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***Surrey Heath Borough Council***  
***BVPI General Survey 2006***

***Prepared For*** ***Surrey Heath Borough Council***  
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***Ref*** ***26/29genrep***  
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## **Introduction**

This report summarises the main findings from the Best Value Performance Indicators General Survey carried out in accordance with DCLG guidelines.

## **Method**

Questionnaires were mailed to a random sample of 2,500 addresses drawn from the small users Postal Address File (PAF) on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2006. Questionnaires were addressed to 'The Residents at ...'

After two reminders a total of 1288 completed questionnaires were received with a further 16 returned as 'gone away'. This represents 1% 'deadwood' and an effective response rate of 52%.

A full description of the methodology used is given in the Technical Appendix at the end of this document.

A copy of the questionnaire used is appended to this document. Note that the wording of the questions was set by the DCLG and could not be altered.

## **Weighting of Data**

Data has been weighted to ensure that the results are fully representative of the population of the District.

All results discussed in this document are based on the weighted data.

## **Comparison with Previous Survey**

Where possible results have been compared with the results from the BVPI General Surveys carried out during 2003. Data from that survey was also based on weighted data representative of the demographic profile of the area.

It must be borne in mind that all survey data is subject to a statistical margin of error, so care must be taken when interpreting changes between the three surveys. Where an observed difference between the surveys is within the margin of error then it can be said that the results are effectively the same – i.e. the difference is not statistically significant. As a guideline a difference of less than 4% will generally not be significant.

Where appropriate, comments are made on the statistical significance or otherwise of the data shown.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The level of crime emerges as the most important element in making somewhere a good place to live. Only 22%, feel this needs improving in their area (down from 30% in 2003).

The borough fares well in terms of the next three factors seen to be important, with these being well down the order in terms of what residents feel needs improving – these being Health services, clean streets and education provision.

Traffic congestion is the most frequently cited factor in terms of what needs improving. Furthermore this has worsened in 2006 with 56% saying this needs improving compared with 50% on the previous survey.

Activities for teenagers is second in the list of areas for improvement, being mentioned by 45% of residents (up from 33% in 2003).

Four other factors feature in the list of what needs improving amongst more than 20% of residents – affordable decent housing (23%), public transport (27%), road and pavement repairs (29%) and cultural facilities (25%).

### ***Anti-Social Behaviour***

The two biggest perceived problems in the area are parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children (which 46% of residents mention) and teenagers hanging around the streets (43%).

Around a third also cite people not treating each other with respect and consideration.

Around a quarter of residents cite people being drunk or rowdy in public places as a problem, and 17% refer to people using or dealing drugs.

Vandalism, graffiti, and other deliberate damage to property and vehicles is felt to be a problem by 22% of residents, and a similar number cite rubbish and litter lying around (25%).

Relatively few cite noisy neighbours and loud parties (8%) or abandoned or burnt out cars (7%).

For all aspects of anti-social behaviour which featured on both questionnaires the proportion of residents believing each to be a problem in their area fell between 2003 and 2006.

The greatest overall improvement is seen in vandalism graffiti and damage to property and vehicles, (down from 46% to 22%).

Big improvements are also seen in the proportion citing people being drunk or rowdy in public places (down from 35% to 23%), people using or dealing drugs (down from 29% to 17%), and abandoned and burnt out cars (down from 23% to 7%).

### ***Satisfaction with Area***

The majority of residents say they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (79%).

### **Community Cohesion**

Amongst those who expressed a view, the majority would agree to some extent that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together – 58% agreeing and 9% disagreeing

When asked whether they had experienced any unfair treatment which they would judge to be discrimination in the last year, 3% of residents said they had.

### **The Duty to Keep Relevant Land Clear of Litter and Refuse (BV 89)**

Overall, 73% of residents are satisfied with the Council's performance in terms of keeping relevant land clear of litter and refuse. This is a significant improvement on 2003 when 68% were satisfied.

### **Household Waste Collection (BV 90a)**

Overall, 77% of residents are satisfied with the waste collection service – similar to the level seen in 2003 (79%).

### **Recycling sites (BV 90b)**

Overall, 63% of residents are satisfied with the bring recycling facilities. This is down from 69% in 2003 with the level of dissatisfaction up from 13% to 21%.

### **Kerbside Collection Service**

Only 43% of the residents are satisfied with the kerbside collection for recycling, which is significantly lower than in 2003 when 49% were satisfied. Over this period dissatisfaction rose from 23% to 36%.

### **Cultural And Recreational Activities**

Overall, 59% of residents have used sports and leisure facilities; 68% of these were satisfied, compared with 74% of users in 2003. **(BV 119a)**

Just over half have used libraries in the last twelve months (53%), with the vast majority satisfied (86%). **(BV 119b)**

Overall, 25% have visited museums and galleries in the last year, with 69% of these being satisfied (similar to the 67% seen in 2003). **(BV 119c)**

In the last twelve months 46% have visited theatres and concert halls, with 77% being satisfied – up from 73% in 2003. **(BV 119d)**

Overall 86% have visited parks or open spaces – 79% were satisfied, which is similar to 2003 when 81% were satisfied. **(BV 119e)**

### **Performance Over The Last Three Years**

Residents were asked to say whether these services and facilities have got better or worse over the last three years.

For all but one of the services the majority opinion is that there has been no change.

Local recycling facilities is the exception, with 38% feeling it has got better (though 15% say it has got worse).

In the case of libraries, the proportion who feel facilities have improved far outweighs those who feel these have got worse.

For the remaining services with the majority opinion being that there has been no change, the remainder are more evenly divided in their opinion.

### ***Planning Services***

Only 20% of residents have had direct experience of planning services - 40% of whom were satisfied - down from 55% in 2003.

### ***Housing Services***

Few respondents have had direct contact with Housing Services (7%). Amongst this group just under half said they were satisfied with the service (42%), with almost a third dissatisfied (31%). This is similar to the pattern seen in 2003.

### ***The Way the Authority Runs Things (BV 3)***

Overall, 55% of residents said they are satisfied with the way the Council runs things – down from 57% in 2003, with the level of dissatisfaction increasing from 11% to 15%.

When asked for their opinion about the performance of the Council over the last three years, the perception of the majority of residents is that there has been no change, with the remainder equally divided as to whether things have got better or worse.

### ***Complaints Handling (BV 4)***

Overall, 19% of residents had contacted the Council with a complaint over the last twelve months.

Over half of these were dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled (53%), which was similar to the position in 2003.

### ***Contacting The Council For Other Reasons***

Overall, 39% had contacted the Council (other than to make a complaint) in the last twelve months.

Two-thirds contacted the Council by telephone, and just under a third visited in person.

Around three-quarters were satisfied with the ease with which they could find the right person to deal with their enquiry, and the way they were dealt with by staff.

Overall, 67% were satisfied with the information they were given, and 19% were dissatisfied.

Whilst 62% were satisfied with the final outcome of their enquiry/contact, 25% were dissatisfied.

### ***How The Council Performs Overall***

Residents were presented with a list of statements and asked to say to what extent they feel each applies to Surrey Heath Borough Council.

The Council comes out best for environmental issues with around two-thirds believing that to some extent it is working to make the area a better place to live, and cleaner and greener; 60% also think the Council is working to make the area safer.

Just under half feel that the Council treats all types of people fairly, promotes the interests of local residents, and acts on the concerns of local residents.

A similar number, however, would describe the Council as remote and impersonal.

Whilst 45% of all residents would describe the Council as efficient and well run, and 43% as trustworthy, only 34% feel it provides good value for money.

### ***Information Provision***

The majority of residents feel adequately informed about how to pay bills to the Council (86%), and how and where to register to vote (85%).

While 55% feel they are well informed about what the Council spends its money on, somewhat fewer feel well informed about the standard of service they should expect (43%), and about the services and benefits the Council provides (40%).

Fewer still feel well informed about how the Council is performing (31%), or whether the Council is delivering on its promises (27%).

Overall 42% of residents say they feel well informed on how to complain to the Council, and 31% on how to get involved in local decision making.

Only 20% feel adequately informed on what the Council is doing to tackle anti-social behaviour.

### ***Sources of Information***

The most common source for finding out about the Council is information provided by the Council (such as magazines, leaflets, posters etc), which 41% of residents cite as their main source.

The local media comes in second position, though some way behind with 28% citing this as their main source of information.

The Council website/internet is cited as the main source of information by 20% of residents.

### ***Local Decision Making***

Amongst those who expressed a view one way or the other about opportunities for participation in local decision making, opinion was mixed – 14% being satisfied and 17% dissatisfied.

Similarly, 30% responded 'don't know' or did not answer the question when asked whether they agree or disagree that they can influence decisions affecting their local area.

Opinion amongst the remainder was weighted towards the negative – 51% disagreeing with the proposition and 21% agreeing.

Overall, 22% said they would like to be more involved in the decisions the Council makes that affect their local area, with a further 57% saying that it would depend on the issue.

### ***The Internet***

Around three-quarters of residents have access to the internet at home, and 45% at work. The majority in both cases use broadband.

Almost four in ten of those who have internet access had visited the Council's website in the three months prior to taking part in the survey.

The vast majority of those who have accessed the site find it either very good or fairly good for layout and design (92%), ease of use (88%), quality of information (88%) and range of information (91%).

## **DETAILED RESULTS**

### **QUALITY OF LIFE**

Respondents were presented with a list of twenty factors relating to quality of life and were asked to say which five they consider to be most important in terms of making somewhere a good place to live, and which five they felt most need improving in their area.

The chart overleaf shows response to both parts of the question with the factors listed in order of perceived importance in making somewhere a good place to live.

Heading the list on the left of the chart is the level of crime which two-thirds of residents include in their list of five things which makes somewhere a good place to live. Only 22%, however, include the level of crime amongst the five factors they feel most need improving in their area. This is an improvement on 2003, when 30% felt that the level of crime needed improving.

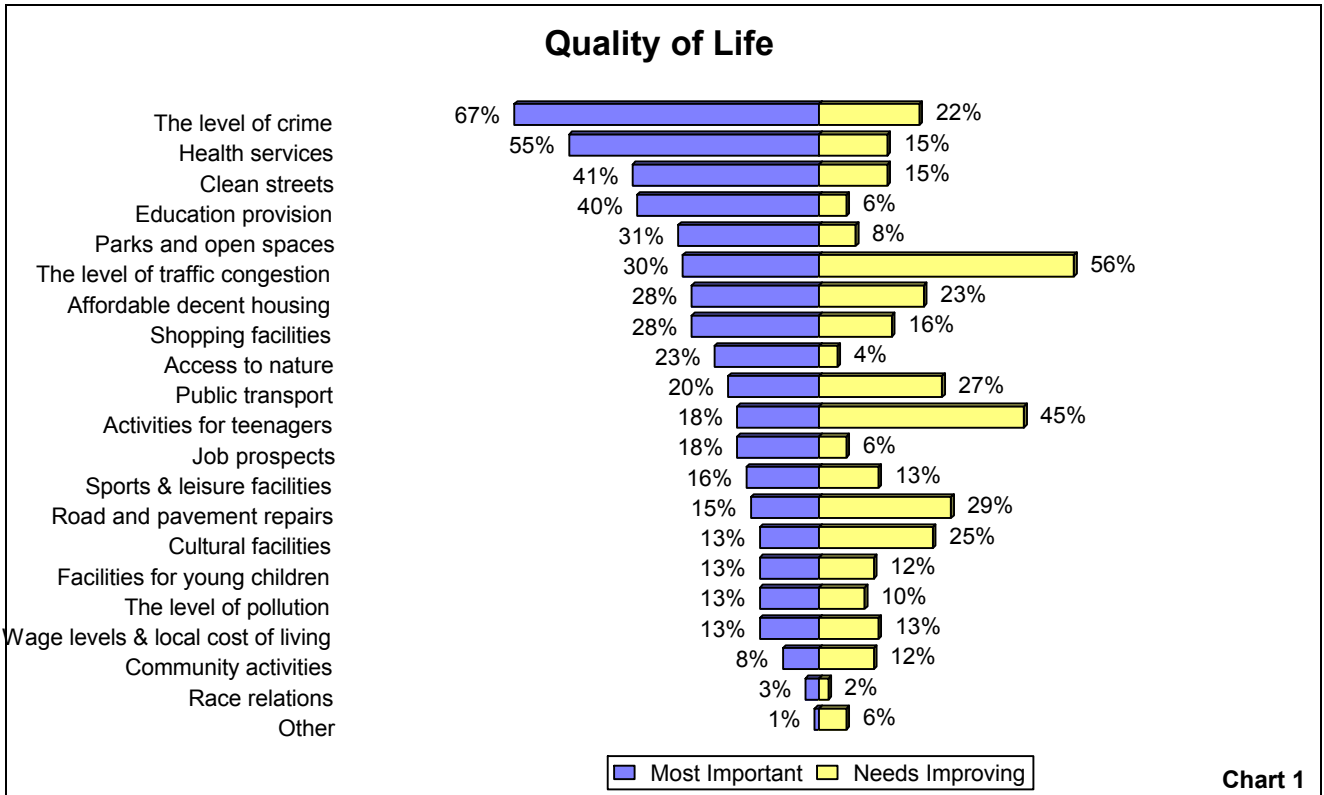
Health services follows in second position with 55% including this in their list of important factors. Again a relatively small proportion see this as a problem in their area (15% down from 21% in 2003).

Clean streets and education provision fall in equal third position with around 40% of residents including these in their list of what makes somewhere a good place to live. Again, these feature well down the order in terms of what residents feel needs improving (15% and 8% respectively mentioning these).

Parks and open spaces and the level of traffic congestion features next on the left of the chart, with just under a third seeing these as important. Traffic congestion is the most frequently cited factor in terms of what needs improving. Furthermore this has worsened in 2006 with 56% saying this needs improving compared with 50% on the previous survey.

Activities for teenagers is second in the list of areas for improvement, being mentioned by 45% of residents (up from 33% in 2003).

Four other factors feature in the list of what needs improving amongst more than 20% of residents – affordable decent housing (23%), public(27%), road and pavement repairs (29%) and cultural facilities (25%).



Base - All (1288)

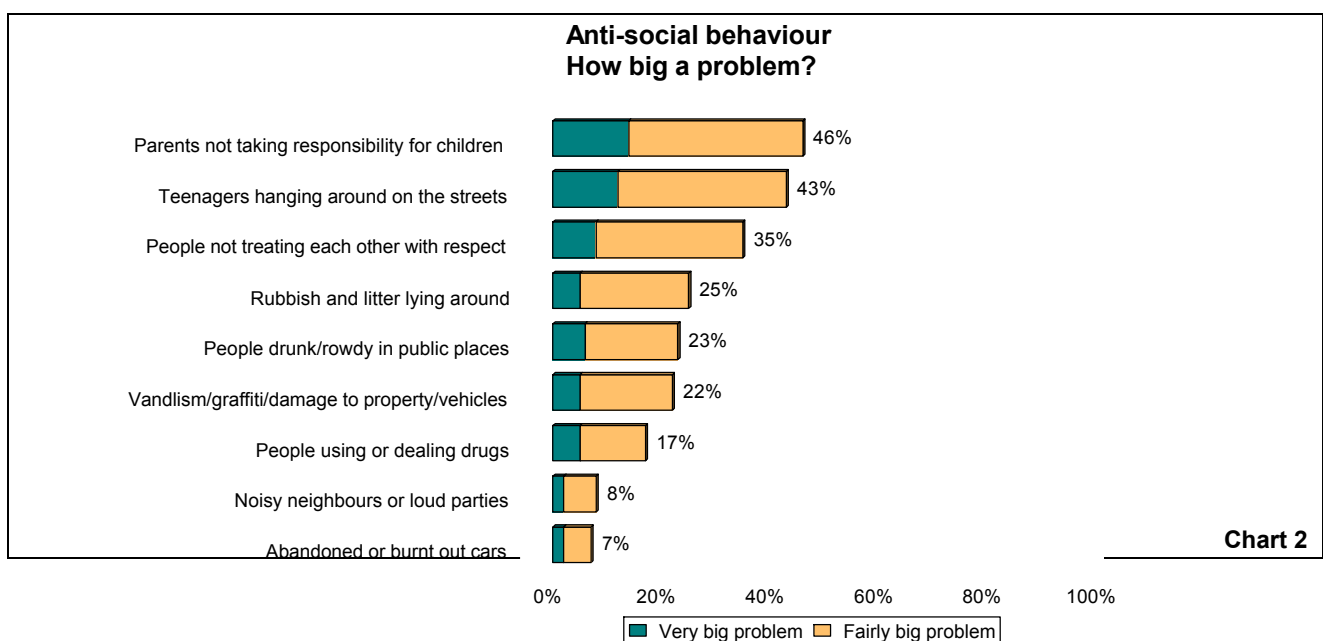
### Anti-Social Behaviour

The two biggest perceived problems in the area are parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their (which 46% of residents mention) and teenagers hanging around the streets (which 43% see as a problem in their area). Closely related, around a third also cite people not treating each other with respect and consideration.

Around a quarter of residents cite people being drunk or rowdy in public places as a problem, and 17% refer to people using or dealing drugs.

Vandalism, graffiti, and other deliberate damage to property and vehicles is felt to be a problem by 22% of residents, and a similar number cite rubbish and litter lying around (25%).

At the bottom of the list are noisy neighbours and loud parties (8%) and abandoned or burnt out cars (7%).



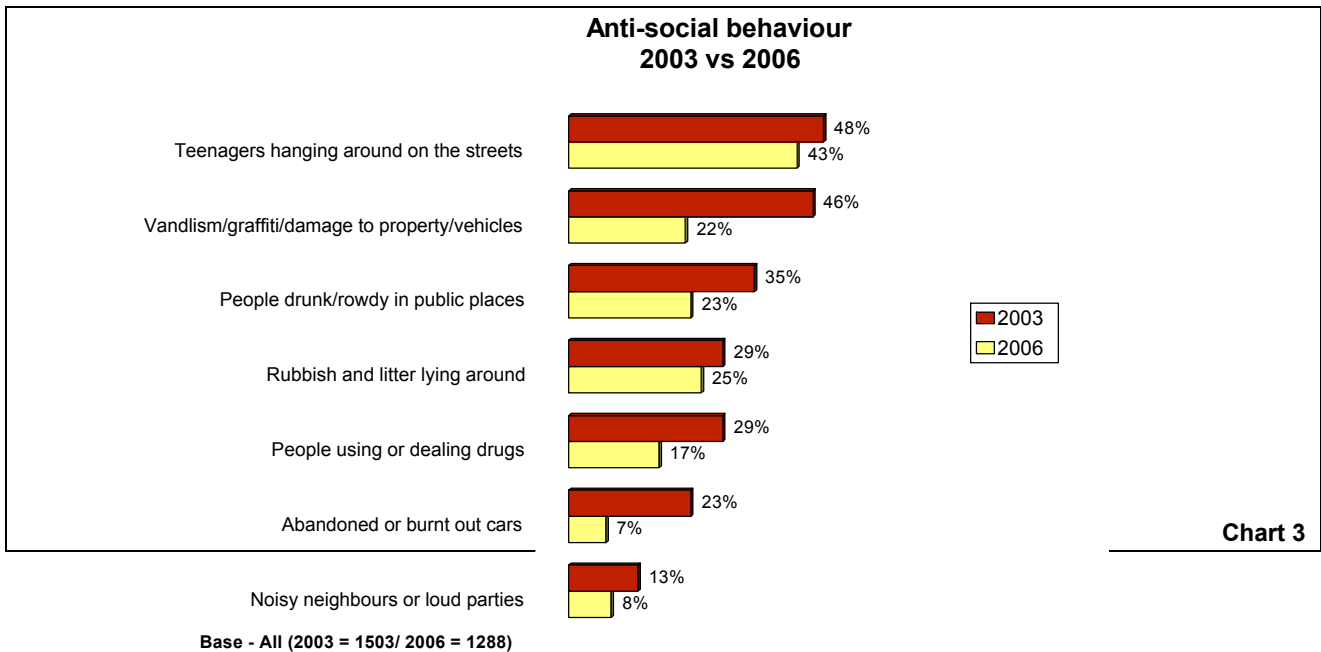
Base - All (1288)

The chart below compares the results seen on the latest survey with those from the survey carried out in 2003 for statements included on both questionnaires.

The chart shows that for all these aspects of anti-social behaviour the proportion of residents believing it to be a problem in their area fell between 2003 and 2006.

The greatest overall improvement is seen in vandalism graffiti and damage to property and vehicles, which has fallen from 46% in 2003 citing this as a problem to 22%.

