

Polling on resident satisfaction with Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council: Wave 5

July 2017



Acknowledgements

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Introduction

During 2015 and 2016, the LGA undertook four polling surveys to find out what residents of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) thought about the town and its council.¹ This piece of work formed part of ongoing improvement work within the authority. The poll asked about satisfaction with the council, perceptions of value for money and responsiveness, and trust and confidence in the council.

Following the LGA's withdrawal of direct support related to resident satisfaction, the council paid to repeat the survey in June 2017, in order to consider how, if at all, the views of residents have changed over time. The council also wished to explore resident perceptions of safety, optimism about the future of the town and views on community cohesion. A sixth polling survey is planned for December 2017.

This report details the findings of the most recent polling survey (Wave 5). It makes comparisons to the previous four polls and also to the LGA's most recent national poll of British residents, which takes place every four months. The latest national poll was made up of a representative random sample of 1,002 British adults (aged 18 or over), and was carried out by telephone between 22 and 25 June 2017.

Comparing Rotherham's results to the national picture provides useful context; however, many additional factors will influence resident views of councils at a local level, including local demographics, economic factors and social circumstances. Therefore, while the results of the polling in Rotherham provides a good high-level indication of resident views of Rotherham and its council, it is important that these polling results are seen as complementary to a wider approach to understanding and responding to communities at the local level.

¹ The polling was conducted by Populus Data Solutions.

Methodology

Between 26 June and 3 July 2017, a statistically representative random sample of 520 Rotherham residents (aged 18 or over) was polled by landline telephone.² Previous polling surveys took place in June and December in both 2015 and 2016.

The question set is outlined in Annex A for information. Most of the questions asked also feature in the LGA's regular polling on resident satisfaction. This question set was developed and tested by the LGA and Ipsos MORI, and then modified and agreed via consultation with the sector. These questions have been repeated across all five of Rotherham's polling surveys. Additional questions about perceptions of safety and community cohesion, as well as feelings of optimism about Rotherham's future and that of its town centre, were also asked.

Where tables and figures report the base, the description refers to the group of people who were asked the question. The number provided refers to the unweighted number of respondents who answered each question.

As mentioned, this report includes comparisons to the LGA's national results, where questions are the same. Differences between the national poll and Rotherham's Wave 5 results are only highlighted within the report where they are statistically significant.³

Please note the following when reading this report:

- Throughout the report, percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 due to rounding.
- The following conventions are used in tables: '*' - less than 0.5 per cent; '0' – no observations; '-' – category not applicable/data not available.

² Quotas were set on age and gender and the data weighted to the known Rotherham profile of age, gender and social grade. The polling was based on a landline sample. While this means that mobile-only households were not included in the sample, the data has been weighted to the known profile of the area, to ensure it is representative.

³ Statistical significance is tested at the 95% level.

Key findings

The LGA undertook a fifth polling survey (known as Wave 5) to capture what residents of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) currently think about the town and its council. The questions included six measures of resident satisfaction, which also feature in the LGA's regular national polling. Additional questions were also asked about residents' feelings of safety, optimism about the future of the town and views on community cohesion.

Resident satisfaction measures

Considering the six measures of resident satisfaction, the results from Wave 5 point to four key achievements for the council (also see Figure 1).

