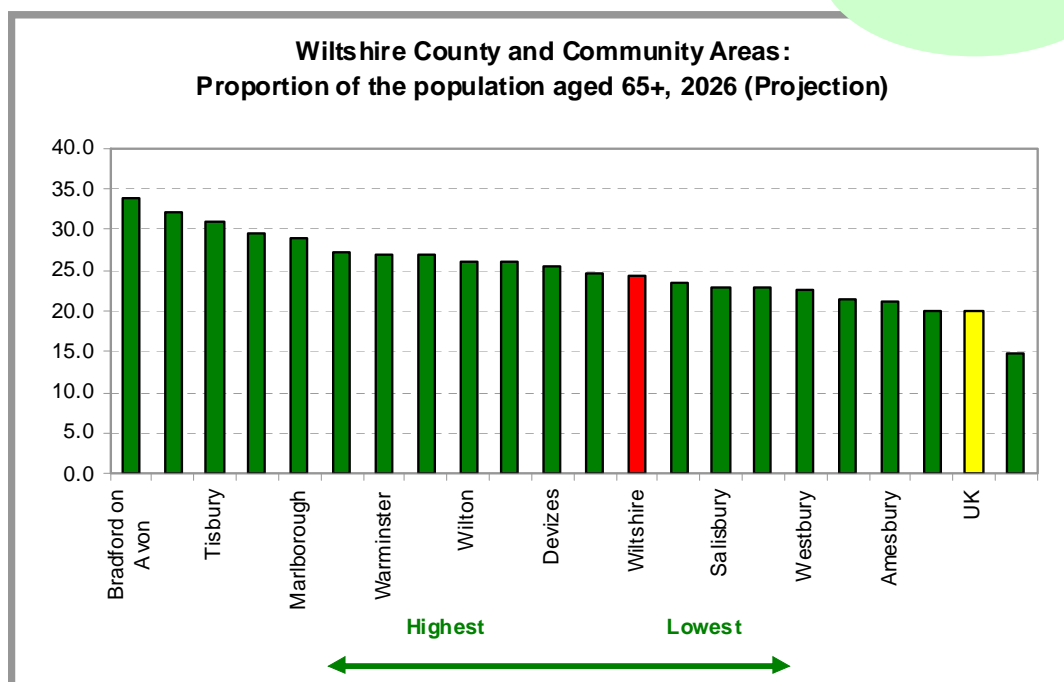


Source: Office for National Statistics, 2007

- However, the downside is that it may contribute to social inequality in the County including house price affordability.

