

To: Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board.

By: Kent County Council Highways & Transportation

Subject: **Results from the Highways & Transportation Annual Satisfaction Survey 2013**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Inform Joint Transportation Boards of the key results of the 2013 Resident, County Member and Parish/Town Council Highway & Transportation Satisfaction Survey. The survey sought views on a range of issues including the condition of roads, footways, streetlights and highway drains through to views on bus services, congestion, safety cameras, Member Highway Fund and the Parish Annual Meeting. The full survey report is published on the KCC website.

Introduction

1. Satisfaction surveys, to gauge perception of the highway service have been carried out since 1987. The 2013 survey was undertaken between November 2013 and January 2014 and sought views from residents, County Members and Parish/Town Councils.
2. An independent market research company called BMG was used to undertake the specialist face to face survey work with residents. All other survey work was undertaken by H&T staff.
3. A summary of the results are presented in this report. This information will be used by the Director and Divisional Management team to identify actions to help improve service delivery.
4. A total of 1,205 face to face interviews were carried out on a representative sample of Kent residents with approximately 100 interviews in each of the twelve Districts, reflecting the age, gender and economic status. This sample size gives us a + or -2.8% accuracy of results at a County level and + or -10% for District results.
5. A total of 46 County Members responded (a response rate of 55%) and for Parish/Town Councils a total of 147 completed the survey (a response rate of 47%). The survey is designed to give an overall view of the service through the eyes of residents and two key elected representative bodies. The community voice is represented through Parish and County Members stakeholder groups.
6. The survey comprised around 30 questions, ranging from satisfaction with the condition of roads, footways, streetlights and the state of road drains through to views on local bus services, congestion, safety cameras, Member Highway Fund and the Annual Parish/Town Council Meetings.

The 2013 survey results

7. To ensure independence in the analysis of the survey results the independent market research company (BMG) was also commissioned to identify key issues emerging from the three stakeholder groups. The graphs in the following appendix present the results as the average % satisfied (green line) and % dissatisfied (red line) across the three key stakeholder groups (Residents, County Members and Parish/Town Councils). Results will not add up to 100% as respondents are also offered a neither satisfied nor dissatisfied option if they have no strong positive or negative views. Across all stakeholder groups BMG identified the following points;
- a) Whilst 76% of residents know how to report a fault only 16% have reported a highway problem in the last 12 months. In terms of Members 100% have reported faults and 99% of Parishes. More could be done to promote the use of the Council's new web based fault reporting tool to ensure more residents know the ease at which faults can be reported and experience the service first hand.
 - b) The combined results, when an average is taken from the County Member, Parish/Town Council and Residents groups, suggest that satisfaction with road, footways and streetlighting has remained broadly the same as last year despite reductions in maintenance and capital improvement budgets. This is a positive message from the survey.
 - c) A new question was added to this year's survey asking 'satisfaction that road drains/gullies are kept clean'. Whilst residents were broadly happy with 65% satisfied there is more to do to improve this service in the eyes of Members (39% satisfied) and Parish Councils (19% satisfied).
 - d) Where a request for service has been made, or a fault reported, the combined results show a 66% satisfaction level which is up a little on last year.. Whilst this is a positive message, more could be done to improve this level of satisfaction by improving expectation management and providing clarity on the levels of service that can be delivered. and engaging with communities about whether this meets their needs. Although this may be difficult with the budget pressures.
 - e) There continues to be a strong perception amongst Parish/Town Councils and County Members of the value of the service provided by District Manager and Steward team and this focal point for access to the highway service appears to be working well. Whilst the overall result is positive there are some District Manager teams where this relationship can be further improved.
 - f) Of all road types Town Centre and Country Lanes remains the biggest area of concern across all three groups but especially amongst Parish/Town Councils and residents. This is of concern with pressures on 14/15 budgets and the level of service that is possible on these minor roads. Clear expectation management is needed here.
 - g) Satisfaction with the condition of Footways has improved on last year with the combined result showing a 53% satisfaction but again Parish Councils are the least satisfied stakeholder group. A positive improvement on last year but more could be done to communicate the expectation message to Parishes and ensure they feel they have a voice on this asset.

