

# **Annual Customer Survey Report 2018**

**Author: Sustainability West Midlands**

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## **Report information**

**Title: Annual Customer Survey 2018**

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### **About Sustainability West Midlands**

We are the sustainability adviser for the leaders of the West Midlands. We are also the regional sustainability champion body for the West Midlands, designated by government. We are a not-for-profit company that works with our members in the business, public and voluntary sectors. Our Board is well led and has cross-sector representation; they are supported by our team of staff and associates.

Our vision is that by 2020 businesses and communities are thriving in a West Midlands that is environmentally sustainable and socially just.

Our role is to act as a catalyst for change through our advice to leaders, to develop practical solutions with our members and share success through our communications.

[www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk](http://www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk)  
Registered company No.04390508

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## 1 Introduction

This report details the key findings from our annual customer survey for 2018. The survey aims to remind customers about the range of activity we are involved with in each year, provides feedback on our services and offers an indication of which of our priorities for the forthcoming year are of most relevance.

We use the results, together with other feedback from events, projects, our website, social media and our members to evaluate our annual impact, provide evidence when seeking funding and to help improve our future activity. Previous copies of our annual accounts and customer surveys can be found on our [website](#).

As the methodology section will explain, in 2017 we changed and simplified our survey when comparing it to previous years to gain a better quality spread of results that will help SWM as an organisation move forward and address the aspects outlined above. This was successful and we have followed a similar format in 2018. The report then goes on to outline the results to each question asked and summarises the key points at the end.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Stakeholders consulted

This year, we sent our customer survey to 79 specific individuals. This represents a greater number than last year (48), as we wanted to give the opportunity for one individual from all our members (55 at the time of writing), recent funders, Board members and network Chairs to complete the survey. We felt that this would still give a greater response rate than in years before 2017, when we sent it to all our contacts (~4,000) and obtained a ~5% response rate but was still a number small enough to manage internally, in terms of being able to follow up with non-respondents on more than one occasion, for example.

We supplemented this with one email to all our networks, the members of which generally engage with SWM less frequently than the audience listed above. This is important so that we can determine what the perspectives of our activities are from those both closely associated with us and those who are less so.

By sending it to these individuals and to our networks, we were able to obtain the perspectives of a mix of private (large), private (SME), public (university), public (local authority), public (other) and third sector bodies.

Naturally, the likelihood was that organisations that work more closely with SWM were more likely to respond, given that they appreciate the activities of SWM more and that we followed up with this audience twice, as opposed to just once to members of our networks.

### 2.2 Design

Last year, we changed the nature of the survey questions so that:

- They more clearly ask for respondents' views on our progress as an organisation. The responses we obtained in previous years did not necessarily reflect SWM's performance and

were more focused on issues outside our control. For us it is more important to determine how our stakeholders view SWM's progress as an organisation and how we can improve to help the West Midlands become a more sustainable region.

- There were fewer questions, to reduce the amount of time it took for respondents to fill it in, improving the response rate.
- The number of options for certain questions was less, again reducing time required by respondents.
- Each question was simplified; most questions had fixed multiple-choice options with just one free box where respondents could input further comments.

The result of these changes was a greater response rate, higher quality responses and a more useful indication of progression and suggested improvements for SWM as an organisation. We maintained this approach this year but asked four new questions to gain perspectives on current issues. These included the familiarity of our stakeholders with our offer, suggestions on membership invoicing and suggestions towards the development of our new [Roadmap](#) which we will be developing next year for implementation in January 2020.

### 2.3 Summary of questions

The questions we asked stakeholders this year are listed below. The green font indicates the options that respondents could choose.

1. **Name:**
  2. **Job title:**
  3. **Organisation:**
  4. **Are you a SWM member? [Y/N]**
  5. **Which of the following SWM [membership](#) benefits does your organisation (SWM member) or would your organisation (non-member) find useful? [Y/N]**
    - Promotion of your brand, events, news and vacancies via our communications.
    - Free use of small meeting rooms at our central Birmingham office.
    - 10% discount on our independent consultancy advice.
    - Opportunities to demonstrate support and raise your profile through hosting, presenting at or sponsoring one of our events or networks.
    - Promoting your good practice through independent review, production and promotion of a case study.
    - A free place (worth £120) at our high profile annual conference.
    - Prioritised support and endorsement for your relevant funding bids.
- Any further comments? [Open box]**
6. **Can you provide any suggestions of other benefits you would like to see membership of SWM bringing to your organisation? If you're not a member, what else would attract you to join? [Open box]**
  7. **We currently invoice for membership fees on a yearly basis. If we were to introduce an option to pay for three year membership, would this be an attractive option for you?**
    - If yes, why would this appeal?
    - If not, why wouldn't this be appropriate for you?**[Open box next to yes and no options]**