## Issue: Ageing population

## Population

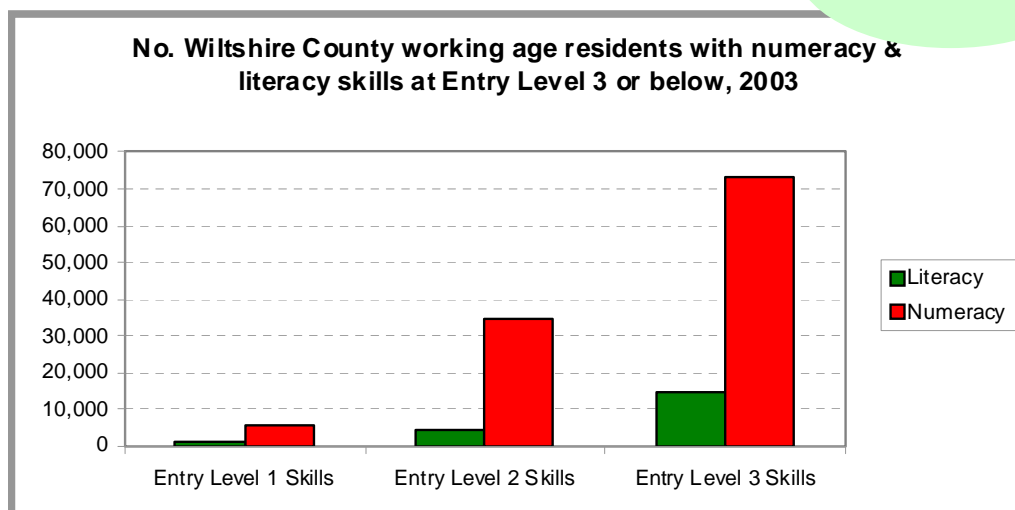


Source: Wiltshire County Council, Economic Regeneration & Intelligence, 2007

- The current age structure of Wiltshire's population is broadly in line with the nation and region. Since 1982 the percentage of young people (0-14 year olds) has declined in Wiltshire, in direct contrast to the older population (post working age). Both the nation and region have also seen the proportion of older people increase.
- Wiltshire County Council projections show that between 2006 and 2026 Wiltshire's population is set to grow by 11.3%. By 2026 Wiltshire's older population (65+) is projected to have risen to from 17.2% to 24.3% of the total population. By contrast, the working age population will have declined to 59.3%, from a 2006 figure of 64.3%.
- By 2026, over 30% of the populations of Bradford on Avon, Downton and Tisbury Community Areas (respectively) are projected to be over the age of 65.
- With an ageing population, increasing numbers of pensioners living alone and deteriorating health, there will be an enormous pressure on public sector resources to care for older people in the future. Many older people will live active and healthy lives and be active citizens contributing to their communities for many years, however, for the very old, there may be barriers which prevent them from accessing services, whether these are through poor finances, health or lack of transport. In addition, the incidence of dementia for over 85s is set to increase significantly.

## Issue: Literacy and numeracy skills

### Education



Source: Read Write Plus, Skills for Life Survey, DfES 2005

N.b. Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3 are below GCSE level and are broadly comparable with National Curriculum Key Stages 1 (7 yr olds), 2 (11 yr olds) and 3 (14 yr olds).

- Although Wiltshire's resident workforce overall skills profile is better than the national average, with a high proportion of graduates, there are still many people of working age who have relatively poor literacy and numeracy skills.
- Figures show that in Wiltshire, in 2003, there were 5,360 working age people with poor literacy skills and 40,325 working age people with poor numeracy skills. These people have the same or less basic skills than that expected of an 11 year old. These numbers suggest that in keeping with national trends, there is a definite requirement for basic skills training.
- Basic skills in the workplace are considered to be a fundamental aspect of personal development on which all further skills grow. Low literacy and numeracy skills have been linked to social exclusion and low incomes as well as contributory factors of low productivity and slow economic growth.