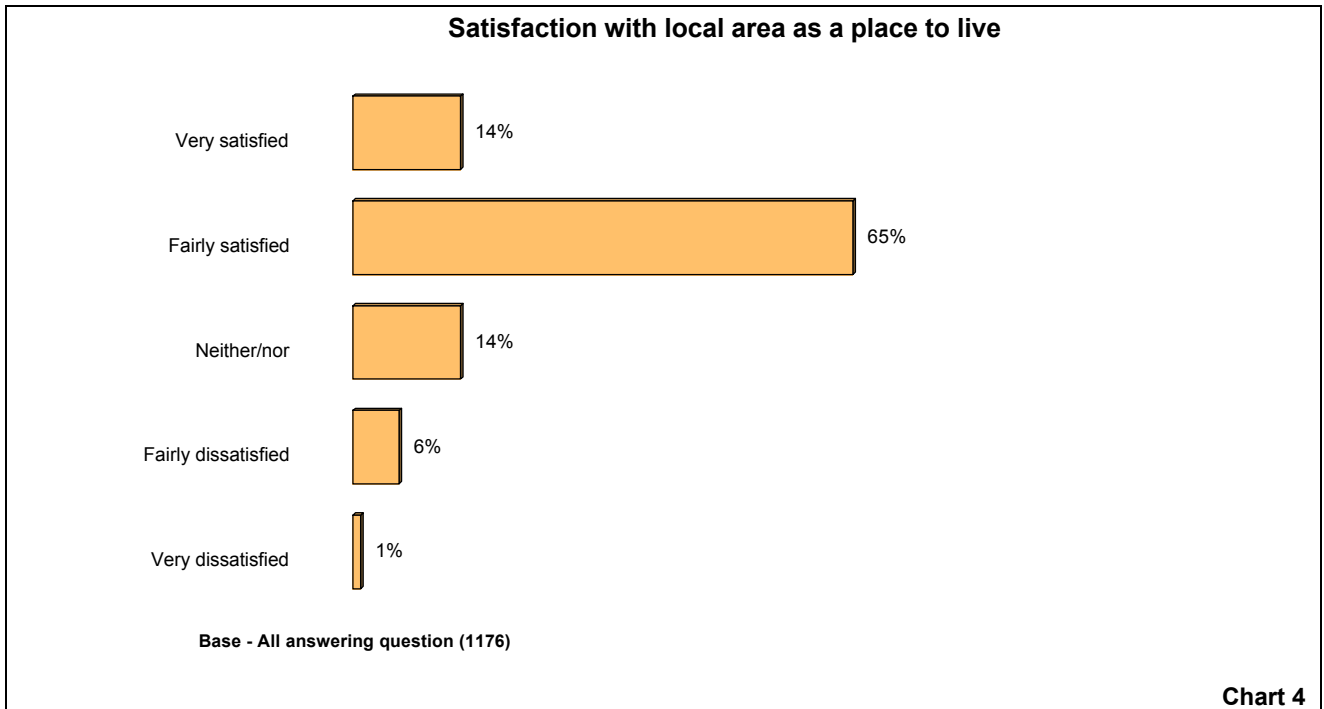
Big improvements are also seen in the proportion citing people being drunk or rowdy in public places (down from 35% in 2003 to 23%), people using or dealing drugs (down from 29% to 17%), and abandoned and burnt out cars (down from 23% to 7%).



### Satisfaction with Area

The majority of residents say they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (79%), with only 7% expressing any degree of dissatisfaction (the remainder in the neutral neither satisfied nor dissatisfied position).

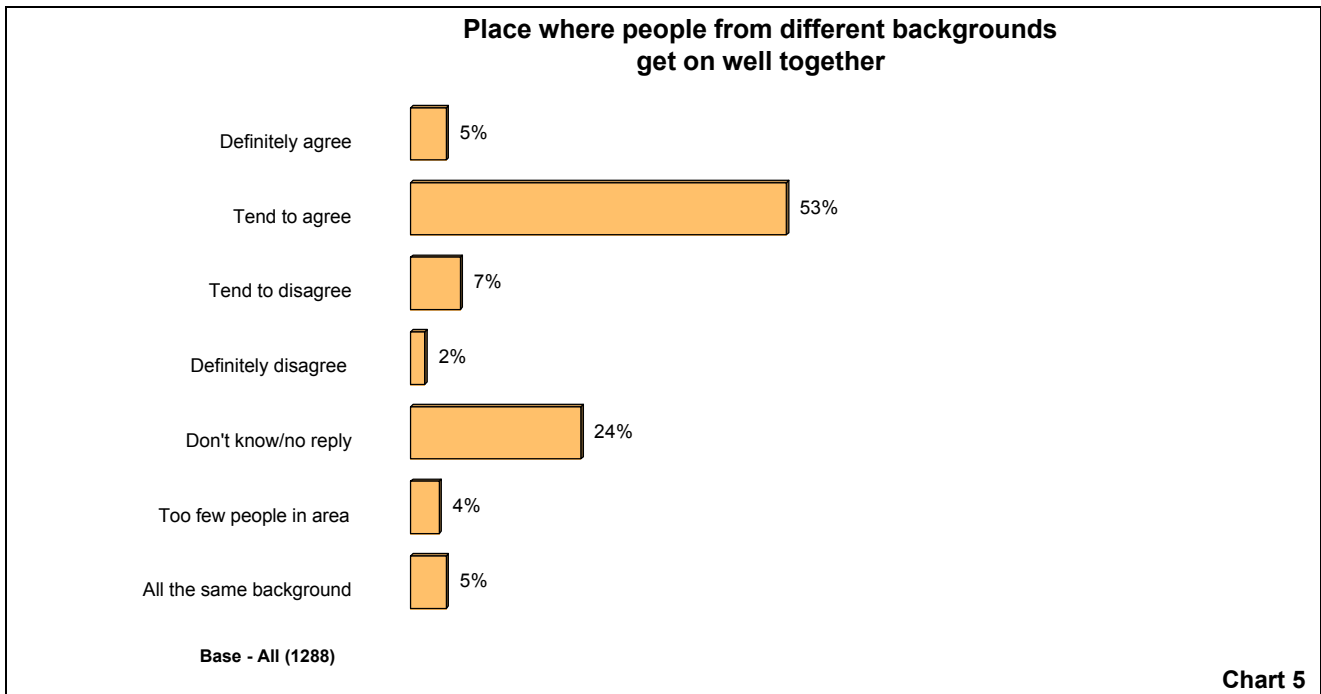
This question was introduced as a required question on the 2006 survey, and was not on previous surveys.



### Community Cohesion

When asked to agree or disagree with the statement “your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together”, a large group of people had no view on the matter (i.e. 24% responded don't know or did not answer the question at all), and others claimed that there are too few people in their area (4%), or that all the people in the area are of the same background (5%).

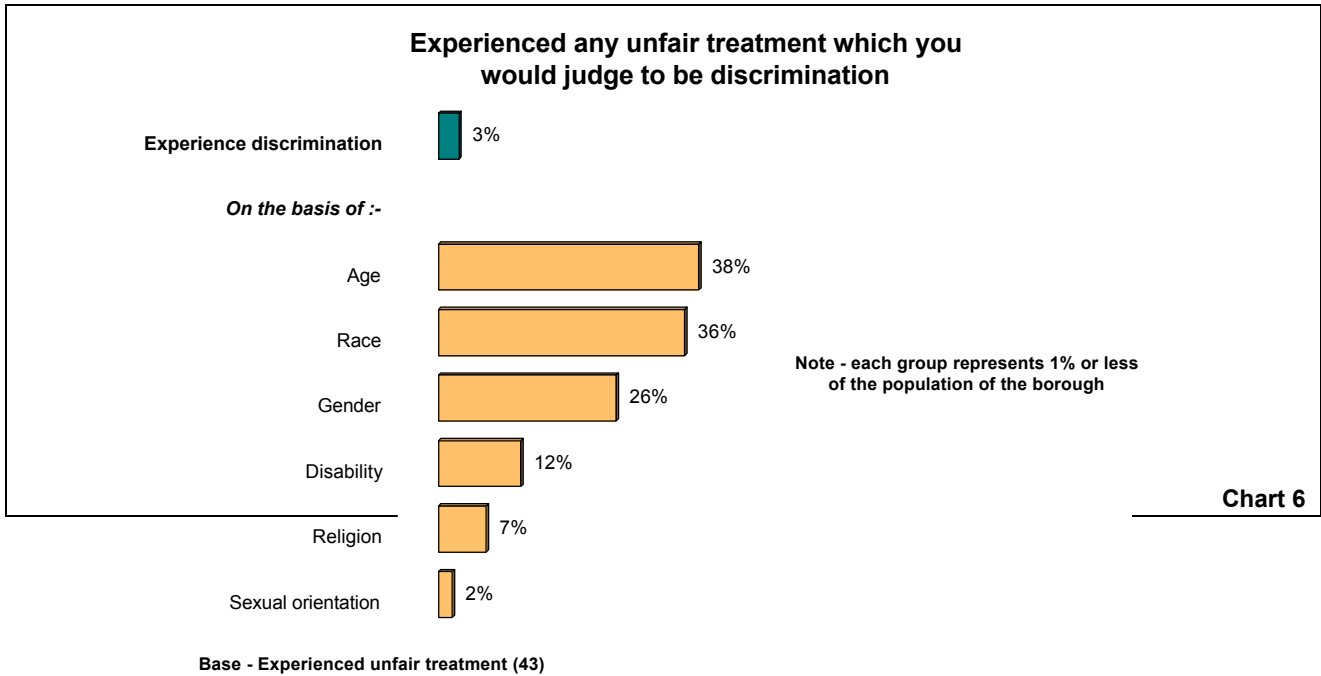
Amongst those who expressed a view, the majority would agree to some extent with this proposition – 58% overall.



Residents were asked whether they had experienced any unfair treatment which they would judge to be discrimination in the last year.

As shown on the chart below, 3% of residents said they had experienced such discrimination. Roughly equal proportions said that this was related to age and race, with gender some way behind. Smaller groups cited a disability, religion or sexual orientation.

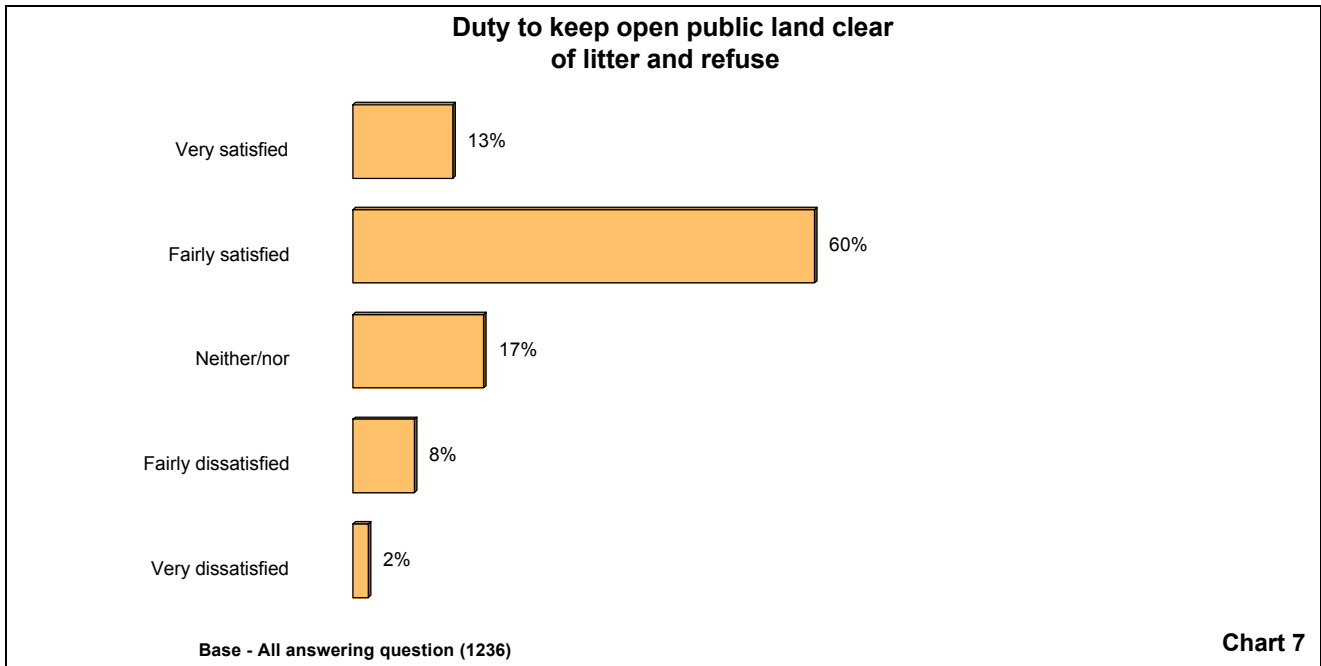
Note that each of these groups represents less than 1% of population of the borough.



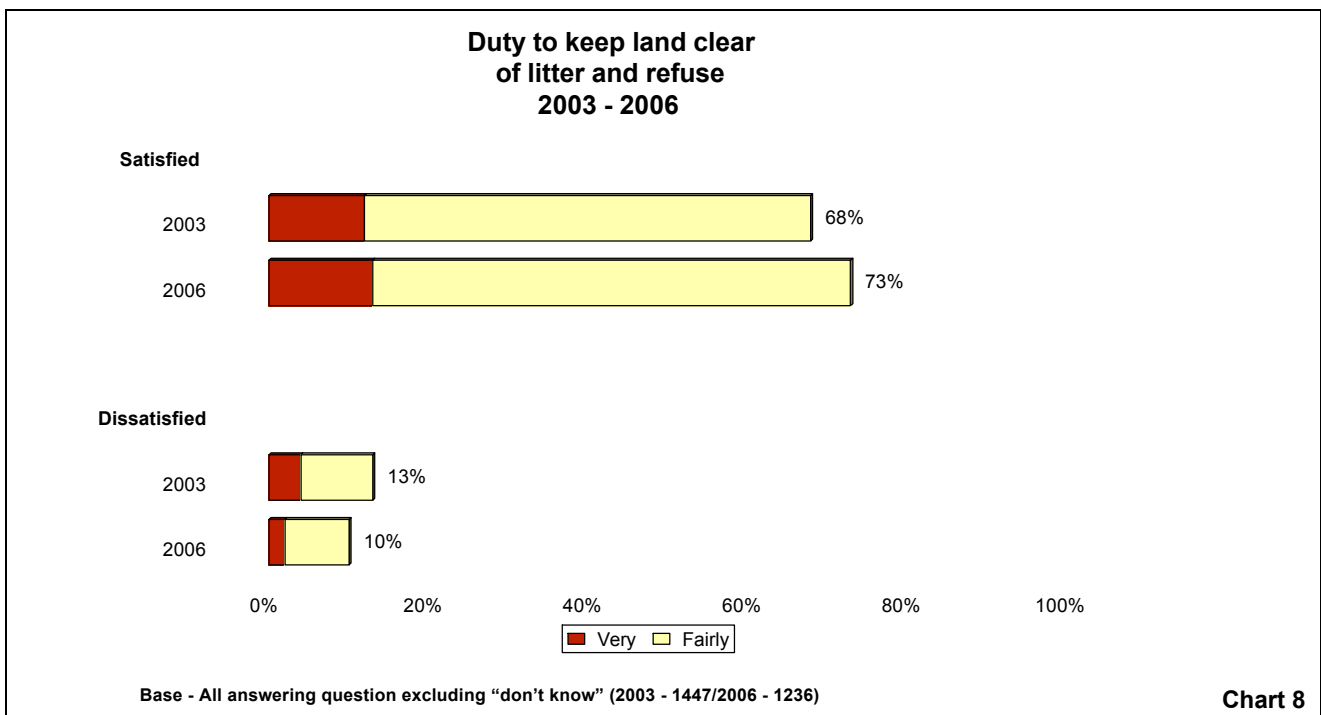
**WASTE AND LITTER SERVICES**

**The Duty to Keep Relevant Land Clear of Litter and Refuse (BV 89)**

Overall, 73% of residents are satisfied with the Council’s performance in terms of keeping relevant land clear of litter and refuse, with 10% being dissatisfied and the remainder opting for the neither satisfied nor dissatisfied box on the questionnaire.



Comparing this with 2003 shows an improved position, with satisfaction up from 68% (a statistically significant difference).

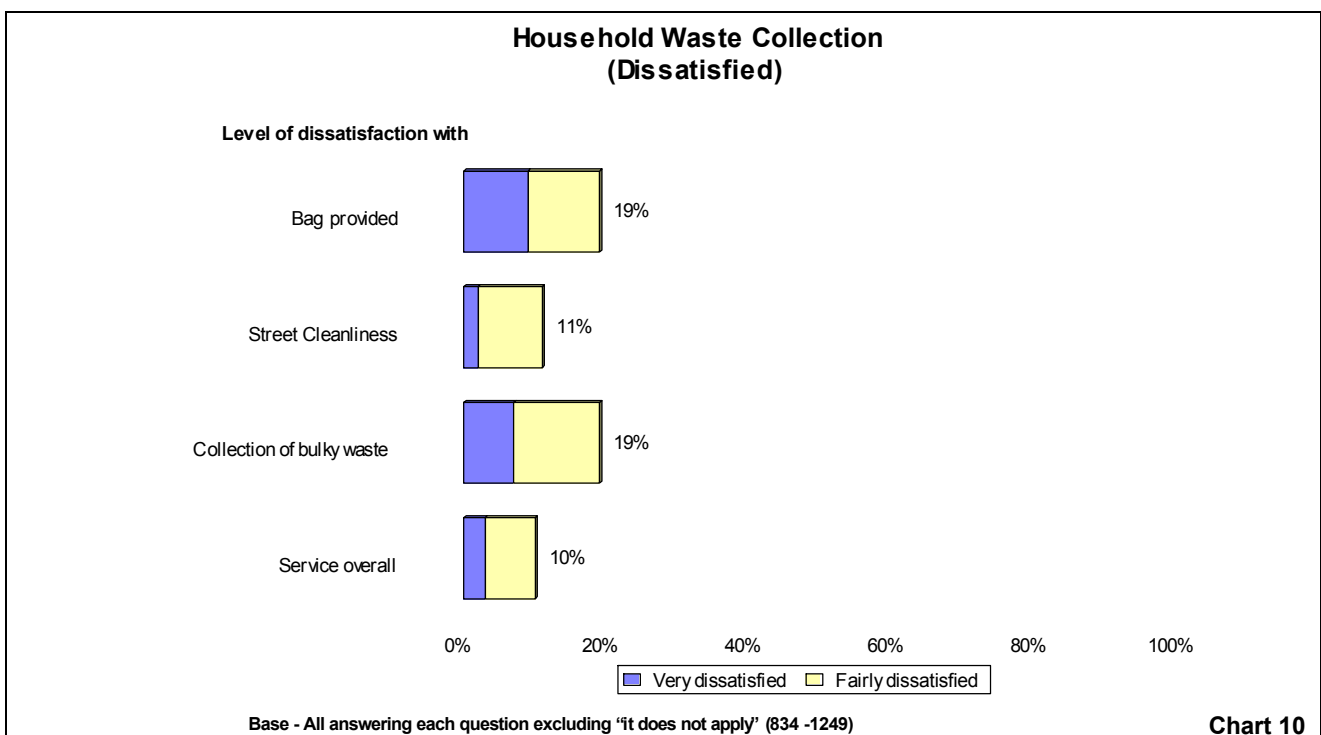
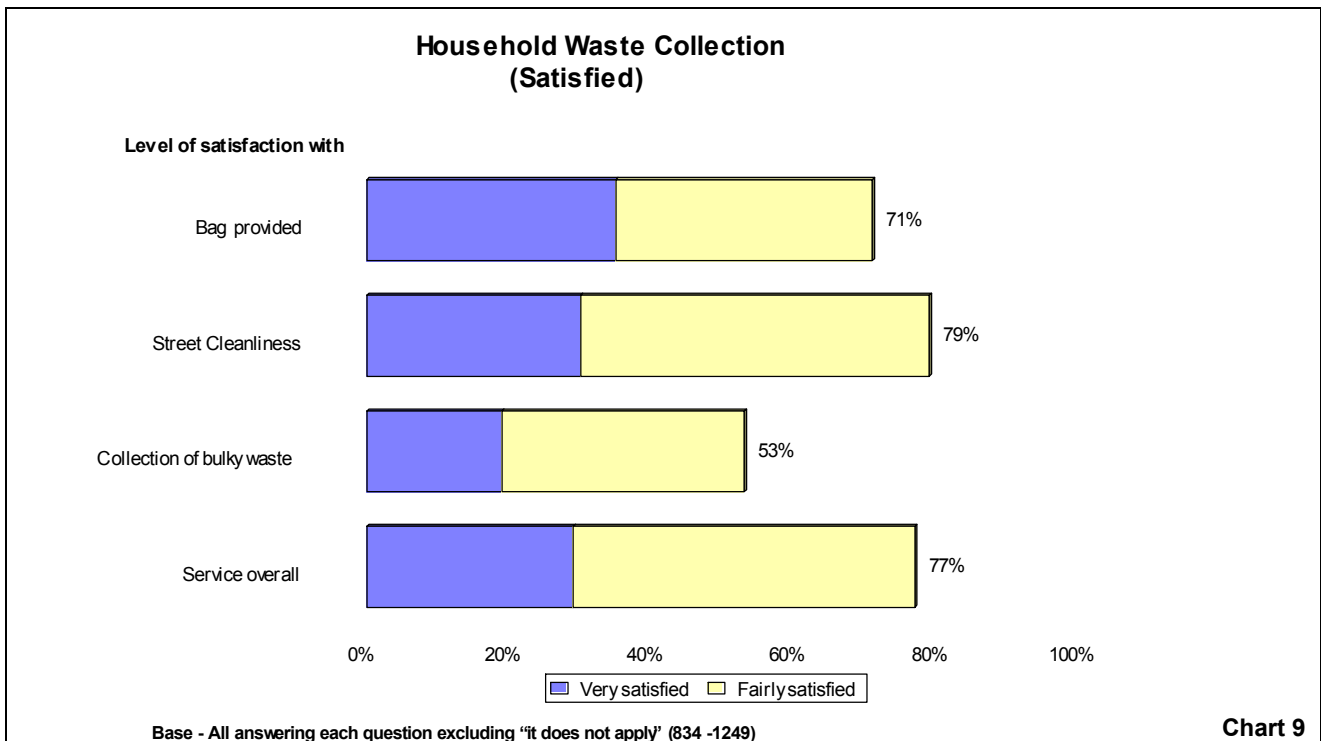


