

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

2006 RESIDENTS SURVEY

BUCHAN AREA REPORT

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CONTENTS

	Page
Summary of Key Findings	
1.0 Background, Objectives and Methodology	1
2.0 Overall Satisfaction	7
3.0 Customer Service and Contact Management	10
4.0 The Communities of Aberdeenshire and Garioch	22
5.0 Public Transport and Safety	32
6.0 Satisfaction with Key Services	35
7.0 Social Responsibility	43
8.0 Council Decision Making, Consultation and Communications	46

APPENDIX (UNDER SEPARATE COVER)

1.0 "Local Insert" Survey Questionnaire	
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SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Overall Satisfaction

“Net Satisfaction” with the Council in Buchan is higher than that for the whole Council area at 30% compared to 25%. There has been an increase of 6% in net satisfaction in Buchan in the past two years compared to a 2% decline in the Council as a whole.

Buchan respondents were more likely to be more positive in their responses concerning the Council’s key issues, though some areas elicited negative responses in common with the rest of the Council area.

Buchan residents are more likely to think the Council is better, rather than worse, and to a slightly greater extent than respondents in the Council overall.

Customer Service and Contact Management

Telephone is typically the preferred method of contacting the Council for most service users.

Buchan residents are in general more satisfied with their contact with the Council than for Aberdeenshire residents as a whole.

Satisfaction with complaint handling remains a concern, however, including the extent to which people are kept in touch with regarding their complaint.

Home internet penetration is lower than the Aberdeenshire and UK figures at 54%, with 48% of internet users having visited the Council’s web site. There is a willingness amongst internet users to use the Council’s web site to transact a range of business, slightly lower than the rest of respondents from the Council area as a whole.

The Communities of Aberdeenshire

Buchan residents feel the Council does as good a job of making towns and villages attractive compared to other Aberdeenshire residents.

There is a concern, however, about the extent to which the Council is perceived to be taking account of the impact of its planning decisions on local facilities and services, although to a lesser extent in Buchan.

Affordable housing is seen as an important issue and residents are willing to countenance house building in a variety of places although there is less resistance to large-scale house building outwith existing settlements. It is noted that residents in Buchan are less likely to feel there is a shortage of affordable housing.

Community spirit and vibrancy in Buchan is rated notably higher in Buchan when compared to the rest of the Council area.

However, people continue to rate the availability of community facilities poorly, particularly in Buchan.

There are higher levels of perceived danger when respondents' personal safety is concerned when they are outside after dark in Buchan. However, most people's actual experience of anti-social behaviour is of the low-level, albeit persistent, kind, with Buchan residents more likely to claim to have been the victim of anti-social behaviour than the average for the Council as a whole.

There has been a substantial movement of population within Buchan in the past 5 years, as well as an inward migration of 7% from outside the area.

Grocery shopping tends to be done locally, but "big ticket" items such as white goods see some leakage to the rest of Aberdeenshire and in particular to Aberdeen City. Public services and leisure facilities are, in general, accessed locally, as are employment opportunities. However, a significant minority have difficulty in accessing these services and opportunities due to a number of factors.

Public Transport and Safety

Perception of the quality of public transport is higher in Buchan when compared to the rest of Aberdeenshire.

There is a strong desire for road improvements within Buchan, though at a slightly higher level than that of the whole Council.

Some desire is evident for safety measures such as more restricted speed areas, pedestrian zones, driver safety education and traffic calming measures.

There is also some desire for speed cameras within towns and villages (but less demand for such speed cameras on main roads).

Satisfaction with Key Services

For those Council services that citizens elect to use, satisfaction ratings from Buchan are generally slightly higher than those for Aberdeenshire as a whole, though the rating for sport and leisure facilities is notably lower.

With regard to a range of "universal services", Buchan residents rate these services very similar to the main sample of residents, with the exception of refuse collection.

The level of perceived improvement in services is, in the main, much higher in Buchan.

Buchan residents would prioritise road maintenance and facilities for young people.

Social Responsibility

Buchan residents' views to those in the rest of Aberdeenshire with regard to their attitudes towards to the Council as a socially responsible organisation are generally more positive.

That the Council should be doing more to help communities is a more prevalent view in Buchan, whilst fewer residents feel that individuals should do more to improve their communities.

Council Decision Making, Consultation and Communications

A large majority of survey respondents claim to have voted in the most recent parliamentary and Council elections, with slightly less claiming to have done so in Buchan.

When people have not voted it has normally been due to a general disenchantment with politics to a lesser extent in Buchan, where there exists a greater feeling of voting not making a difference.

However, a high proportion of Aberdeenshire residents are able to name their elected representatives, though slightly less so in Buchan.

Scepticism is evident with regard to individuals' ability to influence the Council's decision making and to have their views taken into account, though to a lesser extent in Buchan

Despite this, there are strong indications of a desire on the part of many people to take part in civic life.

While there is general satisfaction in Buchan with the information they receive from the Council, a notable minority are dissatisfied with this level of information.

1.0 BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This 2006 Residents survey is the fourth full-scale survey of residents' views which Aberdeenshire Council has undertaken since 2000 (such surveys have now been undertaken in 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2006). Specific in-depth items of research have also been conducted in the intervening years (2001, 2003, 2005). The survey repeats a number of questions from the previous surveys, to allow for a tracking of changes in perceptions over time. In some cases, it has been possible to track changes back to the 2000 survey. However, as the survey questionnaire was considerably revised and updated in 2002, this has not always been possible.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.2 The original broad aims and objectives of the 2006 Residents' Survey were to:
- To identify issues of importance to Aberdeenshire residents.
 - To determine the key priorities which residents have of the Council and whether these are changing.
 - To determine perceptions of the Council's performance against these priorities.
 - To track changes over time (primarily from the 2002 and 2004 surveys).
 - To link the findings of the residents' survey to elements of the employee survey, thus identifying opportunities for improvement and associated barriers (the 2006 employee survey is now due to take place in December 2006).
 - To contextualise the findings by effective benchmarking with other Councils.
 - To provide an overall "headline" measure of public satisfaction.
 - To assist the process of setting goals, and planning actions, for future improvement.

