

## Main Findings from LJC Evaluation 2009/10

Nearly 450 responses to the evaluation survey were received being:

- 330 responses from attendees, including individual members of the public, partners and representatives from community groups
- 106 responses from elected Members of the Committees, including 67 from town and parish councillors and 39 Shropshire Councillors.

In addition a separate survey of officers engaged in the LJCs was undertaken with 64 responses. The analysis of the surveys detailed in this appendix incorporates only the responses from attendees and elected Members. Officer feedback is being used to improve systems and to share good practice amongst the LJCs moving forward. Findings from the LJC Summit also appear at the end of this appendix.

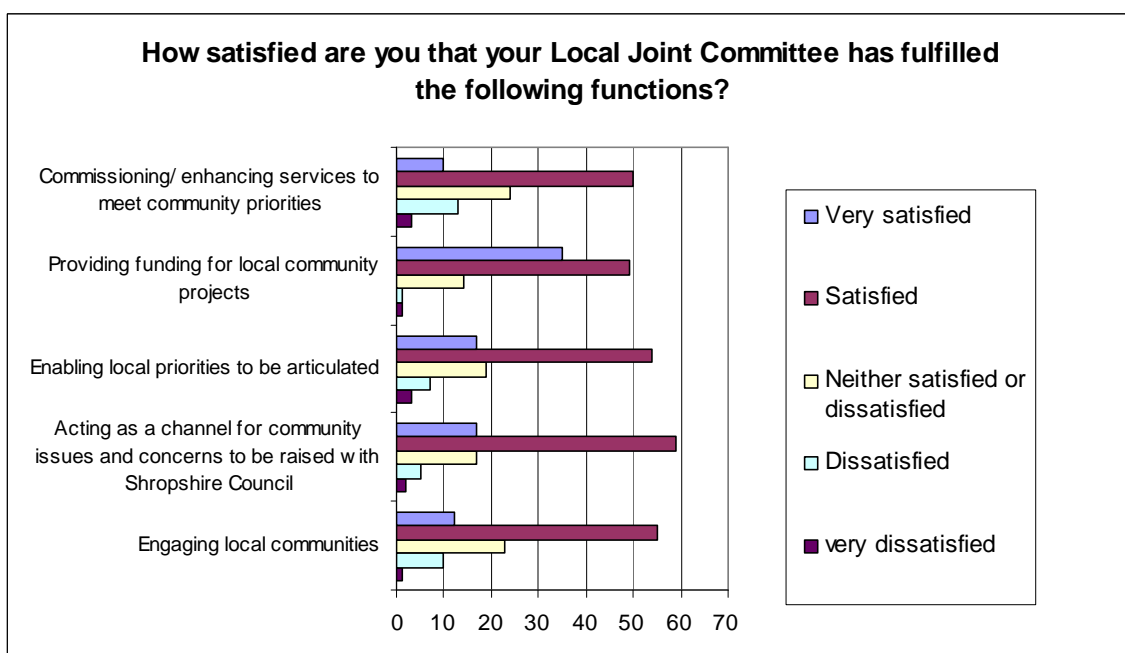
### Key Findings

- Approximately 98% of parish councils are taking part
- Approximately 80% of town/parish councils attend each meeting
- Approximately 84% of Shropshire Councillors attend each meeting

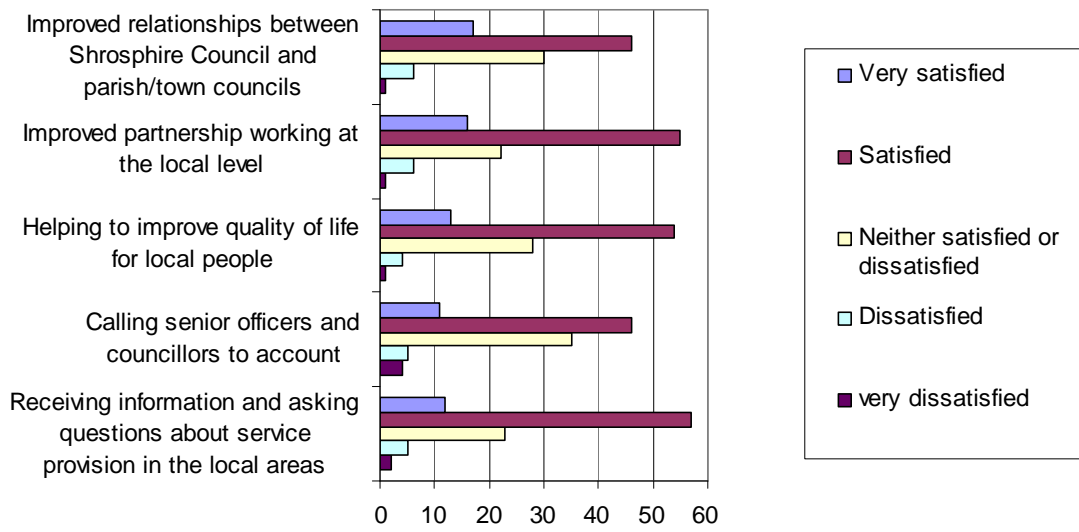
Meeting Attendance has been increasing:

- Round 1 – 660 attendees
- Round 2 – 884 attendees
- Round 3 – 791 attendees (bad weather disruption)
- Round 4 – 958 attendees

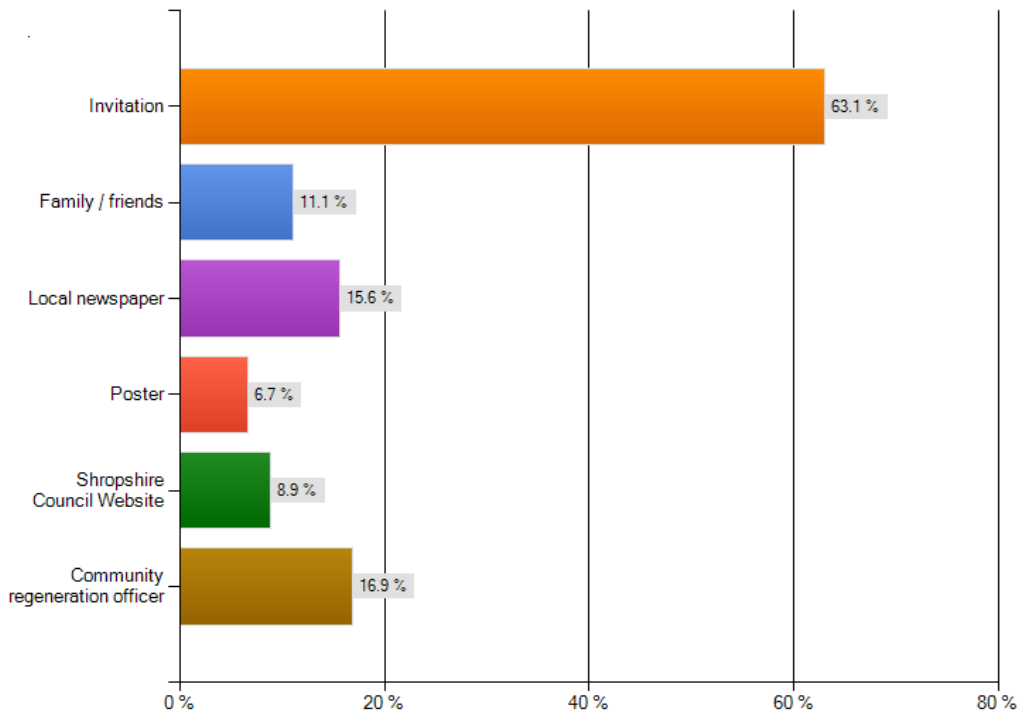
Of those that are attending 68% are satisfied and 90% are likely to attend further meetings. The majority of the feedback at meetings, through the evaluation survey and the LJC Summit is very positive. The following graphs depict the main evaluation findings from the surveys.

