

# Annual Customer Survey Report 2019

Author: Sustainability West Midlands

Version: Final

Date: January 2020

## Report information

**Title:** Annual Customer Survey 2019

**Version:** Final

**Client:** Sustainability West Midlands

**Funders:** Sustainability West Midlands

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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 2019. 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 2019. 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 out our customer survey to 531 individuals via CiviCRM. It was sent to our networks, members (80 of time of survey sent), and board members in a hope to get insightful evaluative data responses. We felt that this would still give a greater response rate than in years before, 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.

By sending it to these individuals, 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.

We sent out two email, first on the 14<sup>th</sup> October and then again on the 4<sup>th</sup> November, asking for responses. The survey was open from the 14<sup>th</sup> October to 14<sup>th</sup> November. There were two survey emails as the response rate was low after the first call for responses, so a second follow on email was sent to help boost responses. Naturally, the likelihood was that the organisations that work more closely and regularly with SWM were more likely to respond, given that they appreciate the activities of SWM more.

### 2.2 Design

This year we changed how we made our survey, in previous years we used 'Survey Monkey' whereas, this year we switched to 'Online Survey'. The reason for this move is that Survey Monkey only allowed you to use limited number of questions, 10, on their free version, and we wanted to ask 13 questions. So, to avoid extra costs, as we are a micro SME we moved to Online Survey, which we could access

using our volunteer's university perks, where we could use unlimited questions and other premium features.

With the upcoming release of our new 2030 Roadmap at our Annual Conference in December 2019, we changed a few questions to relate to the consultation we had with our members and networks before the new roadmap was launched. This could allow us to get feedback on what we did right and what we could improve on when consulting our members in the future.

We also added in the option to add extra comments to the end of every multi-choice question to make it easier for the respondent to express any comments they have with that multi-choice question or add a comment to why they had chosen that answer. This would also make it easier for us to analyse the comments as they are now attached to specific questions asked in the survey.

We also removed the question about three-year membership subscription plan as we found that we were getting the same results and have now written off that idea.

The result of these changes were higher quality responses and a more useful indication of progression and suggested improvements for SWM as an organisation. We also added a final question to ask if respondents would like to keep in touch with SWM activities such as newsletter, annual conferences, and future consumer surveys.

### 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 channels
  - Production of one case study per year, and promotion across the above channels
  - Free attendance at our annual members' only Summer Social
  - A free place (worth £120) at our high profile annual conference
  - The opportunity to discuss collaboration opportunities with fellow SWM members at any time, using SWM as a contact broker
  - Support for your events, through access to our repository of contacts to help you obtain high quality speakers and venues
  - Priority to attend, host, speak and raise your profile at our regular thematic events for our networks, related to our priorities
  - The use of our membership logo to demonstrate your commitment to sustainability and to enhance your corporate social responsibility
  - 10% off the cost of our independent sustainability consultancy and advice
  - First priority and a 10% discount when sponsoring any of our events
- 5.1. **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. 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](#)  
Any comments on how to improve? **[Open box]**
  - Progress against our [Vision and Mission](#)  
Any comments on how to improve? **[Open box]**
  - Our [three core values](#)  
Any comments on how to improve? **[Open box]**
  - Our current [members](#)  
Any comments on how to improve? **[Open box]**
  - The nature and breadth of our events  
Any comments on how to improve? **[Open box]**
  - Our [networks](#)  
Any comments on how to improve? **[Open box]**
  - The frequency and content of our [monthly newsletter](#)  
Any comments on how to improve? **[Open box]**
  - The relevance and quality of our [consultancy work](#)  
Any comments on how to improve? **[Open box]**
- 7.1. Do you have any comments on how to improve? **[Open box]**
8. 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](#)  
Do you have any comments? **[Open box]**
  - How we're performing against our [Vision and Mission](#)  
Do you have any comments? **[Open box]**
  - How we're performing against our [three core values](#)  
Do you have any comments? **[Open box]**
  - The frequency and usefulness of our events  
Do you have any comments? **[Open box]**
  - The frequency and usefulness of our updates to [networks](#)  
Do you have any comments? **[Open box]**
  - The frequency and usefulness of our [monthly newsletter](#)  
Do you have any comments? **[Open box]**
  - The relevance, quality and interest of our [consultancy work](#)  
Do you have any comments? **[Open box]**
- 8.1. Do you have any other comments on any of the above? **[Open box]**
9. Which of the following platforms do you use most often to keep in touch with SWM activities? **[tick box next to each one; people can tick one box only]**
- Our monthly email newsletter
  - Network email updates
  - Our website
  - Twitter
  - LinkedIn