- 1.3 In previous years, the survey process has incorporated a series of exploratory focus groups with members of the public to help identify issues of concern for the main survey. For the 2006 survey, these focus groups were replaced with a series of consultations with the Council's Area Managers and Chairs of Area Committees, in order to identify areas of current or topical interest in each area. Some of the specific local themes identified included:

Banff and Buchan	Buchan	Formartine
<p>The integration of new workers into the area</p> <p>Banff and Buchan as a tourist destination</p>	<p>Availability of parking</p> <p>The integration of new workers into the area</p>	<p>Changes to the refuse collections and recycling service</p> <p>Volunteering issues</p> <p>Awareness of local organisations</p> <p>Formartine as a tourist destination</p>
Garioch	Kincardine and Mearns	Marr
<p>The integration of new workers into the area</p> <p>Changes to the refuse collection and recycling service</p> <p>Volunteering issues</p> <p>Garioch as a tourist destination</p>	<p>Availability of parking</p> <p>Changes to the refuse collection and recycling service</p> <p>Kincardine and Mearns as a tourist destination</p>	<p>Changes to the refuse collection and recycling service</p> <p>The environment of local towns and villages</p> <p>Volunteering issues</p> <p>Marr as a tourist destination</p>

Some issues were also identified in *all* of the areas, including:

- Local shopping patterns
- Barriers to accessing services
- Usage of Council offices
- Population movements within and across areas
- Aspects of life that people would like to see improved.

These discussions helped to inform some of the “new” questions which were covered in the main survey. In addition, following these discussions, it was decided to incorporate “local inserts” to the survey for each of the Council’s six administrative areas.

This report sets out the detailed findings for Buchan both for the main survey and the “local inserts”.

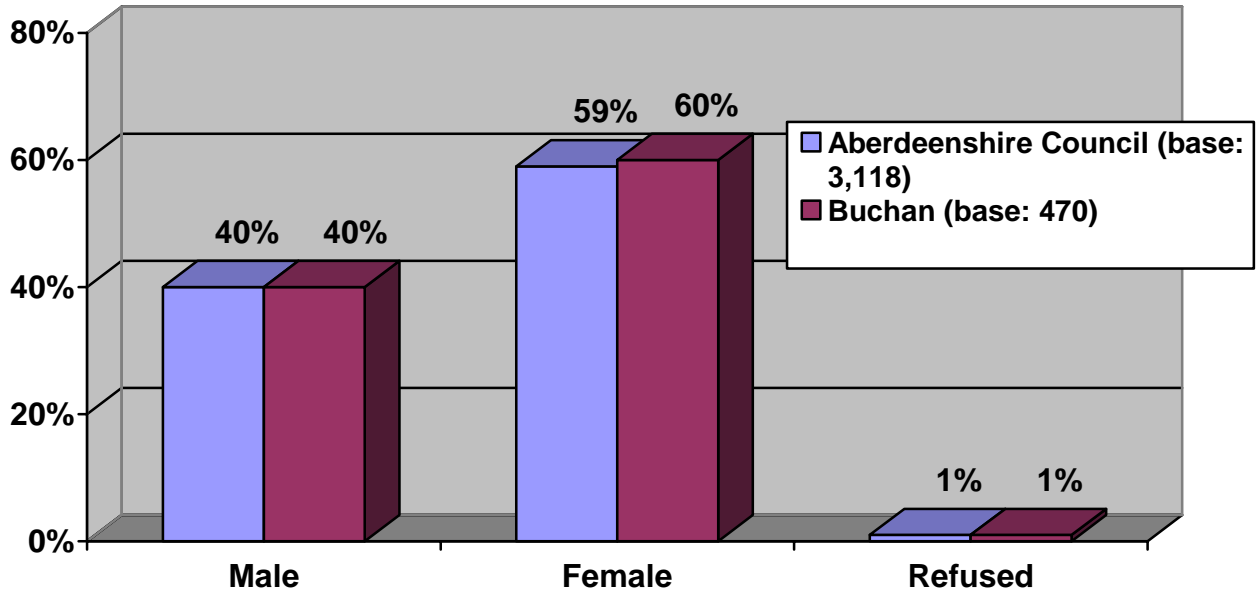
METHODOLOGY

- 1.4 The survey was conducted on a postal basis, with a total of 12,000 invitations being issued, at random, to households in Aberdeenshire, selected to be representative of the population in the Council’s six administrative areas. This approach was broadly similar to that undertaken in 2004, when 12,500 postal invitations were issued.

RESPONSE

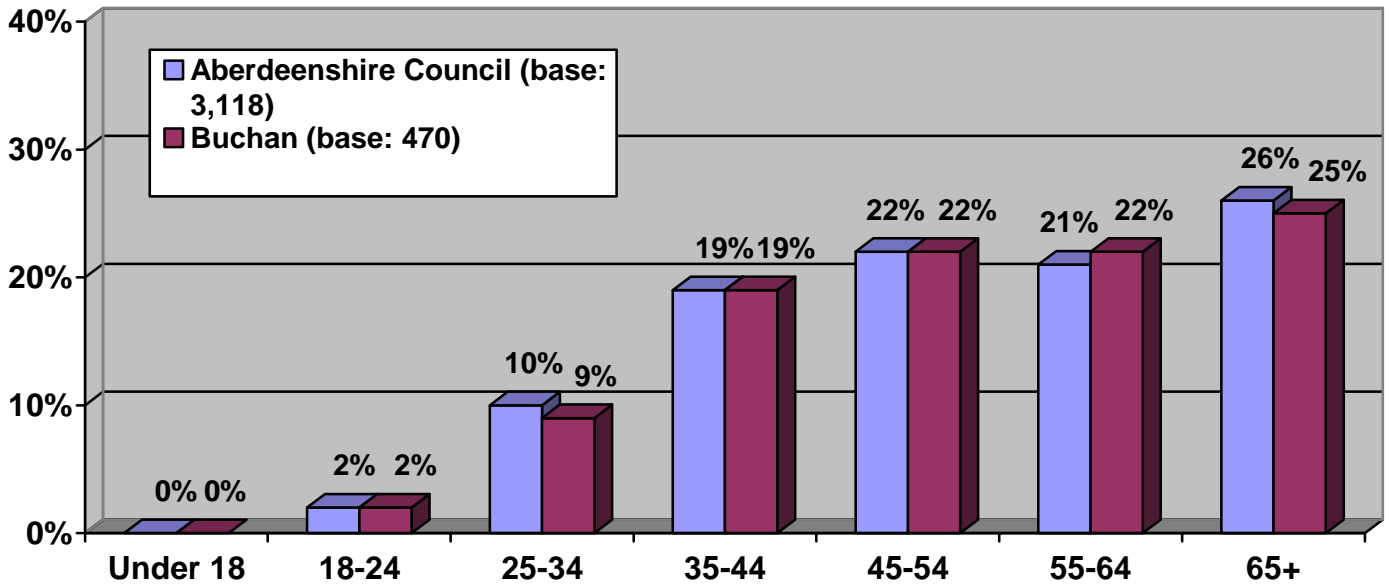
- 1.5 A total of 3,118 responses were received (including 22 responses which were completed online). This represents a response rate of 26.0%. This is within the anticipated range of response rates for surveys of this nature and compares favourably with the 18.9% response rate for the postal component of the 2002 survey and the 22.3% response rate for the 2004 survey. This continued upward trend is encouraging. Within Buchan specifically, 470 respondents were identified.
- 1.6 Figure 1.1 over the page illustrates that the gender mix of respondents in Buchan is similar to that of the overall sample for the whole of the Council area although there is a slightly more pronounced bias towards female respondents than the whole sample. It should be noted that, throughout the report, numbers may not add to 100% due to the effects of rounding.

