

Member Wellbeing Survey 2022

Report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

1) Recommendation

That the Steering Group be asked to:

- (a) Review the results of the Member Wellbeing Survey 2022.
- (b) Agree any resulting actions from the survey.

2) Background / Introduction

- 2.1 After a request from the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services (CIRS) Scrutiny Committee, an initial member wellbeing survey was created and ran from 8th December 2020 to 4th January 2021. Following on from this, additional surveys have been repeated in April 2021 and December 2021 to January 2022.
- 2.2 At the Member Development Steering Group meeting on 29th September 2022, Councillors agreed to run the survey for a fourth time. The fourth Member Wellbeing Survey ran from 1st December 2022 to 3rd January 2023.
- 2.3 This survey asked the some of the same questions as the original survey in order to compare across surveys. In addition, Councillors were asked about personal safety, the Council's Member development offer and their use of the Member's Area on SharePoint. The results from the repeated questions is shown in the appendix.
 - 1. Your name
 - 2. Which of the following describes how you currently feel?
 - 3. What are you doing to support your overall health and wellbeing?
 - 4. How well supported by DCC do you feel at this time?
 - 5. What one thing could the Council do to support you better at this time?
 - 6. Have you ever felt at risk when fulfilling the Councillor role?
 - 7. If you selected yes and if you feel comfortable in doing so, please provide a brief summary of any incidents.
 - 8. How effective is the authority's arrangements for protecting you?
 - 9. Is there anything further the Council should/could do to further support elected members from abuse and/or intimidation?
 - 10. How satisfied are you about the Council's overall member development offer?
 - 11. Thinking ahead for the next 2 years of the Council term, what areas of training and development should we focus on for Members?
 - 12. How confident are you in... (e.g. using SharePoint?)

13. On SharePoint, how often have you accessed (e.g. the who's who page?)

2.4 Questions 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 13 were multiple choice answers while the others were open questions where respondents could input their own answers.

2.5 Just under half of Members responded to the survey (29 out of 60 or 48.3%). This was a decrease compared to the previous survey (65%) but above the first and second surveys, which had response rates of 28.3% and 36.6% respectively.

3) Member Wellbeing Survey 2022

3.1 The summary of the survey is as follows:

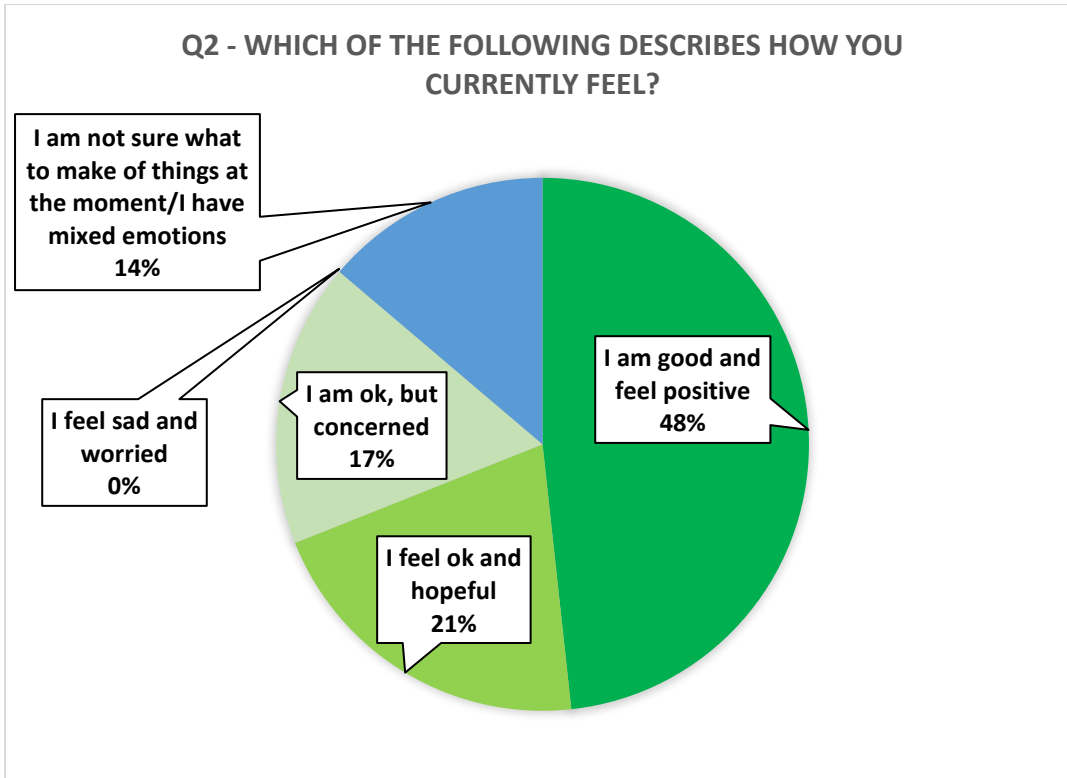
- Overall, the majority of respondents continue to feel positive, choosing between the two 'positive' responses. However, there is a continuing trend in this number falling and a rise in respondents with mixed emotions.
- Respondents are carrying out more activities or ways to support their wellbeing. Keeping in contact with friends and family was the most selected response, and there were declines in the number of respondents using exercise or a good routine to support their wellbeing. There was a concerning small number of respondents who stated they were seeking professional help.
- A large majority of Members (82%) responding to the survey continue to feel "well" supported by the Council.
- The majority of respondents don't feel at risk when carrying out their role as an elected member, and a small number reported some instances as part of the survey.
- 79% of respondents were satisfied with the overall Member Development offer of the Council and made suggestions for future training.
- Most respondents are confident in getting the information they need and using some of the Council's digital platforms. More needs to be done to ensure more Members are confident in using the Member's Area on SharePoint and utilise its functions.