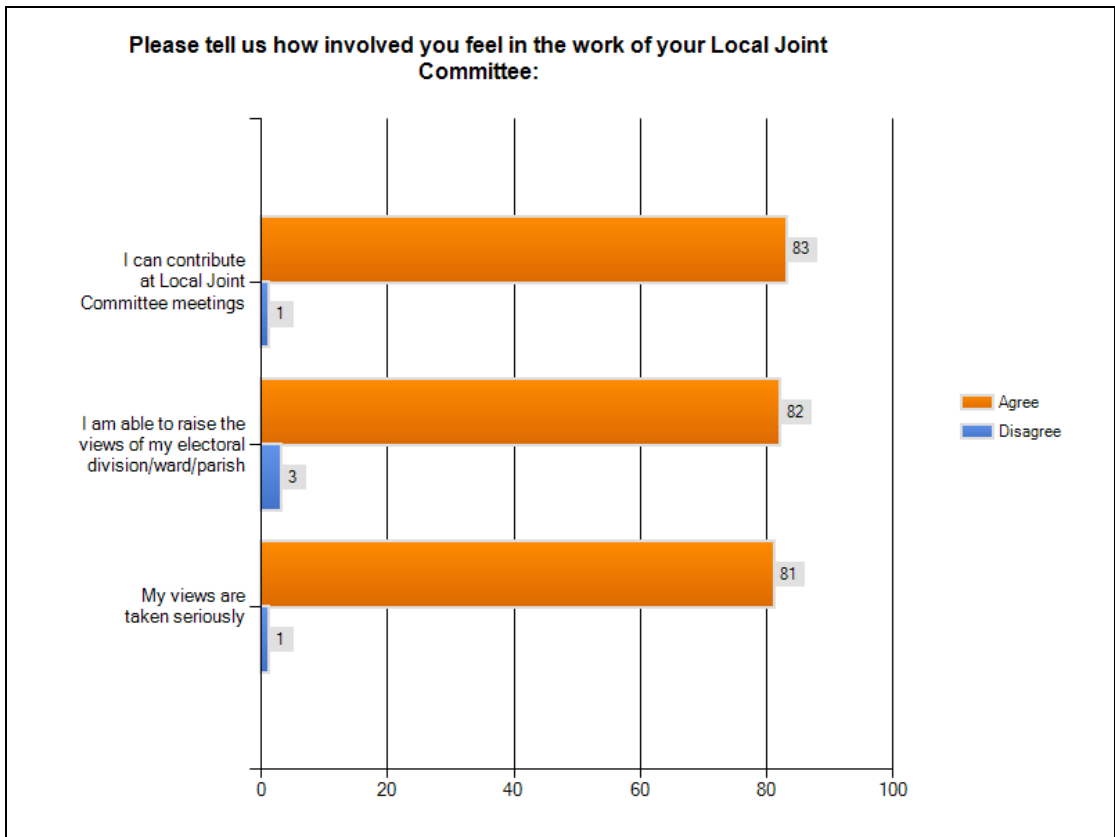
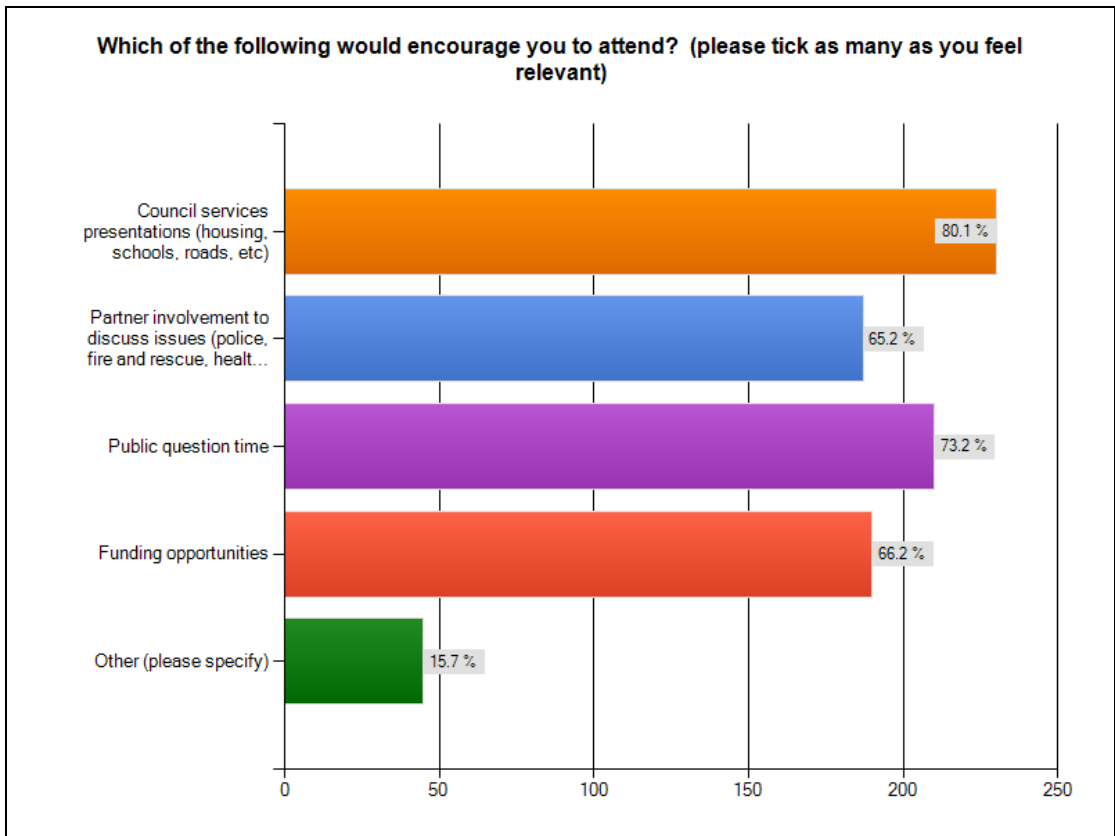