Figure 1.1: Profile of Respondents (Gender)



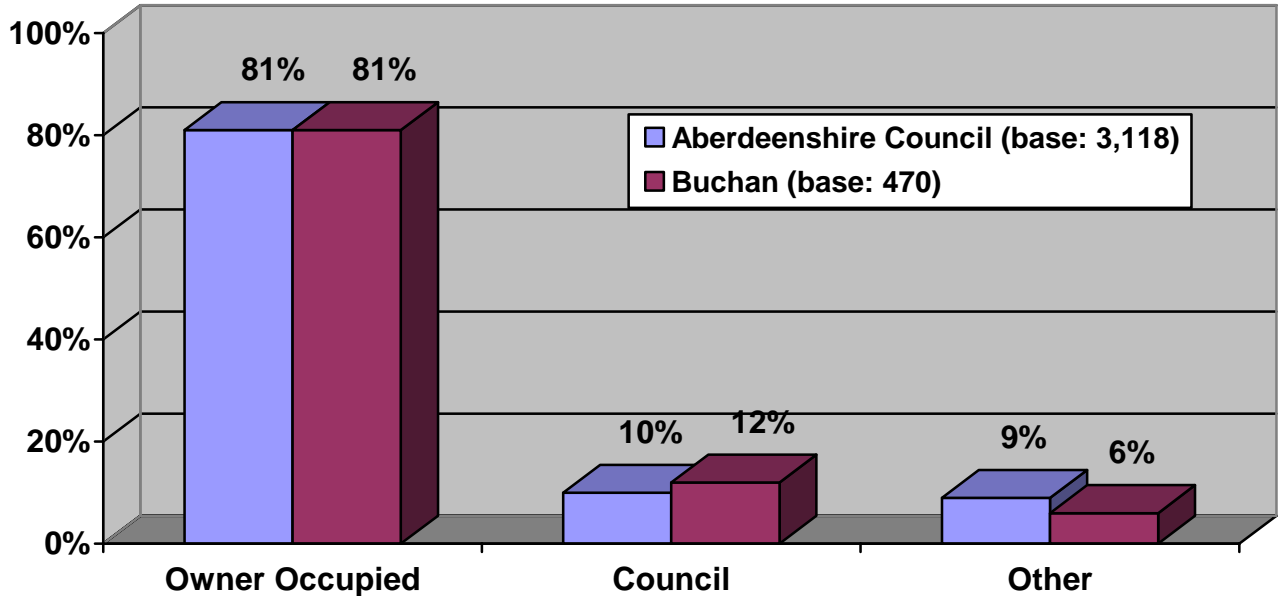
1.7 Figure 1.2 shows that the age profile for Buchan is very similar to that of the overall sample.

Figure 1.2: Profile of Respondents (Age)



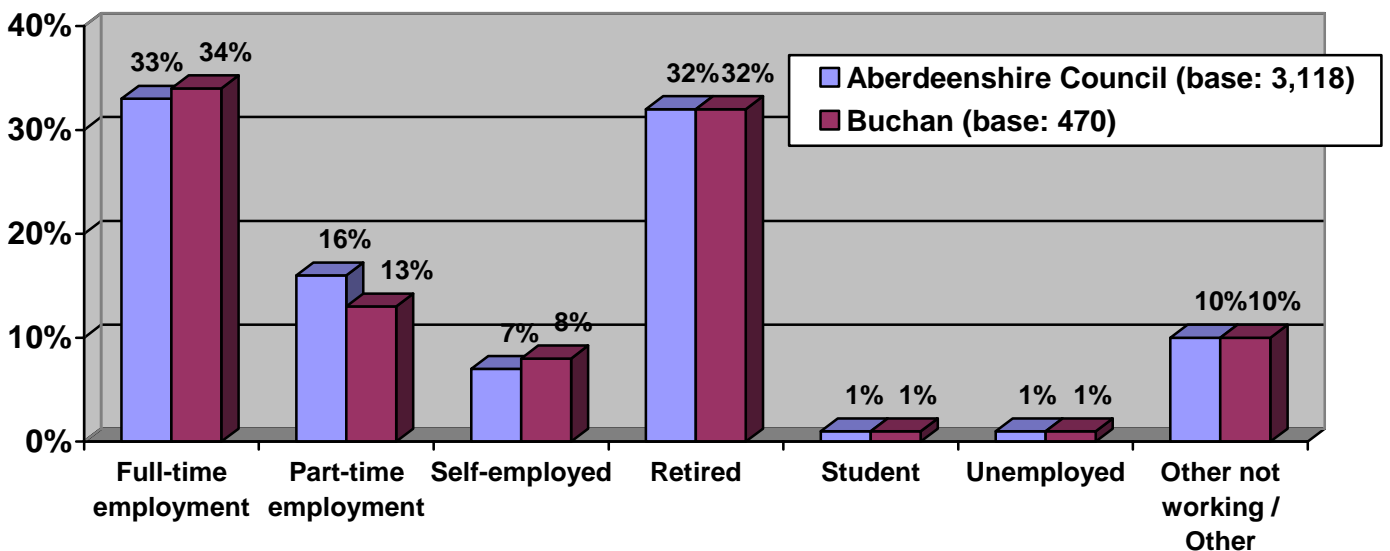
1.8 The profile of respondents in terms of housing tenure is also broadly similar, with slightly higher levels of renting from the Council in Buchan.