**10. 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](#)  
Any further comments or suggested improvements? **[Open box]**
- Promoting the activities of [our members](#)  
Any further comments or suggested improvements? **[Open box]**
- Explaining how SWM can [support your organisation](#)  
Any further comments or suggested improvements? **[Open box]**
- Showcasing the range of activities and projects [SWM is involved in](#)  
Any further comments or suggested improvements? **[Open box]**
- Providing easy to find, navigable and regular updates on [events](#), [case studies](#) and [news](#) related to our priorities  
Any further comments or suggested improvements? **[Open box]**
- Providing easy to find, navigable and regular updates on funding opportunities related to our priorities  
Any further comments or suggested improvements? **[Open box]**

**10.1. Any other comments or suggested improvements for us?**

**11. What support could your organisation provide SWM over the next year? [Y/N]**

- Hosting an event
- Providing a speaker at an event
- Sponsoring an event or network
- Becoming a SWM member, or continuing your membership

**11.1. Where you've answered 'yes' to any of the above questions, please provide more details here.**

**12. SWM is about to launch the region's new sustainability Roadmap to 2030. Have you been involved in the consultation of the new Roadmap, and if so, could you tell us about your perception of this consultation? Do you feel you've been able to have an adequate say over its content? Please let us know how you've been consulted, if you have. [Open box]**

**13. Would you like to stay in touch with SWM? [Tick box]**

- 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 changes in the methodology we received 16 responses in 2019, down from 27 in 2018. We did send the survey out to more individuals, 531, in a hope for more responses, however this did not happen and therefore led to a much lower responses rate of 3% down from 35% in 2018, although this was expected. We did receive 2 responses without a name or organisation info.

Responses came from the following sectors that we work with.

Sector	Organisation type	Number of respondents (Total – 16)
Public (4)	Local authority	2
	NHS	
	University	2
	Other	
Private (10)	SME <250 employees	10
	Large >250 employees	
Third	Organisation	
	Community group	
Unknown (2)		2

Overall, this represents a reasonable useful mix of organisation type, however it would have been great to see more public and third sector organisations. Although, is expected as most of our members are private sector.

Of these 16 respondents:

- 10 are from SWM member organisations
- 0 are members of at least one SWM network
- 4 are affiliated with SWM (either staff, Chair or associate)
- 2 did not leave any contact information

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, who provided insight in terms of how they may be attracted to work with us more readily.