Wellbeing

3.2 In response to Question 2 ("Which of the following describes how you currently feel?"), respondents had 5 options to pick from which currently reflected their wellbeing at the time of taking the survey.

3.3 Overall, the majority of Members responding to the survey continue to feel positive, with 69% selecting the two most 'positive' answers. In this survey 49% of respondents selected "I am good and feel positive" and 21% selected "I feel ok and hopeful".

3.4 However, this survey continues the trend seen in the previous surveys that have seen the overall responses to 'positive' answers decline. For the first time, less than 50% of respondents selected the "I am good and feel positive" and there has been a rise in those selecting the "I am not sure what to make of things at the moment/I have mixed emotions" option, rising from 2.5% in the previous survey to 14% in this survey.



3.5 Question 3 asked respondents “What are you doing to support your overall health and wellbeing?” and like Question 2 respondents were given a selection of answers to pick from with an ‘Other’ box for respondents to input their own answers.

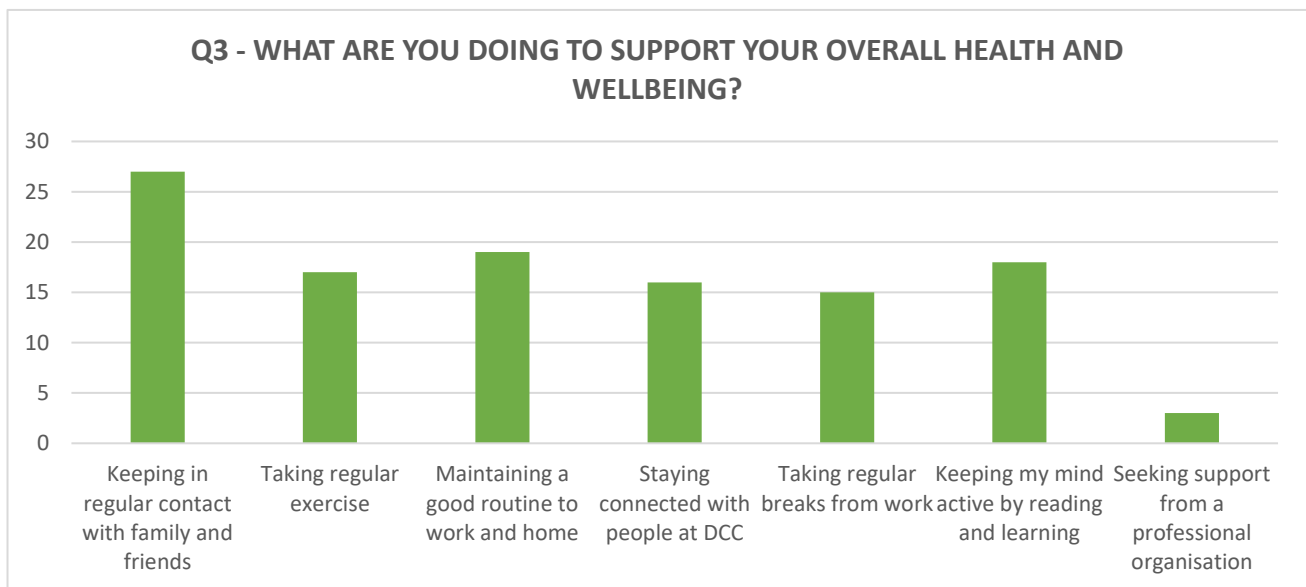
3.6 Overall, we can still see evidence of the range of activities that respondents are taking to support their health and wellbeing. In total, 115 responses were given from the 29 respondents. This was only 5 less than the previous survey, despite having 10 less respondents. On average, each Member had selected 4 activities, 1 higher than the previous survey.

3.7 The most frequent activity was “Keeping in regular contact with family and friends” (27), followed by “maintaining a good routine to work and home” (19) and “taking regular exercise” (18). Aside from “Keeping in regular contact with family and friends” and “seeking support from a professional organisation”, all of the responses fell within the 19-15 range.

3.8 What is interesting is the higher frequency of respondents choosing “keeping in contact with friends and family”, following the trend seen across all 4 surveys which has seen this number rise each time, showing the importance of a support network to Members.