- 8. How familiar do you feel that are you with the following values and activities of SWM?** [Very familiar, familiar, somewhat familiar, slightly familiar, not familiar – open box next to each one for further comments]
- Our 2020 [Roadmap and Priorities](#)
  - Progress against our [Vision and Mission](#)
  - Our [three core values](#)
  - Our current [members](#)
  - The nature and breadth of our events
  - Our [networks](#)
  - The frequency and content of our [monthly newsletter](#)
  - The relevance and quality of our [consultancy work](#)
- 9. How do you rate the following values and activities of SWM?** [Excellent, good, fair, poor, not sure or n/a – open box next to each one for further comments]
- How we're progressing against our 2020 [Roadmap and Priorities](#)
  - How we're performing against our [Vision and Mission](#)
  - How we're performing against our [three core values](#)
  - The frequency and usefulness of our events
  - The frequency and usefulness of our updates to [networks](#)
  - The frequency and usefulness of our [monthly newsletter](#)
  - The relevance, quality and interest of our [consultancy work](#)
- 10. Which of the following platforms do you use most often to keep in touch with SWM activities?**
- Our monthly email newsletter [tick box next to each one; people can tick one box only]
  - Network email updates
  - Our website
  - Twitter
- 11. How well do our communications, including our newsletter, website and Twitter feed achieve the following aims?** [Excellent, good, fair, poor, not sure or n/a]
- Outlining the benefits of SWM [membership](#)
  - Promoting the activities of [our members](#)
  - Explaining how SWM can [support your organisation](#)
  - Showcasing the range of activities and projects [SWM is involved in](#)
  - Providing easy to find, navigable and regular updates on [events](#), [case studies](#) and [news](#) related to our priorities
  - Providing easy to find, navigable and regular updates on funding opportunities related to our priorities
- Any further comments?** [Open box]
- 12. What support could your organisation provide SWM over the next year?** [Y/N, if Y open box to provide more info]
- Hosting an event
  - Providing a speaker at an event
  - Sponsoring an event or network
  - Becoming a SWM member, or continuing your membership
- 13. SWM is in the process of refreshing its 2020 [Roadmap, Priorities and Vision](#) and is thinking about what these should look like post-2020. Do you have any suggestions on what you'd like to see, in terms of any aspects of our Priorities, Vision, timescales or targets we should**

be monitoring? Please note this response is limited to 200 words. **[Open box – limit to 200 words]**

**Ending boxes**

- Please tick this box if you'd like to receive SWM's monthly newsletter.
- If you'd like to find out more about attending or exhibiting at our [Annual Conference](#) on 3 December, please tick this box and provide your email address below.
- Please tick this box if you are happy to be contacted in relation to next year's SWM Annual Survey.

### 3 Results

#### 3.1 Respondent analysis

Due to the change in methodology, we received 27 responses in 2018 from the 78 individuals we specifically targeted, which is a 35% response rate as opposed to an approximately 50% response rate in 2017, although this was expected. We also received an additional 6 responses from members of our networks (one of these is assumed, as one person provided no name or organisational information).

Responses came from the following sectors that we work with.

Sector	Organisation type	Number of respondents (Total – 33)
Public (14)	Local authority	8
	NHS	1
	University	3
	Other	2
Private (6)	SME <250 employees	5
	Large >250 employees	1
Third (12)	Organisation	12
	Community group	0
Unknown (1)		1

Overall, this represents a useful mix of organisation type; there is a greater response from the public sector, but this is because there is a greater variation of public sub-sectors that we consulted, namely NHS Trusts, universities and local authorities. We also run more networks for these sectors. Third sector organisations were also well represented this year. It should also be noted that in a few cases, we obtained more than one response from the same organisation.

Of these 33 respondents:

- 15 are from SWM member organisations
- 19 are members of at least one SWM network
- 6 are members of two or more of our networks
- 6 are affiliated with SWM (either staff, Chair or associate)

Unsurprisingly, most respondents could be classed as having a strong relationship with SWM already, with only a small number of respondents coming from organisations we engage with less. Organisations we engage with more were able to provide an honest, more in depth overview of our progress and those we engage with less provided insight in terms of how they may be attracted to work with us more readily.

#### 3.2 Responses to questions

This section outlines the questions asked and the responses given to each of them, based on a series of multiple choice answers. A select number of comments from respondents are



also provided below. Note that where the total number of responses to each option does not equal 33, it means an individual will have not responded to that choice.