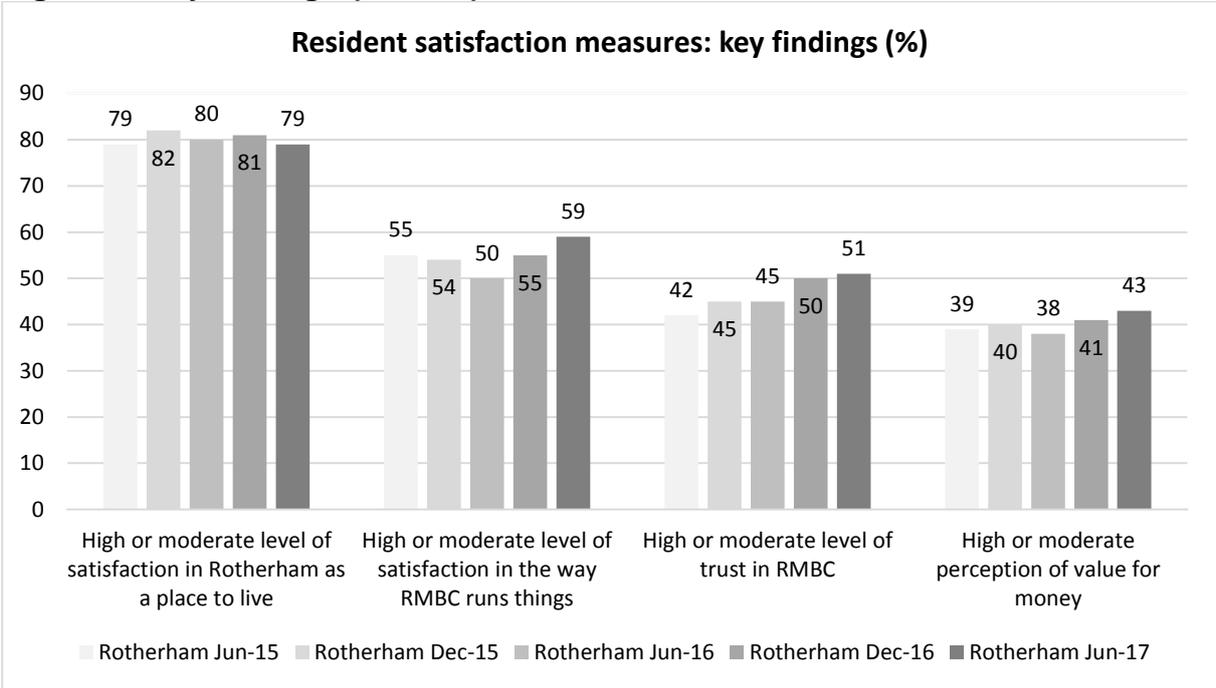
- **Satisfaction with local area as a place to live:** A strong satisfaction rating was again observed with Rotherham as a place to live (79 per cent of respondents were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied) – a level sustained across all five polls and consistent with the broader pattern nationally (81 per cent nationally).
- **Satisfaction with the way RMBC runs its services:**⁴ A majority of respondents (59 per cent) reported feeling 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with the way RMBC runs things – the highest level observed across all five polling surveys and significantly higher than a year ago (50 per cent in June 2016).
- **Trust in RMBC:** Just over half of all respondents (51 per cent) said they trusted Rotherham council 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' – a significantly higher proportion than Waves 1 to 3 and similar to Wave 4. Whereas the national figure for trust is significantly higher Rotherham's recent result (60 per cent), the proportion who were trusting of RMBC reflects an ongoing and seemingly sustainable rise compared to previous polls.
- **Provision of value for money:** For the first time, there was no significant difference in the proportion of Rotherham respondents who agreed that RMBC provides value for money and the proportion observed nationally (43 per cent in Rotherham and 47 per cent nationally). This is the highest positive result for this question across the five polls.

For the remaining two measures, perceived responsiveness of RMBC and keeping residents informed, opinions given in Wave 5 were broadly consistent with previous polls (50 per cent and 49 per cent, respectively) – positive replies fluctuate up to six and seven percentage points across the polls. The proportion of respondents

⁴ Services include refuse collection, street cleaning, planning, education, social care services and road maintenance.

replying favourably is significantly lower than the national picture (57 per cent and 58 per cent, respectively).