- h) A positive 88% of residents who have used the KCC website /twitter/facebook for travel and roadwork's information were satisfied. This is a positive message and good use of emerging social media to share key information and keep customers informed.
 - i) Residents provided a wide range of examples where their journeys were impacted by congestion and these should be used in congestion strategy work. In all 35% stated that they experienced congestion on their journeys 0-5 days per month and 25% on 16+ of their journeys. This is an area worthy of further investigation.
 - j) In relation to public transport, 59% of bus users were satisfied with their local services (similar to last year). Those dissatisfied with bus services stated that 'infrequent service' (24%), 'cost of fares' (16%) and late/not punctual as the main reason. This has been a consistent message in recent surveys and one that needs to be shared with providers.
 - k) Overall 35% of residents feel that KCC does enough to support residents in making greener travel choices with 52% stating they have not taken any steps in the last 12 months to travel in a greener way (however did state they have 31% walked more and 16% used the bus more). A key balance between those who feel impacted by congestion and encouraging them to make green travel choices.
 - l) In terms of Safety Cameras helping to make roads safer across Kent 57% Members, 51% residents and 48% of Parishes Councils agreed with the statement. This % has stayed pretty consistent over the last 3 years and is no doubt impacted on by the wider media messages.
8. Examples of some of the main results included in the full report are set out in Appendix 1. Figures 1-5 show the combined County Members, Residents and Parish/Town Councils satisfaction results for Roads, Footways, Streetlights, Drainage and Satisfaction with Service Received (as these are reported at a Countywide level they have an accuracy of + or -2.8%).

Conclusions from the Director of Highways and Transportation

- 9. Overall the results show a positive trend when set against the difficult financial position that local authorities continue to find themselves in.
- 10. Clearly there is always room for improvement and the Highways and Transportation Division is continuing to develop its service delivery ethos and focus on delivering ever improving outcomes for the public of Kent. The contents of this report and the year by year tracking profile it provides continues to be helpful in helping us shape our future actions and improvement plans and as such is greatly valued.
- 11. We are entering an even more challenging period and working hard to ensure we manage expectations around the levels of service we are able to deliver. We are using the KCC website, our District Manager teams and Contact Centre colleagues (when customers report faults to us) to better explain our services and listen to customers about their concerns. A recently completed Local Government Association Peer Review identified areas of good practice but also some areas for improvements

and we will be working on these in the coming months. Key challenges will be how to engage better with local communities and our approach to managing the asset in the long term.

Further Information

12. The full tracker survey report is very large and contains much more information along with a more detailed executive summary of the issues identified from the results by BMG. A copy of the report is available on the KCC website

Background Documents: None

Other Useful Information: Highways & Transportation Highway Tracker Survey 2013

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Appendix 1

Results from the Highway Tracker Survey 2013 – Countywide results

Figure 1 – Combined Average Results - Satisfaction with the condition of Roads in the local area – year-on-year comparison (average of residents, County Members & Parish/Town Councils)