### 3.2.1 SWM Membership

**Q. Which of the following SWM membership benefits does your organisation (SWM member) or would your organisation (non-member) find useful?**

Option	Yes	No
Promotion of your brand, events, news and vacancies via our communications	23	5
Free use of small meeting rooms at our central Birmingham office	12	15
10% discount on our independent consultancy advice	11	16
Opportunities to demonstrate support and raise your profile through hosting, presenting at or sponsoring one of our events or networks	23	6
Promoting your good practice through independent review, production and promotion of one case study	22	5
A free place (worth £120) at our high profile annual conference	24	4
Prioritised support and endorsement for your relevant funding bids	18	8



**Key findings are as follows:**

- These figures suggest that the vast majority of respondents value promotion of their activities and general branding across SWM networks, including the publication of a case study
- Other popular benefits include the free place at the annual conference, opportunities to present at our events, as well as endorsement for funding bids

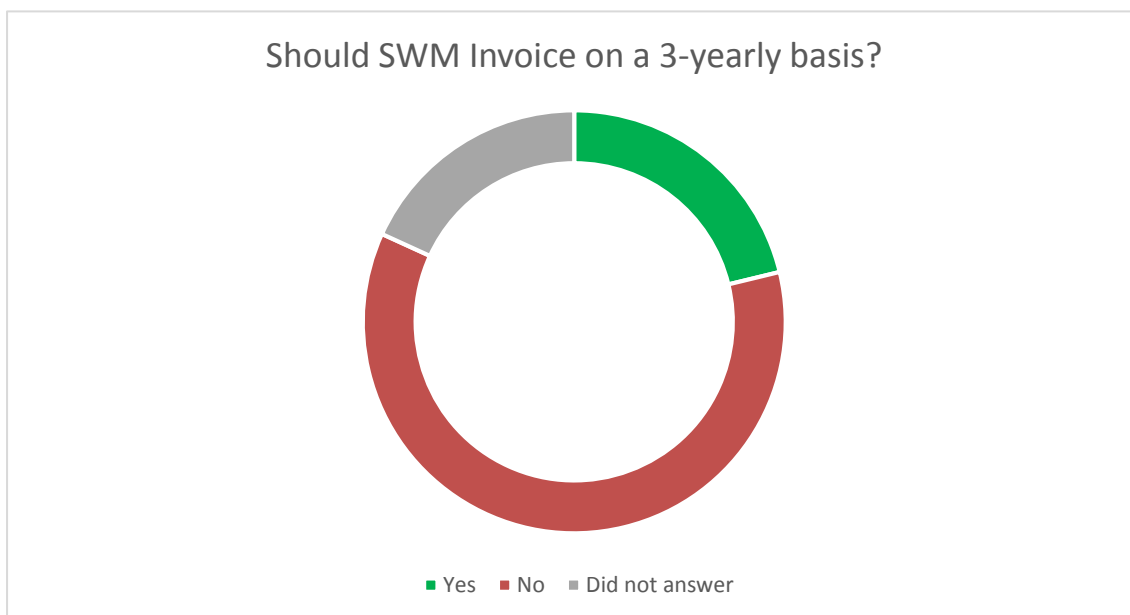
- Less popular membership offers include the discount on consultancy advice, although this may be more because not all members have required our consultancy work, as well as the free use of meeting space (although both did register some level of interest)
- In the comments section, the recurring theme was that people would like to see a members-only event to give an opportunity.

**Selected comments from this question (What they would like to see in addition):**

- *Networking with other member organisations at a breakfast meeting*
- *Annual members only event - bookable slots for people to discuss opportunities with each other*
- *Introductions to other members or to network members*
- *Sharing best practice, opportunities for networking.*

**Q. We currently invoice for membership fees on a yearly basis. If we were to introduce an option to pay for three year membership, would this be an attractive option for you?**

Option	Number
Yes	7
No	20
Did not answer	6



**Key findings are as follows:**

- The majority of respondents do not want a three-year charge due to budgeting and the need to review membership annually
- However, some respondents indicated that they would like this option as it would reduce their paperwork and administration.

**Selected comments from this question:**

- *Our preference would be to continue with a yearly membership as we evaluate our budgets yearly and allocate membership against relevant projects at that time*
- *Because we regularly review memberships to ensure they continue to add value*
- *We operate a 4-year business plan and would help secure the budget for a longer period*

- To ensure funds are available up to maintain sustainability of membership.