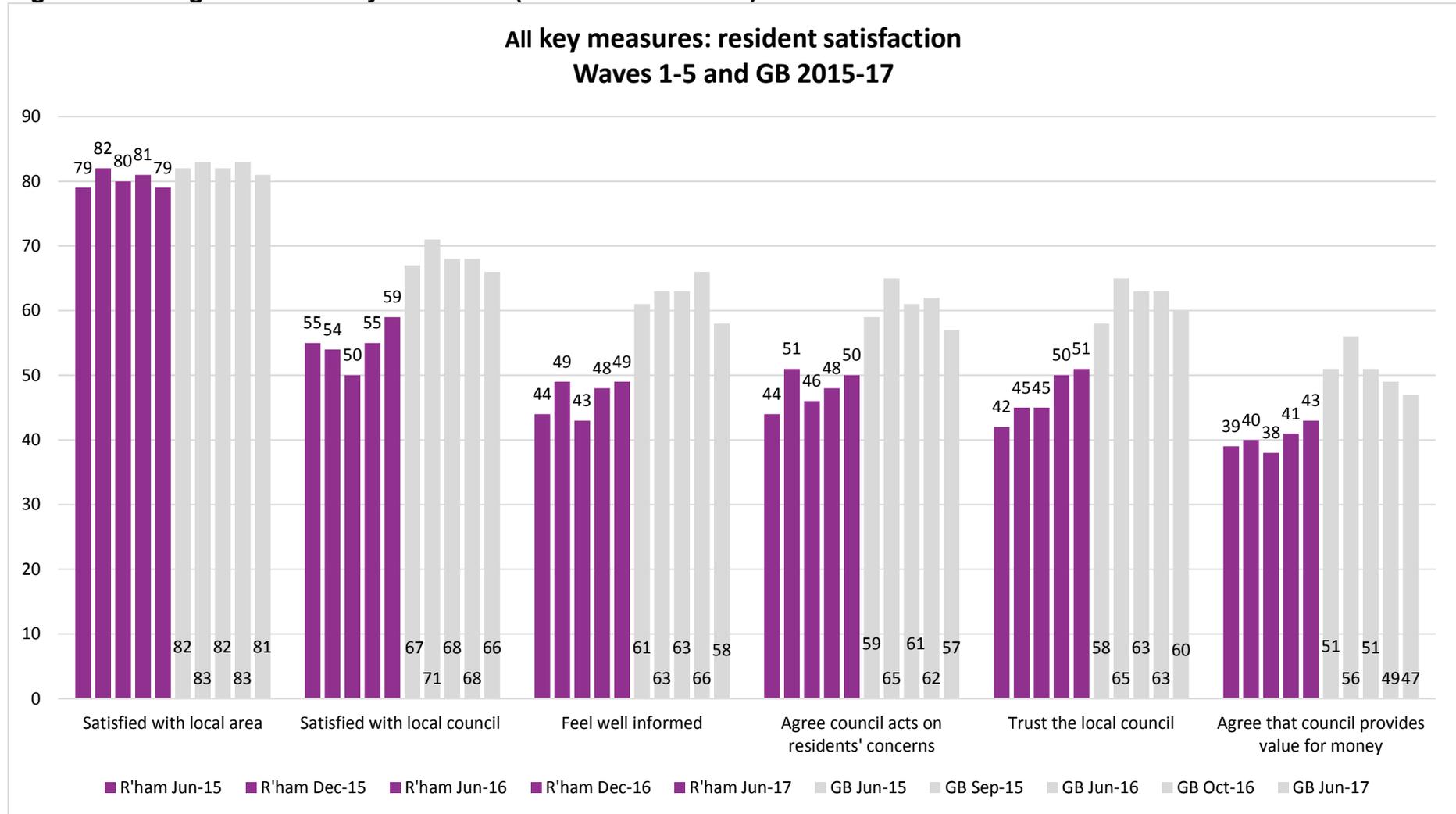
Figure 1: Key findings (Wave 5)



Base (all respondents – figure includes only those who gave a positive reply): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015 Rotherham: 528; June 2016 Rotherham: 520; Dec 2016 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 Rotherham: 520

Figure 2 summarises the polling results for the six indicators of resident satisfaction used in the Rotherham polling survey, combining the positive results achieved for each question (e.g. ‘a great amount’ and ‘a fair amount’). The results are presented alongside those from the LGA’s national polling survey, for the nearest comparable time period.

Figure 2: Polling results for key indicators (Rotherham and GB)



Base (all respondents – figure includes only those who gave a positive reply): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015 Rotherham: 528; June 2016 Rotherham: 520; Dec 2016 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 Rotherham: 520; June 2015 GB: 1008; Sept 2015 GB: 1009; June 2016 GB: 1001; Oct 2016 GB: 1002; June 2017 GB: 1002

Confidence in RMBC

- In each survey wave, respondents were asked to state the extent to which they had confidence in RMBC. In Wave 5, 50 per cent said they had a 'great' or 'moderate' amount of confidence in the council. This is a significantly higher proportion than observed in the two previous June polls, and is also higher (but not significantly) than the two December surveys – suggesting a relatively fixed upward trend. There is no national comparison for this question.

Feelings of safety, optimism and cohesion

The following results were obtained in relation to three additional questions that were added to the polling survey in Wave 5:

- **Feelings of safety:** Significantly lower feelings of safety were reported by respondents in Rotherham than those reported nationally. Eighty three per cent felt 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' during the day and 59 per cent felt the same after dark (93 per cent and 79 per cent, nationally). Importantly, there was a marked gender difference in feelings of safety after dark – 75 per cent of men said they felt 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' but only 44 per cent of women (nationally, the figures are 84 per cent for men and 74 per cent for women).
- **Feelings of optimism:** Optimism among respondents about the future of Rotherham as a place to live totalled 53 per cent (either 'very optimistic' or 'fairly optimistic'), but only 26 per cent felt the same about the future of the town centre (either 'very optimistic' or 'fairly optimistic'). There is no national comparison for this question.
- **Community cohesion perceptions:** The results from Wave 5 show no consensus among respondents as to whether or not Rotherham is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (28 per cent tended to agree, 27 per cent gave a neutral response and 23 per cent tended to disagree). There is no national comparison for this question.