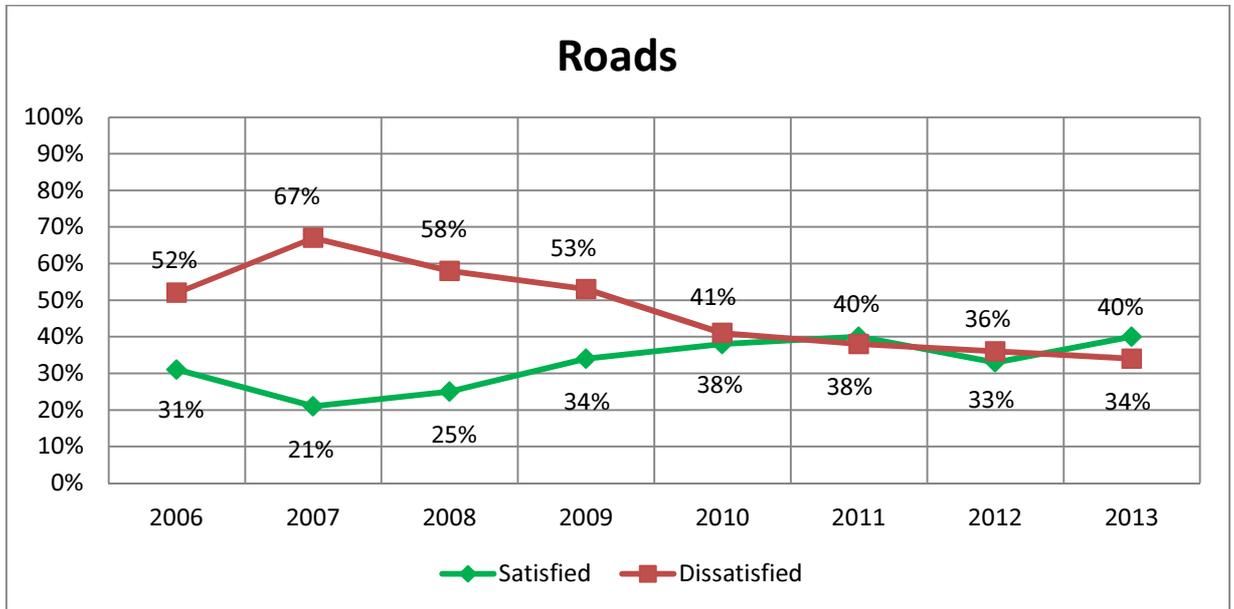


Figure 2 - Combined Average Results - Satisfaction with the condition of Footways in the local area – year-on-year comparison (average of residents, County Members & Parish/Town Councils)

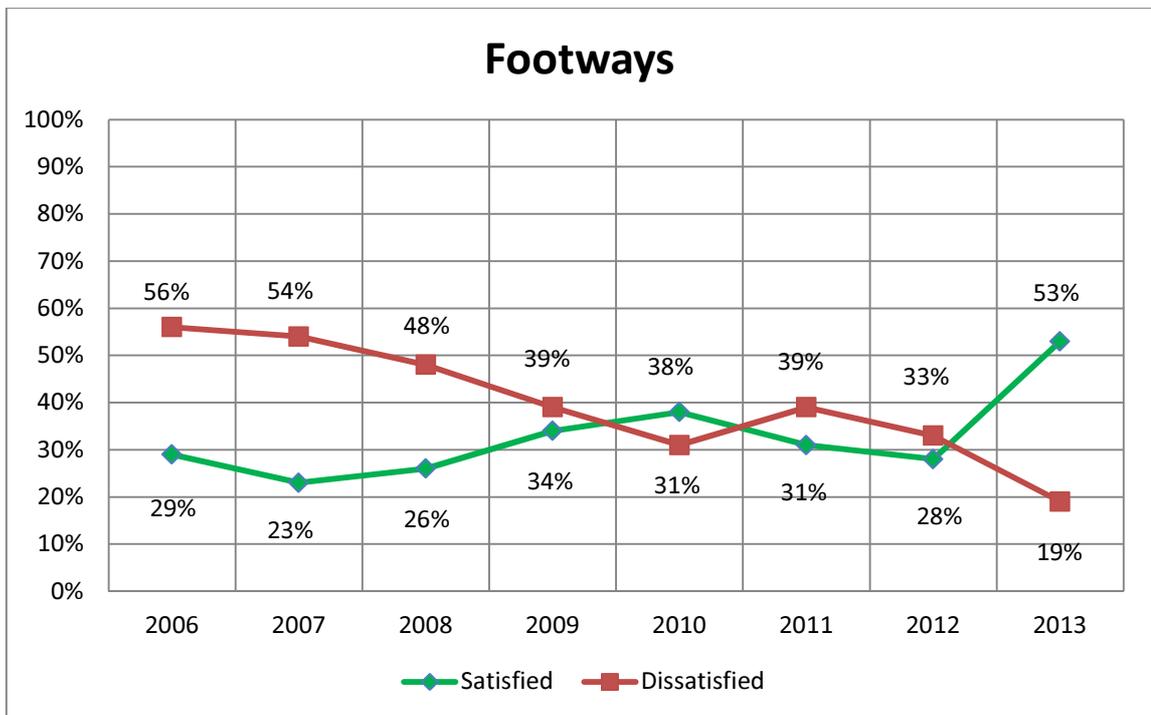


Figure 3 - Combined Average Results - overall satisfaction with Street Lighting in the local area – year-on-year comparison (average of residents, County Members & Parish/Town Councils)