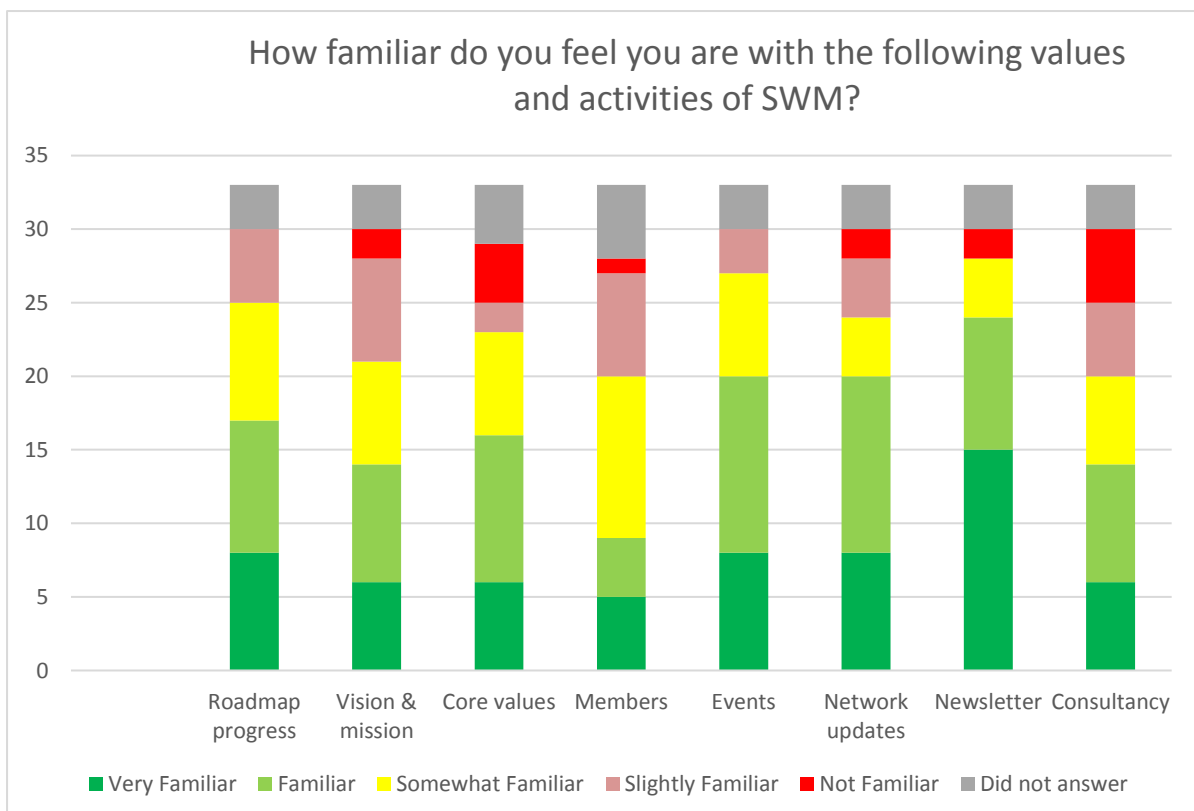
#### Actions SWM will take/has taken as a result of findings:

- We have revamped our [membership offer](#) for 2019, which includes greater emphasis on how members can raise their profile across our communications platforms
- We have removed the 'use of small meeting rooms' offer
- We will be running the first 'members only' event in 2019, based on survey comments
- We will not yet explore the possibility of invoicing on a three-yearly basis.

### 3.2.2 SWM Core Activities

#### Q. How familiar do you feel you are with the following values and activities of SWM?

Option	Very Familiar	Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Slightly Familiar	Not Familiar	Did not answer
<a href="#">Roadmap progress</a>	8	9	8	5	0	3
<a href="#">Vision &amp; mission</a>	6	8	7	7	2	3
<a href="#">Core values</a>	6	10	7	2	4	4
<a href="#">Members</a>	5	4	11	7	1	5
<a href="#">Events</a>	8	12	7	3	0	3
<a href="#">Network updates</a>	8	12	4	4	2	3
<a href="#">Newsletter</a>	15	9	4	0	2	3
<a href="#">Consultancy</a>	6	8	6	5	5	3