Figure 1.3: Profile of Respondents (Housing Tenure)



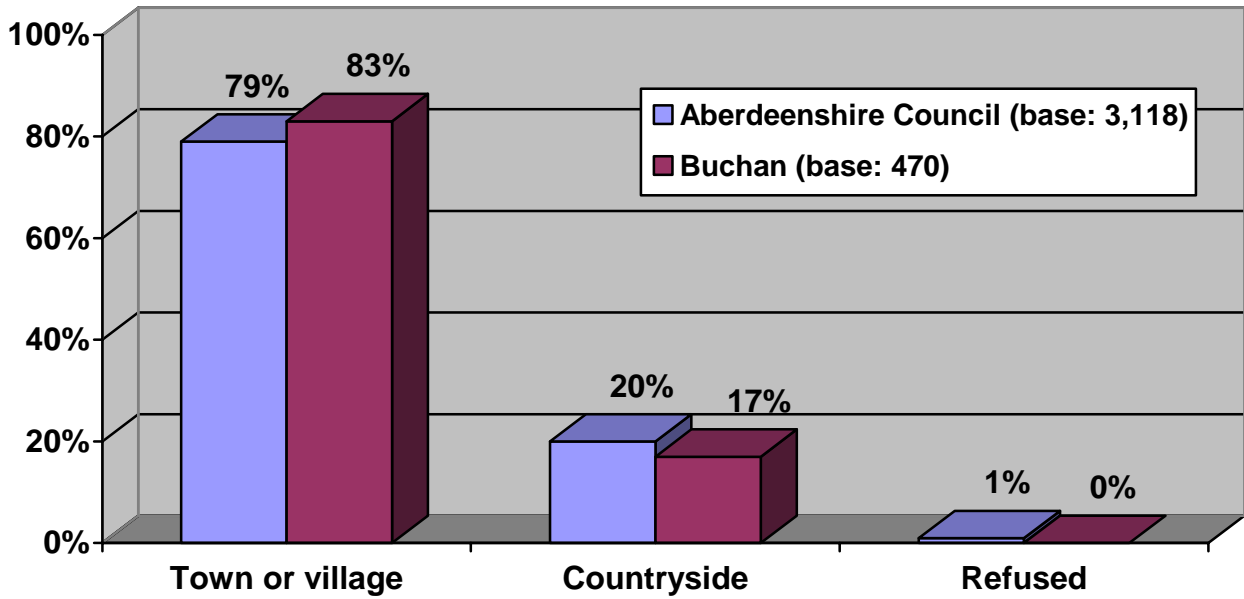
1.9 A similar proportion of respondents in Buchan are in employment, with an accompanying higher level of retired respondents, reflecting the similar age profile of Buchan respondents to the whole sample.

Figure 1.4: Profile of Respondents (Employment Status)



1.10 Buchan respondents are more likely to consider themselves resident in a town or village as opposed to the countryside.

Figure 1.5: Profile of Respondents (Rurality)



1.11 The “local insert” survey questionnaire on which this report is based is available as Appendix 1 which has been provided to the Council under separate cover. Detailed analysis of the results by gender, age, tenure and employment status is available on request. Where variations according to such criteria are of particular significance, they are noted in the analysis which follows.

2.0 OVERALL SATISFACTION

2.1 This section sets out patterns of overall satisfaction with Aberdeenshire Council, as identified by the quantitative survey. In a number of cases, the questions used are “benchmark” questions which have been adopted by COSLA and it is hoped to compare the Council’s results to those of other Councils who had submitted results to COSLA. In some instances, relevant to this and other chapters, it is anticipated that future drafts of this report will incorporate additional benchmark information.

2.2 A “headline” picture of overall satisfaction comes from levels of agreement with the statement *“I am satisfied with Aberdeenshire Council as a provider of local services”*.

The pattern in responses to this question remains fairly positive as illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.

Within many of the graphs in this report, “net agreement” figures will be given. That is to say, the figure quoted is the % agreeing with a statement (or expressing satisfaction) less those disagreeing (or expressing dissatisfaction). This allows for agreement and disagreement levels to be taken into account in a single figure, thus allowing for large amounts of data to be summarised easily. Further details of actual agreement and disagreement levels are set out in Appendix 2.