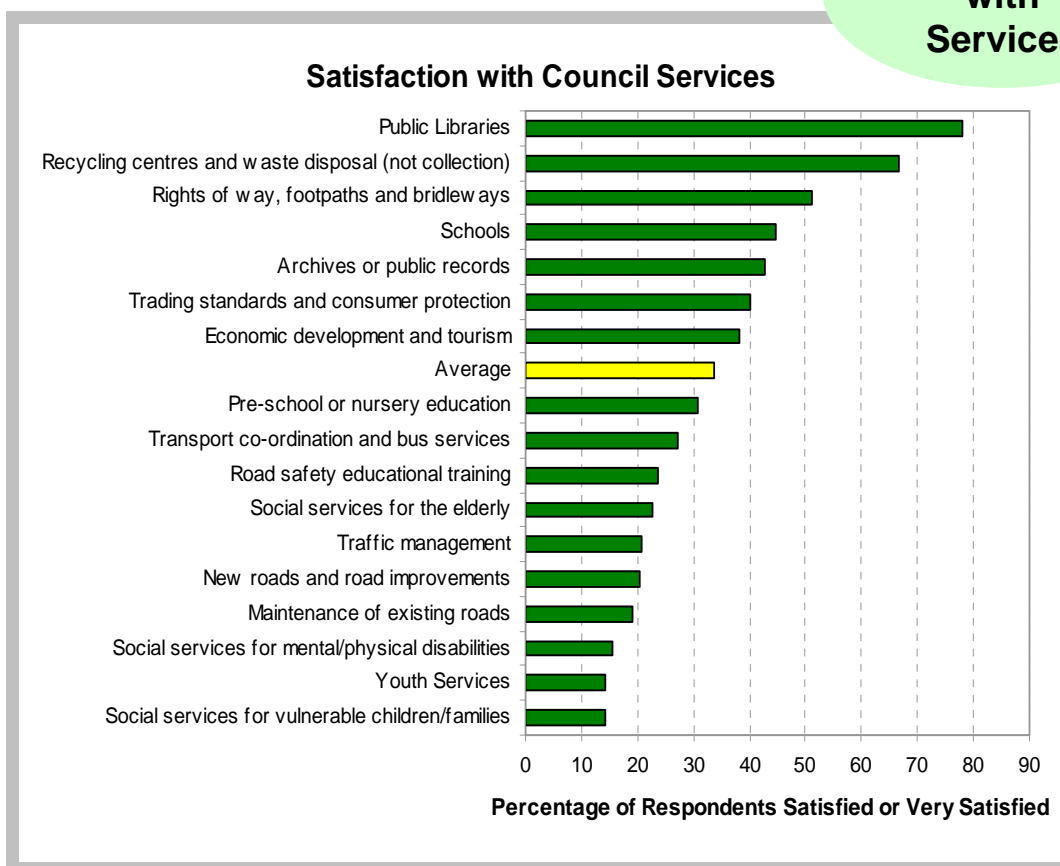


**Deprivation**

- According to the Department for Communities and Local Government's Indices of Deprivation 2007, the most prevalent form of deprivation in Wiltshire relates to geographic barriers to services such as GPs surgeries, general stores or supermarkets, primary schools and Post Offices or sub post offices; about 27% of the County's 281 LSOAs are within the most deprived 10% in England.
- Wiltshire County Council's Rural Facilities Survey 2005 shows that general food shops and specialist food shops have seen a gradual decline since 1976; 67% for general food shops and 55% for specialist shops. However, there has been recorded growth of 470% in mobile sales. The number of rural post offices has seen a large decline in the 1976 to 2005 period (195 to 96). This accounts for a drop of 66% of independent post offices and 45% of linked post offices. With respect to health facilities in rural areas, GPs' surgeries and clinics suffered losses in the late eighties and recovered by the late nineties. However, since then, they have begun to experience losses again. In the period from 1976 to 2005, the number of primary schools in rural settlements gradually declined from 155 to 119.
- There are various drivers that might continue to affect the changing scale and nature of the demand and supply of rural services, such as: demographic changes and the ageing population; increase personal mobility; ICT availability; cultural changes; central government policy on rural service delivery; and business competition. Service provision planning will have to consider these trends in order to ensure that the more 'vulnerable' rural residents not only have their basic services met, but are also able to have opportunities to choose to live their lives as active citizens in their communities.