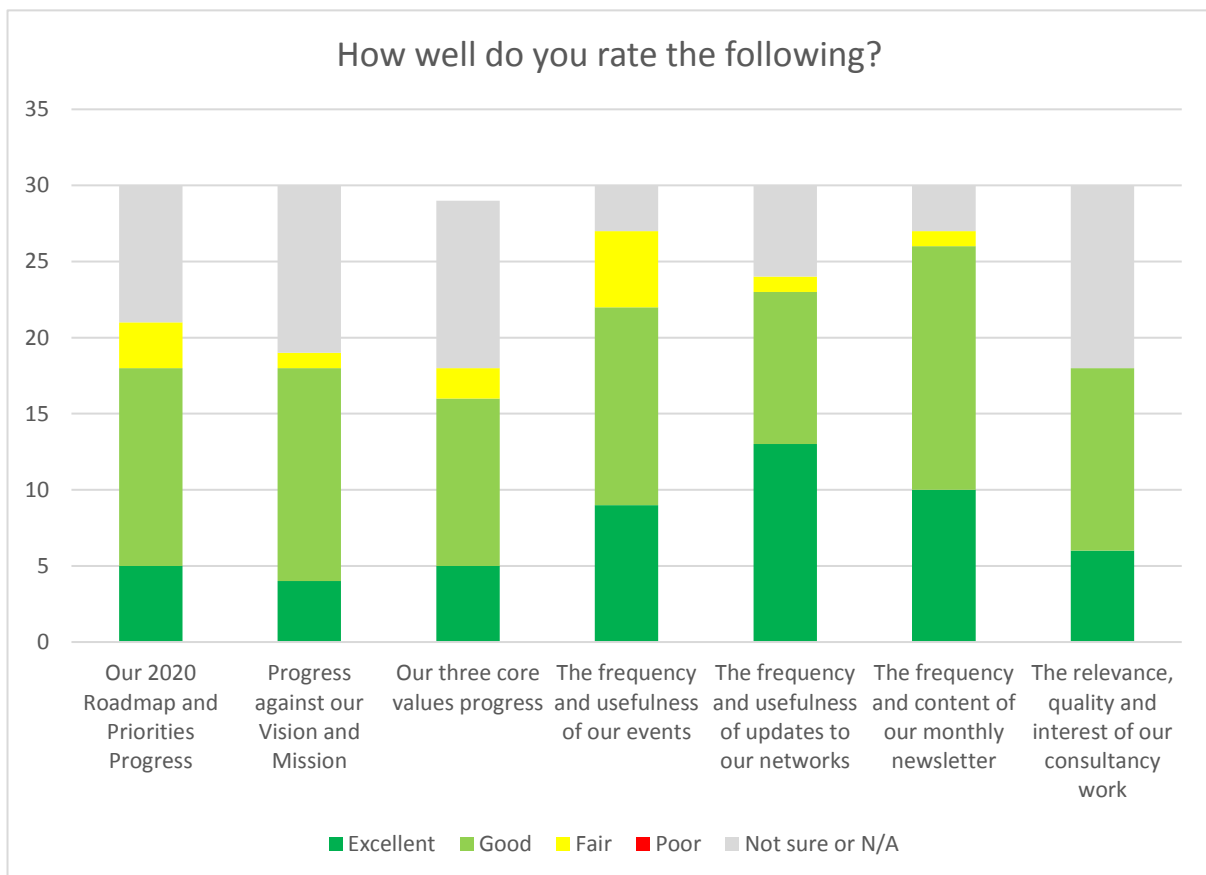


**Key findings are as follows:**

- Very little of our work is largely regarded as being “Very Familiar” to people with only our Newsletter breaching more than one third of respondents in this category
- Consultancy and knowledge of members are arguably our least familiar areas, but all categories show room for improvement
- In comparison with the 2017 survey, there was a marked increase in satisfaction of the newsletter and our event-hosting abilities.

**Q. How do you rate the following?**

Option	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not sure or N/A
Our 2020 Roadmap and Priorities Progress	5	13	3	0	9
Progress against our Vision and Mission	4	14	1	0	11
Our three core values progress	5	11	2	0	11
The frequency and usefulness of our events	9	13	5	0	3
The frequency and usefulness of updates to our networks	13	10	1	0	6
The frequency and content of our monthly newsletter	10	16	1	0	3
The relevance, quality and interest of our consultancy work	6	12	0	0	12



**Key findings are as follows:**

- Generally, highly positive results, showcasing SWM as an organisation highly valued in its activities
- None of our activities received a “Poor” rating which is a tremendous achievement and shows our improvements from last year where we did receive some “Poor” ratings
- There is a notable increase in satisfaction surrounding our events hosting, with the latest results with 81% regarding this area as “Excellent” or “Good”
- A significant proportion of respondents put that they were “Not Sure”, especially in the areas of knowledge of our values, visions and consultancy work
- The low acknowledgement of consultancy work is in line with last year’s result and is likely because not all our members have engaged with us on a consultancy level. However, last year’s annual survey stated that to combat this, we should make more of an effort to promote our own work so this may still require further investigation.

**Selected comments from this question:**

- *3 core values score might be higher if you have clear evidence of how you fulfil these, I think you probably do but at a quick glance I couldn't see how exactly other than through my own dealings with you - you could share more examples of this*
- *No direct experience of the consultancy work but believe it to be good quality*
- *SWM are well-positioned to lead in advocacy and connecting of upcoming local industrial strategies.*

**Q. SWM is in the process of refreshing its 2020 Roadmap, Priorities and Vision and is thinking about what these should look like post-2020. Do you have any suggestions on what you'd like to see in terms of any aspects of our Priorities, Vision, timescales or targets we should be monitoring?****Selected comments from this question:**