#### 3.2 Responses to questions

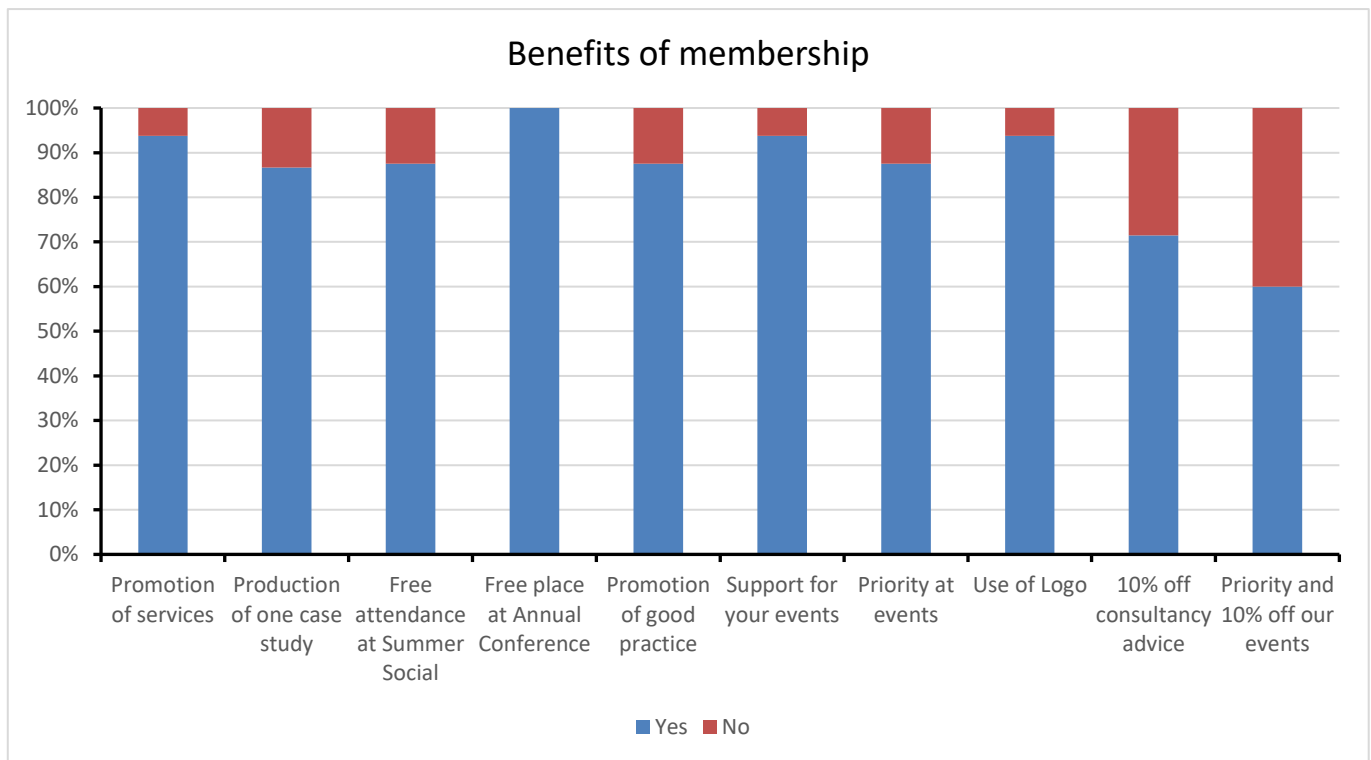
This section outlines the questions asked and the responses given to each of them, based on a series of multiple choice and open comment boxes answers. A select number of comments from respondents are also provided below. Note that where the total number of responses to each option does not equal 16, 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	Did Not Answer	Yes Percentage %
Promotion of your brand, events, news and vacancies via our communications channels	15	1	0	93.75%
Production of one case study per year, and promotion across the above channels	13	2	1	86.67%
Free attendance at our annual members' only Summer Social	14	2	0	87.50%
A free place (worth £120) at our high profile annual conference	16	0	0	100.00%
The opportunity to discuss collaboration opportunities with fellow SWM members at any time, using SWM as a contact broker	14	2	0	87.50%
Support for your events, through access to our repository of contacts to help you obtain high quality speakers and venues	15	1	0	93.75%
Priority to attend, host, speak and raise your profile at our regular thematic events for our networks, related to our priorities	14	2	0	87.50%
The use of our membership logo to demonstrate your commitment to sustainability and to enhance your corporate social responsibility	15	1	0	93.75%
10% off the cost of our independent sustainability consultancy and advice	10	4	2	71.43%
First priority and a 10% discount when sponsoring any of our events	9	6	1	60.00%



#### 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 the use of our logo
- Less popular membership offers include the discount on consultancy advice, although this may be more because not all members have required our consultancy work
- Other less popular options were the free use of meeting space
- In the comments section, there were positive feedback with one comment saying that they know they have not used the full extent of the membership and will pursue to make full use of it

#### Comments from this question:

- *Already benefited from most of these - especially the 10% discount for support and advice projects*
- *[organisation] is a very small group but being part of SWM helps give us access to the 'top table'*
- *We have not (yet) done justice to our membership of SWM. This is because of a combination of meagre staff resources and ill health. We hope to recruit new volunteers in the year to come and if this is successful, we would like to play a more prominent role*