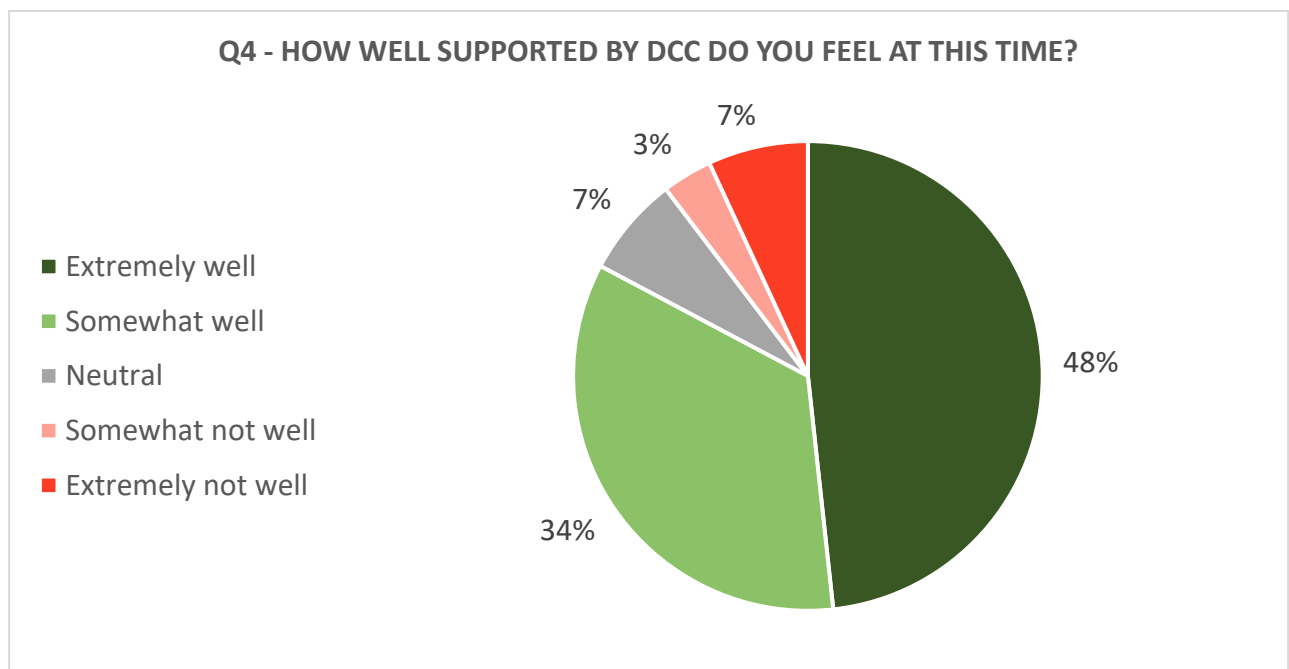
3.9 There was a fall in “maintaining a good routine to work and home” and “taking regular exercise” from the previous survey, reversing the trend from previous surveys which had seen both options increase. This could largely be attributed to the season, and the particularly cold weather when the survey was run in December 2022.

3.10 Concerningly, 3 members selected the “Seeking support from a professional organisation” response. Across all 3 previous surveys, only once has a respondent selected this response.



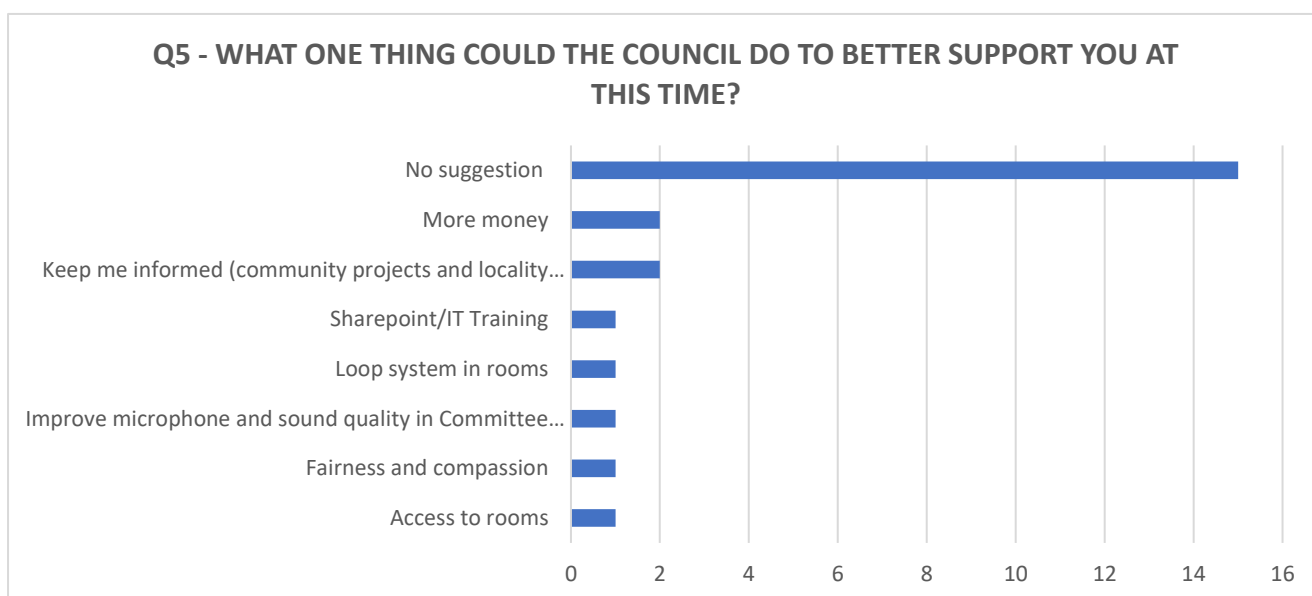
Support from the Council

3.11 Question 4 asked Members “How well supported by DCC do you feel at this time?” and gave respondents a scale of “Extremely well” to “Extremely not well”. Due to rounding, the figure below does not add up to 100%.



3.12 Positively, 82% of respondents felt that the Council supported them either “extremely” or “somewhat” well which is similar to the percentage in the 2nd and 3rd surveys. There has been a 10% rise in respondents feeling “extremely” well supported by the Council, rising from 38% in January 2022 to 48% in December 2022. This is coupled with a decrease from 46% to 34% in respondents feeling “somewhat” well supported.

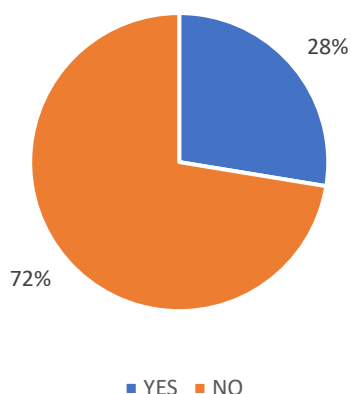
- 3.13 10% of respondents did not feel well supported by the Council. For the first time, the “extremely not well” answer was selected by respondents highlighting that some targeted work to understand these issues and support these Members is needed.
- 3.14 Question 4 directly links to Question 5 and asked “What one thing could the Council do to better support you at this time?”. Many respondents offered more than one response, and these have been categorised into common themes or suggestions. The categorised responses, shown in the figure below, show that “No Suggestion” had the highest frequency of responses (15). This has been the common most frequent response across all of the Member Wellbeing Surveys.
- 3.15 A number of Members requested individual areas for improvement such as “keep me informed with community projects” or “Microphones need to be set up with loop system in Committee rooms”. These individual requests will be investigated separately and responded to in the coming months.