**How satisfied are you that your Local Joint Committee has fulfilled the following functions? (continued)**



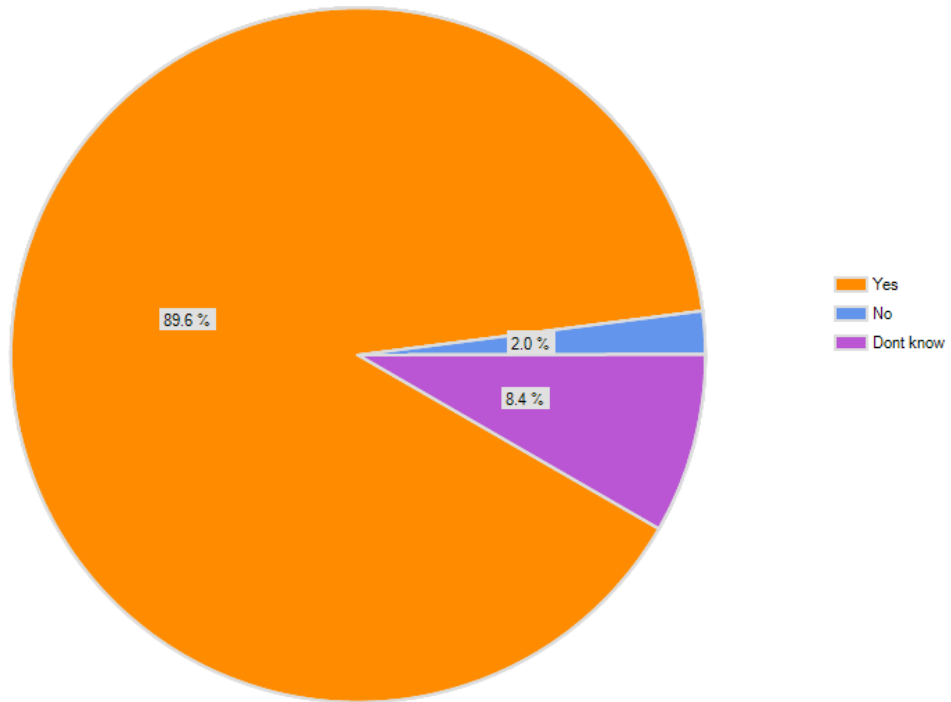
**How do you usually find out about your Local Joint Committee?**