- *Linking in to EIZs and LEPs. Also keeping focus on LEPs low carbon and sustainability targets and progress and also a local authority level - benchmarking*
- *Stronger support for promoting biodiversity*
- *There may need to be a slight amendment to focus areas - more on resource efficiency and water etc? More on the quality of jobs as well as the number?*
- *Continuation to focus on business, people and place. Depending on the time length of the new roadmap, it will need to focus on long-term priority concerns for the region, such as sustaining an increased population, global warming etc.*
- *Have more specific targets such as the number of EV charging points, percentage of journeys taken on public transport etc.*
- *Needs to align with the recent IPCC report*
- *More of the same - but clearer on what the regional level action should be*
- *Greater focus on air quality*
- *Transparent methodology of how addressing reducing life expectancy gaps with 'Community.'*

**Key findings are as follows:**

- The general consensus is that the new roadmap should include bigger focuses, especially in line with global co-operations such as that which followed the recent [IPCC Special Report](#)
- The view is that there have not been enough priority areas set out in our current roadmap and so it should be expanded in order to have more targets which can be assessed against

- There was very little feedback on the timeframe that the new roadmap should be, however, the requests to include the IPCC special report goals could arguably incorporate the timeframe specific to that report.

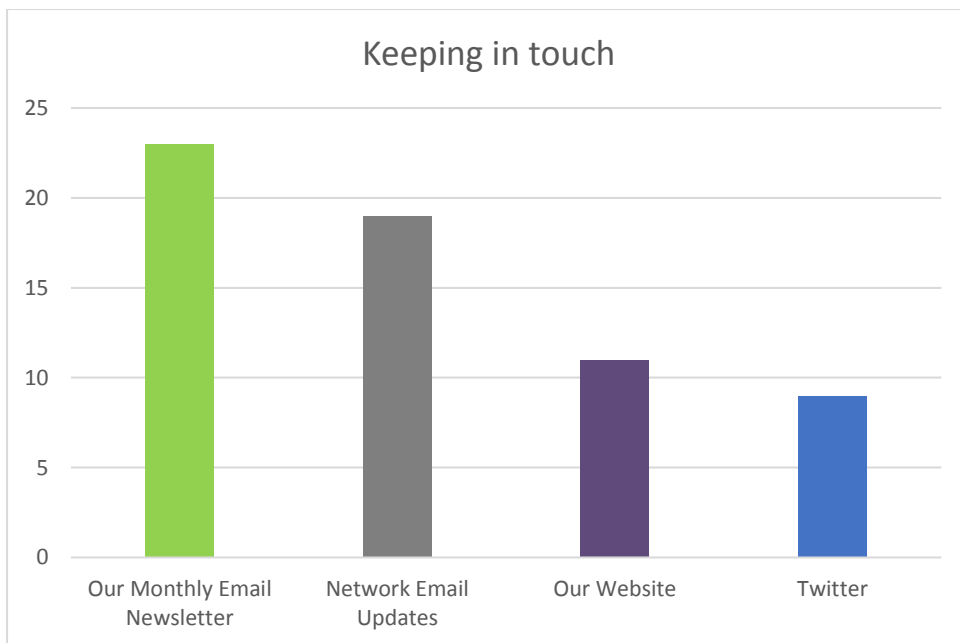
**Actions SWM will take/has taken as a result of findings:**

- We are currently in the process of updating our website and external communications to help improve people’s familiarity with our activities
- We will consider further enhancement of our offer by getting involved in external events and exhibitor opportunities, something which we now have more capacity to do after we expanded the core team in August 2018
- We will continue to build on the positive impact our activities are making and ensure members are consulted in the development of our post-2020 Roadmap, a process we have already started.

**3.2.3 SWM’s communications**

**Q. Which of the following platforms do you use most often to keep in touch with SWM activities?**

Method	Number	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Our Monthly Email Newsletter	23	76.7
Network Email Updates	19	63.3
Our Website	11	36.7
Twitter	9	30