Figure 2.1: Overall Net Satisfaction

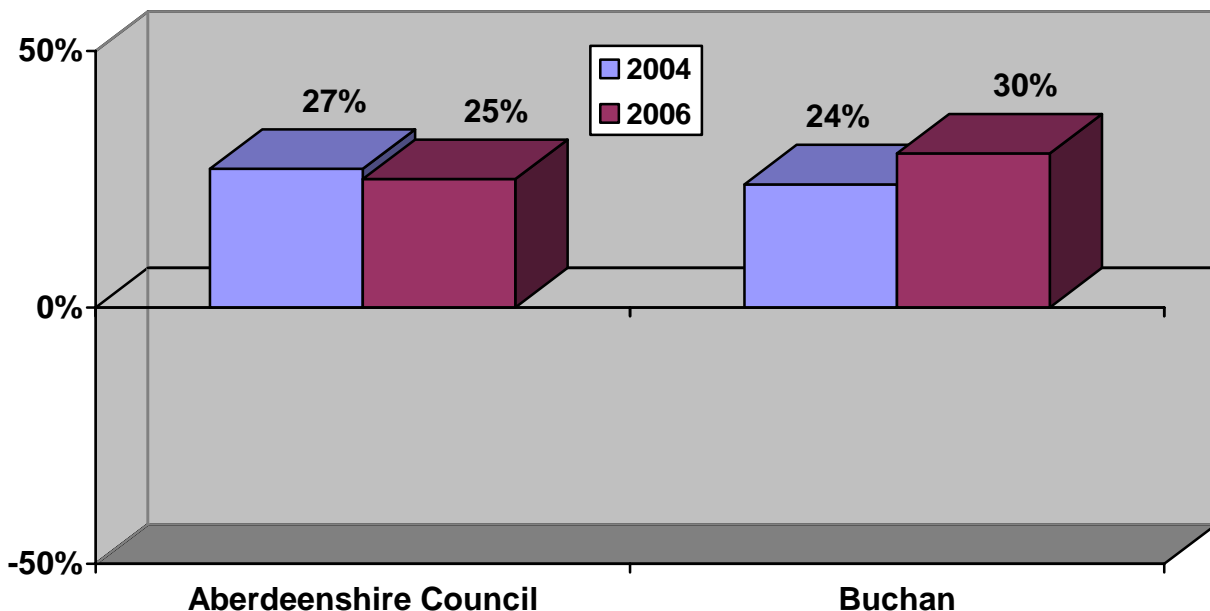
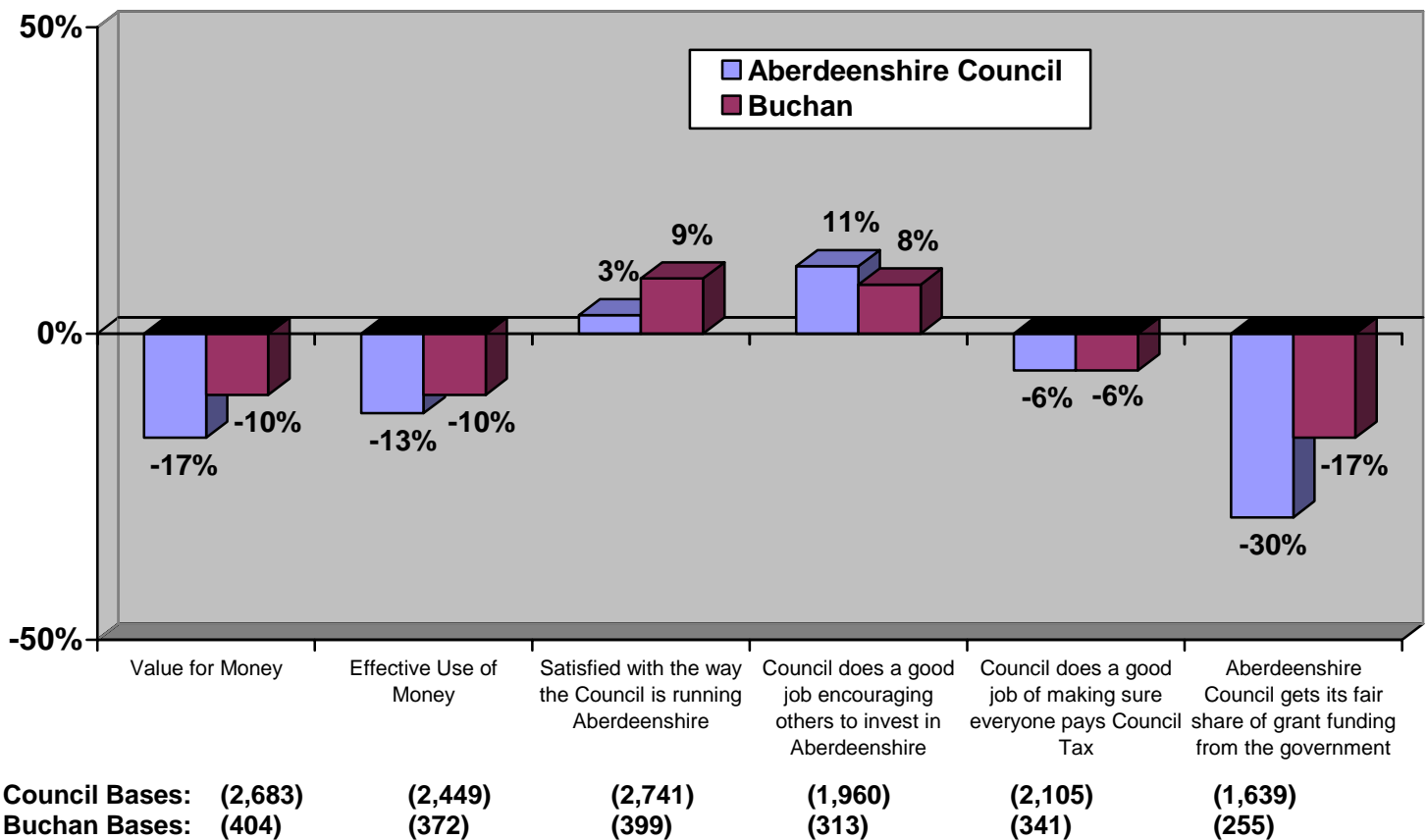


Figure 2.1 demonstrates a net agreement of 25% in 2006 compared to 27% in 2004 for the Aberdeenshire Council area as a whole. However, this moderate decline across the Council is not replicated in Buchan where net satisfaction has increased from 24% to 30%.

Net satisfaction with the Council increases with age, with those 65 and over having a net satisfaction rating of 59% compared to the under 45s whose net satisfaction was 19%.

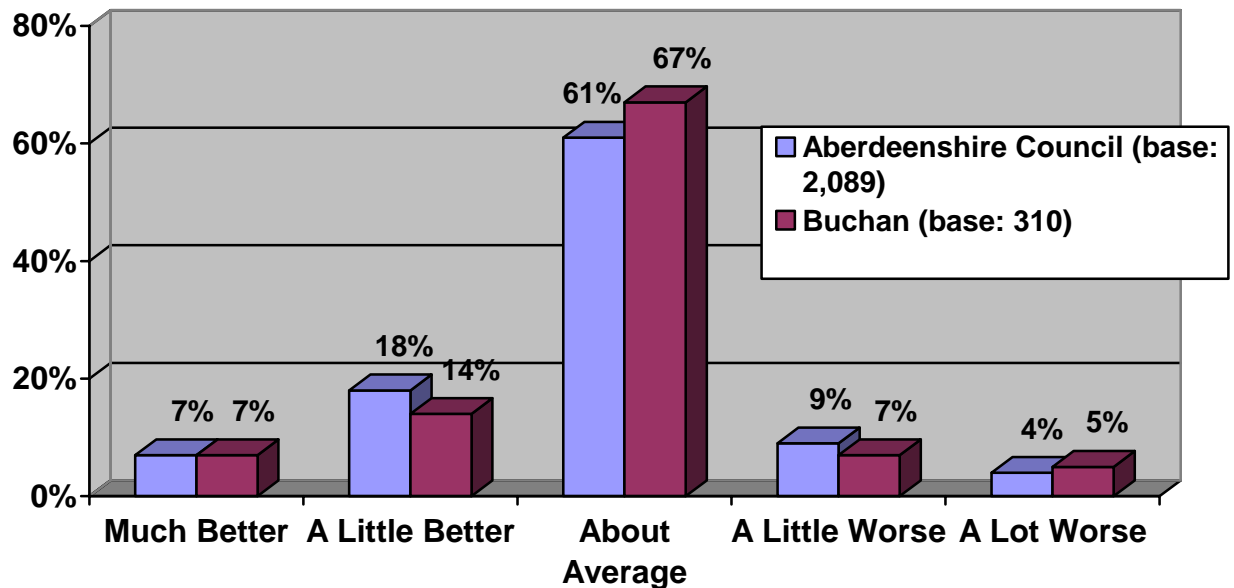
2.3 The overall views of the Aberdeenshire population were explored, with reference to a number of attitudinal statements. As can be seen below, whilst satisfaction levels are in, in the main, higher than in the Council as a whole, respondents' retained a number of negative views with respect to some of these statements. Particularly high satisfaction is obtained with regard to the Council's efforts to encourage others to invest in Aberdeenshire. Buchan residents are somewhat more likely to view the Council in a positive light.