**Q. 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?**

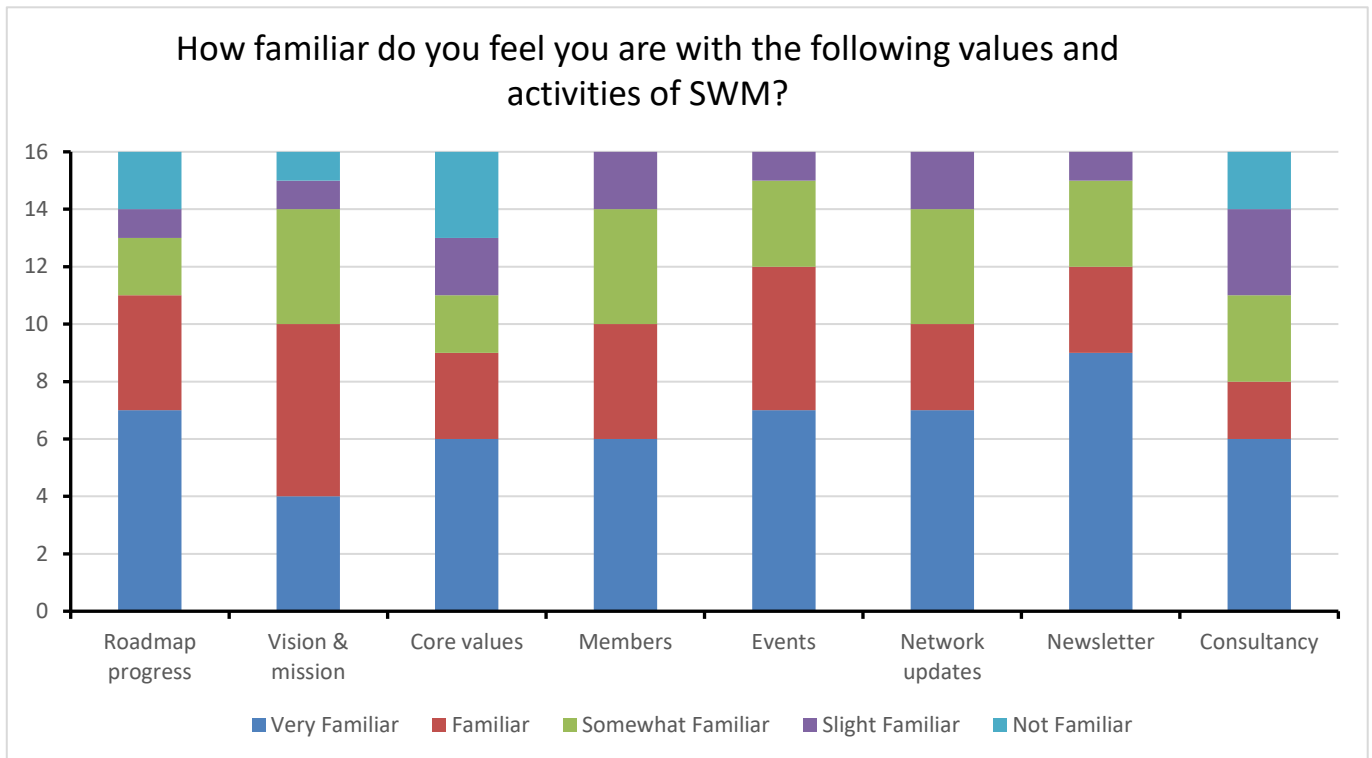
- *Ability to work with SWM on partnership opportunities*
- *free/informal expertise sharing and advice, leading to paid consultancy for bigger projects, but often it's unclear what's feasible and early free advice can help identify opportunities before they are fully identifiable*
- *Potentially SWM speakers at our events*
- *We would like to see SWM play a more up-front role in issues of greatest interest to [organisation] - ie land-use planning and transport. We see these as being at the heart of the sustainable development of the West Midlands*
- *Ad hoc advice / consultancy / case studies etc. Advocacy on behalf of members and critical analysis, guidance and discussion when business or local government action is not sufficient. SWM needs greater ambition, and a louder voice!*

There was some useful feedback which we will take on board and look at improving our membership for our members. From the comments, members would like SWM to be closer to them and for SWM to have “a louder voice” in sharing advice and expertise with more and regular case studies from.

### 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
Roadmap progress	7	4	2	1	2	0
Vision & mission	4	6	4	1	1	0
Core values	6	3	2	2	3	0
Members	6	4	4	2	0	0
Events	7	5	3	1	0	0
Network updates	7	3	4	2	0	0
Newsletter	9	3	3	1	0	0
Consultancy	6	2	3	3	2	0



**Key findings are as follows:**

- Across all aspects people are familiar with the values and activities of SWM
- Respondents are most familiar with our newsletter, events, networks, and our current members
- The quality of our consultancy work and our three core values are the least familiar areas
- Compared to the 2018 customer survey 'vision and mission' and 'events' areas improved the most on average going from 'somewhat familiar' to 'familiar' in 2019