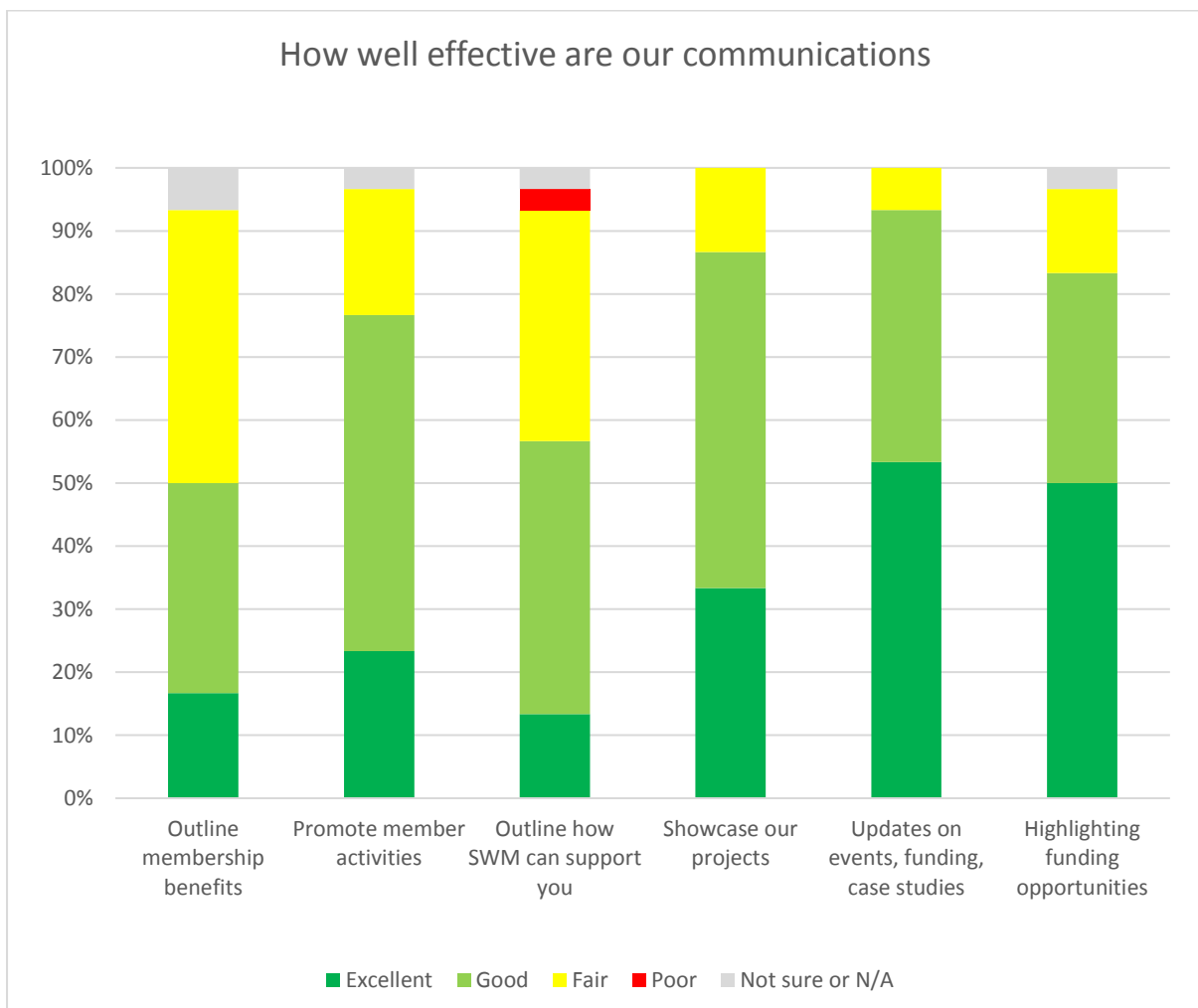
**Key findings are as follows:**

- Our newsletter is the principle method that people use to keep up to date with our activities
- Despite our number of followers on Twitter, it’s evident that we are not fully reaching out to our whole membership with it

- Our website, which should arguably be one of our main sources of information, is under-utilised and therefore we are not fully maximising the benefit to members of publishing their events and news items or promoting the activities and opportunities in the region.

**Q. How well do our communications, including our newsletter, website and Twitter feed achieve the following aims?**

Option	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not sure or N/A
Outlining the benefits of SWM membership	5	10	13	0	2
Promoting the activities of our members	7	16	6	0	1
Explaining how SWM can support your organisation	4	13	11	1	1
Showcasing the range of activities and projects SWM is involved in	10	16	4	0	0
Providing regular updates on events, case studies and news related to our priorities	16	12	2	0	0
Providing regular updates on funding opportunities related to our priorities	15	10	4	0	1



**Key findings are as follows:**

- There was generally very positive feedback regarding updates from members such as publishing events, job opportunities and funding but we performed less well on outlining benefits of membership and what support we can offer to our members (this is in line with last year’s annual survey)
- The comments are similarly positive but does raise the issue of whether branching out into LinkedIn could provide a greater market for our social media