### Household Waste Collection

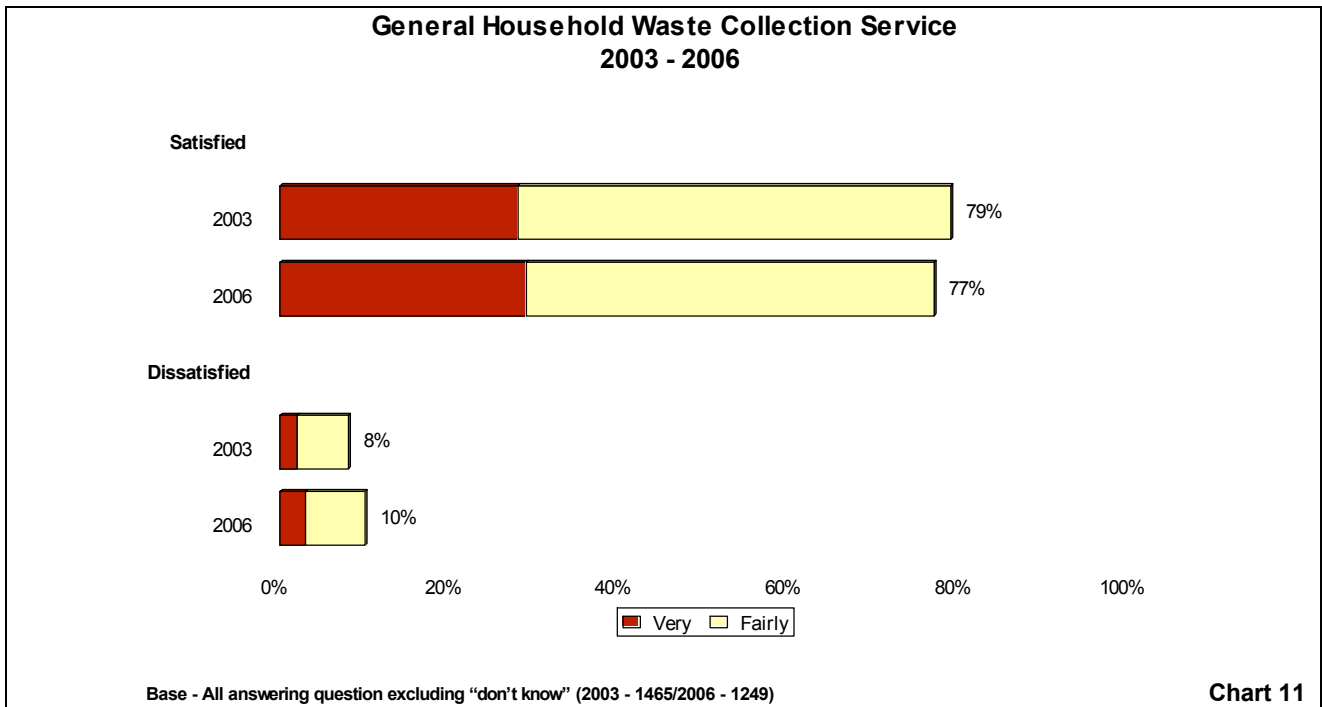
Overall, 77% of residents are satisfied with the waste collection service, with 79% satisfied with the cleanliness of the street following the collection.

A significant minority (19%) are dissatisfied with the bag provided for household waste - though this is an improvement on 2003 when 26% were dissatisfied.

In the case of the collection of bulky household waste, around a quarter of residents did not have a view on the service. Amongst those expressing an opinion on way or the other 53% were satisfied with the service and 19% dissatisfied.



Overall satisfaction with the general household waste collection is much the same as seen in 2003 (differences shown not being statistically significant).

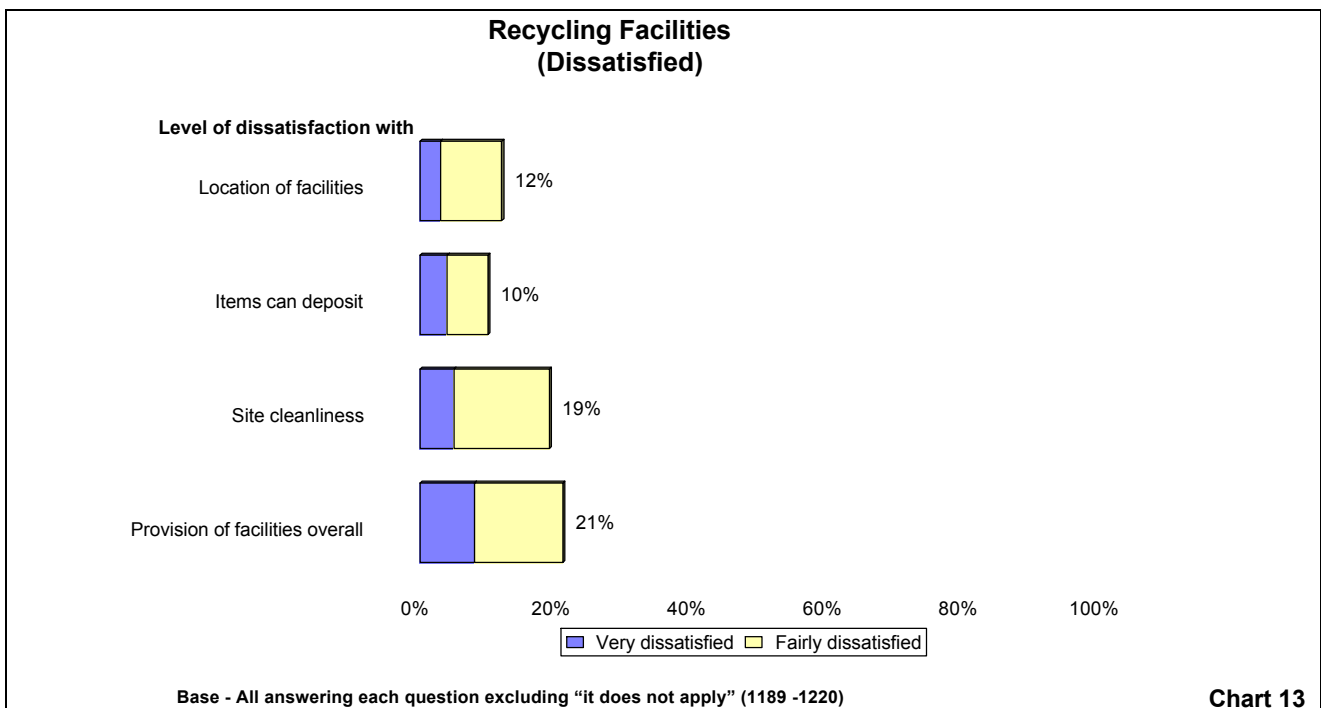
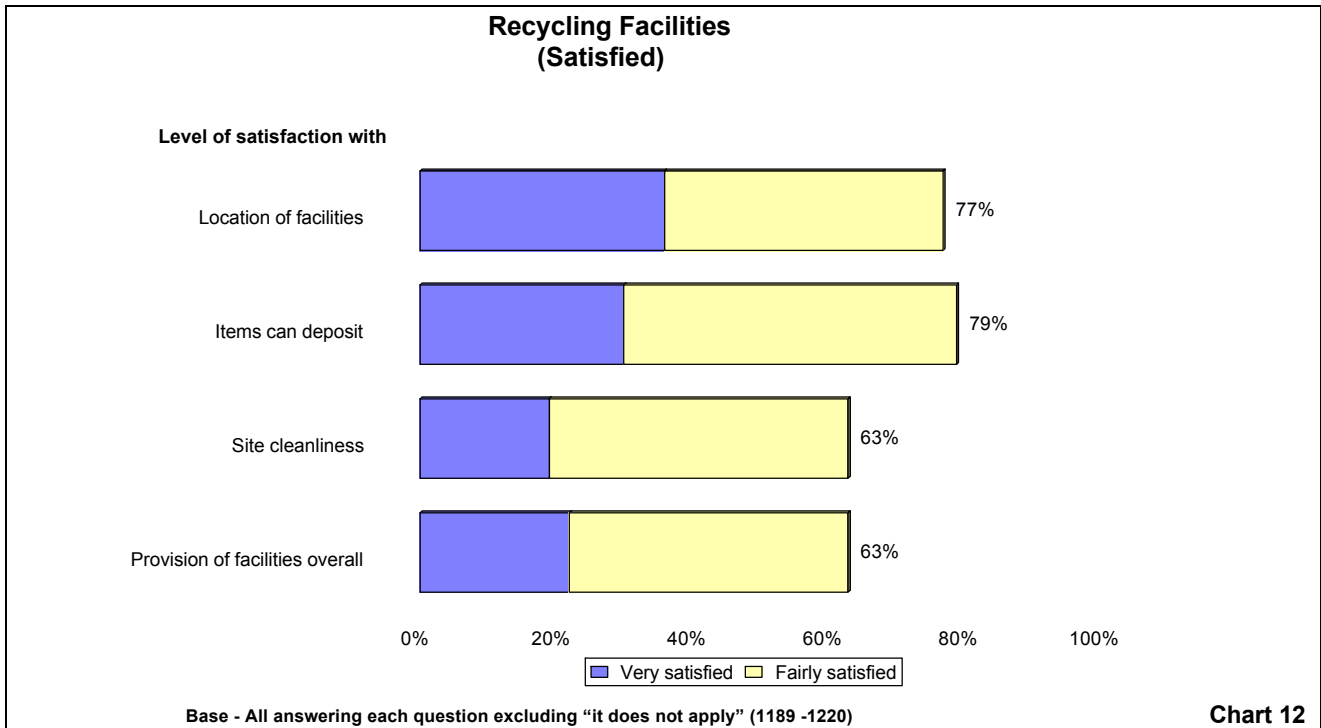


## RECYCLING FACILITIES

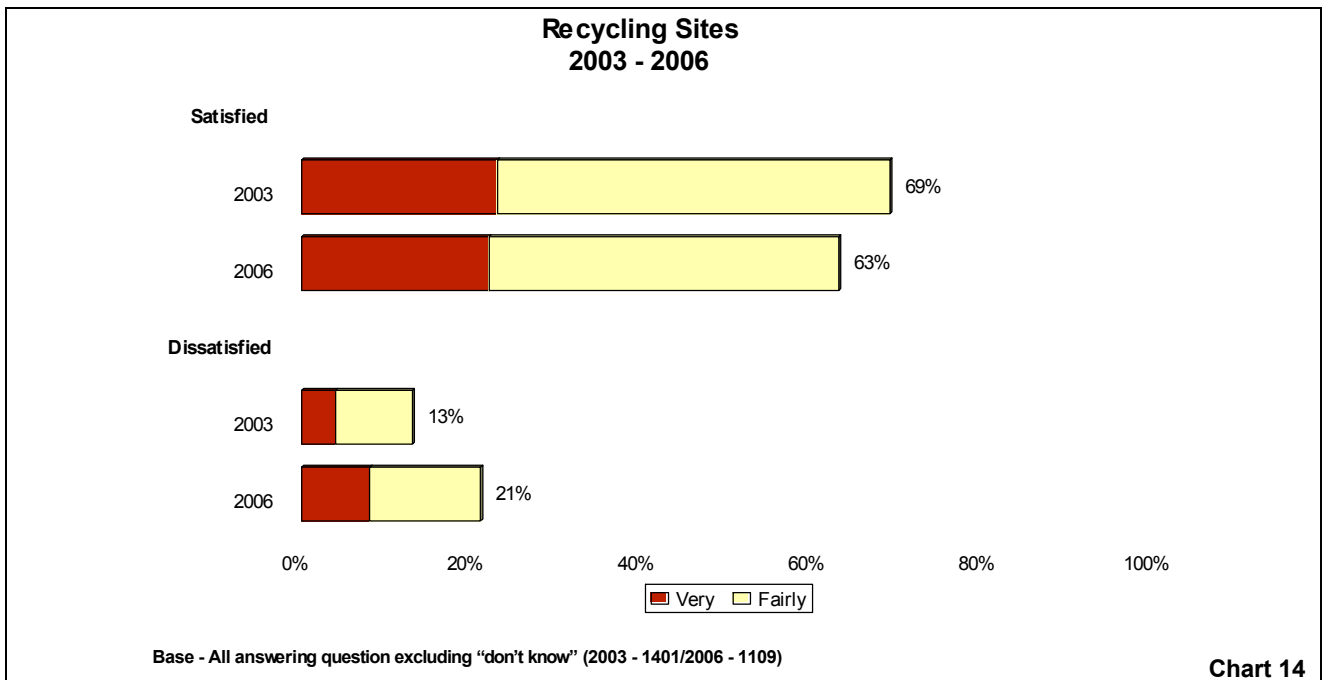
### Recycling sites

Overall, 63% of residents are satisfied with the bring recycling facilities provided by the Council, with 21% dissatisfied.

More than three-quarters of residents are satisfied with the location of recycling facilities (77%) and the range of items they can deposit (79%). Fewer, however, expressed satisfaction with the cleanliness of the sites (63%), with 19% dissatisfied (the remainder opting for the neutral neither satisfied nor dissatisfied position).



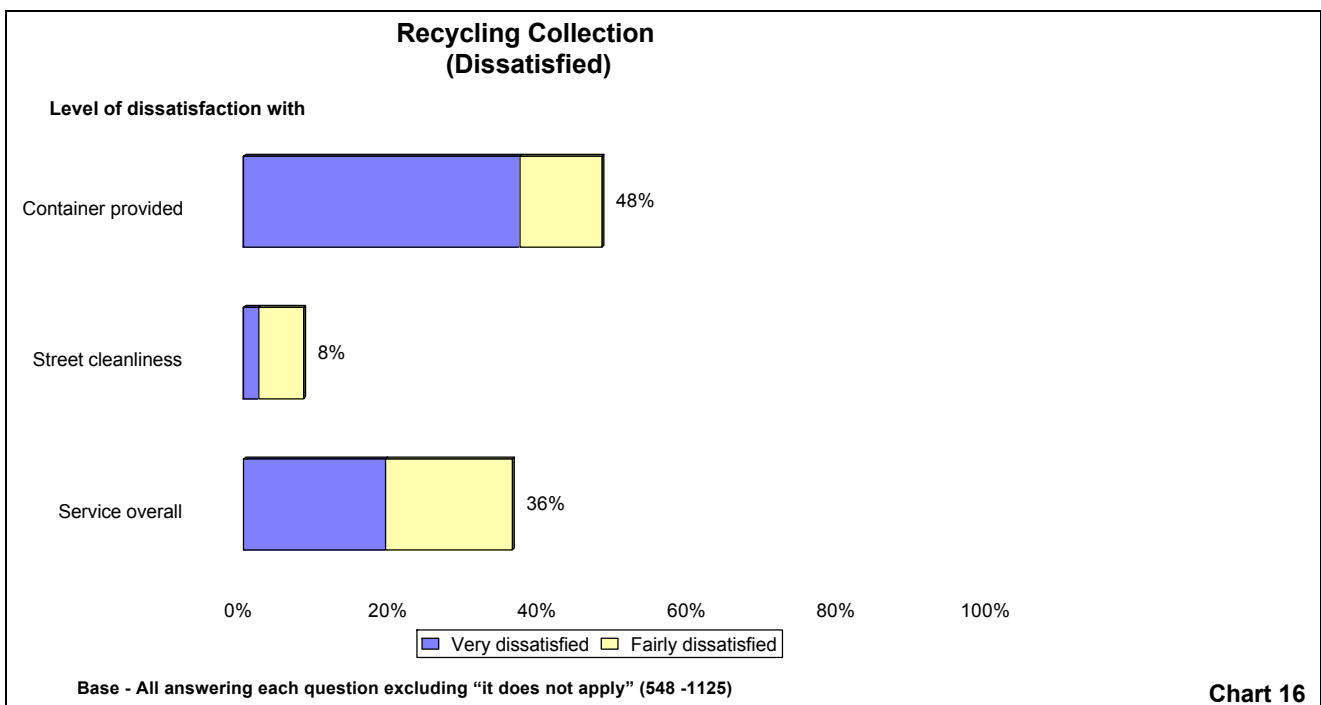
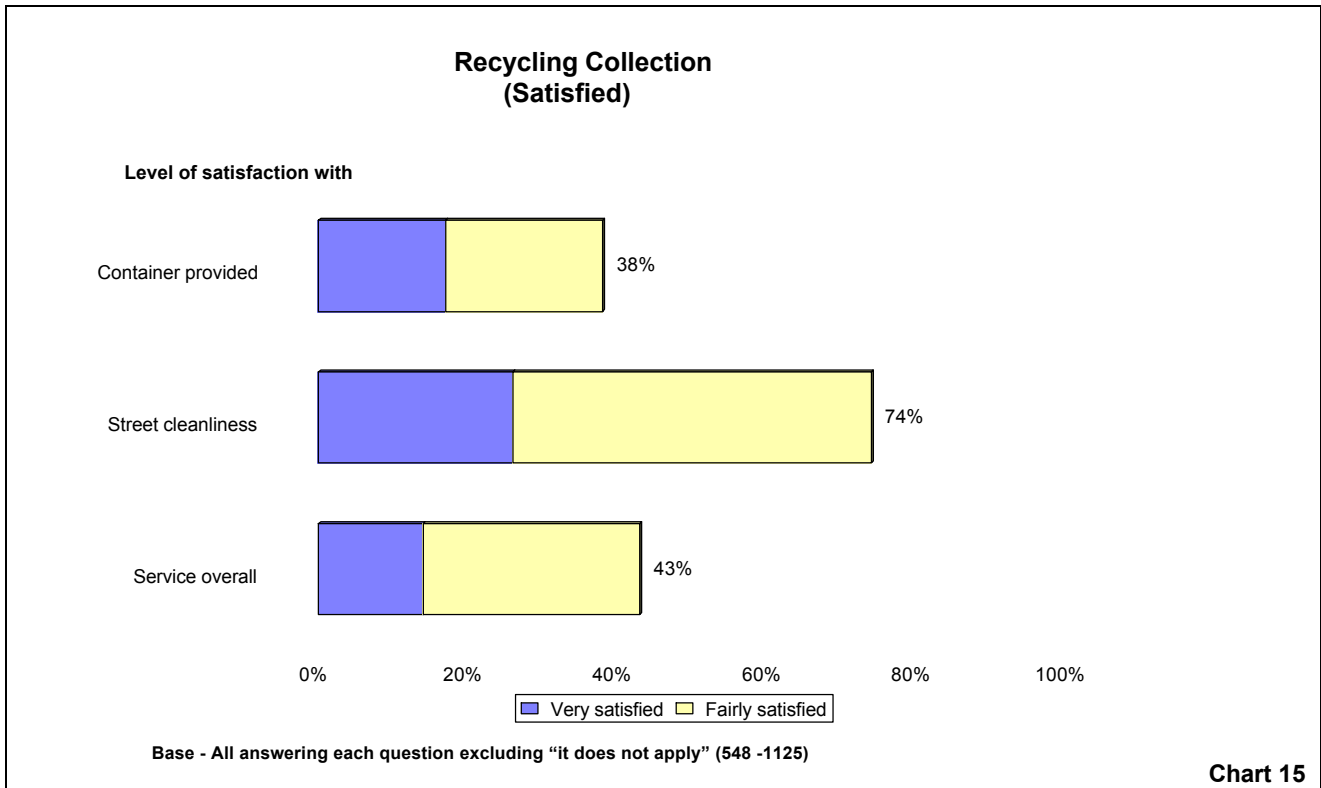
Overall satisfaction with local recycling facilities fell from 69% in 2003 to its current level of 63%, with the level of dissatisfaction increasing from 13% to 21% (both being statistically significant differences).