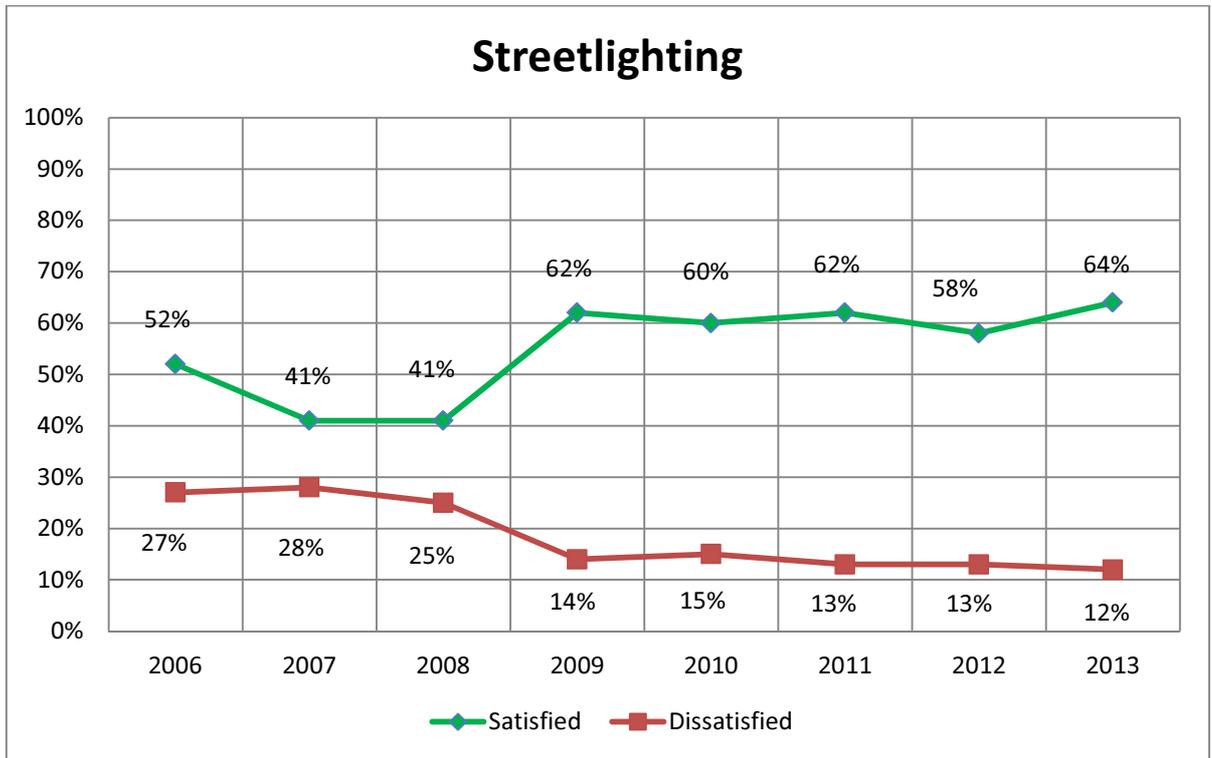


Figure 4 - Combined Average Results - overall satisfaction with Road Drains/Gullies kept clean – (average of residents, County Members & Parish/Town Councils)