Rotherham's Polling Results

This section outlines the full set of polling results for a fifth Rotherham poll which took place in June 2017 (Wave 5). Four previous polls have been conducted, one in June 2015 (Wave 1) to establish a baseline picture of residents' views of Rotherham and its council, a second in December 2015 (Wave 2), a third in June 2016 (Wave 3) and a fourth in December 2016 (Wave 4).

Satisfaction with local area as a place to live

Satisfaction with Rotherham as a place to live has remained stable since the first polling survey two years ago (see Table 1). Across the five waves, there have been no significant differences in opinion. Importantly, the proportion of respondents who were either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' – across all five polls – reflects the national picture for similar time periods.

Seventy nine per cent of respondents in Wave 5 reported feeling 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied', which is generally consistent with the proportion observed nationally, for the same period (81 per cent). Respondents in the youngest age band (18-24 years) were significantly *less* likely to report being 'very satisfied' than the average for all age groups.

Table 1: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?⁵

	Jun-15	Dec-15	Jun-16	Dec-16	Jun-17	Jun-17
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	GB
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	79	82	80	81	79	81
Very satisfied	35	31	35	35	35	35
Fairly satisfied	44	51	45	45	44	46
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	6	9	8	8	7
Fairly dissatisfied	7	6	6	7	8	8
Very dissatisfied	5	6	5	4	4	4
Don't know	-	-	*	*	*	*

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015 Rotherham: 528; June 2016 Rotherham: 520; Dec 2016 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 GB: 1002

Satisfaction with how RMBC runs things

The majority of respondents in Wave 5 (59 per cent) were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with how RMBC runs things (see Table 2).⁶ This is the highest level observed across all five polling surveys, and significantly higher than a year ago (50 per cent in June 2016). Respondents in the highest age band (65 and above) were

⁵ Local area was defined as: 'The area within 15 to 20 minutes walking distance from your home'.

⁶ Services include refuse collection, street cleaning, planning, education, social care services and road maintenance.

significantly *more* likely to report being ‘very satisfied’ than the average for all age groups.

Compared to the most recent national figure for satisfaction (66 per cent), the figure for Rotherham is significantly lower.

Table 2: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council runs things?⁷

	Jun-15	Dec-15	Jun-16	Dec-16	Jun-17	Jun-17
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	GB
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	55	54	50	55	59	66
Very satisfied	12	15	12	14	15	17
Fairly satisfied	42	39	38	41	43	49
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14	16	17	13	15	13
Fairly dissatisfied	16	18	20	19	17	13
Very dissatisfied	14	12	13	11	9	8
Don't know	*	*	*	1	*	1

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015 Rotherham: 528; June 2016 Rotherham: 520; Dec 2016 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 GB: 1002

Provision of value for money by RMBC

Forty three per cent of respondents would ‘tend to agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that RMBC provides value for money (see Table 3). This is the highest positive result for this question across the five polls (although opinion does not vary enough to indicate a significant change). For the first time, the result is *not* significantly lower than the proportion observed nationally (47 per cent, for the same period) – indicating no meaningful difference in the positive responses given by respondents in Rotherham compared to those given across the country, with regards to perceptions about value for money.⁸

⁷ The GB polling asked about ‘your local council’ rather than naming an individual council.

⁸ Previous results were: June 2015: Rotherham 39%, GB 51%; December 2015: Rotherham 40%, GB 56%; June 2016: Rotherham 38%, GB 56%; December 2016: Rotherham 41%, GB 49%.

Table 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council provides value for money?⁹

	Jun-15	Dec-15	Jun-16	Dec-16	Jun-17	Jun-17
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	GB
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Strongly or tend to agree	39	40	38	41	43	47
Strongly agree	8	10	7	7	9	10
Tend to agree	31	31	31	34	34	37
Neither agree nor disagree	28	33	29	30	30	25
Tend to disagree	19	17	19	19	19	16
Strongly disagree	13	8	13	9	7	11
Don't know	1	1	*	2	1	1

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015 Rotherham: 528; June 2016 Rotherham: 520; Dec 2016 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 GB: 1002

Responsiveness of RMBC

Council responsiveness is an important measure of local accountability as it looks at whether councils are perceived to be receptive to local issues and problems (see Table 4). Fifty per cent of respondents in Rotherham answered positively when asked about the extent to which RMBC acts on the concerns of local residents (i.e. ‘a great deal’ or ‘a fair amount’). This is similar to the previous polling survey, but is significantly lower than the national results (57 per cent).