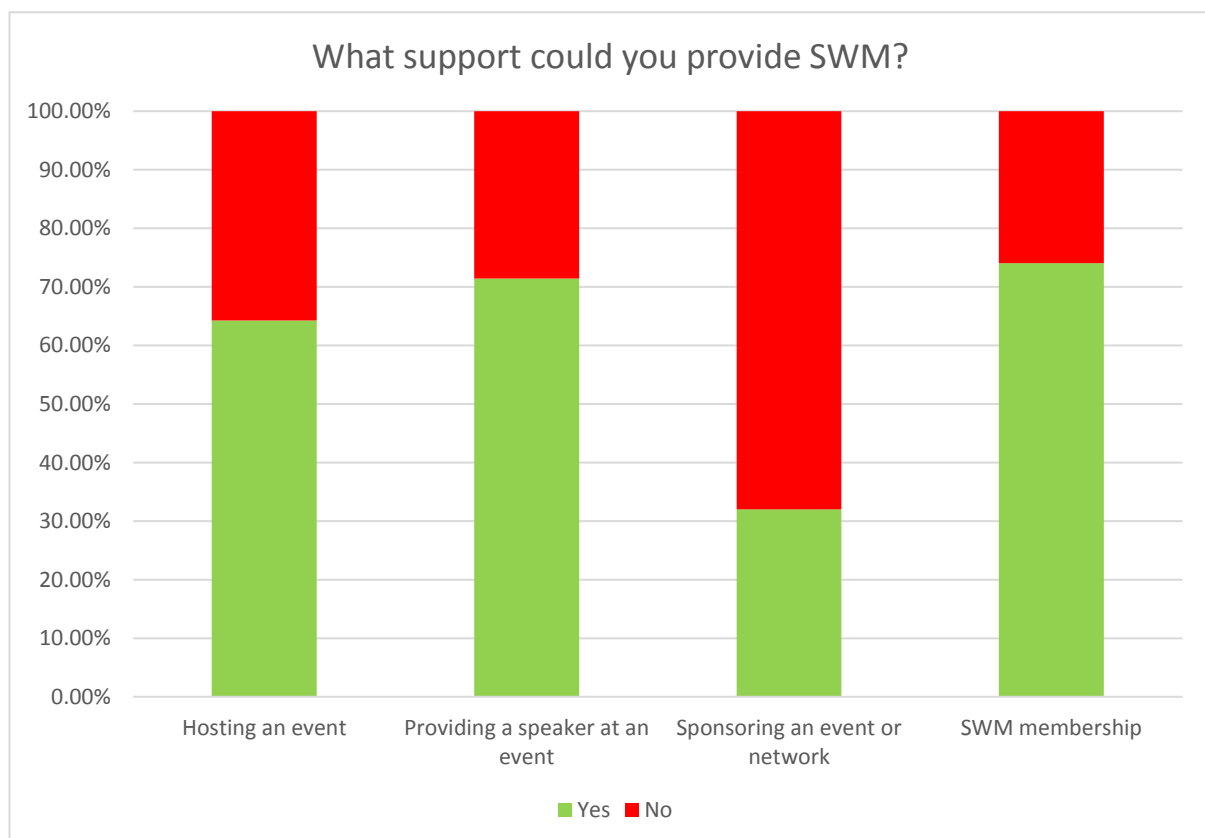
**Selected comments from this question:**

- *LinkedIn might be a useful platform if you have the resource to manage it - I use that more than twitter and would engage more frequently with your content*
- *Receive excellent links and updates via Innovation and Low Carbon Working Group*
- *SWM are a pleasure to work with and always add value to the projects that we undertake in partnership.*

**3.2.4 Support from respondents**

**Q. What support could your organisation provide SWM over the next year?**

Option	Yes	No
Hosting an event	18	10
Providing a speaker at an event	20	8
Sponsoring an event or network	8	17
Becoming a SWM member, or continuing your membership	20	7





**Key findings are as follows:**

- 64% of those who answered this question said they may be able to provide a venue for a SWM event and 71% of those who answered said they would be willing to provide a speaker for an event. This shows the great potential that exists for SWM to continue to put on great events in great locations
- The majority of respondents wish to continue membership, but this is to be expected given the specific reach of the survey.

**Selected comments from this question:**

- *Continue to host the Innovative Low Carbon Working Group and other discussions relevant to innovation*
- *Sponsorship is a potential, although we are limited to strategic areas and large sponsorship packages are unlikely to be supported*
- *Providing a speaker at a suitable event is a possibility; our focus is on encouraging local food production and consumption not least to support the local economy.*

**3.3 Summary**

From the responses and comments provided by the individuals that took our survey, the following key concluding findings and actions can be drawn:

- The survey gained a wide variety of responses from individuals based in different sectors, as well as both members and non-members, enabling us to obtain a range of views of the activities of SWM
- This survey has helped to establish opinions of members, including the highly valued current membership offer as well as the desire to not invoice membership on a 3-yearly basis
- However, it is very apparent that more can be done to raise awareness among our members and stakeholders about the activities of SWM
- We have a good reputation for the work we do that people are aware of, but more can be done to the newsletter and our core mission/values which is very timely with the ongoing update of our roadmap
- With regards to the roadmap, members have lots of intriguing ideas for what should be included to help drive the West Midlands forwards post-2020.

We would like to thank the individuals who took the time to respond to our survey. If you would like to find out more about Sustainability West Midlands and how we can support your organisation, please get in touch at [enquiries@swm.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@swm.org.uk) or on 0121 237 5890.

**-END-**