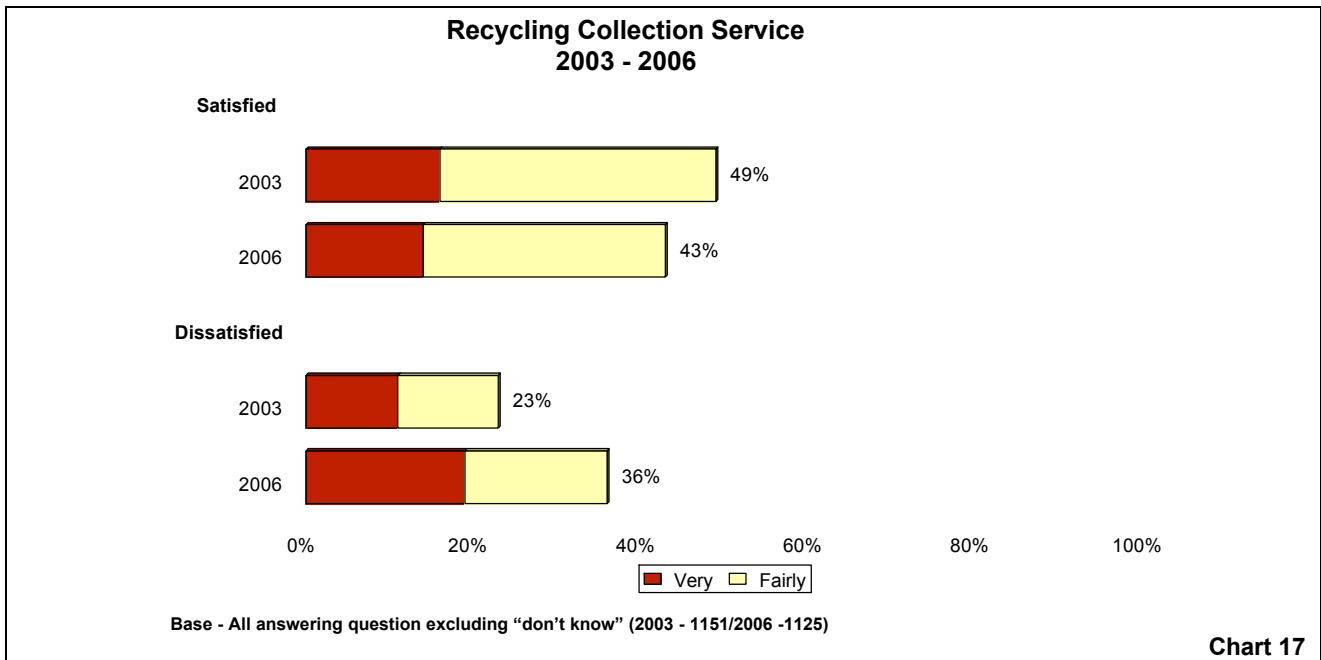
**Kerbside Collection Service**

Fewer than half of the residents of the borough are satisfied with the kerbside collection for recycling (43%), with more than a third dissatisfied (36%).

Only 38% expressed satisfaction with the container provided, with 48% dissatisfied (up from 41% in 2003).



From a low base in 2003, the latest survey shows a significant fall in satisfaction with this service in 2006.



## CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

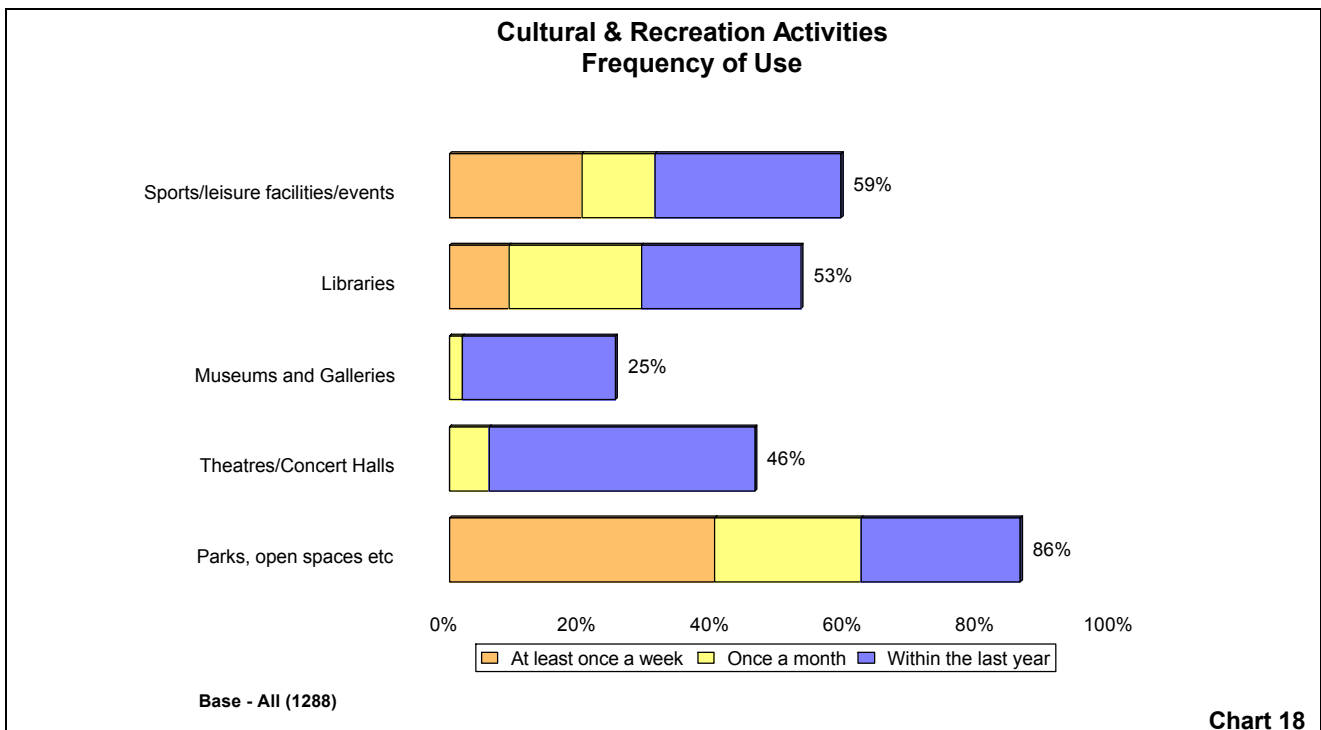
### Frequency of use

Overall, 59% of residents have used sports and leisure facilities in the last twelve months – 20% using these facilities at least once a week and further 11% once a month.

Just over half have used libraries in the last twelve months (53%), though only 9% use them on a weekly basis.

In the last twelve months 46% have visited theatres and concert halls (e.g. the Camberley Theatre) albeit infrequently; 25% have visited museums and galleries in the last year (e.g. Surrey Heath Museum).

Overall 86% have visited parks or open spaces - 40% doing so weekly and 22% monthly.



**Sports and Leisure Facilities (BV 119a)**

Overall 68% of those who have used sports and leisure facilities in the last twelve months were satisfied with the facilities provided.

A relatively small proportion expressed dissatisfaction with these facilities (9% overall).

A large proportion of non-users have no view on these facilities, with more than half of those who answered the question opting for the neutral category on the questionnaire; the balance of opinion amongst the remainder was positive – 37% being satisfied and 6% dissatisfied.

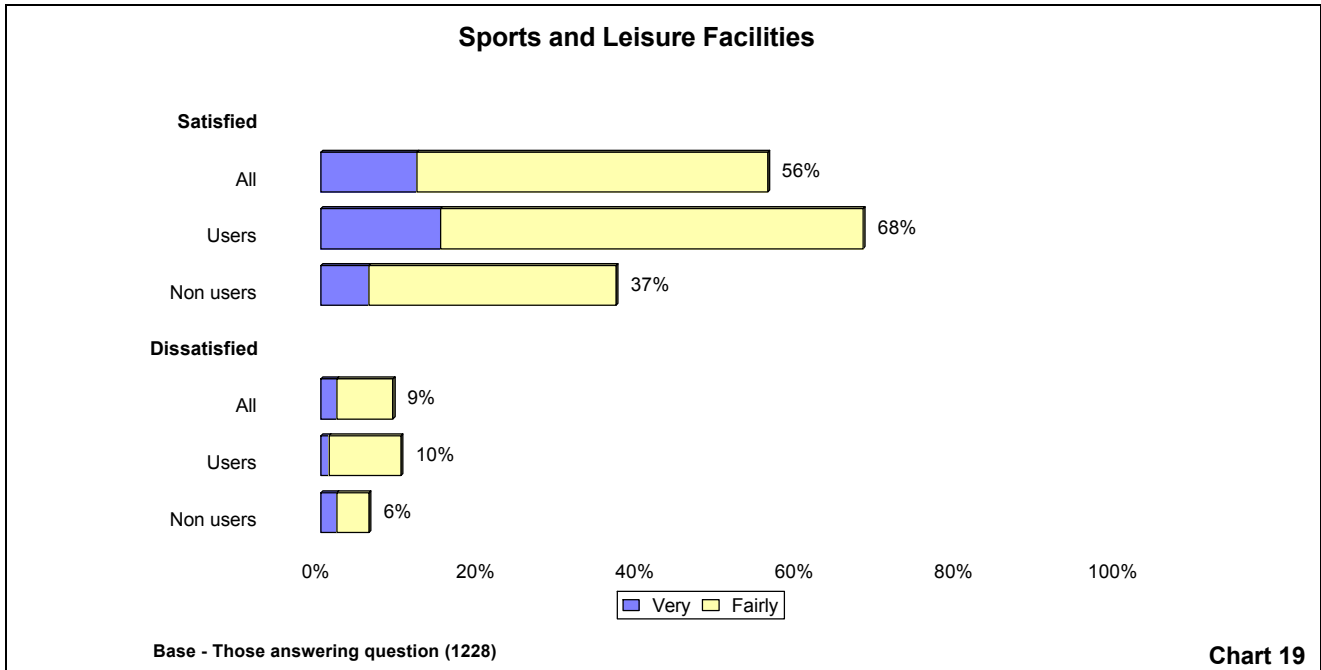


Chart 19

As shown on the chart below, satisfaction with these facilities amongst users fell significantly between 2003 and 2006. Much of the difference, however, was accounted for by a movement into the neither satisfied nor dissatisfied position, with dissatisfaction increasing to a lesser degree.

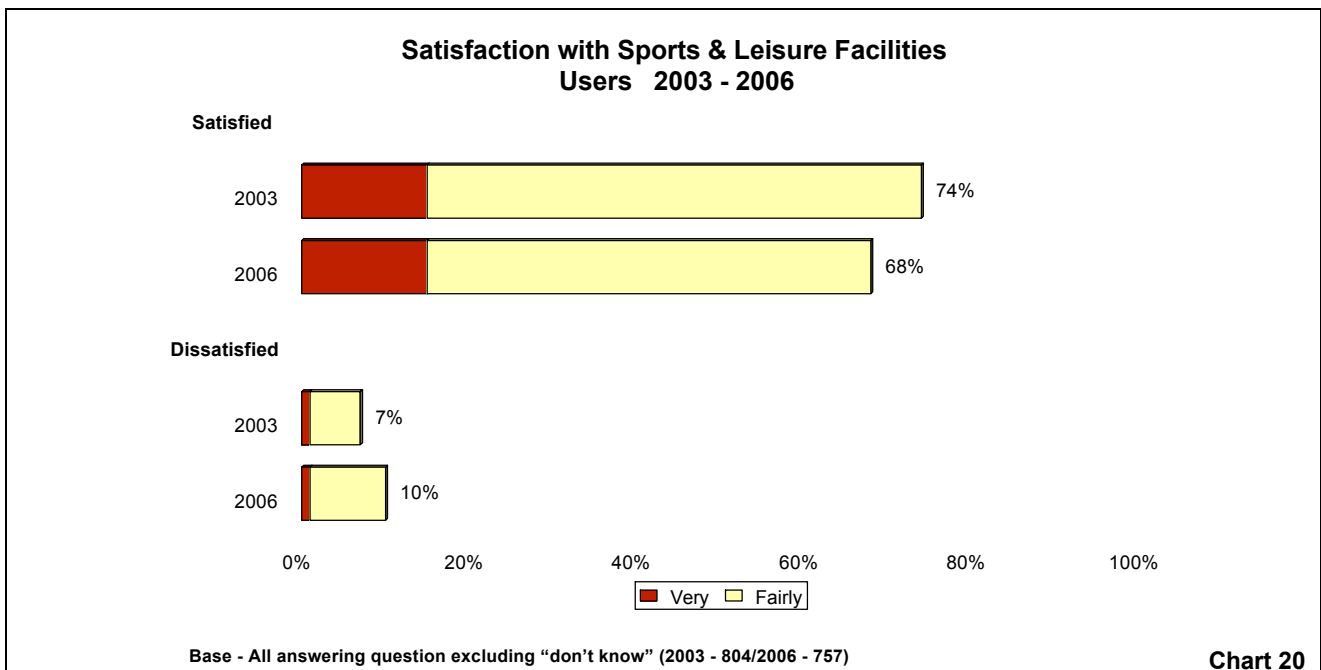


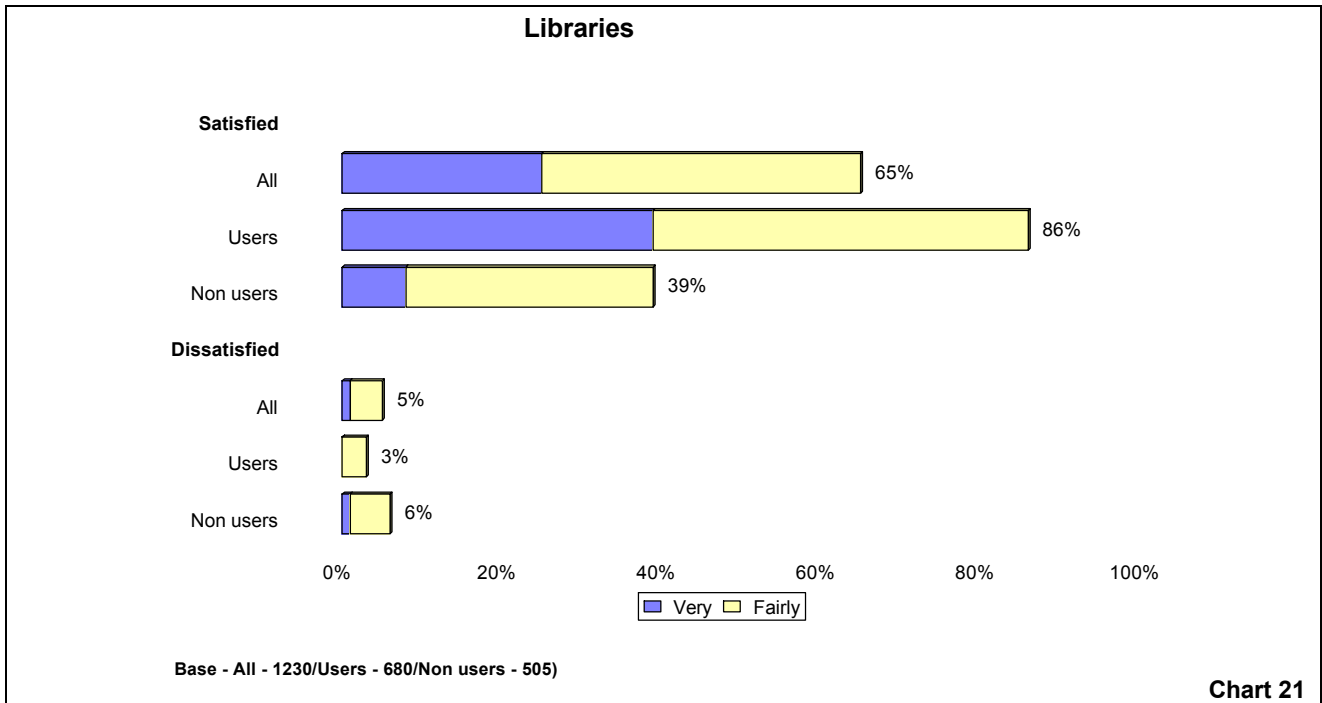
Chart 20

**Libraries (BV 119b)**

The majority of those who have visited a library in the last twelve months were satisfied with their experience (86%), with only 3% dissatisfied.

Fewer than half of those who have not used these facilities were able to comment one way or the other, with the majority being positive (39%).

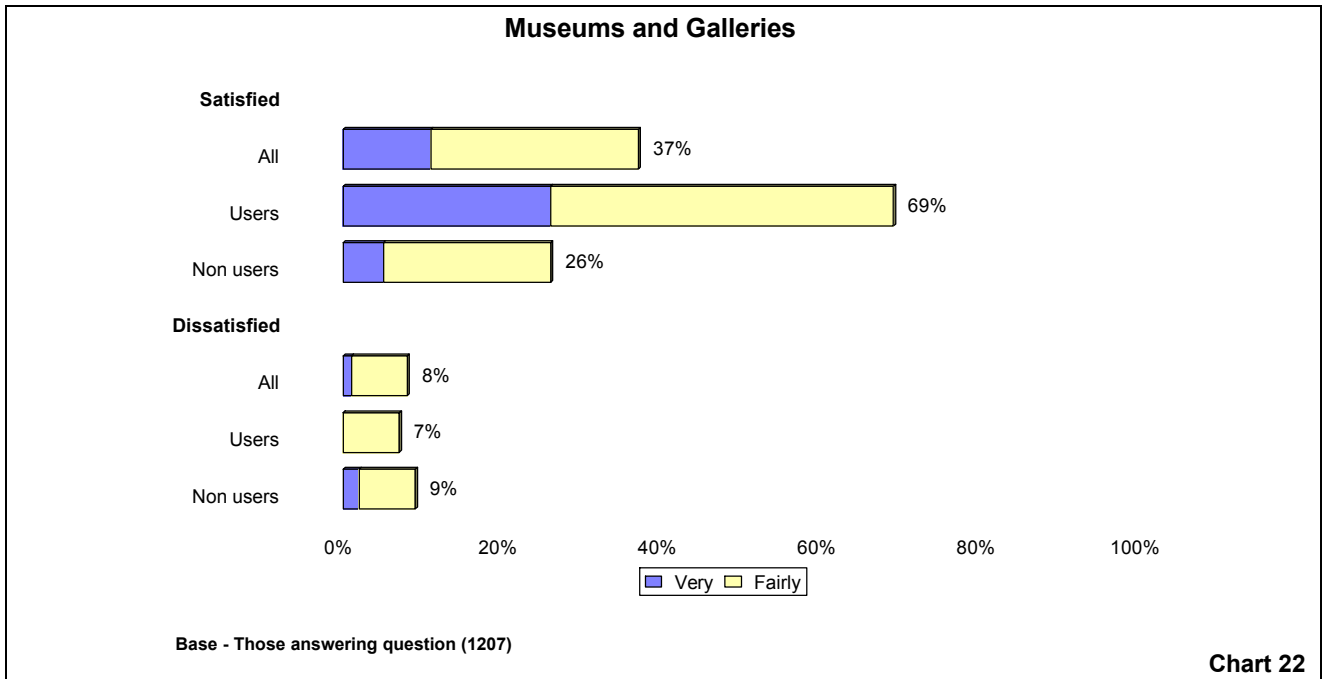
Note that libraries were not included on previous questionnaires for district authorities, but this was a requirement in 2006.



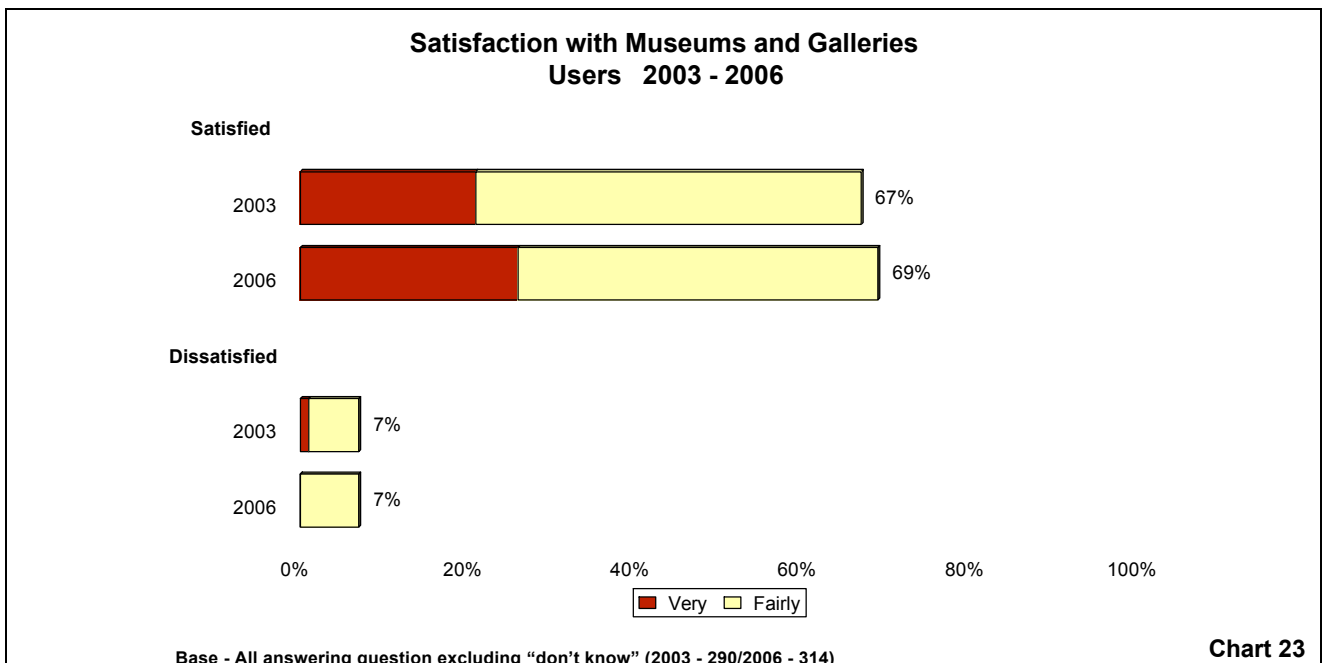
**Museums and Galleries (BV 119c)**

Around two-thirds of those who have visited museums and galleries in the last twelve months were satisfied with their experience (69%). Only 7% of users expressed dissatisfaction, with the remainder opting for the neither satisfied nor dissatisfied position.