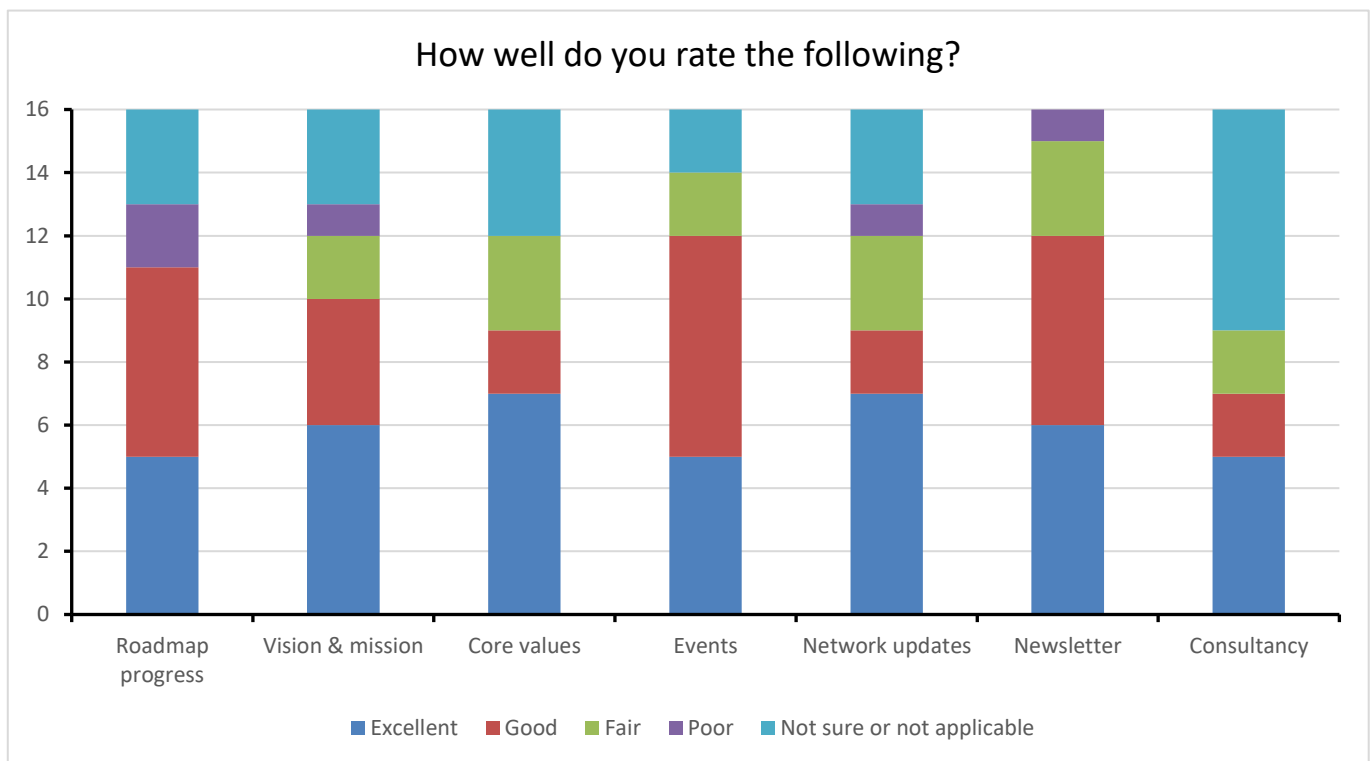
**Selected comments from this question (Do you have any other comments on how to improve?):**

- *Promote consultancy work more through comms channels.*
- *It is for us, not SWM, to improve. we have not been sufficiently engaged to take advantage of the opportunities available.*
- *What's the point of the roadmap if missed targets aren't discussed?*

**Q. How do you rate the following values and activities of SWM?**

Option	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not sure or N/A
<b>Our 2020 Roadmap and Priorities Progress</b>	5	6	0	2	3
<b>Progress against our Vision and Mission</b>	6	4	2	1	3

<b>Our three core values progress</b>	7	2	3	0	4
<b>The frequency and usefulness of our events</b>	5	7	2	0	2
<b>The frequency and usefulness of updates to our networks</b>	7	2	3	1	3
<b>The frequency and content of our monthly newsletter</b>	6	6	3	1	0
<b>The relevance, quality and interest of our consultancy work</b>	5	2	2	0	7



**Key findings are as follows:**

- Overall out of the work SWM do, people rate us as 'good', the highest rated is our consultancy work and performing against our three core values
- The poorest rated work is the usefulness of our newsletter and progression against our 2020 roadmap
- Compared to 2018 the data is very familiar to 2019 however, on average the network updates and newsletter as gone from a rating of 'excellent' in 2018 to 'good' in 2019
- Also, there were a five 'poor' rating, whereas in 2018 there were none
- 43% of respondents put 'not sure or N/A' for quality of consultancy work, despite it being one of the highest rated overall, this follows a similar pattern from last year where consultancy managed to achieve a 100% rating for 'excellent' or 'good' despite having 36% of respondents choosing 'not sure or N/A'

- 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.