Personal safety of Councillors

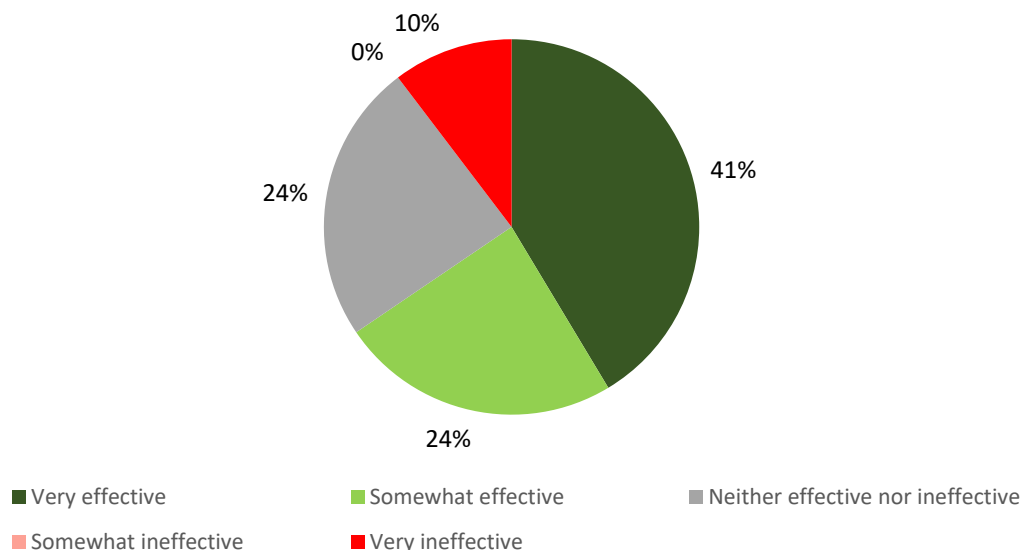
- 3.16 As requested by the Steering Group at the meeting held in September 2022, this survey also asks Members about their own personal safety and if the Council could or should do more to support Members.
- 3.17 Question 6 asked Members “Have you ever felt at risk when fulfilling the councillor role?” which is shown below, 72% of respondents have never felt at risk but 28% have. As per question 7, 8 Members shared details of incidents.

Q6 - HAVE YOU EVER FELT AT RISK WHEN FULFULLING THE COUNCILLOR ROLE?



3.18 Question 8 asked Members “How effective is the authority’s arrangements for protecting you?” As show below, the majority of respondents felt the current arrangements were effective with 41% selecting “very effective” and 24% selecting “somewhat effective”. While this is welcome, 10% of respondents did state that arrangements were “very ineffective”.

Q8 - HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE AUTHORITY'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR PROTECTING YOU?



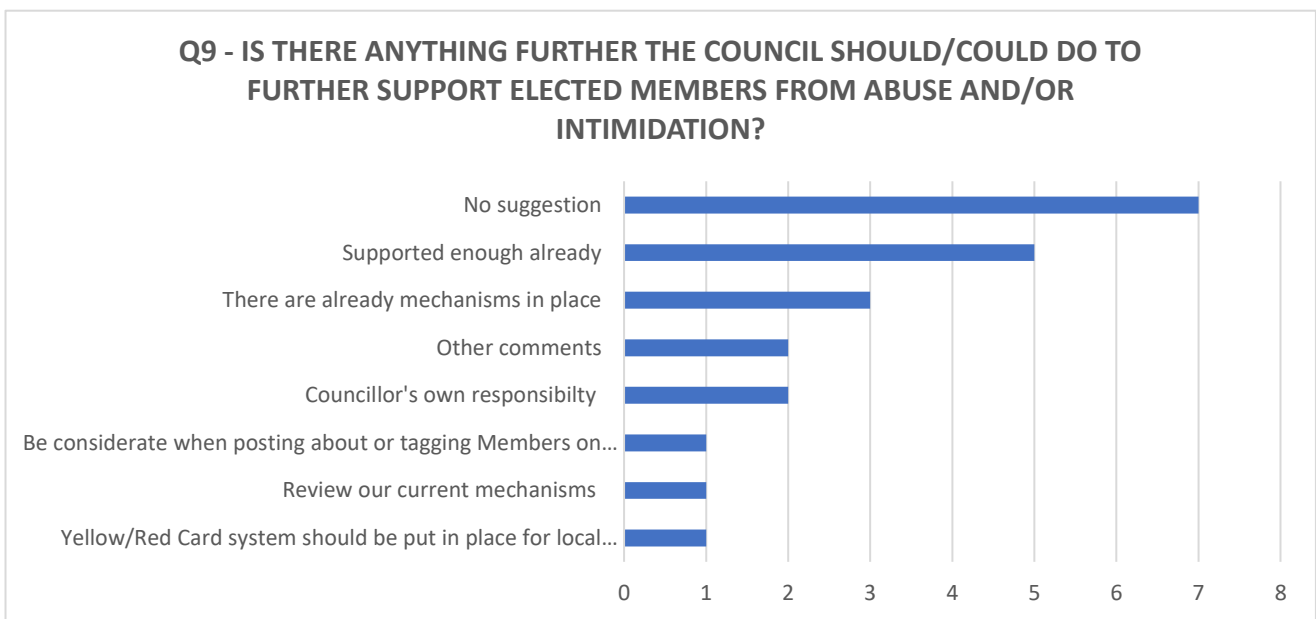
3.19 24% of respondents stated the arrangements were “neither effective nor ineffective”, the neutral option. This is supported by some of the responses to Question 9 where some Members responded that they did not feel the Council should have a role in this or there were already arrangements in place with other agencies.