Only a third of those who have not visited the facilities expressed an opinion one way or the other, with the majority being satisfied (26%).



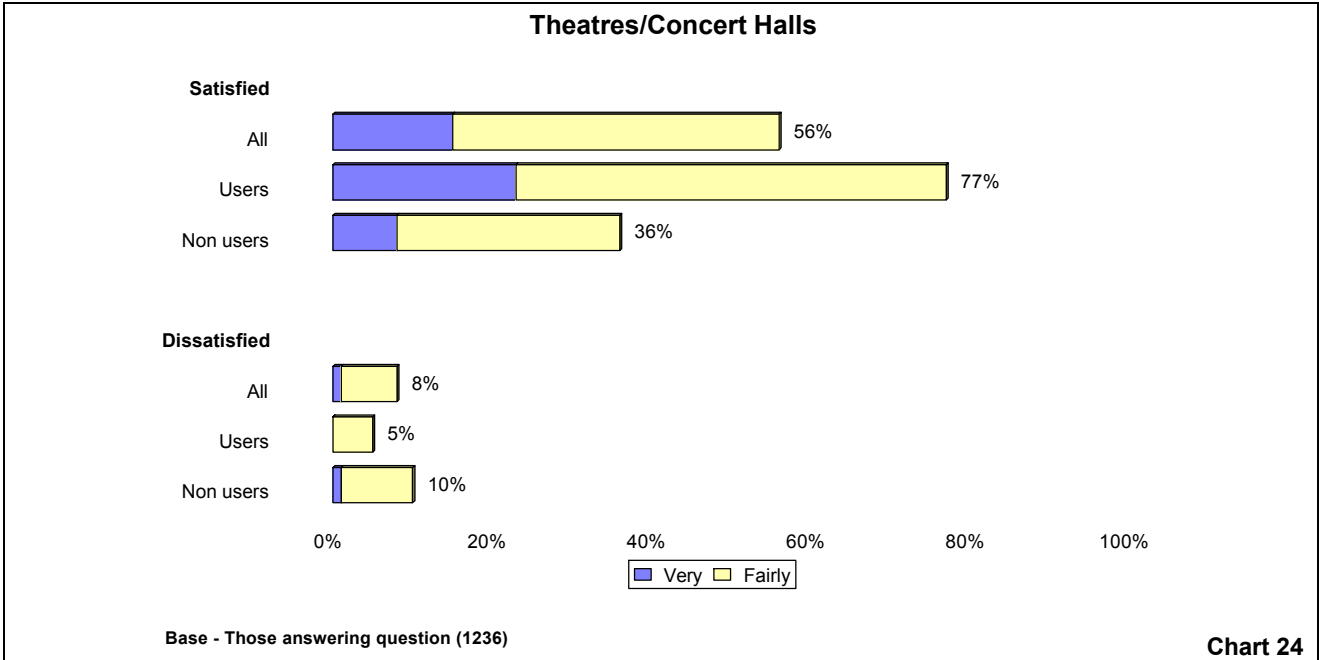
As shown on the chart below there was little change in the level of satisfaction between the two surveys (differences shown not being statistically significant on the relatively small sample sizes).



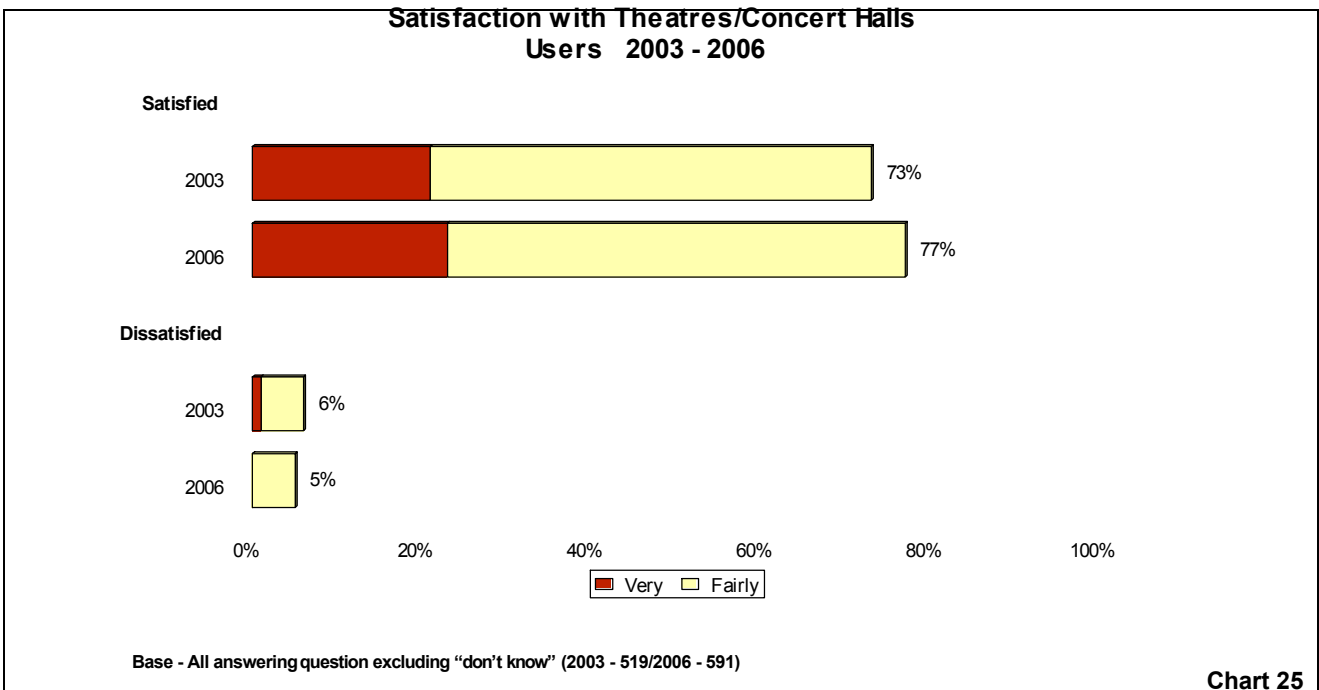
**Theatres and Concert Halls (BV 119d)**

The majority of those who have visited theatres and concert halls in the last twelve months were satisfied with their experience (77%), with only 5% expressing any degree of dissatisfaction.

Again, only a small proportion expressed any level of dissatisfaction with this facilities - 8% overall, with almost two-thirds of non users being unable to express an opinion one way or the other.



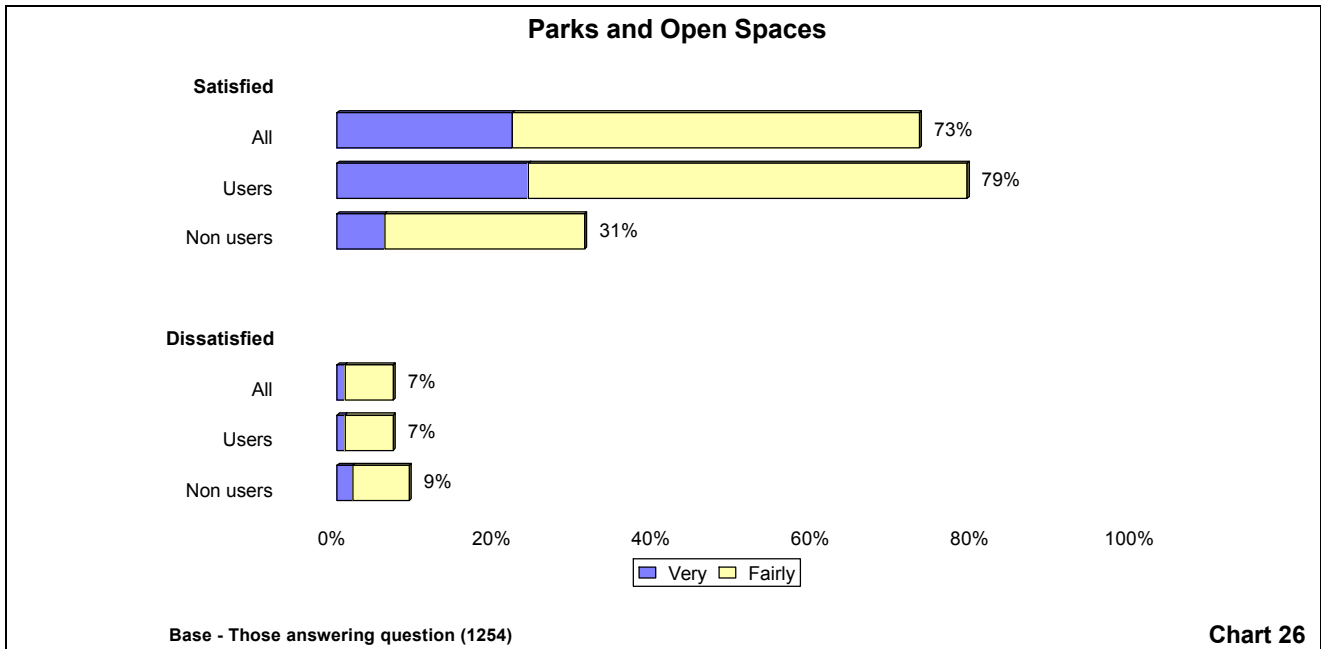
The chart below shows an increase in satisfaction with these facilities between 2003 and 2006, though the difference is not statistically significant.



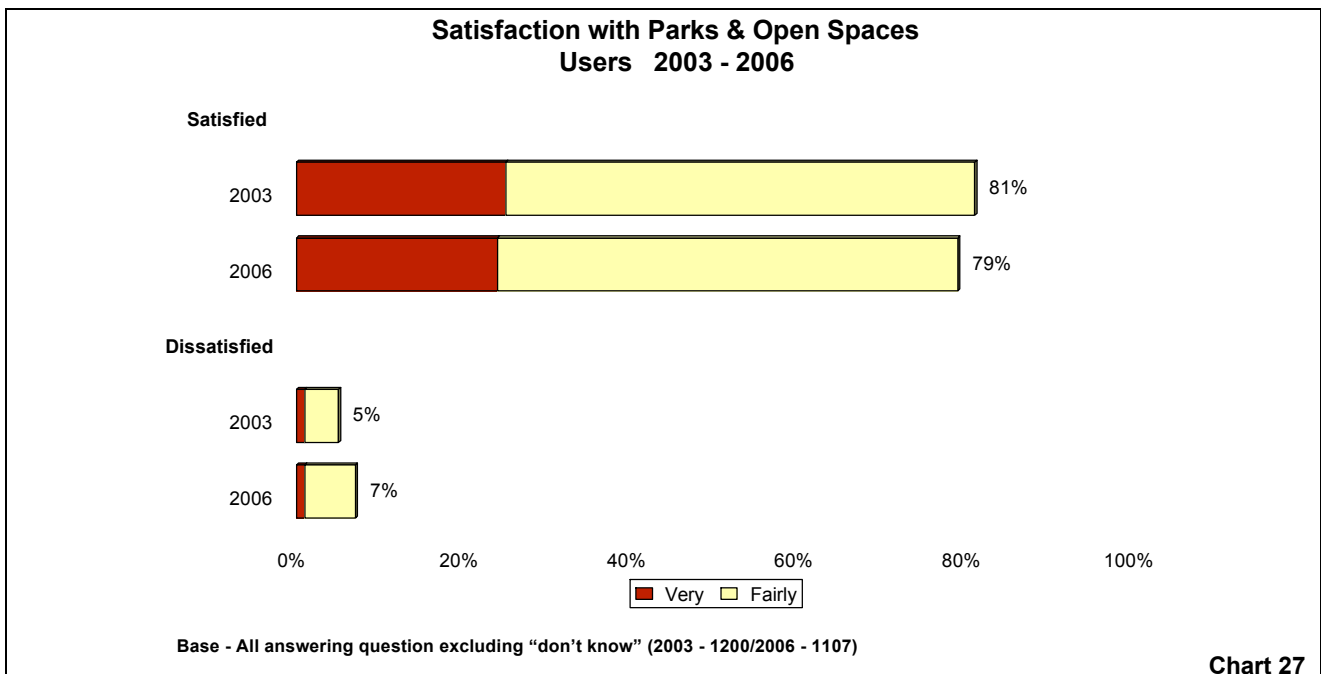
**Parks and Open Spaces (BV 119e)**

Amongst those who have visited parks and open spaces in the last twelve months, the vast majority are satisfied with the facilities provided (79%), with only 7% expressing any degree of dissatisfaction (the remainder being neutral).

Again there was a large proportion of non-users who had no opinion, 60% selecting the 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' option. The balance of opinion amongst those who expressed a view was positive – 31% satisfied and 9% dissatisfied.



As shown on the chart below, there was little change in the level of satisfaction between the two surveys.



### Performance Over The Last Three Years

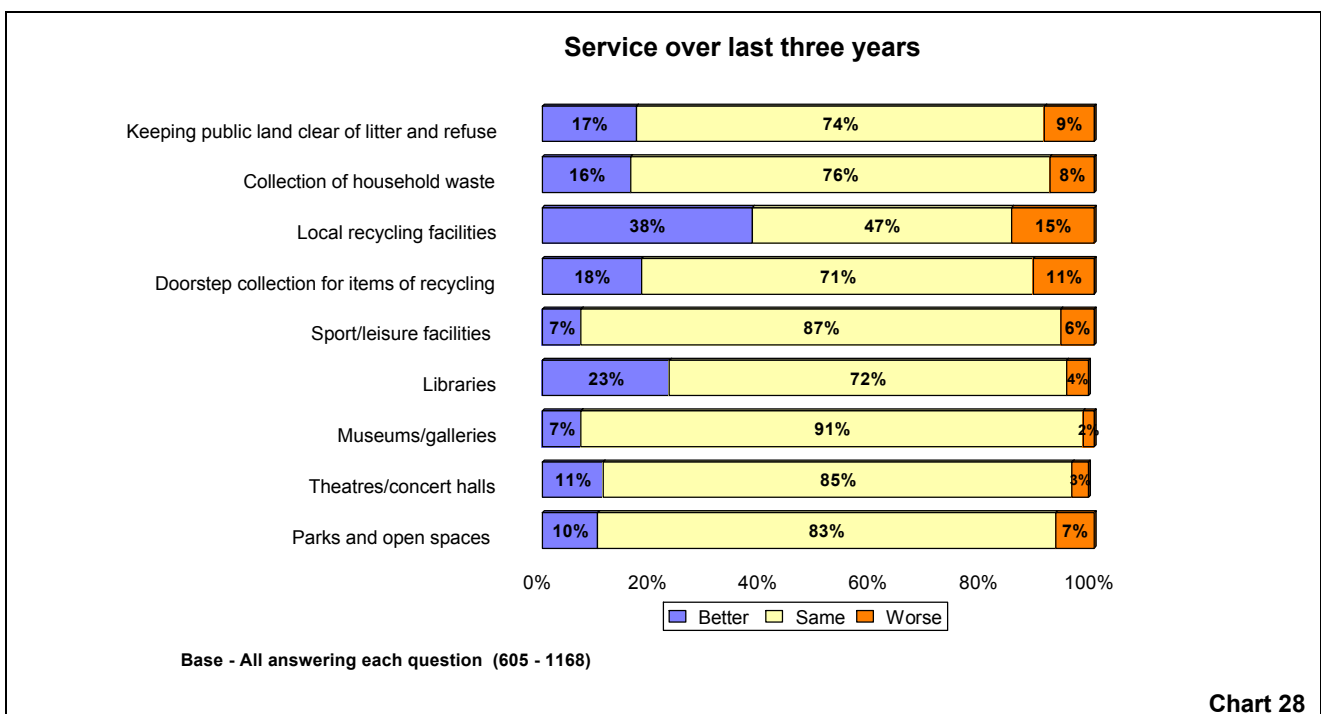
Residents were asked to say whether these services and facilities have got better or worse over the last three years.

For all but one of the services the majority opinion is that there has been no change.

Local recycling facilities is the exception, with 38% feeling it has got better (though 15% say it has got worse).

In the case of libraries, the proportion who feel facilities have improved far outweighs those who feel these have got worse.

For the remaining services with the majority opinion being that there has been no change, the remainder are more evenly divided in their opinion.

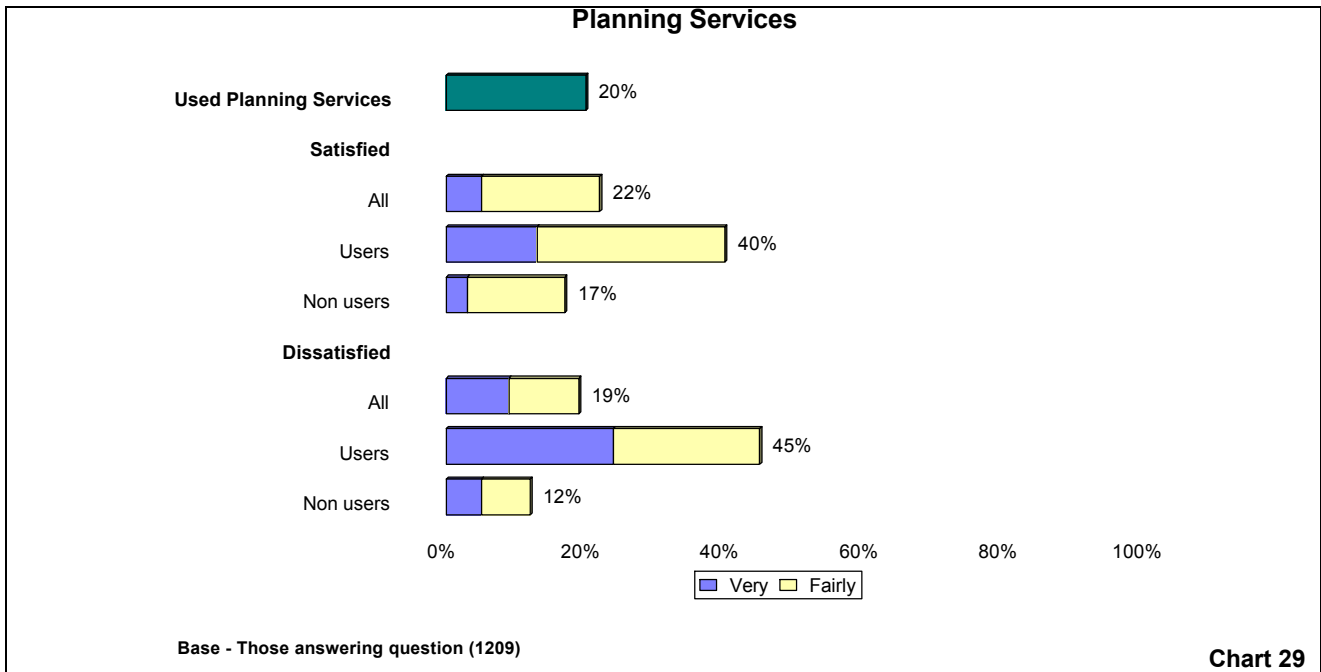


**SERVICE DEPARTMENTS**

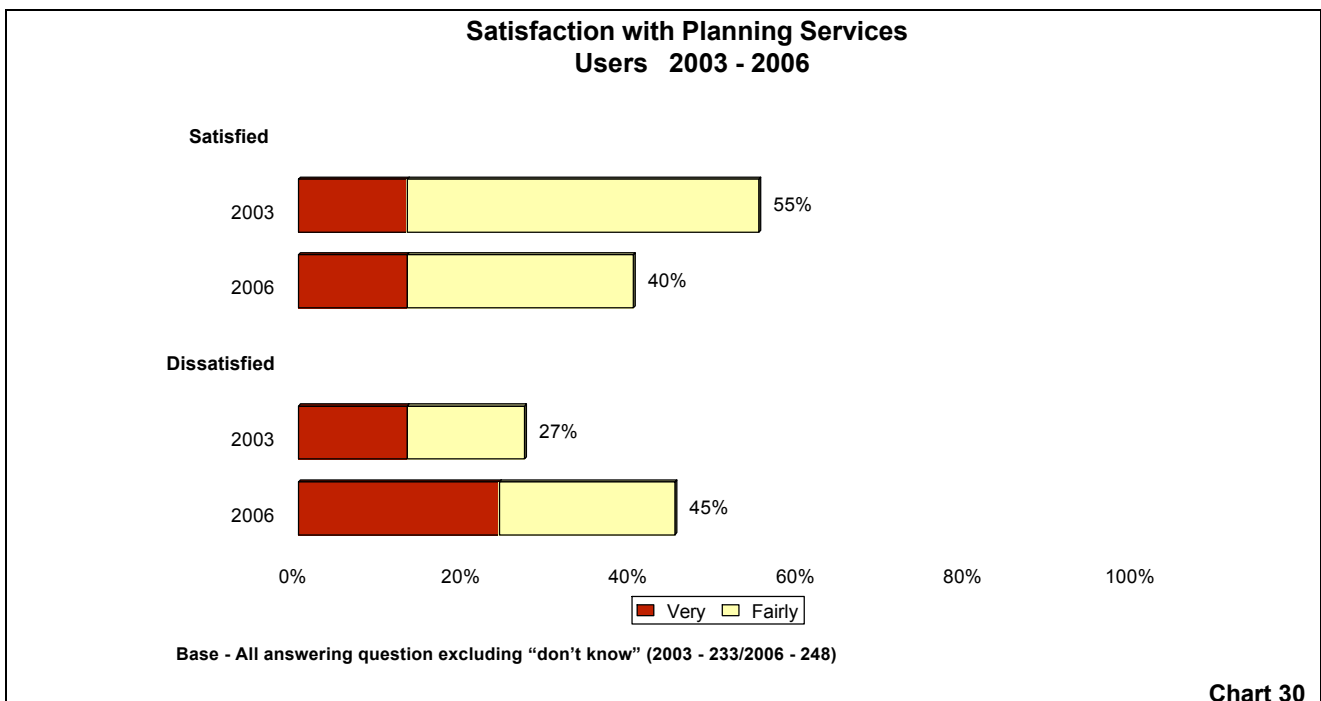
**Planning Services**

When asked about Planning Services almost two-thirds of respondents opted for the neutral neither satisfied nor dissatisfied position. This suggests that very few residents have a view on the quality of service provided by this department.