## Issue: Variation in Service Satisfaction

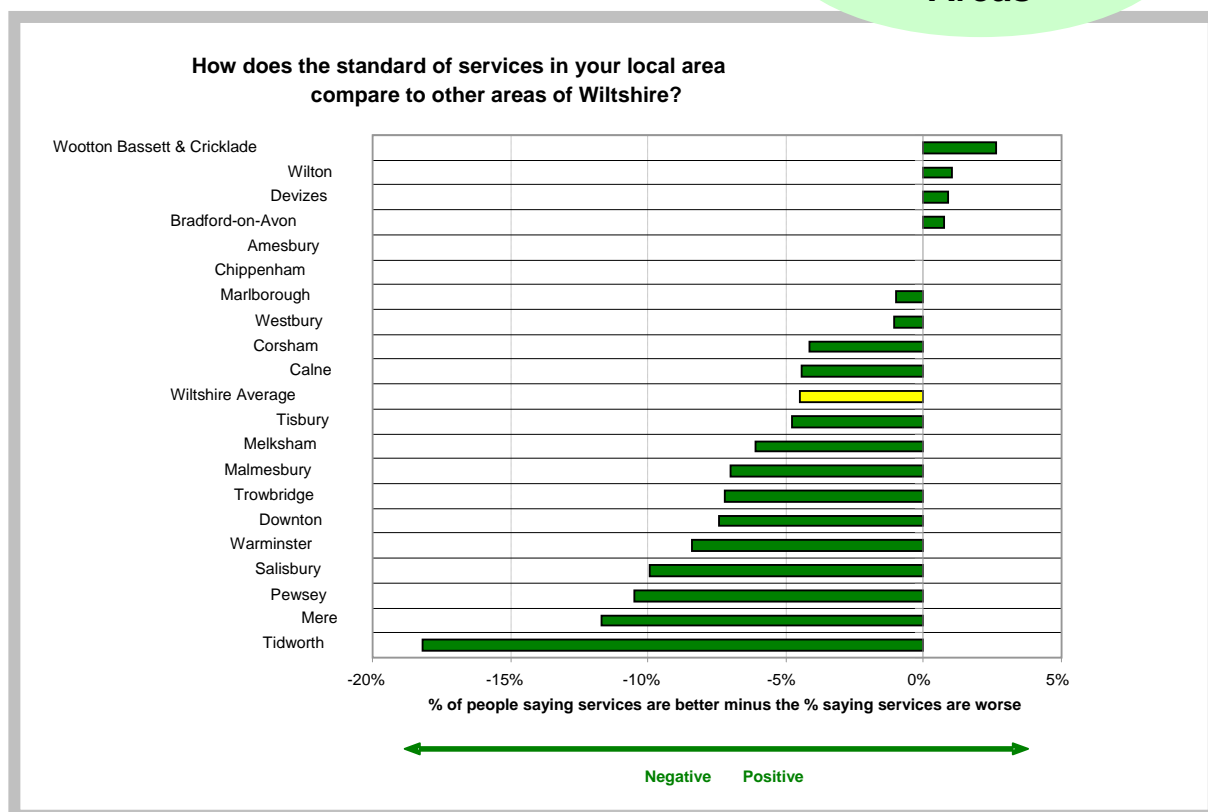
### Satisfaction with Services



- The November 2007 People's Voice survey asked how satisfied or otherwise panellists are with services provided by the County Council.
- Out of the list of services respondents are most satisfied with Public Libraries with 78% of respondents saying they are satisfied or very satisfied
- Respondents are least satisfied with Social Services for vulnerable children or families with only 14% saying they are satisfied or very satisfied. Youth Services and Social Services for mental or physical disabilities are also poorly regarded with satisfaction ratings of 14% and 15% respectively.
- The average satisfaction rating for the services listed is 34%.
- The percentages of respondents who are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied was also analysed. The highest levels of dissatisfaction are all transport and highways related:
  - Maintenance of existing roads 68%
  - New roads and road improvements 48%
  - Traffic management 47%
  - Transport co-ordination and bus services 35%

## Issue: Variation in Area Satisfaction

### Comparison of Community Areas

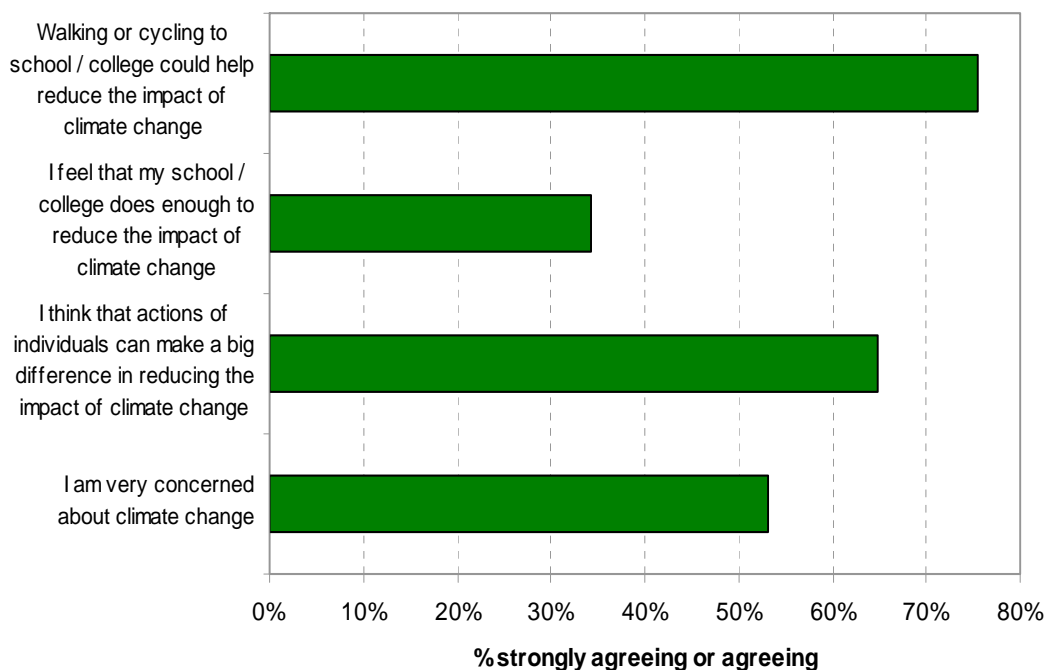


- The July 2007 People's Voice asked how panellists think the services in their local Community Area compare with those in other areas of Wiltshire.
- In general respondents are slightly negative about their local areas with more of them thinking the standard of services in their local Community Area is worse than in other areas of Wiltshire than those thinking the standard is better. In 4 Community Areas respondents are positive about service standards in their local area compared to other areas of Wiltshire:
  - Wootton Bassett and Cricklade
  - Devizes
  - Wilton
  - Bradford-on-Avon
- In contrast respondents from 14 Community Areas think their area is worse than other areas of Wiltshire. Of course, overall in Wiltshire the percentage thinking services are better in their area should equal the percentage thinking services are worse. However, this would assume that respondents have complete information on the services in their area and in other areas, whilst in reality they rely on the local media and word of mouth for a lot of information.
- Respondents in Tidworth are by far the most pessimistic about their area with 21% thinking the standard of their local services is worse than other parts of Wiltshire and only 3% thinking they are better.