3.20 Question 9 asked “Is there anything further the Council should/could do to further support elected members from abuse and/or intimidation?”. Many respondents offered

more than one response, and these have been categorised into common themes or suggestions. A large number of (17/22 responses) did not suggest anything further that the Council could do. Some of these responses included: **“No suggestions”**, **“Not at this time”**, **“It is up to the Member to sort themselves out”** or **“I am happy with the level of support”**. Other comments included that a respondent was happy that the Members did not have to publish their home address on our website as a contact method.

3.21 The comments that respondents made as suggestions related to relationships with town and parish councils, reviewing our internal processes and being considerate of social media posts including Members.

3.22 While not directly related to Member safety, one respondent did suggest rolling out body cameras to our highways and enforcement teams for their safety.

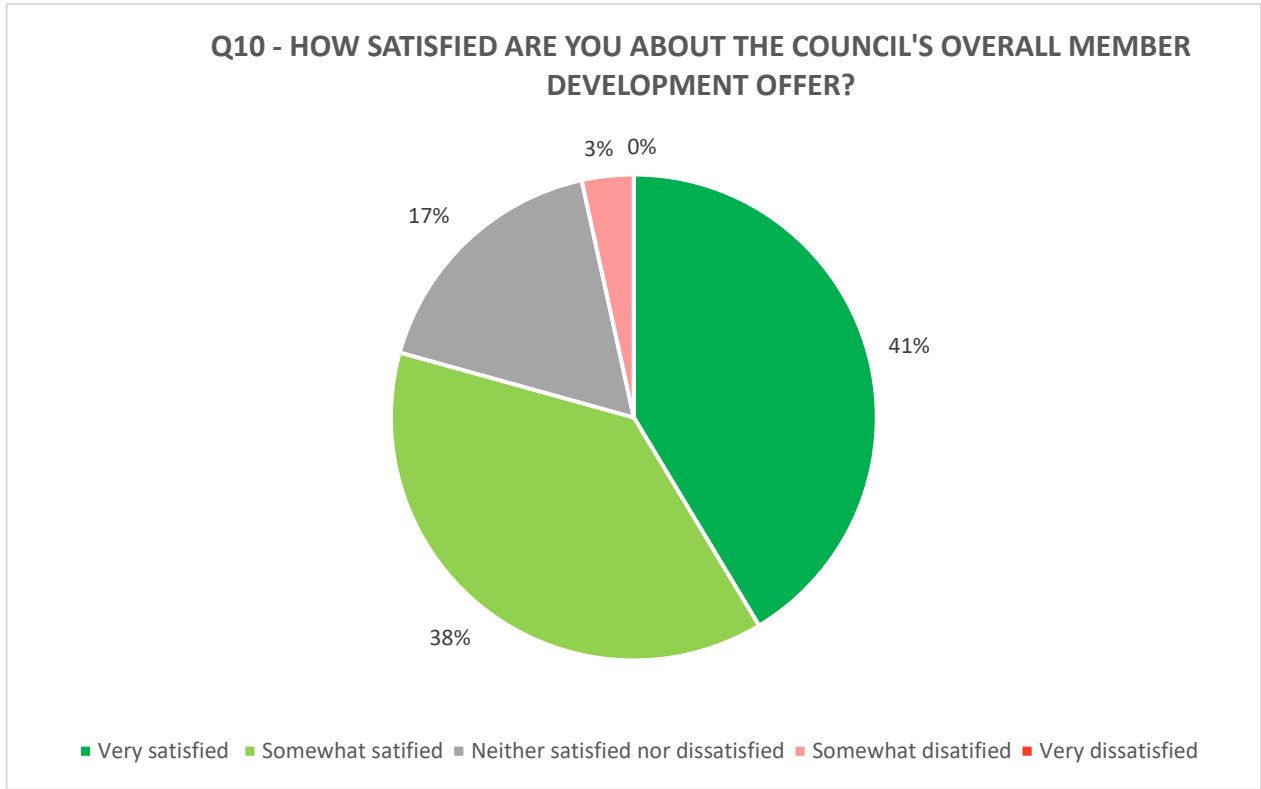


Member Development

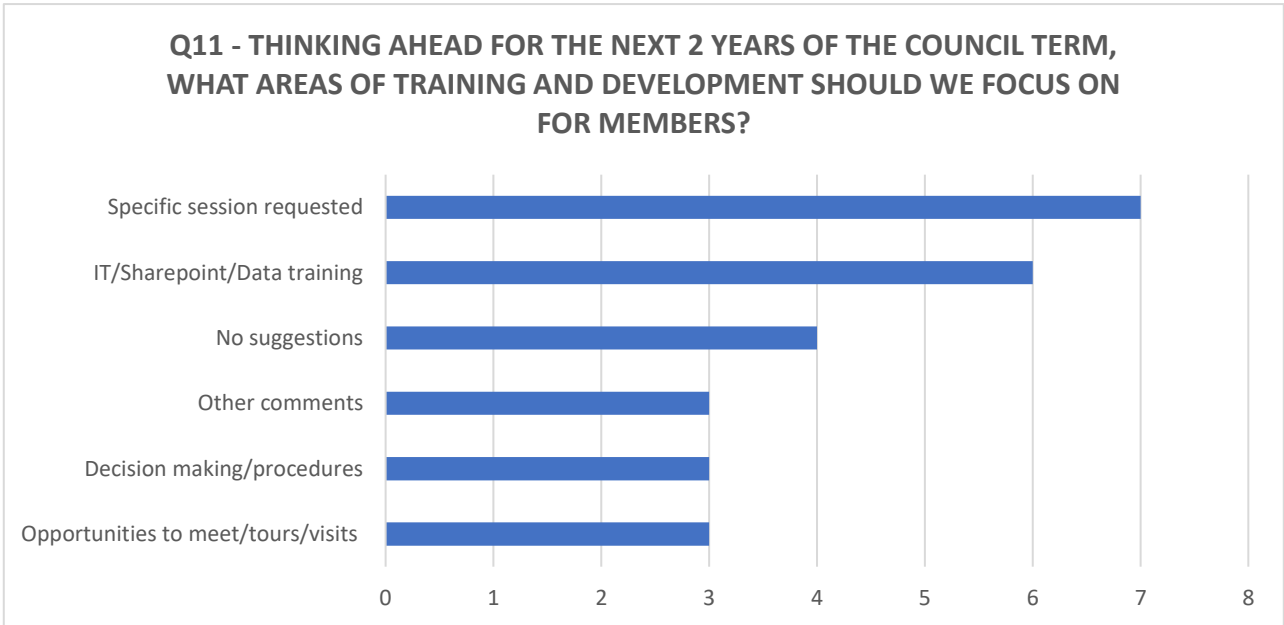
3.23 For this survey, Members also wanted to ask about the overall Member development offer of the Council, largely because the Council term is heading towards its halfway mark. Question 10 asked Members “How satisfied are you about the Council’s overall Member Development offer?”. Positively, over three quarters of respondents (79%) were very or somewhat satisfied with the Council’s overall offer. No respondent stated they were ‘very’ dissatisfied with just 3%, equal to 1 response, were “somewhat” dissatisfied.

3.24 This is welcoming for the Council as it devotes a lot of time into training and upskilling Members in a range of different ways including Scrutiny Masterclasses, All Member Development/Briefing Sessions and targeted training areas such as IT and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). One part of the Member’s SharePoint site is dedicated to Member development and training with relevant links to the LGA and training materials. Officers also make use of the bi-weekly Member’s Bulletin to highlight development and training opportunities.

Q10 - HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU ABOUT THE COUNCIL'S OVERALL MEMBER DEVELOPMENT OFFER?