Only 20% of residents have had direct experience of planning services - 40% of whom were satisfied and 45% dissatisfied.



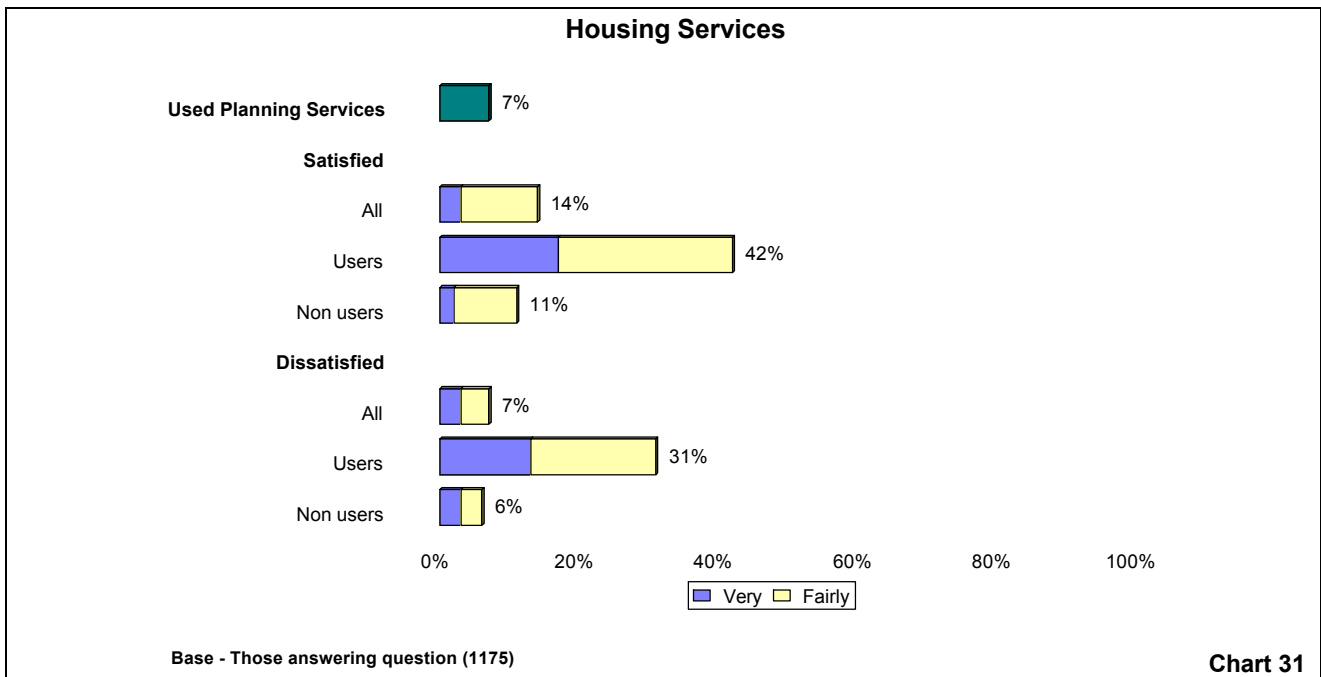
Satisfaction with planning services amongst users identified on the two general residents surveys shows a deteriorating position, with dissatisfaction up from 27% in 2003 to 45% on the latest survey.



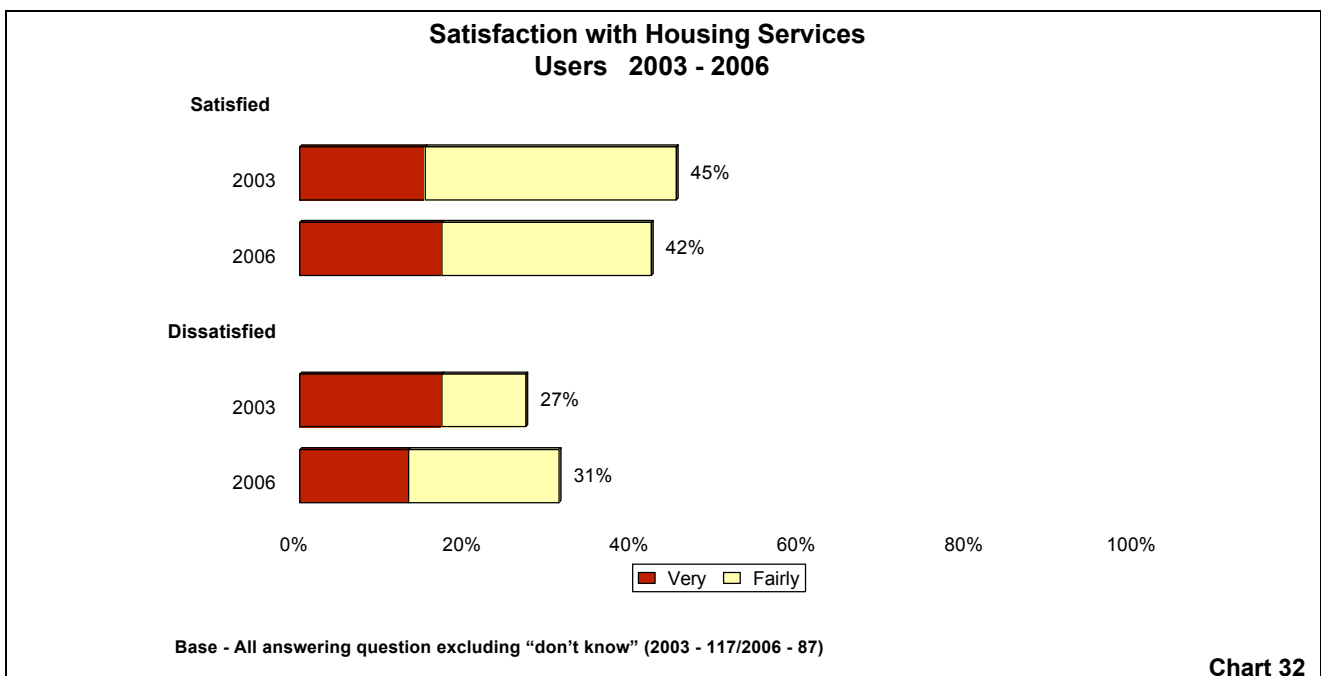
### Housing Services

When asked about Housing Services, the majority of respondents opted for the neutral neither satisfied nor dissatisfied position. This suggests that very few residents have a view on the quality of service provided by this department.

Few respondents have had direct contact with Housing Services (7%). Amongst this group just under half said they were satisfied with the service (42%), with almost a third dissatisfied (31%).



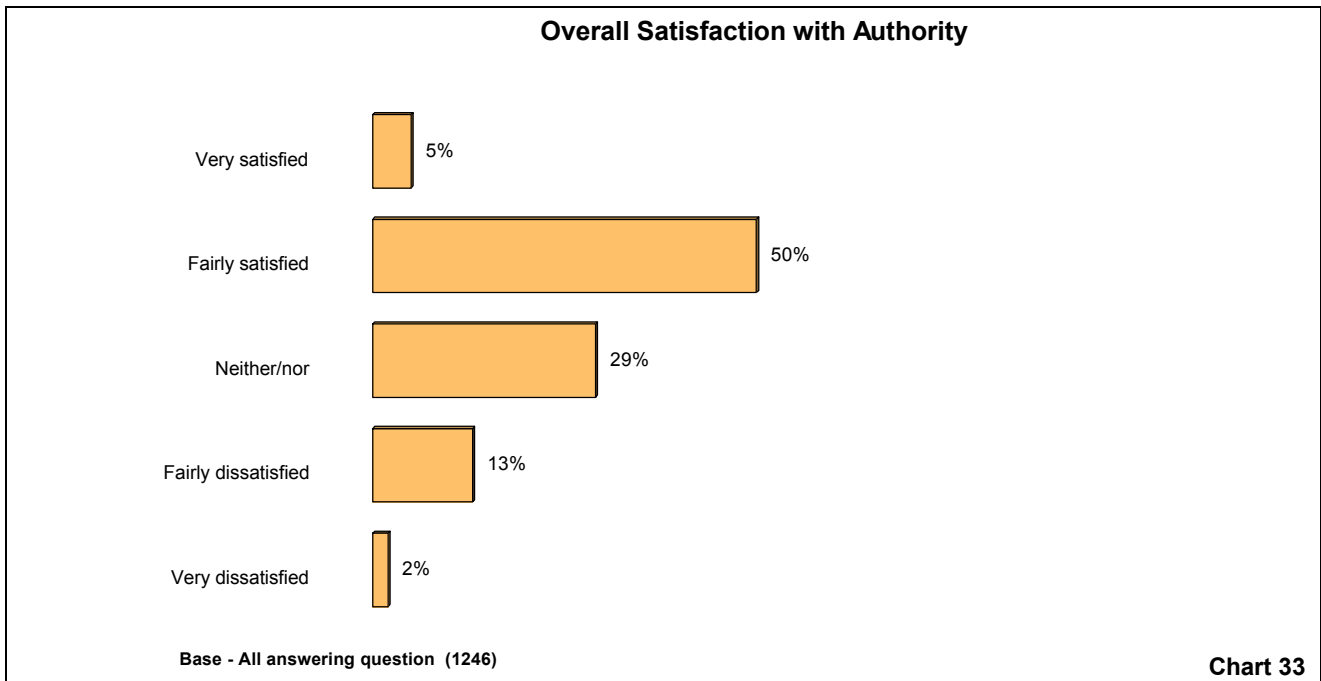
The chart below shows a similar pattern of response on the two surveys amongst those identified as users of housing services on the general residents surveys (differences not being statistically significant).



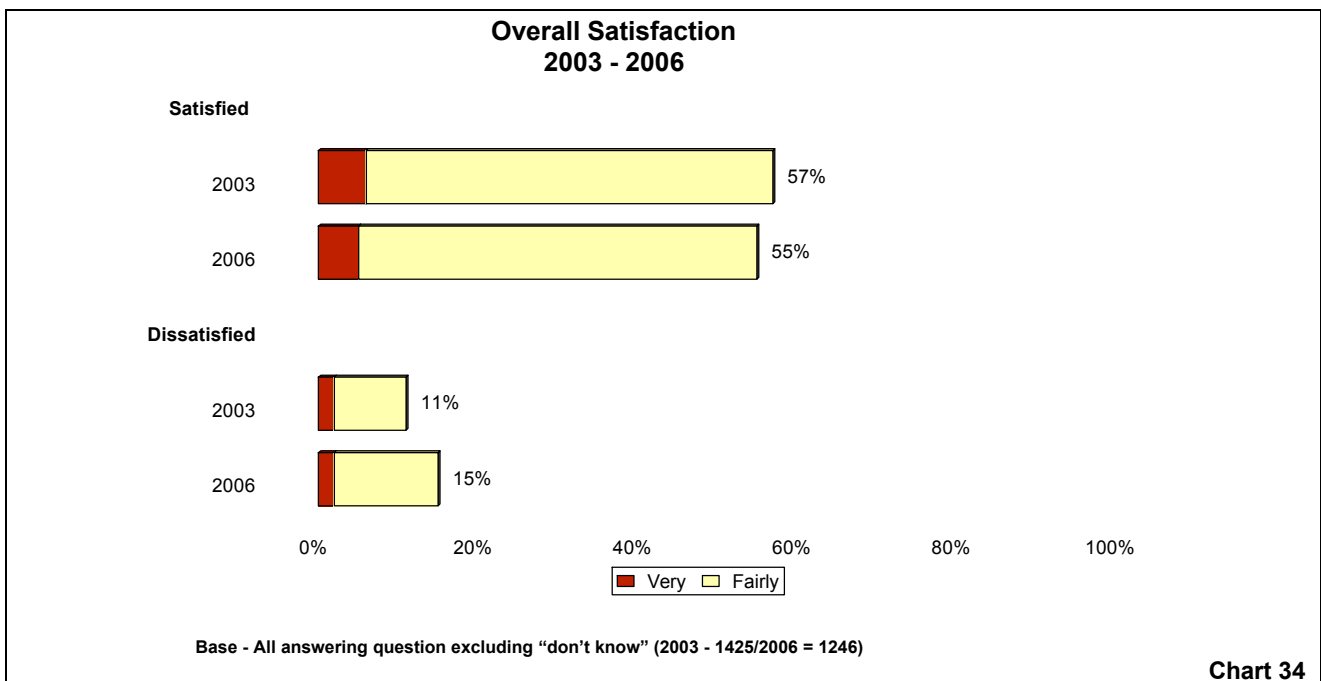
**THE AUTHORITY AS A WHOLE**

**The Way the Authority Runs Things**

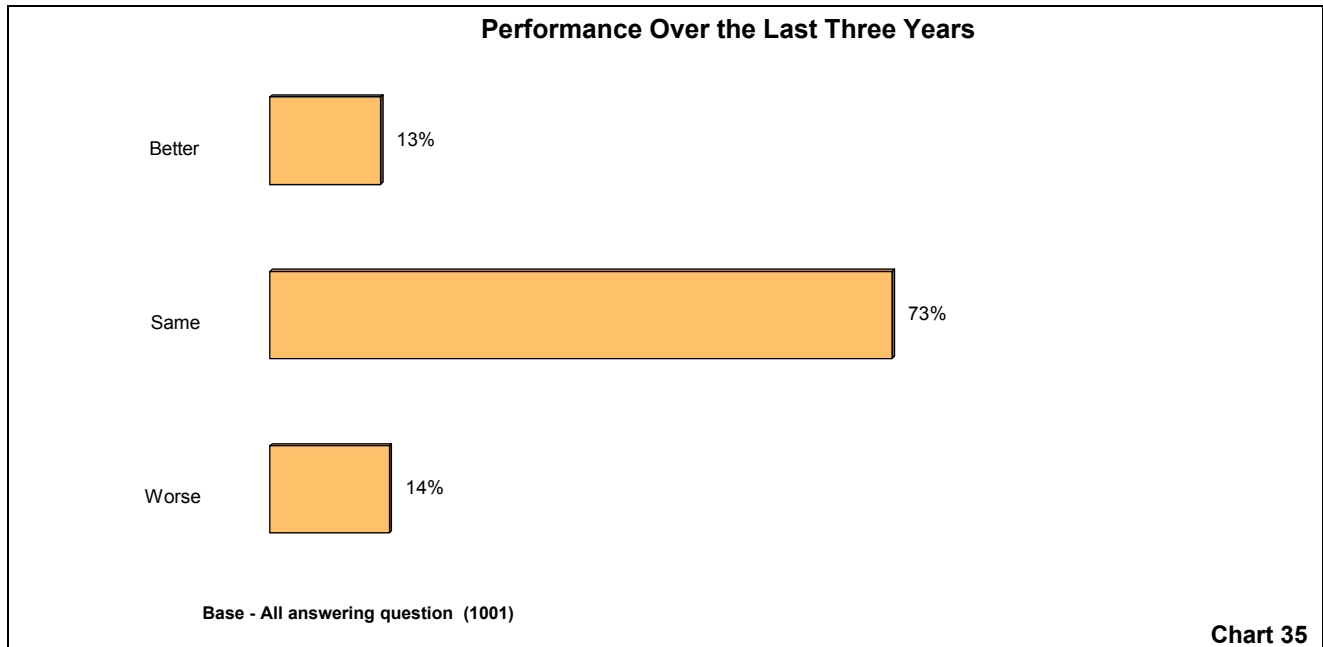
Overall, 55% of residents said they are satisfied with the way the Council runs things, with 15% showing some degree of dissatisfaction and 29% opting for the neutral neither satisfied nor dissatisfied position.



The chart below shows a fall in satisfaction between the two surveys (down from 57% in 2003), with dissatisfaction increasing from 11% to 15%. While the difference in the proportion satisfied is not statistically significant, the difference seen in the level of dissatisfaction is significant.



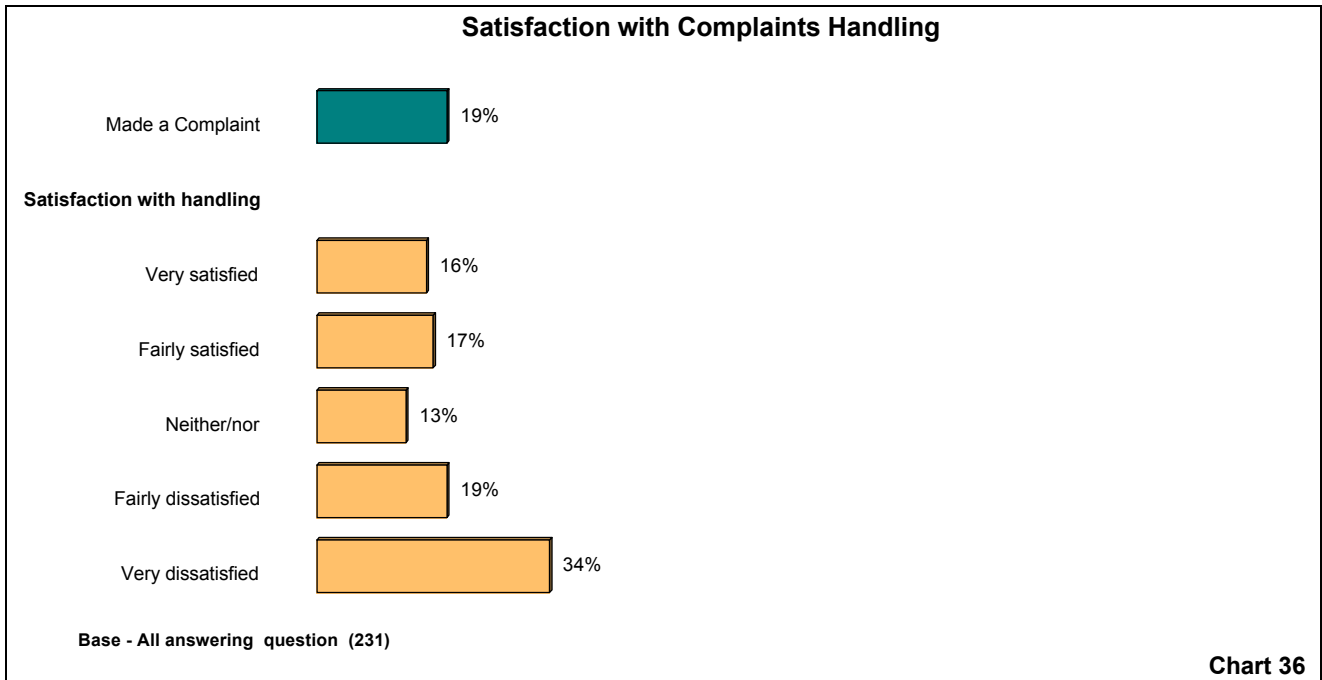
When asked for their opinion about the performance of the Council over the last three years, the perception of the majority of residents is that there has been no change, with the remainder equally divided as to whether things have got better or worse.



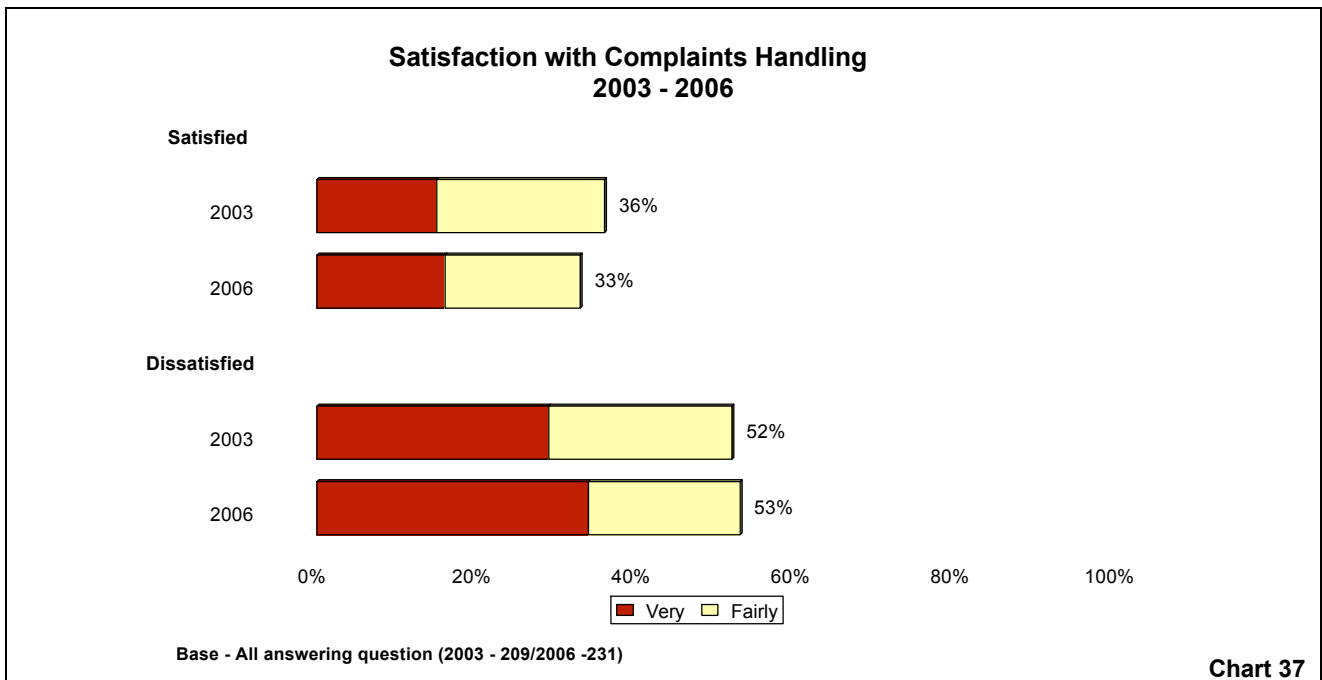
### Complaints Handling

Overall, 19% of residents say they contacted the Council with a complaint over the last twelve months.