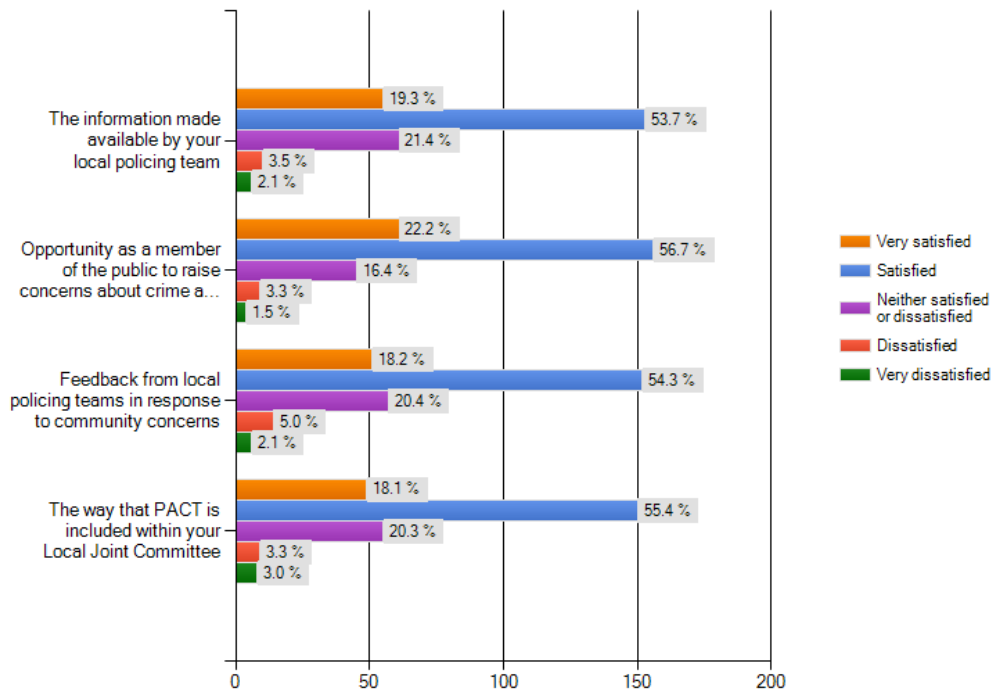


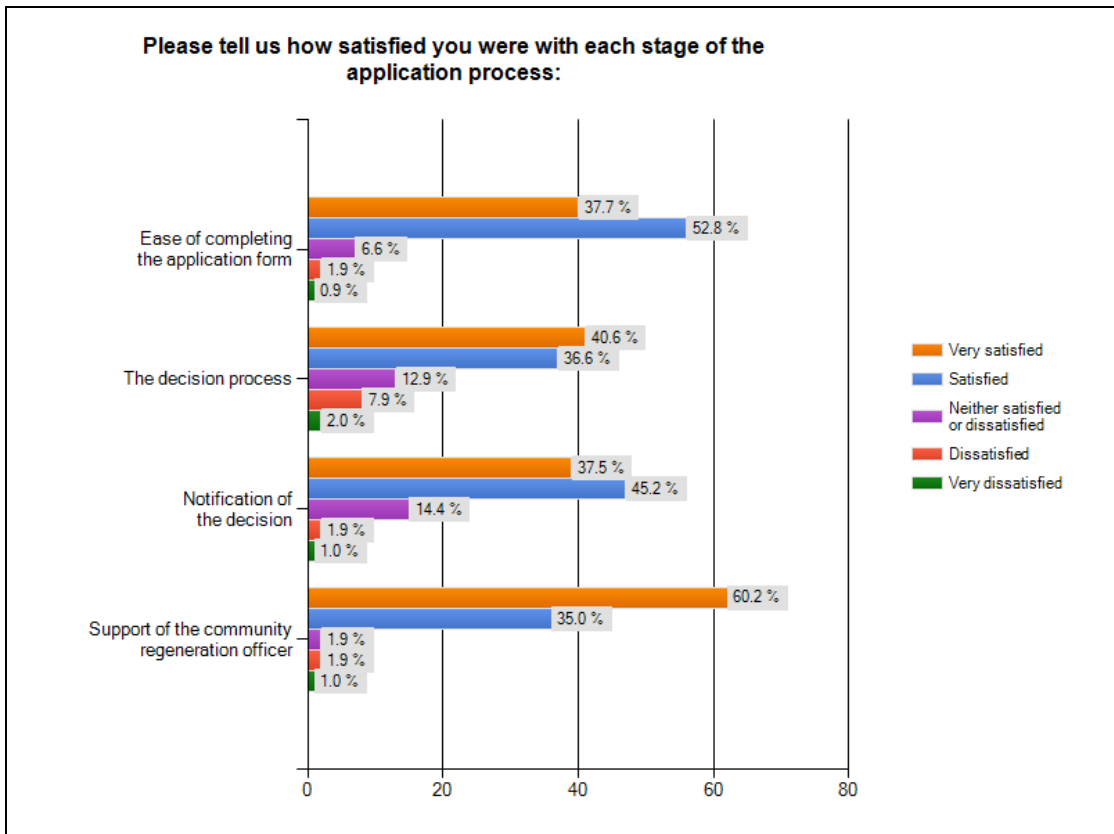
*(Elected Members only)*

Do you think that it has been beneficial to include partner services (police, fire, etc) within your Local Joint Committee meetings?