- 3.25 Linking to the previous question, Question 11 asked ‘Thinking ahead for the next 2 years of the Council term, What areas of training and development should we focus on for Members?’ The highest frequency of responses (7) related to a specific ask for a particular session or topic. Specific sessions or areas requested included managing expectations, carbon and impact of climate change, safeguarding, questioning skills and additional training related to the Public Rights of Way Committee and Corporate Parenting.
- 3.26 Training relating to general IT skills, SharePoint or data was the next highest frequency (6). Members receive on site support at Full Council days and have had online IT drop-in sessions but it is clear there is a particular ask to continue IT training for some respondents.
- 3.27 A number of respondents asked for sessions which we have previously held such as questioning skills, decision making and procedures training. Recordings of these sessions are available for Members and this may point to a need to advertise this more widely and remind Members what is already available.
- 3.28 3 respondents asked about ways to meet with each other and build relationships with Members. This is a particular legacy from the pandemic as Members elected in 2021 did not have a usual induction and it was largely delivered virtually. This meant that Members has less opportunities to meet with each other and build relationships. However, there are opportunities for informal networking with SLT before Council meetings and Scrutiny committees are encouraged to arrange visits to sites and offices to build Member’s knowledge of Council services and meet staff.



Getting information and support

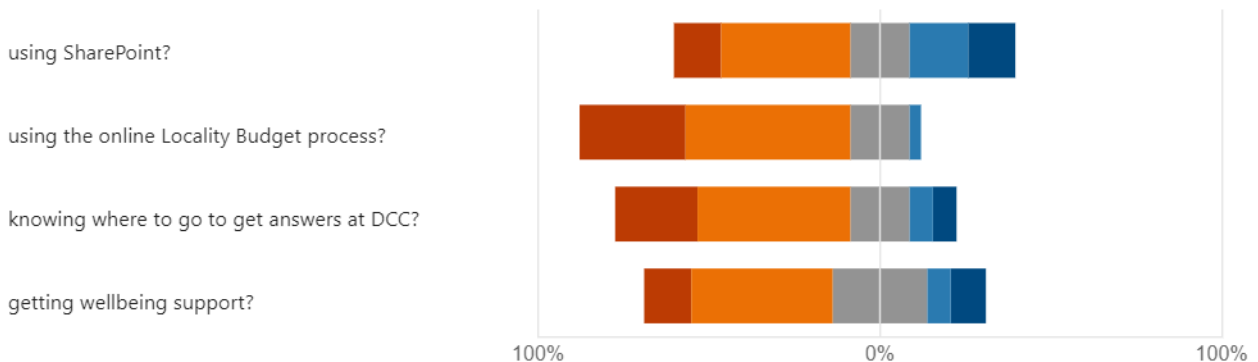
3.29 The final questions asked Members about their confidence in knowing where to go to get answers or support and navigating some of the IT and digital platforms the Council uses to support Members such as SharePoint and an online locality budget process.

3.30 Question 12 asked Members how confident they were in using SharePoint, the locality budget process, knowing where to go to get answers and getting wellbeing support. Members were asked to rate these on a scale from 'Very confident' to 'Not at all confident'. Positively, respondents to all of these questions selected more of the 'confident' responses than the not confident responses. Respondents were most confident with the locality budget process (79.3%), followed by knowing where to go to get answers at DCC (68.9%).