Over half of these were dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled – 34% being very dissatisfied and 19% fairly dissatisfied.



As shown on the chart below this picture was very similar to that seen in 2003.



The table below shows the types of complaints made to the authority outlined on the latest survey, together with the number making each.

<b>Made a complaint</b>	<b>231 (19%)</b>
<b>Complained about</b>	<b>Number mentioning</b>
Refuse collection service	35
Planning applications/issues/decisions	26
Recycling service	24
Problems with neighbours	20
Illegal/inconsiderate parking	19
Blocked drains/flooding	19
Overgrown trees/verges/hedges	15
Poor maintenance of streets/roads/footpaths	12
Noise/air pollution	10
Street lights	9
House repairs	9
Street cleaning/litter problems	9
Traffic problems	7
Council tax/housing benefit	6
Poor state of parks/play areas/open spaces	6
Fly tipping	5
Car parks/parking fines	4
Vandalism/graffiti	4
Travellers	4
Anti-social behaviour	3
Problems with youths	3
Abandoned cars	3
Pests - rats/foxes/squirrels etc	2
Dog fouling	2
Zone 3 flood plane not thought through properly	2
Street/road signs	1
Lack of bus shelters	1
Incorrect bill/payment/error	1
Free newspaper distributor dumping excess papers in waste bin	1
Lack of housing	1
Adoption of road and repairs needed	1
Canadian geese on school playing field	1

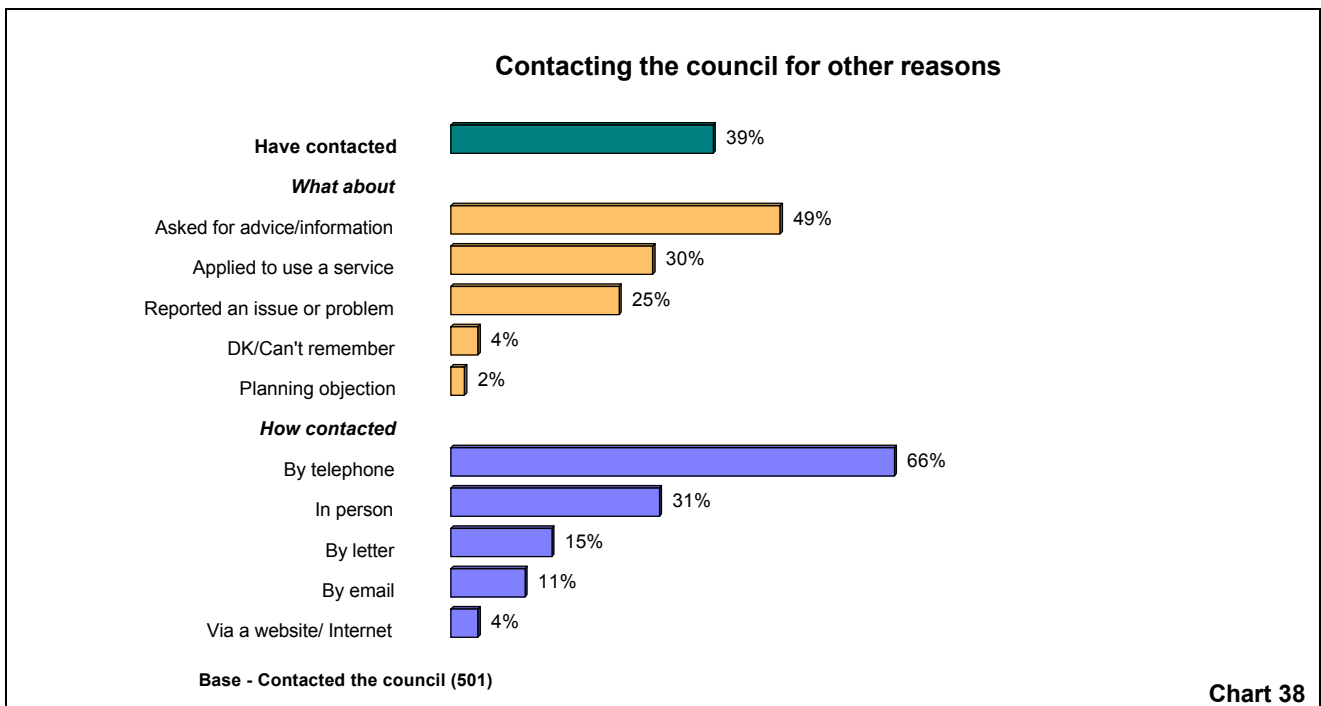
### Contacting The Council For Other Reasons

Overall, 39% of all residents say they contacted the Council (other than to make a complaint) in the last twelve months.

The chart below shows that in half of these cases the resident asked for advice or information, 30% applied to use a service, and a quarter reported an issue or a problem.

Two-thirds of those who contacted the Council did so by telephone, and just under a third visited in person. Relatively few wrote letters or used electronic means.

Note that some respondents used more than one method.

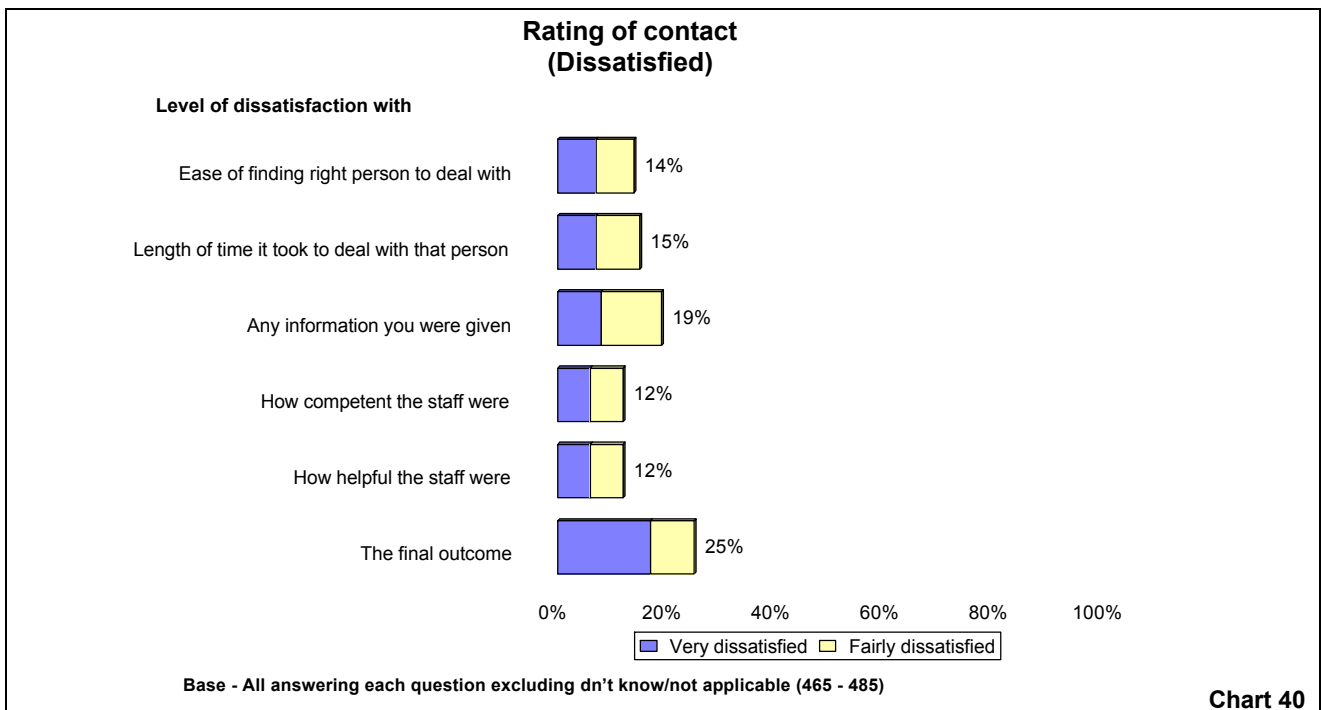
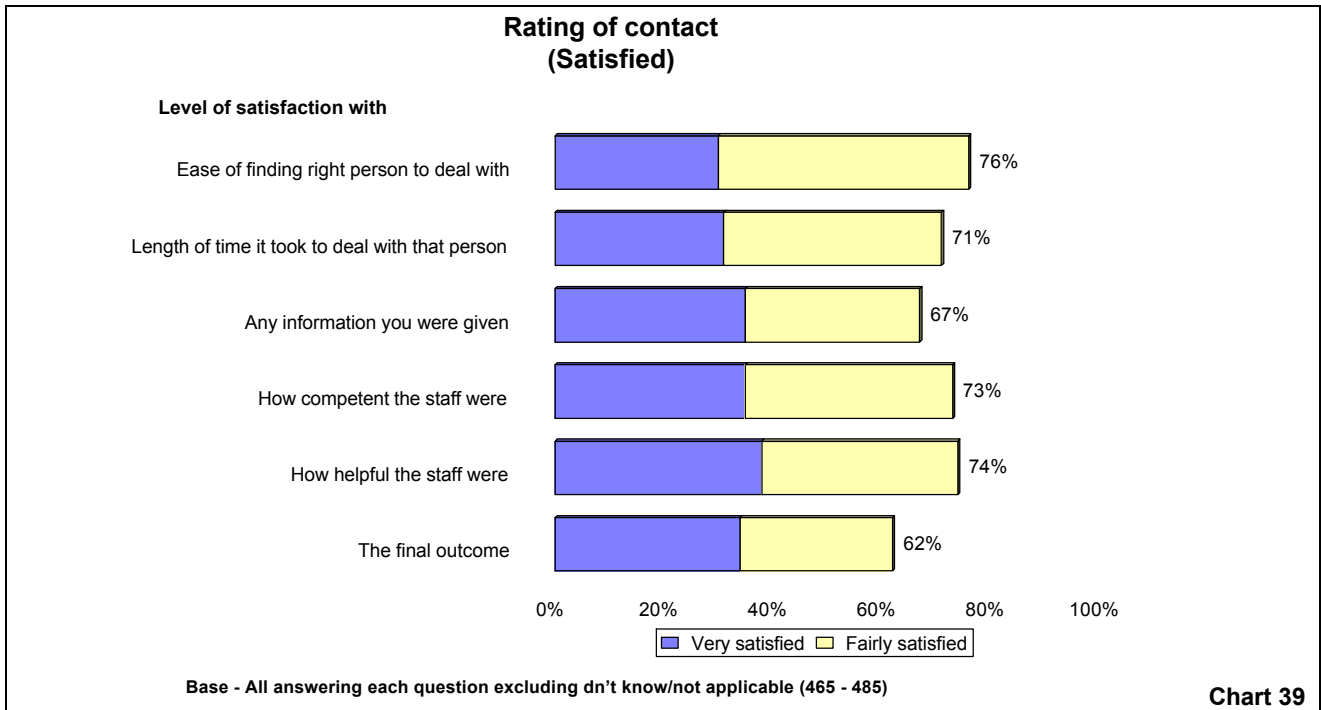


The charts below show the level of satisfaction with the way the resident was dealt with when they contacted the Council.

Around three-quarters were satisfied with the ease with which they could find the right person to deal with their enquiry, and the way they were dealt with by staff.

Overall, 67% were satisfied with the information they were given, and 19% were dissatisfied.

Whilst 62% were satisfied with the final outcome of their enquiry/contact, 25% were dissatisfied.



**How The Council Performs Overall**

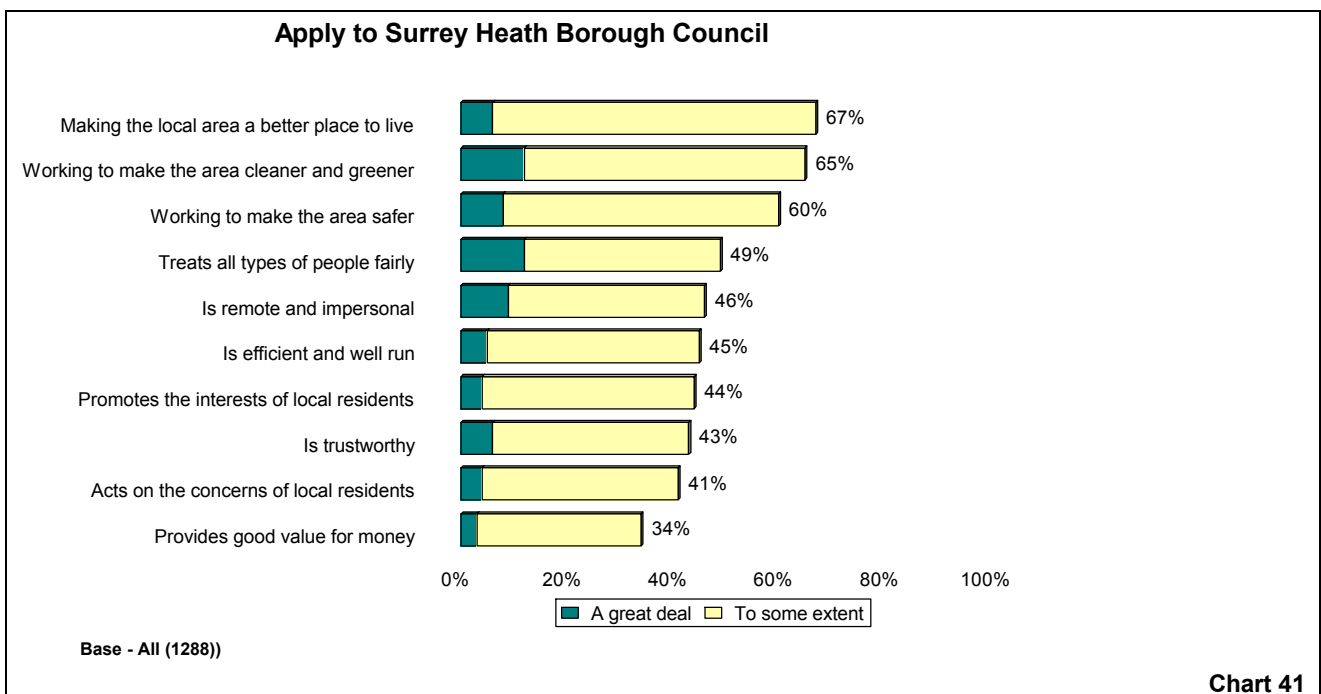
Residents were presented with a list of statements and asked to say to what extent they feel each applies to Surrey Heath Borough Council.

The Council comes out best for environmental issues with around two-thirds believing that to some extent it is working to make the area a better place to live, and cleaner and greener; 60% also think the Council is working to make the area safer.

Just under half feel that the Council treats all types of people fairly, promotes the interests of local residents, and acts on the concerns of local residents.

A similar number, however, would describe the Council as remote and impersonal.

Whilst 45% of all residents would describe the Council as efficient and well run, and 43% as trustworthy, only 34% feel it provides good value for money.



## INFORMATION PROVISION

Residents were asked to indicate how well informed they feel about a range issues and aspects of the performance of the Council.

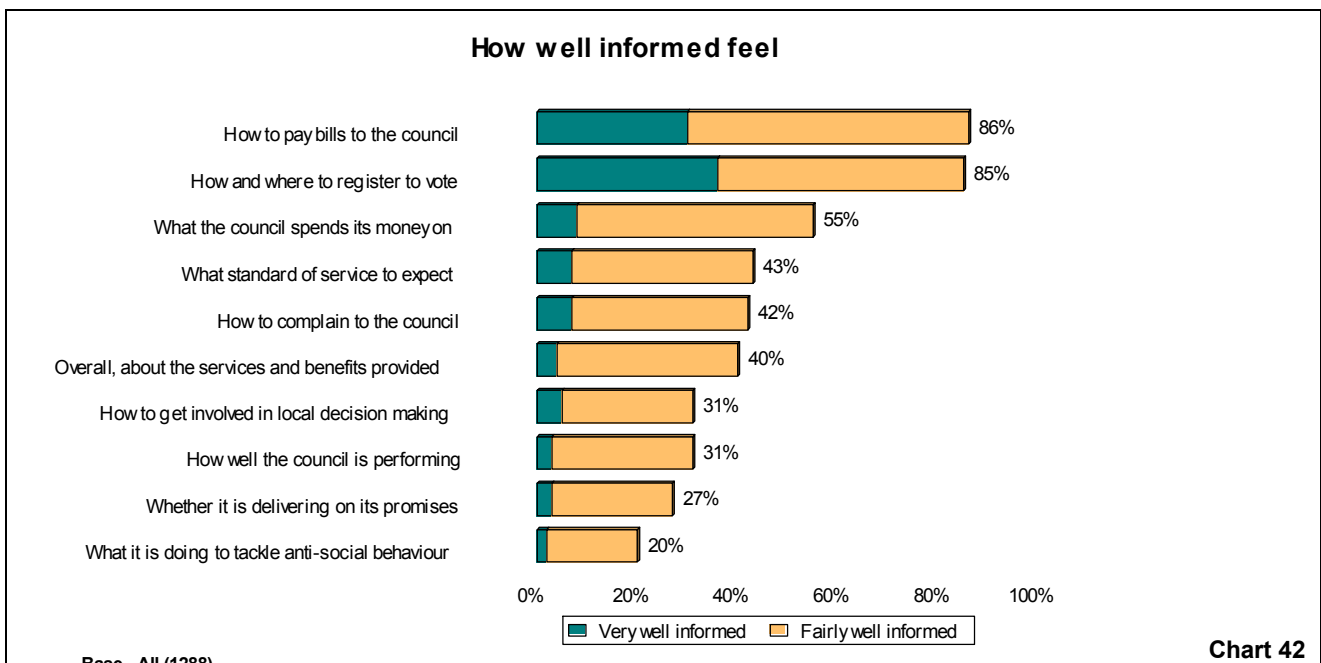
As shown on the chart below, the majority of residents feel adequately informed about how to pay bills to the Council (86%), and how and where to register to vote (85%).

While 55% feel they are well informed about what the Council spends its money on, somewhat fewer feel well informed about the standard of service they should expect (43%), and about the services and benefits the Council provides (40%).

Fewer still feel well informed about how the Council is performing (31%), or whether the Council is delivering on its promises (27%).

Overall 42% of residents say they feel well informed on how to complain to the Council, and 31% on how to get involved in local decision making.

At the bottom of the list, only 20% feel adequately informed on what the Council is doing to tackle anti-social behaviour.



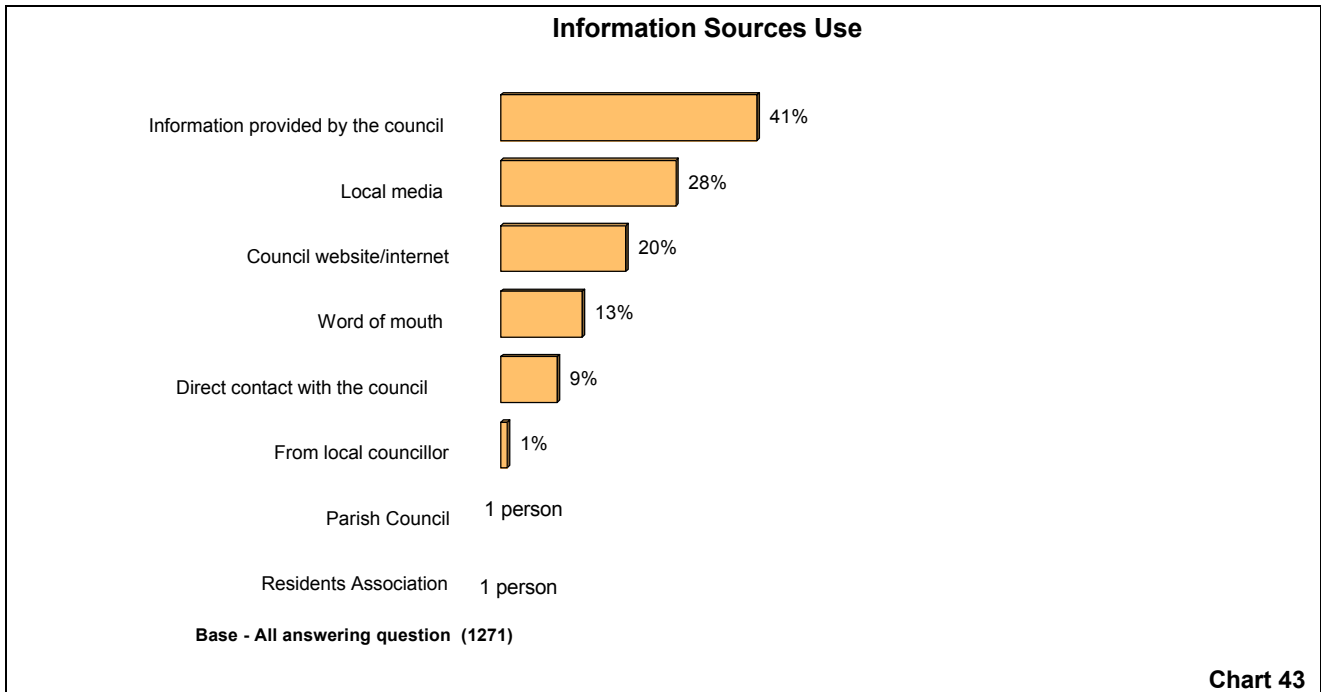
### Sources of Information

The most common source for finding out about the Council is information provided by the Council (such as magazines, leaflets, posters etc), which 41% of residents cite as their main source.