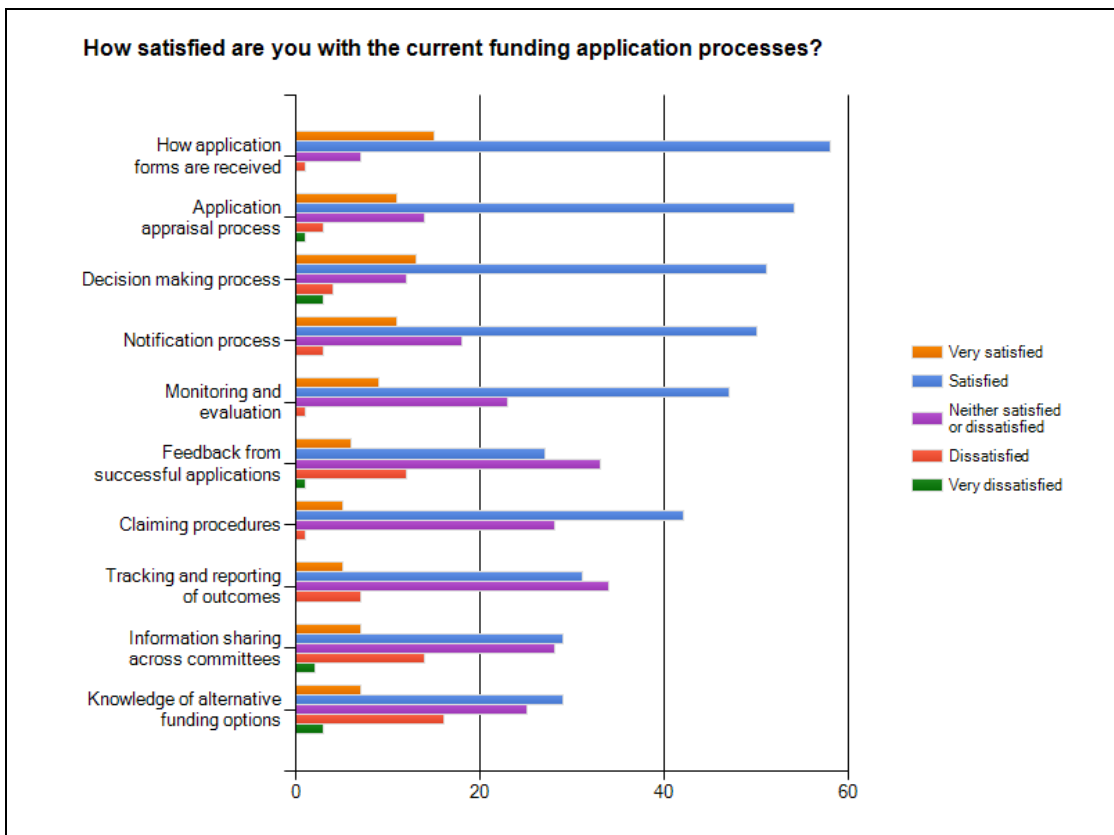


In relation to the police PACT (Partners and Communities together), how satisfied are you with the following?