12. How confident are you in....

[More Details](#)

■ Very confident
 ■ Confident
 ■ Neither confident nor unconfident
 ■ Not so confident
 ■ Not at all confident



3.31 Respondents were least confident in using SharePoint, with 31% selecting the 'Not confident' responses. This is an increase from the previous survey (22.5%). However,

51.7% of respondents were confident in using SharePoint, a slight rise from the previous survey when 47.5% of respondent selected the 'confident' responses. When previously asked, 30% of respondents selected the neutral option. For this survey, the figure had dropped to 17.2%. This could suggest that more Members are now aware of SharePoint but have either found it easy to use or not easy to use. This is reflected in the responses to Question 11, where 6 respondents requested particular training on IT and Sharepoint.

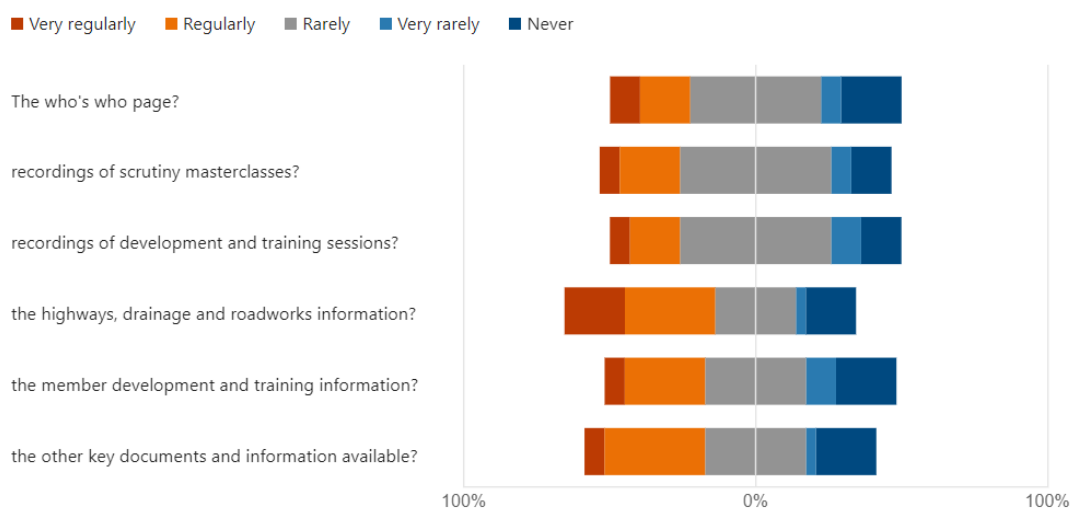
3.32 Question 13 asked specifically about SharePoint and often Members had accessed certain parts and pages of the Member's Area site. Respondents were asked to select from 'Very regularly' to 'Never'.

3.33 The results across the different areas are roughly the same, with the exception of highways, drainage and roadworks information. 51% of respondents accessed this part of the site regularly compared to an average of 31% for the other parts of the site.

3.34 On average, 24.7% of respondents 'very rarely' or 'never' accessed the any part of the site with the highest frequency being member development training of information (31%). The responses to Question 13 are reflected to the fact respondents 31% of respondents are not confident in using SharePoint with lots of Members 'very rarely' or 'never' accessing the selected parts of the site, possibly due to a lack of confidence in using the site.

13. On SharePoint, how often have you accessed...

[More Details](#)



4) Options / Alternatives

Nil

5) Consultations / Representations / Technical Data

Nil

6) Strategic Plan

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/strategic-plan>

While this report does not align with the six priorities of the strategic plan, it aligns to how the Council will deliver the plan. Well supported, informed Members will help ensure good decision making and part of the Council's commitment to be a trusted, inclusive and innovative Council.

7) Financial Considerations

There are no specific financial considerations.

8) Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal considerations.

9) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)

There are no specific environmental or climate change considerations.

10) Equality Considerations

There are no specific equality considerations.

11) Risk Management Considerations

The issue of Member Safety has now been formally included in the Council's risk register.

12) Summary

12.1 The Member Development Steering Group is asked to review the results of the Member Wellbeing Survey 2022 and agree any subsequent actions.

12.2 In previous surveys, the Steering Group has requested that Officers create a 'You Said, We Did' briefing note which was circulated to all Members listing the responses to their queries. Feedback from Members not on the Steering Group was positive and highlighted the wide range of information available.

Maria Price

Director of Legal and Democratic Services

Electoral Divisions: All

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Background Paper - Nil

Contact for enquiries:

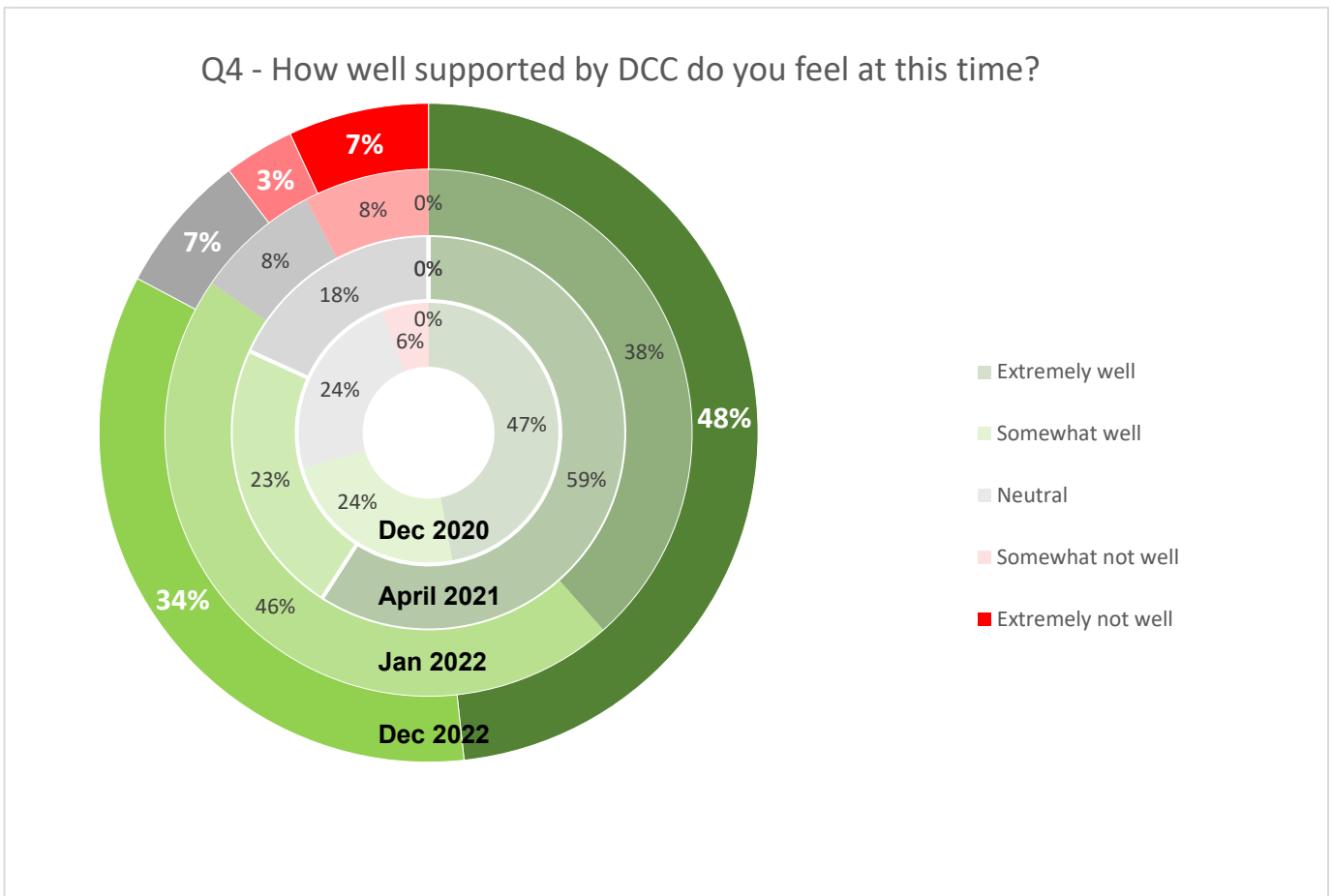
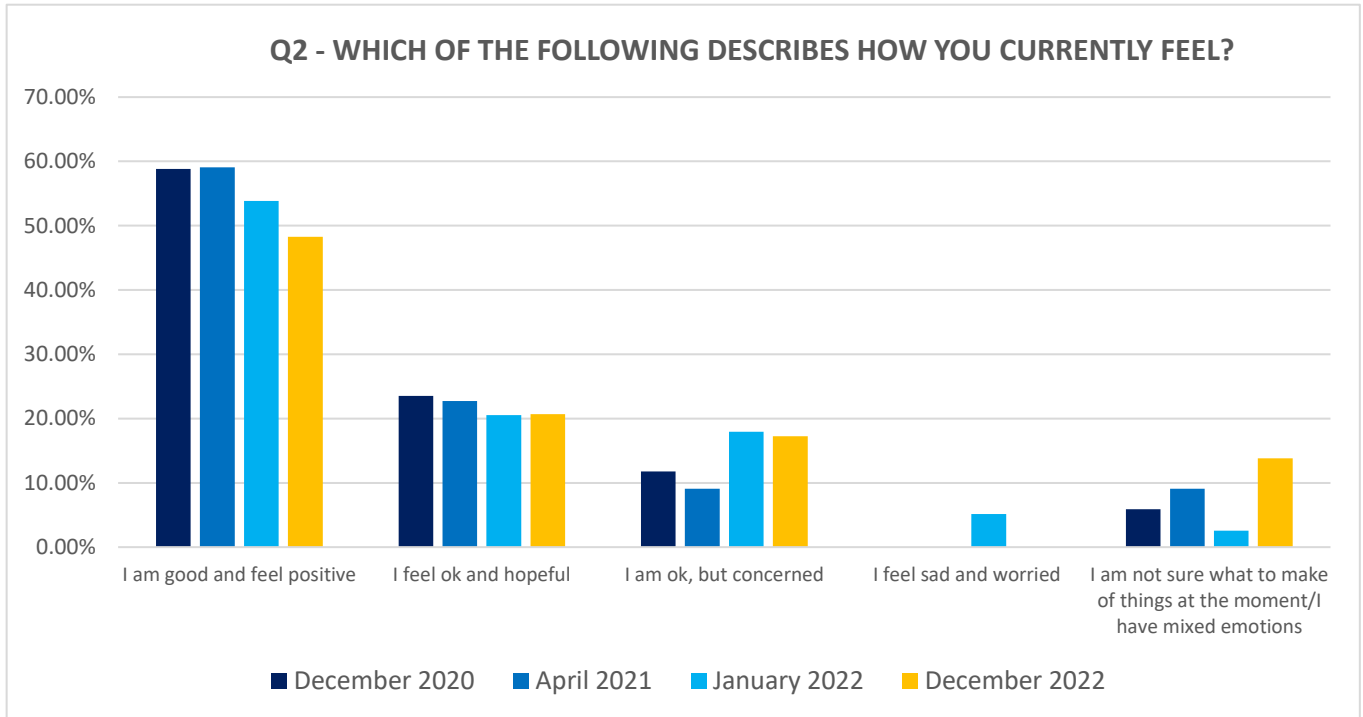
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Appendix

Additional graphs showing the results of repeated questions from all 4 Member Wellbeing Surveys.



Q3 - WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO SUPPORT YOUR OVERALL HEALTH AND WELLBEING?