The local media comes in second position, though some way behind with 28% citing this as their main source of information.

The Council website/internet is cited as the main source of information by 20% of residents.

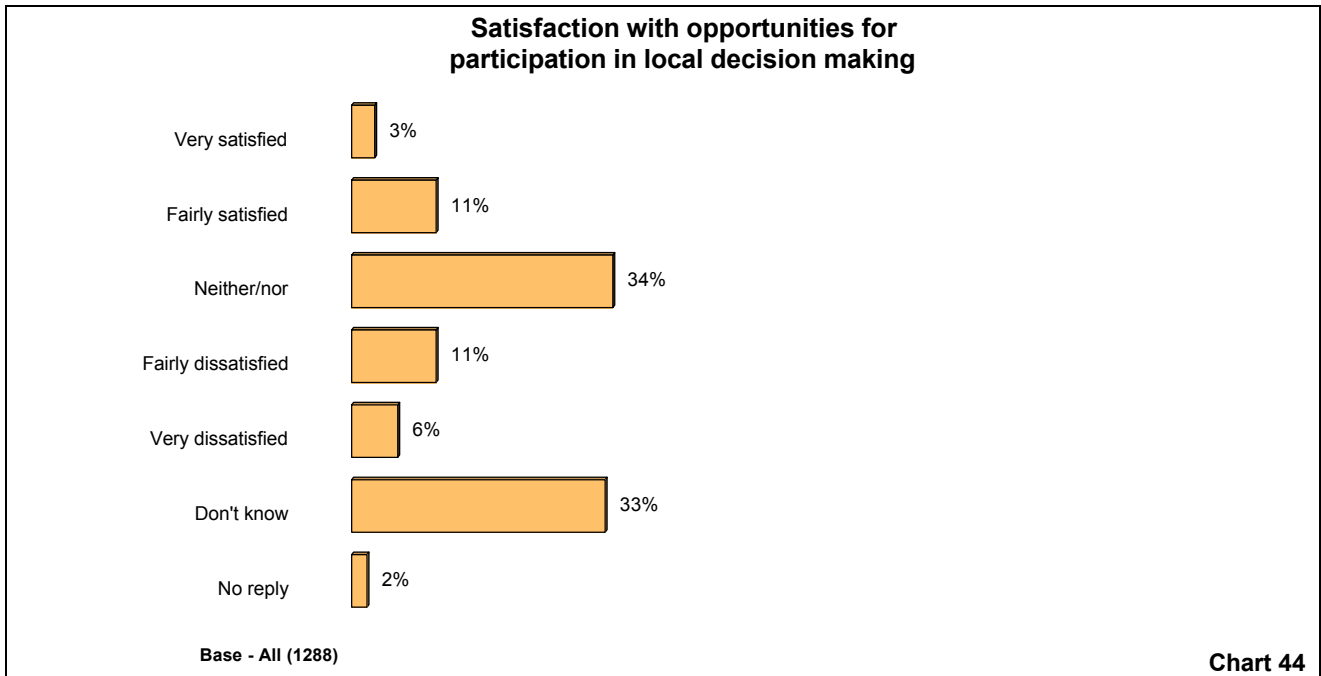
Other sources do not feature to the same extent.



## LOCAL DECISION MAKING

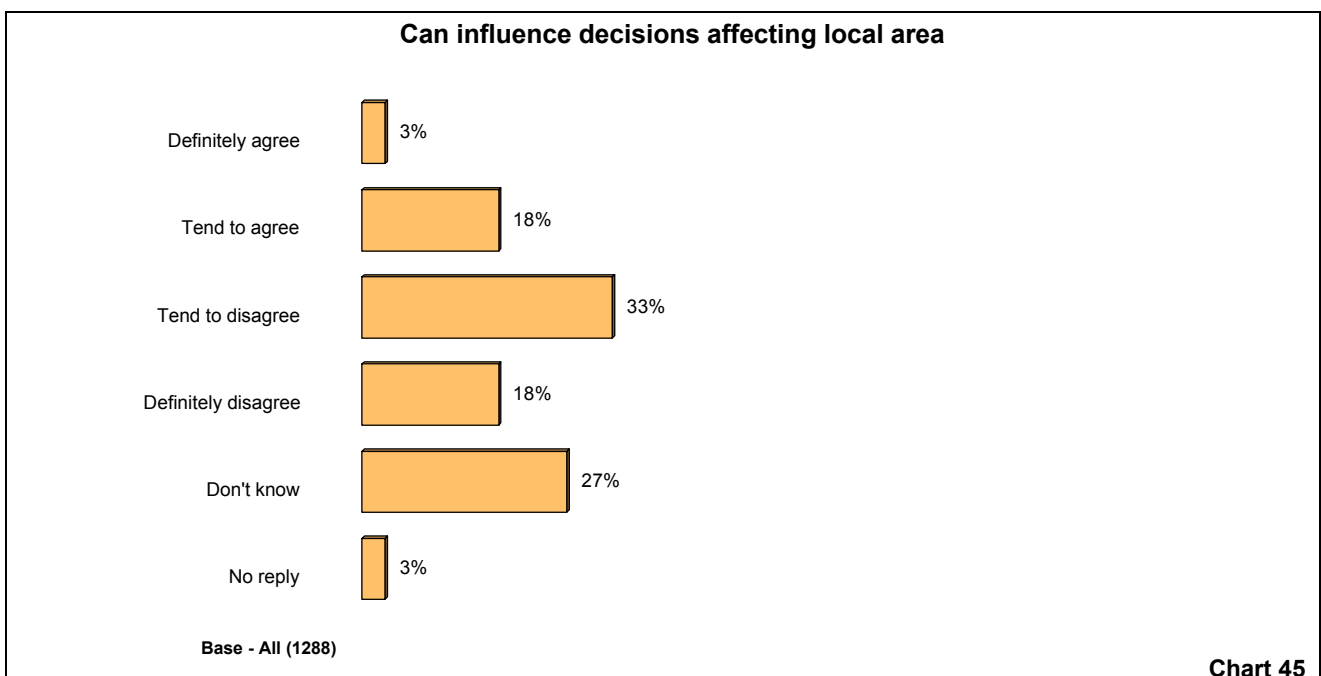
When asked to indicate how satisfied they are with opportunities for participation in local decision making provided by the Council, relatively few respondents expressed a view – 35% either ticking the don't know box or not answering the question at all, and a further 34% responding neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This suggests that this group have little or no interest in this area.

Amongst those who did express a view one way or the other, opinion was mixed – 14% being satisfied and 17% dissatisfied.

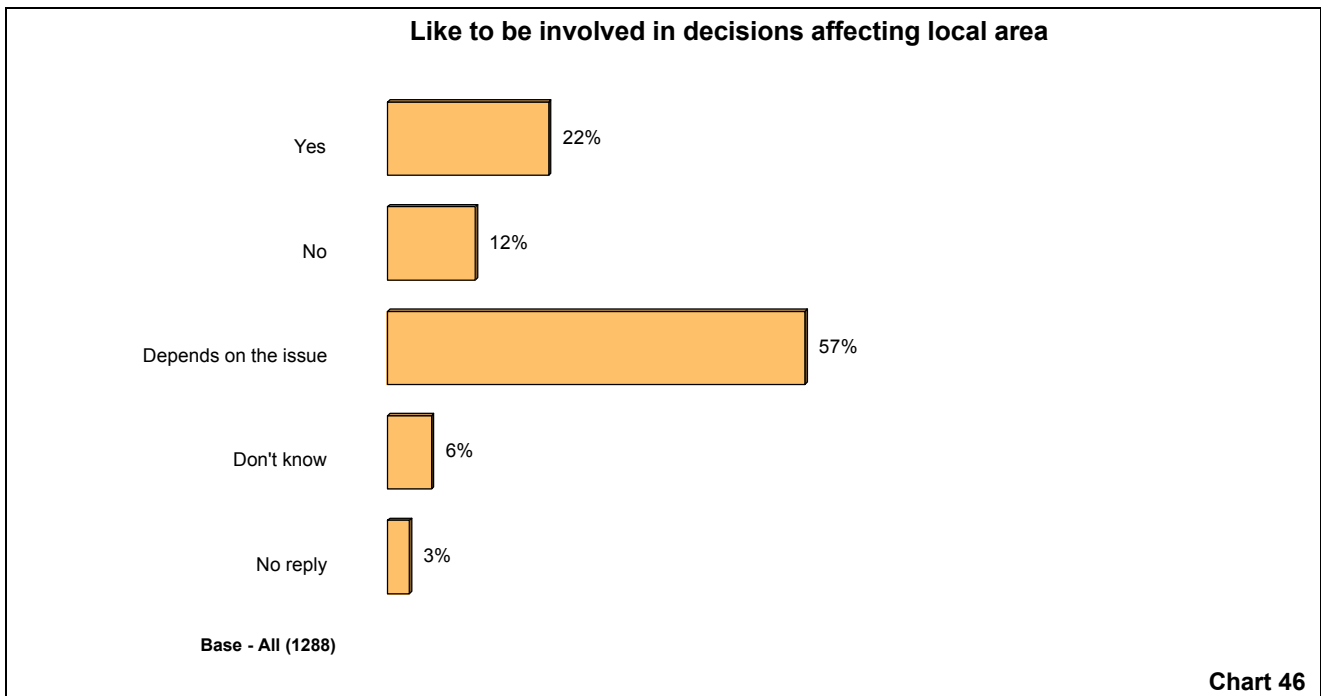


Similarly, 30% responded 'don't know' or did not answer the question when asked whether they agree or disagree that they can influence decisions affecting their local area.

Opinion amongst the remainder was weighted towards the negative – 51% disagreeing with the proposition and 21% agreeing.

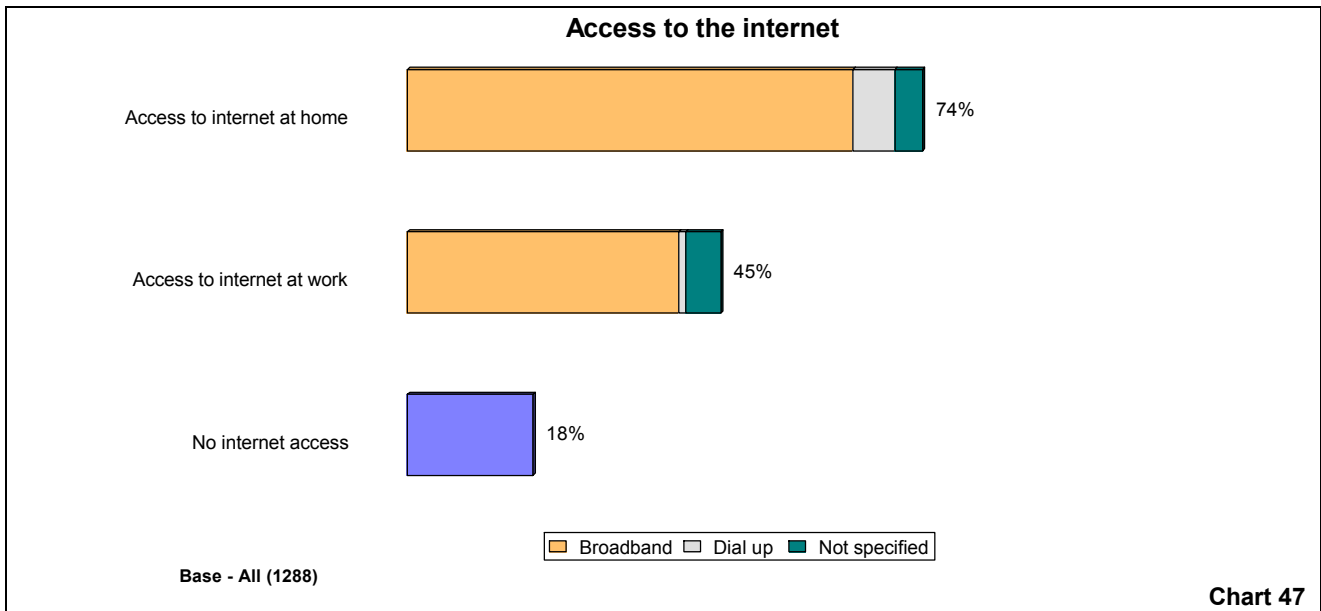


Overall, 22% said they would like to be more involved in the decisions the Council makes that affect their local area, with a further 57% saying that it would depend on the issue.



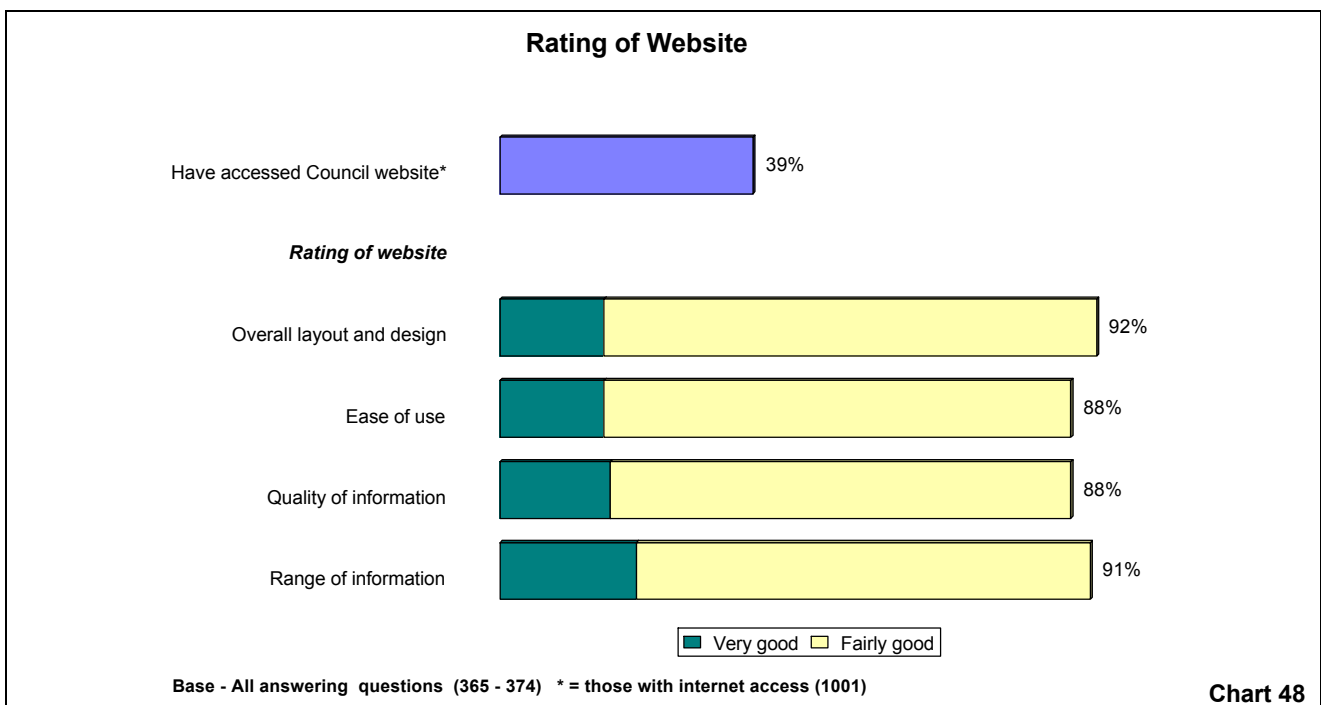
## THE INTERNET

Around three-quarters of residents have access to the internet at home, and 45% at work. The majority in both cases use broadband.



Almost four in ten of those who have internet access had visited the Council's website in the three months prior to taking part in the survey.

The vast majority of those who have accessed the site find it either very good or fairly good for layout and design (92%), ease of use (88%), quality of information (88%) and range of information (91%).



When asked to suggest ways in which the website could be improved, only 16 respondents made any suggestions, and these are shown on the table below.

<b>Made any suggestion</b>	<b>16</b>
	<b>Number mentioning</b>
More detailed information on planning applications	4
More detailed information on recycling	3
Issues/concerns received from residents	3
Acknowledgement when payments made over the internet	1
More information on town centre plans	1
Cost and progress on the Atrium	1
Facility to log complaints	1
Contact numbers for problems/issues	1
Available housing on housing register	1

## OTHER COMMENTS

At the end of the questionnaire respondents were invited to add any other comments they might wish to make, and 16% took the opportunity to do so.

The table below shows the range of comments made and the number making each comment.

<b>Made any comment</b>	<b>206 (16%)</b>
	<b>Number mentioning</b>
Poor/lack of recycling service	84
Poor refuse service	43
Traffic problems	18
Problems with car parking	15
High Council tax/poor value for money	13
Poor state of/lack of play areas/open spaces	12
Lack of police/poor police presence/poor service from police	9
Poor planning decisions/made against residents wishes	8
Too much building/overdevelopment/changing the character of the area	8
Anti-social behaviour	7
Problems with blocked drains/flooding	6
Problems with youths	5
Poor street cleaning/litter problems	5
Poor/lack of public transport	5
Poor/lack of sports and leisure facilities	4
Problems with people being drunk/drinking	4
Dog fouling problems	4
Poor service from planning department	4
Survey is a waste of time/money could be better spent	4
Overgrown trees/hedges/verges	4
Poor facilities for young people	3
Poor/lack of public toilets	3
Poor maintenance of roads/footpaths/streets	2
Problems with crime	2
Lack of affordable housing	2
Problems with neighbours	2
Should turn office lights off at night	2
Poor/lack of facilities for disabled	2
Recycling facilities good	2
Should be a Fair Trade Town	1
Should move travellers from illegal sites	1
Council does not spend money wisely	1
Fly tipping problems	1

Too many empty/boarded up buildings	1
Poor/Lack of street lighting	1
Improvements needed to road systems	1
General good service/no problems	1
Lack of adult education/high price of adult education	1
Council should promote environmental protection	1
By-laws not enforced	1
Tomkins Pond work good	1
Council should listen to residents more	1
Lack of bus shelters	1
Removal of bulky household waste should be free/cheaper for elderly	1
Public transport	1
Vandalism/graffiti problems	1
Council too reliant on website for information	1

## **TECHNICAL APPENDIX**

### **Detailed Methodology**

The Audit Commission supplied a random sample of 6,000 addresses for the Surrey Heath Borough Council area drawn from the small users Postal Address File (PAF). The PAF is a listing of all domestic mailing addresses.

From the 6,000 addresses QCL Market Research selected a random sample of 2,500 for mailing.

Questionnaires were mailed to 'The Residents at ...' for these 2,500 addresses on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2006. A FREEPOST return envelope addressed to QCL Market Research was included.

Those who had not responded by 6<sup>th</sup> December were sent a reminder which comprised of the same questionnaire with the covering letter changed to include a reminder message. A FREEPOST envelope was included for the return of the questionnaire.

Those who had still not responded by 2<sup>nd</sup> January were sent a further reminder again comprising of the same questionnaire with the covering letter including a reminder message. A FREEPOST envelope was included for the return of the questionnaire.

By 9<sup>th</sup> February a total of 1,288 completed questionnaires had been received, together with 16 returned by the Post Office as undeliverable. This represents 1% dead wood and an effective response rate of 52%.

All questionnaires were checked manually by QCL's experienced staff in preparation for data entry.

Data entry was carried out by experienced data entry staff and checked by the department supervisor.

A 5% verification check was undertaken on the data.

A preliminary print out of results was examined by one of the QCL's Directors and any errors were identified and corrected before data was finalised.

### **Weighting of Data**

Postal surveys invariably produce a sample which is not fully representative of the population as different demographic groups tend to respond at different rates. Using the PAF as a sampling frame exacerbates the skewing of the achieved sample towards the older age groups.

Raw data was submitted to the Audit Commission and a weighting process was undertaken. A weighting factor for each case in the achieved sample which was then attached to the raw data file.

The application of these weighting factors ensures that when the data is analysed the results are fully representative of the demographic profile of the local authority area.

***Questionnaire***