Table 4: To what extent do you think Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council acts on the concerns of local residents?

	Jun-15	Dec-15	Jun-16	Dec-16	Jun-17	Jun-17
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	GB
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal or fair amount	44	51	46	48	50	57
A great deal	5	7	6	6	8	8
A fair amount	39	44	40	42	42	49
Not very much	37	36	37	36	37	31
Not at all	12	9	13	11	9	8
Don't know	7	4	4	5	3	3

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015 Rotherham: 528; June 2016 Rotherham: 520; Dec 2016 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 GB: 1002

Keeping residents informed

Forty nine per cent of Rotherham respondents in Wave 5 said that RMBC keeps residents ‘very well’ or ‘fairly well’ informed about the services and benefits it provides (see Table 5). This is significantly lower than the most recent national result

⁹ The following preamble was used: “In considering the next question, please think about the range of services [Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council/your council] provides to the community as a whole, as well as the services your household uses. It does not matter if you do not know all of the services [Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council/your council] provides to the community. We would like your general opinion.”

(58 per cent), but is similar to the figure achieved for RMBC in the previous poll (48 per cent).

Table 5: Overall, how well informed do you think Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?						
	Jun-15	Dec-15	Jun-16	Dec-16	Jun-17	Jun-17
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	GB
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly well informed	44	49	43	48	49	58
Very well informed	6	8	7	8	7	11
Fairly well informed	38	42	36	40	42	47
Not very well informed	37	35	38	34	39	30
Not well informed at all	15	14	18	17	11	1
Don't know	3	2	*	1	1	1

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015 Rotherham: 528; June 2016 Rotherham: 520; Dec 2016 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 GB: 1002

Trust in RMBC

Fifty one per cent of respondents said they trusted Rotherham council 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' (see Table 6). This proportion is significantly higher than the two polling surveys carried out in 2015 and also June 2016 (42, 45 and 45 per cent, respectively). While the national figure is significantly higher than the result for Wave 5 (60 per cent), this recent result signifies a significant improvement in trust compared to the first three polls and is also an increase on the result achieved in December 2016.

Resident trust in their council is an important aspect of reputation which is likely to impact on issues such as democratic legitimacy and engagement. In terms of what the word 'trust' means, it is useful to look at the results of the cognitive testing carried out as part of the review to develop this question.¹⁰ The testing indicated that respondents based their answers on criteria including: transparency and openness, upholding promises, responding to residents, reliability and any recollection of 'scandal'.

¹⁰ Are you being served? Benchmarking resident satisfaction data: consultation response (LGA, 2012) <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/residents-satisfaction-fi-893.pdf>

Table 6: How much do you trust Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council?

	Jun-15	Dec-15	Jun-16	Dec-16	Jun-17	Jun-17
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	GB
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal or fair amount	42	45	45	50	51	60
A great deal	6	7	5	9	9	8
A fair amount	35	38	40	42	43	52
Not very much	34	39	32	32	32	28
Not at all	22	15	22	15	15	11
Don't know	2	1	1	2	2	1

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015 Rotherham: 528; June 2016 Rotherham: 520; Dec 2016 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 GB: 1002

Confidence in RMBC

As Table 7 shows, 50 per cent of respondents in Wave 5 stated that they have confidence in RMBC (either 'to a great extent' or 'to a moderate extent') – a significantly higher proportion than for Wave 2 (June 2015, 41 per cent) and Wave 4 (June 2016, 44 per cent). Indeed, this is the highest level of agreement given for this question across the five polling surveys. This indicates a significant improvement in confidence since the first poll (from 41 per cent to 50 per cent). There is no national comparison for this question.

Table 7: To what extent would you say that you have confidence in Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council?