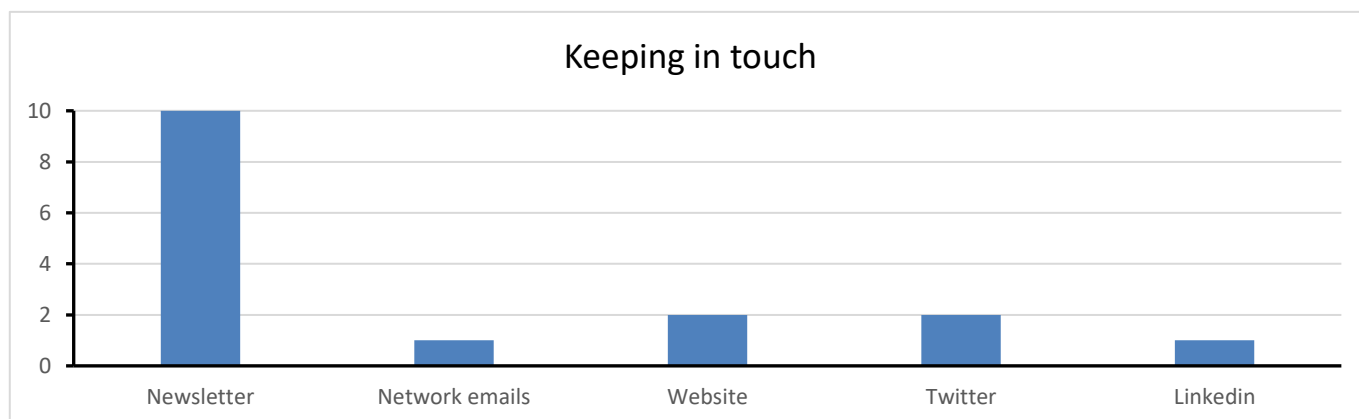
**Selected comments from this question:**

- *Need to communicate failures more clearly - they're not SWM failures, they're regional failures, but it's important they're visible!*
- *Impressive - given the ups and downs of working with partners and politicians*
- *Could be more analytical and insightful, less like a really long list of links? I might be thinking of the network update emails?*

**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	10	62.5
Network Email Updates	1	6.25
Our Website	2	12.5
Twitter	2	12.5
Linkedin	1	6.25