Figure 2.2: Overall Views on Key Issues



2.5 Despite respondents' net satisfaction with the Council having increased in Buchan, they are somewhat less likely to compare the Council favourably to other Councils than the sample as a whole.

Figure 2.4: Overall Views (Comparison to Other Councils)



Summary of Key Points

“Net Satisfaction” with the Council in Buchan is higher than that for the whole Council area at 30% compared to 25%. There has been an increase of 6% in net satisfaction in Buchan in the past two years compared to a 2% decline in the Council as a whole.

Buchan respondents were more likely to be more positive in their responses concerning the Council's key issues, though some areas elicited negative responses in common with the rest of the Council area.

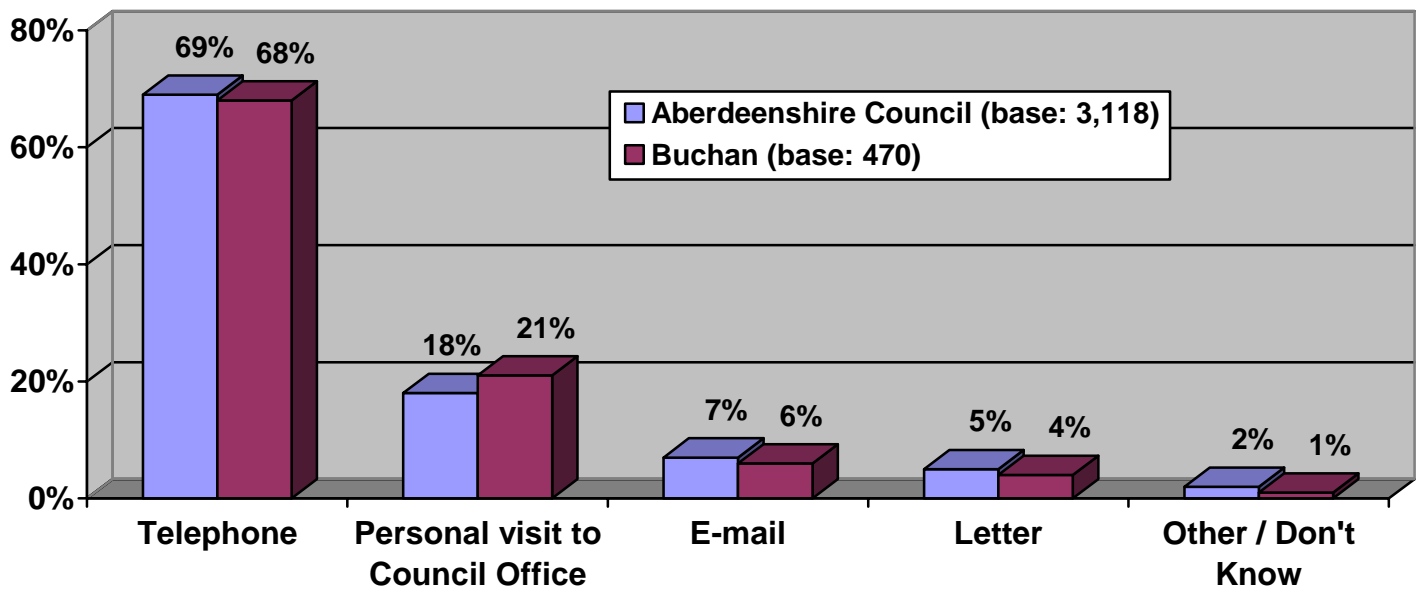
Buchan residents are more likely to think the Council is better, rather than worse, and to a slightly greater extent than respondents in the Council overall.

3.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE AND CONTACT MANAGEMENT

CONTACTING THE COUNCIL

3.1 Buchan residents are more likely to prefer a personal visit to Council Offices than the sample as a whole, possibly due to the higher urban demographic in Buchan.