	Jun-15	Dec-15	Jun-16	Dec-16	Jun-17
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5
	%	%	%	%	%
To a great or moderate extent	41	45	44	49	50
To a great extent	6	7	4	7	7
To a moderate extent	35	38	39	42	43
To a small extent	33	37	32	31	35
Not at all	25	18	23	19	14
Don't know	1	*	1	1	1

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015 Rotherham: 528; June 2016 Rotherham: 520; Dec 2016 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 GB: 1002

Feelings of safety

The June 2017 Rotherham survey asked two questions about feelings of personal safety, which also feature in the LGA's national polling survey. Eighty three per cent of respondents in Rotherham said they felt 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' during the day when outside in their local area, and 59 per cent reported the same feelings of safety after dark. Both results are significantly lower than the proportions observed nationally – mainly because a much smaller proportion of respondents in Rotherham said they felt 'very safe' in their local area.

There was a significant difference in men and women’s feelings of safety after dark in the Rotherham polling survey, with 75 per cent of men reporting feeling ‘very safe’ or ‘fairly safe’ compared to only 44 per cent of women (84 per cent for men and 74 for women in the LGA’s most recent poll).

Table 8: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day? How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?

	During the day		After dark	
	Jun-17	Jun-17	Jun-17	Jun-17
	Wave 5	GB	Wave 5	GB
	%	%	%	%
Very safe or fairly safe	83	93	59	79
Very safe	34	62	17	34
Fairly safe	49	31	43	45
Neither safe nor unsafe	7	3	10	11
Fairly unsafe	5	2	18	7
Very unsafe	4	1	10	3
Don't know	*	*	2	*

Base (all respondents): June 2017 Rotherham: 520; June 2017 GB: 1002

Feelings of optimism

Most respondents (53 per cent) reported feeling ‘very optimistic’ or ‘fairly optimistic’ about the future of Rotherham as a place to live (see Table 9). Far fewer respondents, however, reported feeling as positive about the future Rotherham town centre (26 per cent felt ‘very optimistic’ or ‘fairly optimistic’). There is no comparable data for these questions.

Table 9: How optimistic do you feel about the future of Rotherham as a place to live? And, more specifically, how optimistic do you feel about the future of Rotherham town centre?

	Rotherham as a place to live	Rotherham town centre
	Jun-17	Jun-17
	Wave 5	Wave 5
	%	%
Very optimistic or fairly optimistic	53	26
Very optimistic	7	5
Fairly optimistic	45	21
Not very optimistic	34	38
Not optimistic at all	13	33
Don't know	*	3

Base (all respondents) 520

Community cohesion perceptions

The polling survey generated mixed responses from respondents about perceptions of community cohesion. There was no clear consensus reached among respondents as to whether or not Rotherham was seen as a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, with 28 per cent tending to agree with the

statement, 27 per cent giving a neutral response and 23 per cent tending to disagree. Overall agreement totalled 34 per cent, while overall disagreement totalled 38 per cent.

Table 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that Rotherham is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?	
	Jun-17
	Wave 5
	%
Strongly agree or tend to agree	34
Strongly agree	5
Tend to agree	28
Neither agree nor disagree	27
Tend to disagree	23
Strongly disagree	15
Don't know	2

Base (all respondents) 520

Annex A: Polling questions

- 1. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?** *Please consider your local area to be the area within 15-20 minutes walking distance from your home.*

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Don't know

Your local area receives services from Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is responsible for a range of services such as refuse collection, street cleaning, planning, education, social care services and road maintenance.

- 2. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council runs things?**

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Don't know

In considering the next question, please think about the range of services Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council provides to the community as a whole, as well as the services your household uses. It does not matter if you do not know all of the services Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council provides to the community. We would like your general opinion.

- 3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council provides value for money?**

Strongly agree
Tend to agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Tend to disagree
Strongly disagree
Don't know

4. To what extent do you think Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council acts on the concerns of local residents?

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Not at all

5. Overall, how well informed do you think Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council keeps residents?

- Very well informed
- Fairly well informed
- Not very well informed
- Not well informed at all

6. How much do you trust Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council?

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Not at all

7. To what extent would you say that you have confidence in Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council?

- To a great extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a small extent
- Not at all

8. How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?

Please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home

- Very safe
- Fairly safe
- Neither safe nor unsafe
- Fairly unsafe
- Very unsafe

9. How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day?

Please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home

10. How optimistic do you feel about the future of Rotherham as a place to live?

- Very optimistic
- Fairly optimistic
- Not very optimistic
- Not optimistic at all

11. And, more specifically, how optimistic do you feel about the future of Rotherham town centre?

- Very optimistic
- Fairly optimistic
- Not very optimistic
- Not optimistic at all

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Rotherham is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together? *By getting on well together, we mean living alongside each other with respect.*

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree



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