## Issue: Climate Change – Is enough being done?

### Climate Change

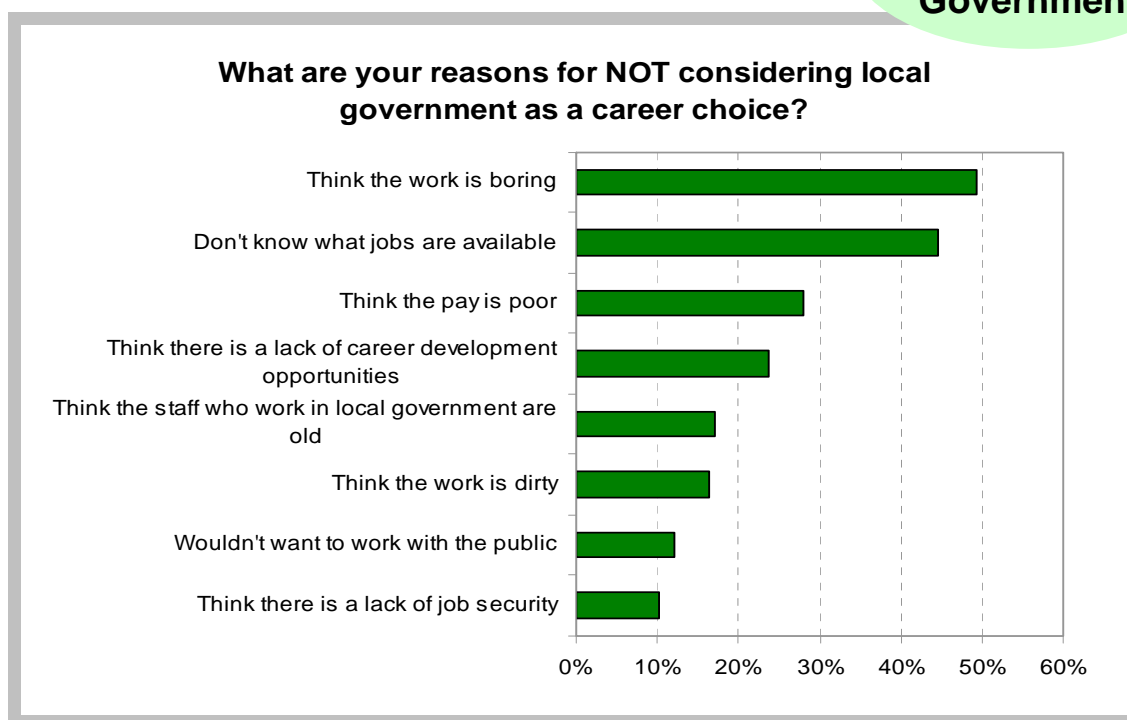
#### Climate Change: Young People's Views



- The Autumn 2007 Tomorrow's Voice survey asked about young people's views on different aspects of climate change.
- 53% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are very concerned about climate change; only 13% disagreed in any way.
- 65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that actions of individuals can make a big difference in reducing the impact of climate change; only 14% disagreed in any way.
- 34% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their school or college does enough to reduce the impact of climate change; whilst 29% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.
- 75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that walking or cycling to school or college could help reduce the impact of climate change; only 8% disagreed in any way.
- The same survey also found that overall only 10% of respondents said they regularly cycle to school. When given a list of suggested measures, to make young people more likely to regularly cycle to school the most popular was new or improved cycle paths followed by less traffic on the roads near school or college.

## Issue: Council jobs don't appeal to the young

### Careers in Local Government



- The Autumn 2007 Tomorrow's Voice survey asked young people about careers in local government.
- Only 7% of respondents said they would consider applying for a job in a local council. 53% said they would not consider applying and the rest (40%) don't know.
- The main reason given for not considering local government as a career choice was that the "work is boring" (49%). Almost half the respondents (45%) chose the reason "don't know what jobs are available". 28% wouldn't consider it as a career because they think the "pay is poor" and 24% because they think there is "a lack of career development opportunities". Only 10% wouldn't make it a career choice because there is "a lack of job security".
- Respondents were also asked which jobs they know exist in local government. The most respondents (80%) knew that teachers' jobs are available in local government. Next were social workers (78%); receptionists (73%) and secretaries (72%). The job that respondents were most surprised to find exists in local government is computer hardware specialists (38%); followed by buyers of good and services (36%) and refuse collectors (34%).
- 20% of respondents said that, after finding out more about the types of jobs that are available in local government from the Tomorrow's Voice survey, they would consider seeking work experience in a local council. Only 35% said they would not consider work experience at a local council (compared to 70% when the question was last asked).