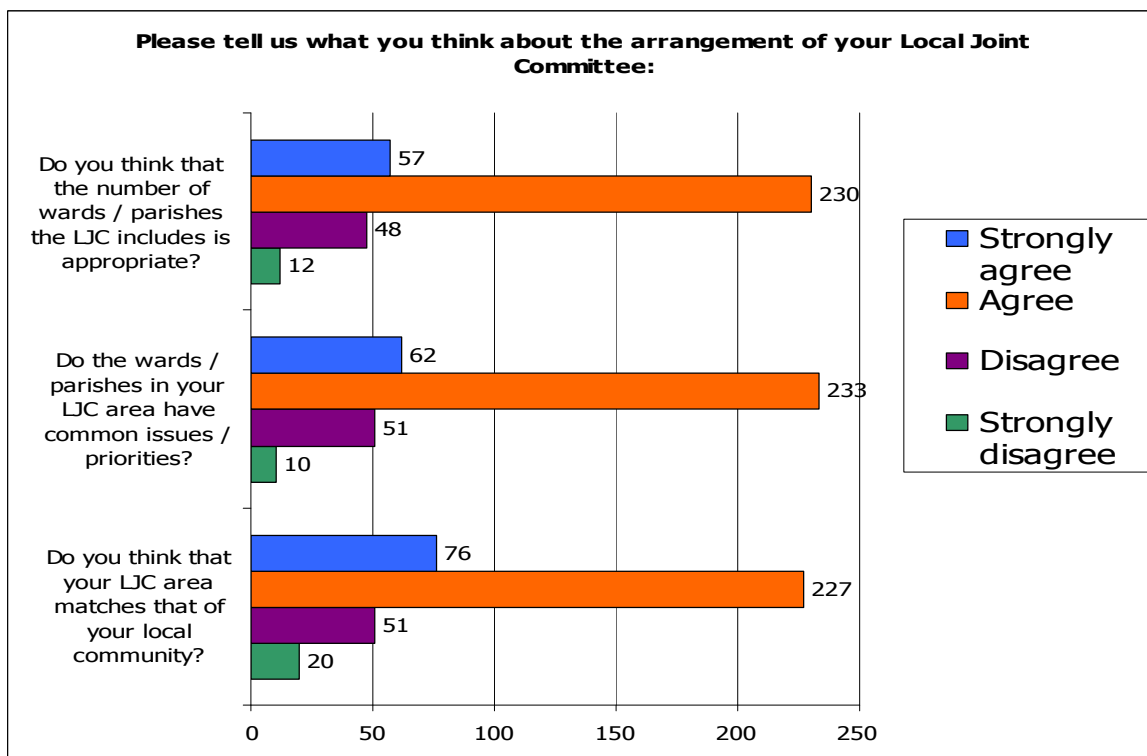




*(Applicants only)*



*(Elected Members Only)*



Below are some of the comments made to the free text questions:

### Geographical arrangement of the LJCs

Majority response agreeing that their LJC area matches local community; parishes have common issues; number of parishes is appropriate, but, of those disagreeing or strongly disagreeing there are a number of themes, namely:

- There are significant differences between the constituent parts of some LJC areas. This may be due to the different interests and priorities of urban as opposed to rural areas, or due to differences in socio-economic factors across an area.
- Some particular parishes and parts of LJC areas have more in common and are naturally drawn to a neighbouring LJC area as opposed to the one they are currently part of.
- Areas of concern quoted include Broseley/Barrow being separate from Much Wenlock and in turn, Highley being placed with Much Wenlock; Moreton Say and Adderley identifying with Market Drayton rather than Whitchurch; Weston under Redcastle and Whixhall having a greater affinity with Prees and Whitchurch; Wem and Shawbury – no commonality between western and eastern parishes; Column and Sutton shouldn't be attached to Meole; Meole Brace should be joined with Radbrook; Hordley has more in common with Ellesmere.
- Some LJC areas are too large and there are too many parishes in some.

### Administrative Arrangements

Strong and positive responses regarding the administrative arrangements, including the receipt of agenda papers, the room layout, the use of different venues, and the use of pre agenda meetings.

Some respondents expressed concern about the pre agenda process. One stated that the discussion of grant applications at pre agenda meetings could lead to pre determination, whilst another felt that it was unnecessary to get all members of the committee together for pre agenda meetings and that this should be left primarily to the Chair & vice Chair.

Other respondents referred to the importance of choice of venue given that this sometimes restricted the options for layout. One respondent felt that it was confusing to regular attendees having different venues.

### **Improving the LJC constitution**

86% of respondents had no suggestions for improving the constitution but of those who did, comments included:

- Allowing for community representatives to chair LJC's; more regular discussion of the constitution and its content; changing the quorum to include more parish & town councillors; and providing for more community involvement in meetings.