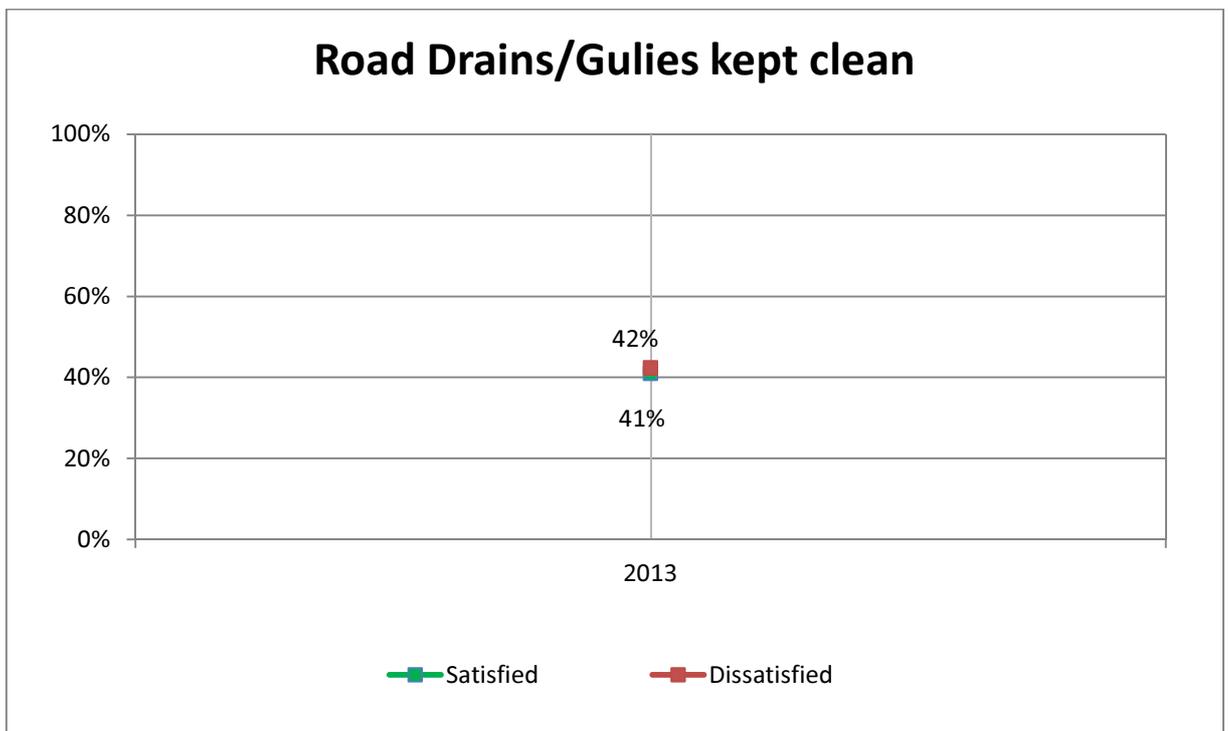
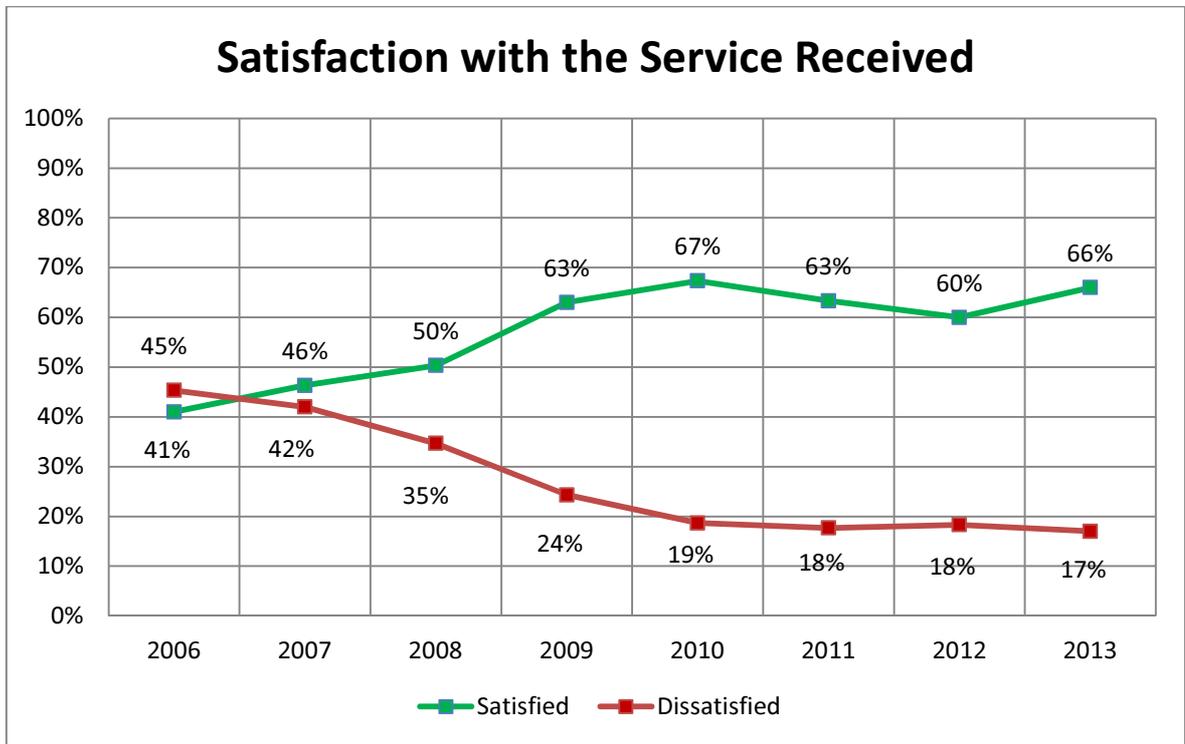


Figure 5 - Combined Average Results - overall satisfaction with the Service Received when asking for information or reporting a problem – year-on-year comparison (average of residents, County Members & Parish/Town Councils)



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