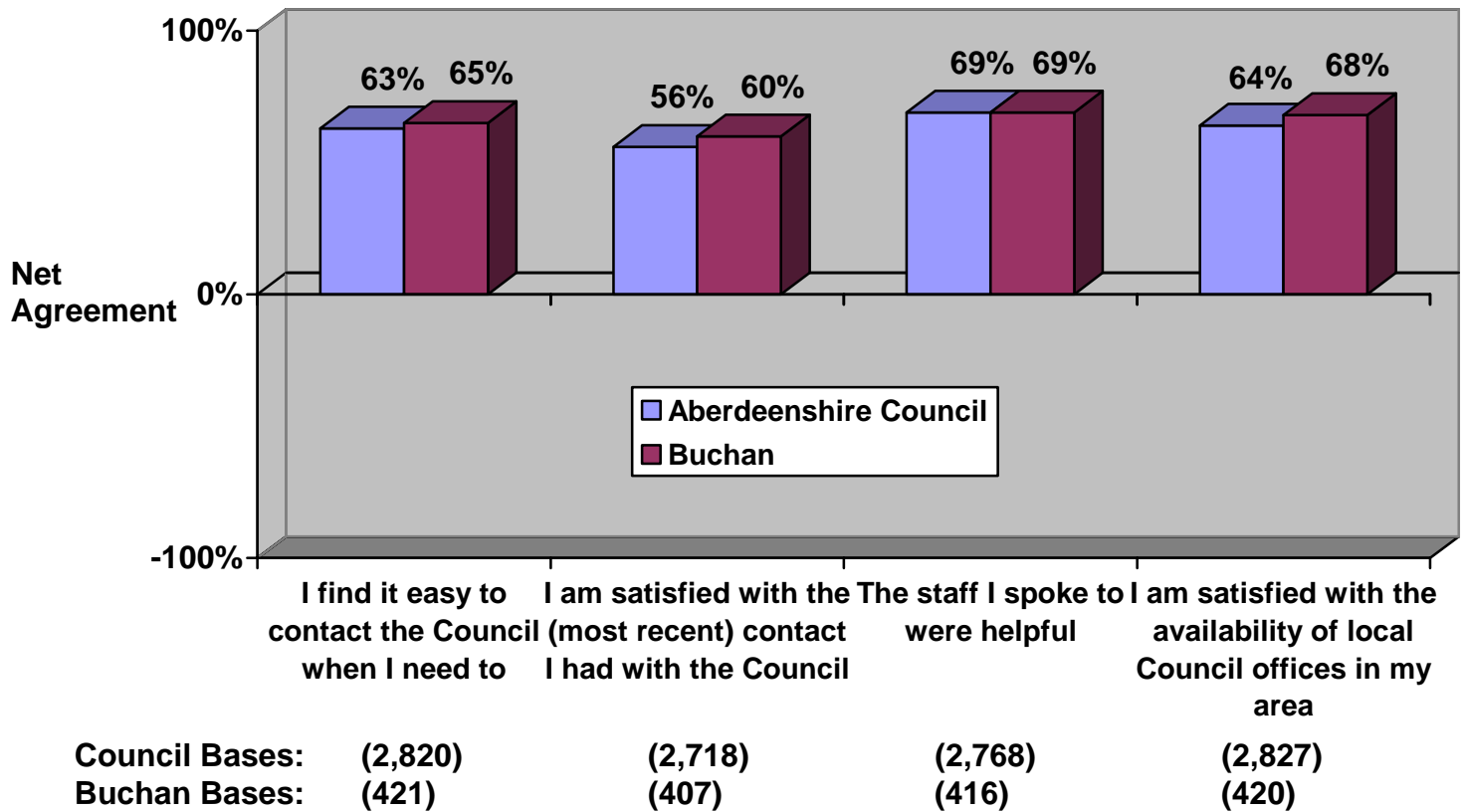
Figure 3.1: Preferred Method of Contacting the Council



Women are more likely to prefer a personal visit to the Council's offices compared to men (72% to 62%) whereas men are more likely to prefer personal visit to a Council Office (25% to 17%).

3.2 The generally positive ratings achieved by the Council with regard to the ease with which residents can contact them, and also satisfaction with their most recent contact, is higher amongst respondents from Buchan.

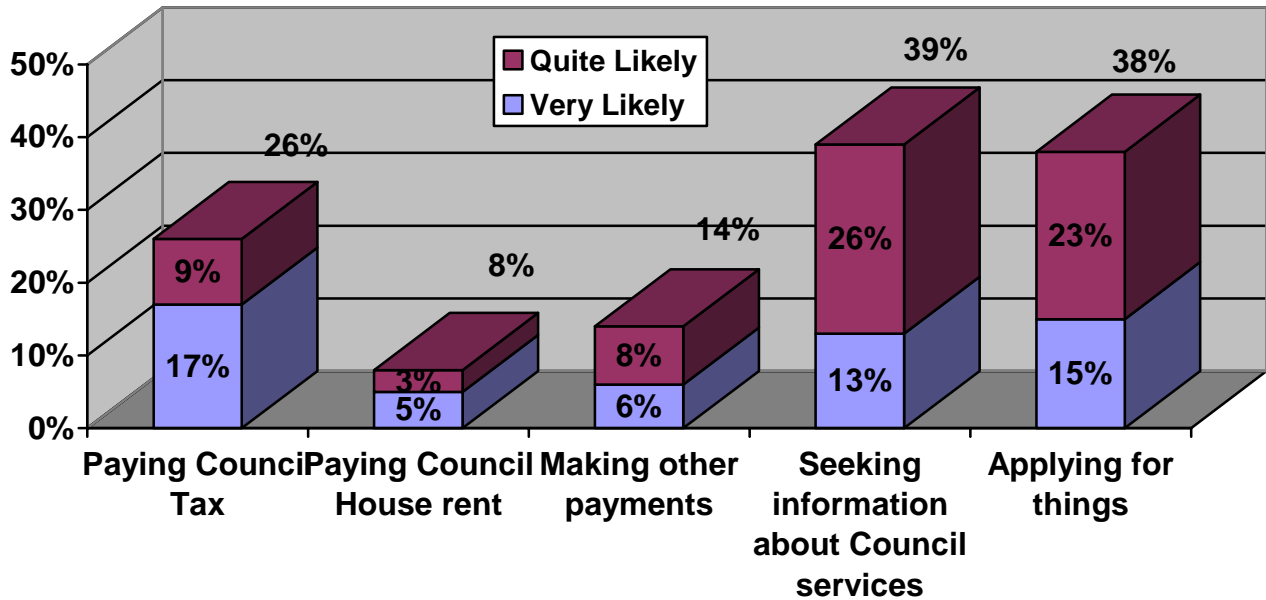
Figure 3.2: Contacting the Council



3.3 67% of Marr respondents have used the Council's offices (in Peterhead and Maud) in the past, with 45% having used them in the past year.

Figure 3.3 shows respondents belief of how likely they would be to use the Council's offices in the future for a range of services.

Figure 3.3: Likelihood of Future Use of Council Offices



Base: 480

It should be noted that amongst Council House tenants, 49% of respondents stated that they would be quite or very likely to use Council offices for payment of rent.

3.4 Figures 3.4(a) and (b) below map out net satisfaction ratings for a range of customer service attributes. These issues are arranged in the order of importance that was ascribed to them in the 2004 survey.