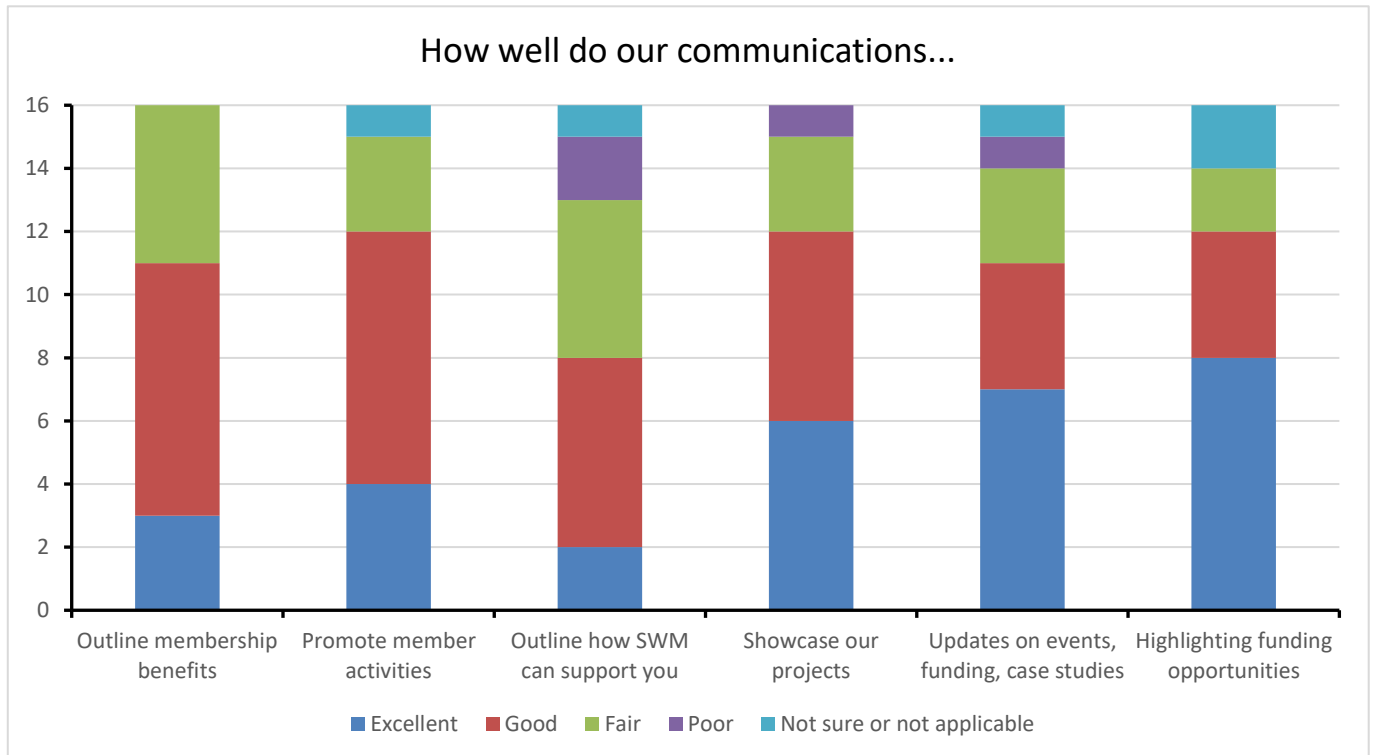


**Key findings are as follows:**

- Our newsletter continues to be 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
- This year we have been pushing our LinkedIn account, as it came back as feedback and something people would use from the 2018 survey. This has allowed us to spread our reach on social media with our followers growing since using it and possibly increasing the likelihood of new members

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

Option	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not sure or N/A
Outlining the benefits of SWM membership	3	8	5	0	0
Promoting the activities of our members	4	8	3	0	1
Explaining how SWM can support your organisation	2	6	5	2	1
Showcasing the range of activities and projects SWM is involved in	6	6	3	1	0
Providing regular updates on events, case studies and news related to our priorities	7	4	3	1	1
Providing regular updates on funding opportunities related to our priorities	8	4	2	0	2



**Key findings are as follows:**

- The trend continues from 2017 through to 2019 where positive feedback about publishing events, job opportunities and funding, but performing less well on outlining ‘membership benefits’ and how ‘SWM can support your organisation’
- There has been an increase in the number of poor rated areas (4) compared to 2018 (1). However, due to the lower response rate in 2019, the overall rating across all areas is rated ‘good’ the same as 2018
- From the comments it is clear that readers of the newsletter want to see a change to the lay out and have a improve eye catchiness, instead of an endless list of links with one commenting that the newsletter is “overwhelming sometimes” – this is something that will be looked at

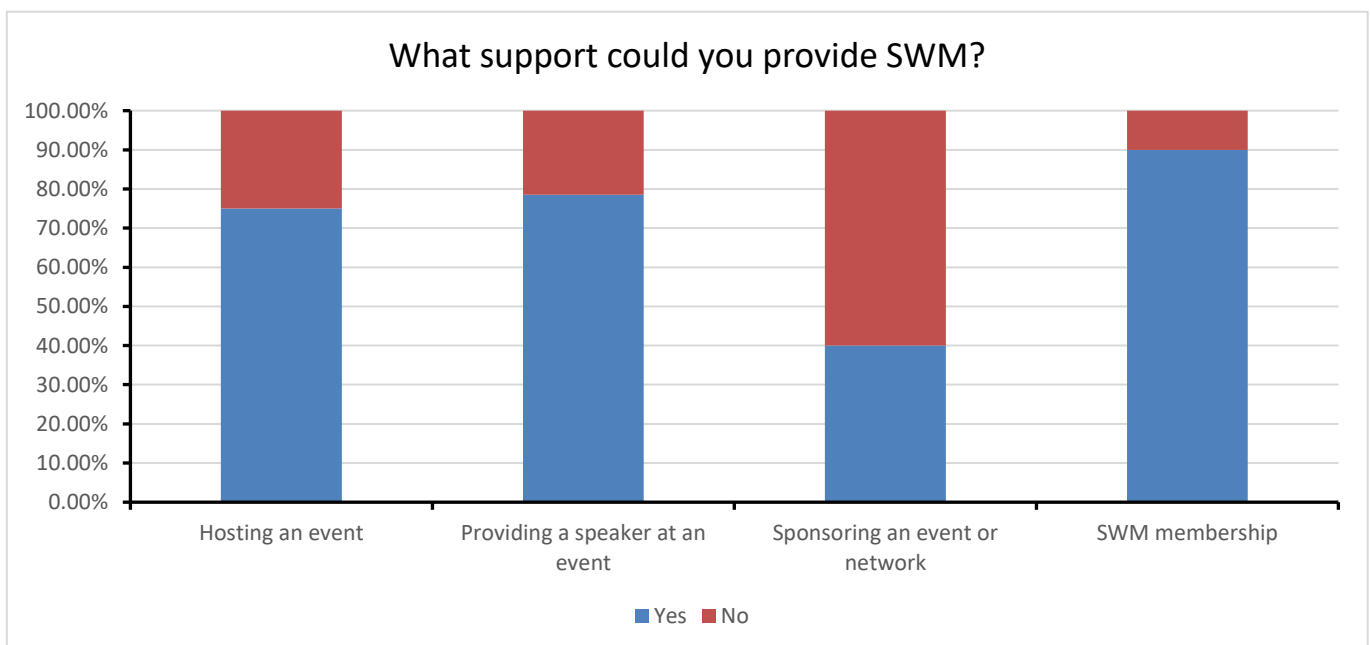
#### Selected comments from this question:

- *I think SWM needs to be a little more bold.*
- *Dominant comms seems to be about funding. Not expertise or connecting people or guidance or advice or advocacy, just endless links to government funding.*
- *Overwhelming sometimes*

#### 3.2.4 Support from respondents

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

Option	Yes	No	Did not answer	Yes Percentage %
Hosting an event	9	3	4	75
Providing a speaker at an event	11	3	2	78.6
Sponsoring an event or network	4	6	6	40
Becoming a SWM member, or continuing your membership	9	1	6	90



#### Key findings are as follows:



- There has been a percentage increase in all the areas we asked, the biggest increase comes from ‘becoming a SWM member, or continuing membership’. This may be down to that the ones who answered, are those active members who take full use out of the SWM membership and would therefore continue membership. There were 6 people who did not answer
- High percentage of people would provide a venue and speakers for SWM events – this shows great potential that exists for SWM to continue to put on great events in ideal locations
- ‘Sponsoring an event or network’ continues to be low, however increasing from 32% to 40%

**Where you've answered 'yes' to any of the above questions, please provide more details here.**

- *Happy to host events in our event space, provide a speaker & continue our membership*
- *Always willing to speak on Birmingham Climate Emergency - the role for faith communities*
- *We intend to continue our membership. It time we hope to play a more active role*

**Q. SWM is about to launch the region’s new sustainability Roadmap to 2030. Have you been involved in the consultation of the new Roadmap, and if so, could you tell us about your perception of this consultation? Do you feel you’ve been able to have an adequate say over its content? Please let us know how you’ve been consulted, if you have.**

- *We expressed concern that the look is very similar to the SDGs and that might cause confusion. I am not sure whether this has been taken on board*
- *Yes - its a great example of a collaborative approach to developing a sustainability framework.*
- *Wanted to contribute, but just ran out of time and it never got to the top of my priorities.*
- *The consultation has in my opinion been poor. The feedback provided hasn't been taken into account. We are disappointed with the roadmap to 2030, and the fact that our organisation is on the long list of names makes it appear that we contributed to it significantly which we did not because our feedback was ignored. Rather than showing us a half formed plan and then ignoring the few comments we made, expert, detailed consultation should be sought on the targets, and this does not seem to have been done.*

**Key findings are as follows:**

- There were clear signs that people had concerns with the roadmap or had missed the opportunity for consultation and collaboration on the creation. We will take this feedback into account in the future as the roadmap will be updated throughout its life.
- We will be asking members to share what they have done and be more open about the changes we make to our roadmap.

**Q. Would you like to stay in touch with SWM?**

<b>Newsletter</b>	11
<b>Annual Conference</b>	7
<b>Next Annual Survey</b>	10

### 3.3 Summary

We might have wanted more respondents and from more of a spread of public, private, and third sector, but with the data and comments we got for respondents that took our survey we were able to see patterns of where we are performing well and what areas need more work.

The following are key findings and actions drawn from the 2019 Annual Customer Survey:

- Across all areas of our membership, we have an 86% approval rating in that they agree our membership is useful
- To improve our partnership with our members we will be running more 'meet the members' meeting to grow that connected relationship. We will also be asking on social media and through our newsletter for members to send us case studies on their work, which we can then share to our other members of good 'case studies' and 'practices' in the West Midlands
- The recurring pattern, from previous surveys, that our core values and consultancy work is not as familiar to our members than our newsletter, events, networks, and other members. Therefore, we will be pushing the consultancy work we do as it is clear from the survey that 7 out of 9 respondents, that know of our consultancy work, would rate it 'excellent' or 'good'
- 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
- It is very apparent that more can be done to raise awareness among our members and stakeholders about the activities of SWM
- The newsletter needs a change up as readers find it "overwhelming" with "endless links", so this is something that we will be looking into to improve over the course of the year
- With regards to the roadmap, some members left that they had been left out of the consultation and collaboration. Therefore, this will be helped by the 'meet the members' programme and to be more open on social media for ideas and feedback for the roadmap as it evolves over time

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-**