### **Improving the financial procedures**

78% of respondents had no suggestions for improving the financial procedures but of those who did comments included:

- Allowing votes to be agreed by the whole meeting not just Members; giving out of monies on a piecemeal basis reduces the opportunity to benefit the whole patch; the need for prompt payment of grants when applications are agreed; money going to larger parishes with some smaller parishes not making bids; the use of follow up to check that grants have been used for the approved purpose; and more clarity on the evaluation of bids.

### **Improving the funding application process**

69% of respondents had no suggestions for improving the funding application process but of those who did common themes included:

- Greater clarity on the criteria for judging applications.
- More speedy notification and payment of grants.
- More feedback on successful applications and the benefits and outcomes arising.
- Single comments made included: A requirement for three estimates for every item over £500; provision of recent accounts and demonstrate own efforts as a percentage of the project cost; giving the public a chance to vote; and more publicity about what's available.

### **Improving the publicity of LJC's**

42% of respondents had suggestions for improvement. Common themes included:

- Giving LJC's autonomy to develop own poster design. Several respondents thought that the posters should have a more local feel and not be constrained by corporate design.
- Earlier distribution of posters with much clearer reference to date, venue etc and use of local photograph.

- More publicity and promotion about the work of the LJC, including the difference that grants have made to the local community.
- More use of press releases and local publications.
- Single comments made included: Direct invitations to representatives of community groups; advertisements in Shropshire Star; use schools to encourage children to get parents involved; use of friendly not formal narrative on web pages.

### **The most successful elements**

The main issue flagged was the availability of funding to support worthwhile local organisations and projects. Other common themes included:

- Joint working between parishes and with Shropshire Council.
- Promoting debate and responding successfully to local issues and concerns.
- Community engagement and attendance, coupled with the ability to meet and question Councillors and officers.

### **Needing the greatest attention**

The two most mentioned issues were improving the publicity and press releases for LJC meetings and improving public engagement, attendance and participation. Other issues raised included:

- Improving the scrutiny role.
- The tension between the formal aspects of the committee and the desire to get people involved and having their say.
- The length of meetings and the need to not place too much business on agenda.
- Need to assess the cost effectiveness of LJC's against the achievements realised.

### **The Officer Support Available**

Positive responses made regarding the officer support available to LJC's, and knowledge of the individuals performing the different roles. A small number of respondents referred to the excessive attendance of Officers at meetings. One respondent saw no purpose in the role of Support Officer.

### **Other comments:**

Wide and varied responses, including:

- LJC's are a Shropshire success story and one of the best things to come out of the unitary process.
- LJC's need greater clarity on role and objectives.
- Too early to confidently evaluate the success of LJC's.
- If there's to be any change in areas these need to be realistic so as not to put too many parishes together.
- The membership of LJC's should be extended beyond local councillors.



## **LJC Summit - April 2010 - Summary of Group Discussions**

The Summit broke in to thirteen groups and discussed the following:

- What is currently working well that we can build on further?
- What are the obstacles to achieving our aims?
- What can we do better to support elected Members in this work?

In summary key points raised were:

### **Funding**

- Grant applicants making presentations to meetings works well, as does feedback on the implementation of their activities at future meetings
- Several LJCs ringfence funding for young people's activities
- Supporting local community activity with small amounts of funding can have a big impact
- The current application process is simple, although local interpretation is leading to some inconsistency in what is eligible for support
- Some concerns about the sustainability of the funding and the potential for applications from the same groups year on year
- Some LJC meetings giving too much focus to the grants available
- Not enough joint discussions with neighbouring LJCs on shared funding
- Should promote more the activities supported through LJC grants

### **Community Engagement**

- Community engagement is limited and we need to find different ways to encourage more people to attend

### **Meeting Format**

- A more informal style is welcomed by most although this can create some tensions with the formal decision making aspects of the meetings

### **Scrutiny**

- Any scrutiny role for the LJCs, and the link to Council Scrutiny, needs to be more clearly defined

### **Governance Structures and Geographies**

- Some LJCs considered too big and others too small
- Many of the initial concerns have been overcome and most are working well with town and parish councils
- Some think 28 is too many whilst others think they are not currently local enough

### **Publicity and Promotion**

The posters don't seem to work – need to emphasise the information more