Figure 3.4(a): Rating of Service Attributes

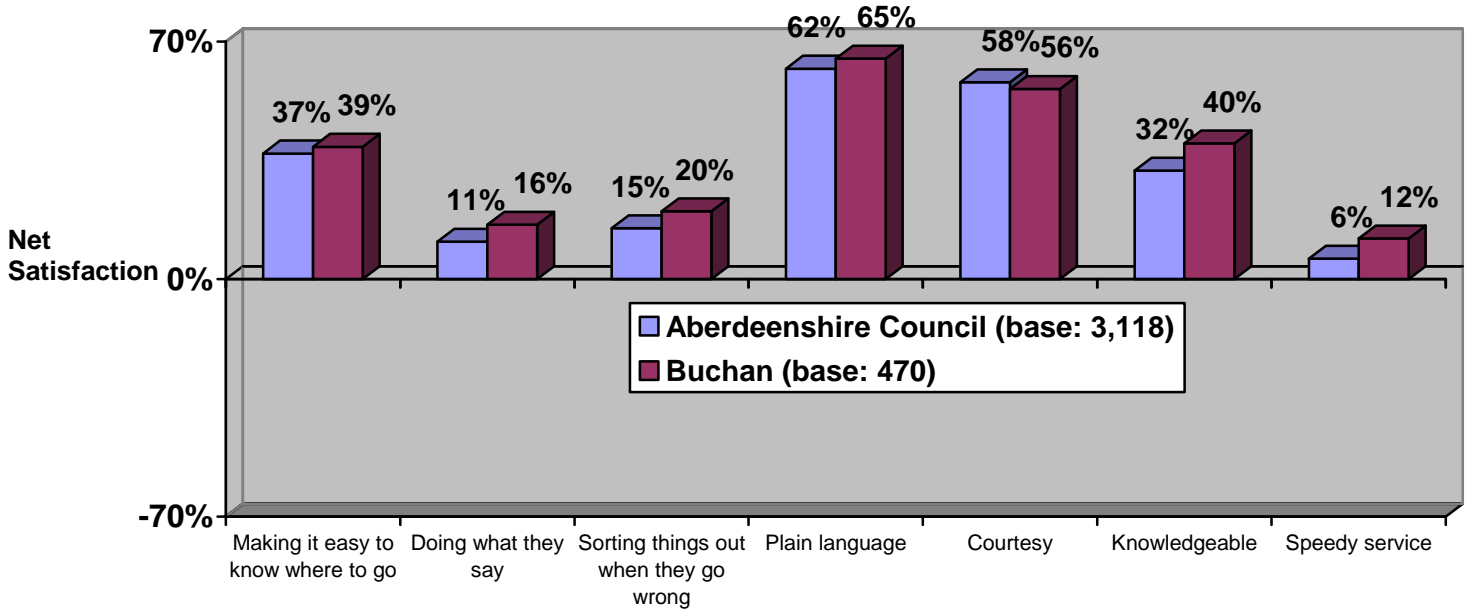
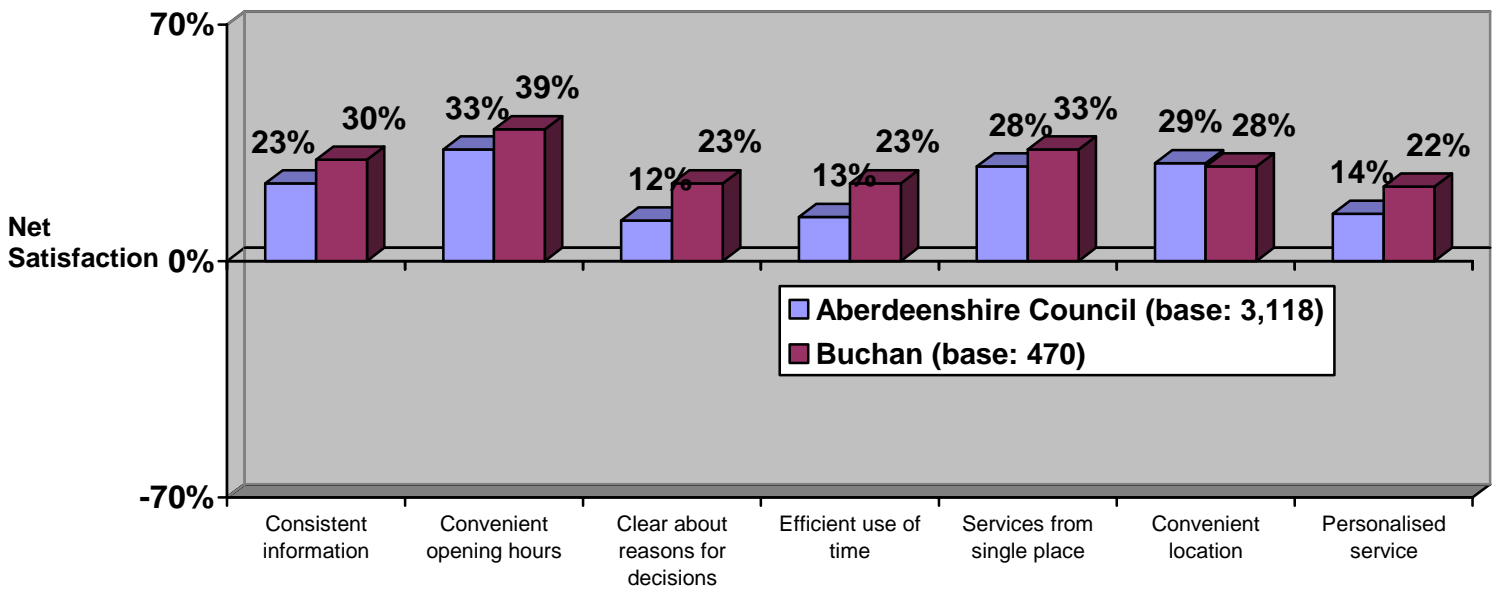


Figure 3.4(b): Rating of Service Attributes



There exist no significant variations in the ratings that Buchan residents give to these attributes than for the whole sample, with the exception of the clarity surrounding decisions made and efficient use of time which is notably higher amongst Buchan respondents. Buchan residents generally rate the Council's customer service more highly than the rest of Aberdeenshire residents.

3.5 Figures 3.5(a) and (b) compares the mean ratings achieved for each of these attributes, between Buchan and for the whole of Aberdeenshire, where a five point scale from very good to very poor was utilised. For example, a very good rating receives a score of plus 2, a good rating a score of plus 1, an average rating a zero score, poor rating a score of minus 1 and a very poor rating a score of minus 2.

Figure 3.5(a): Customer Service Ratings

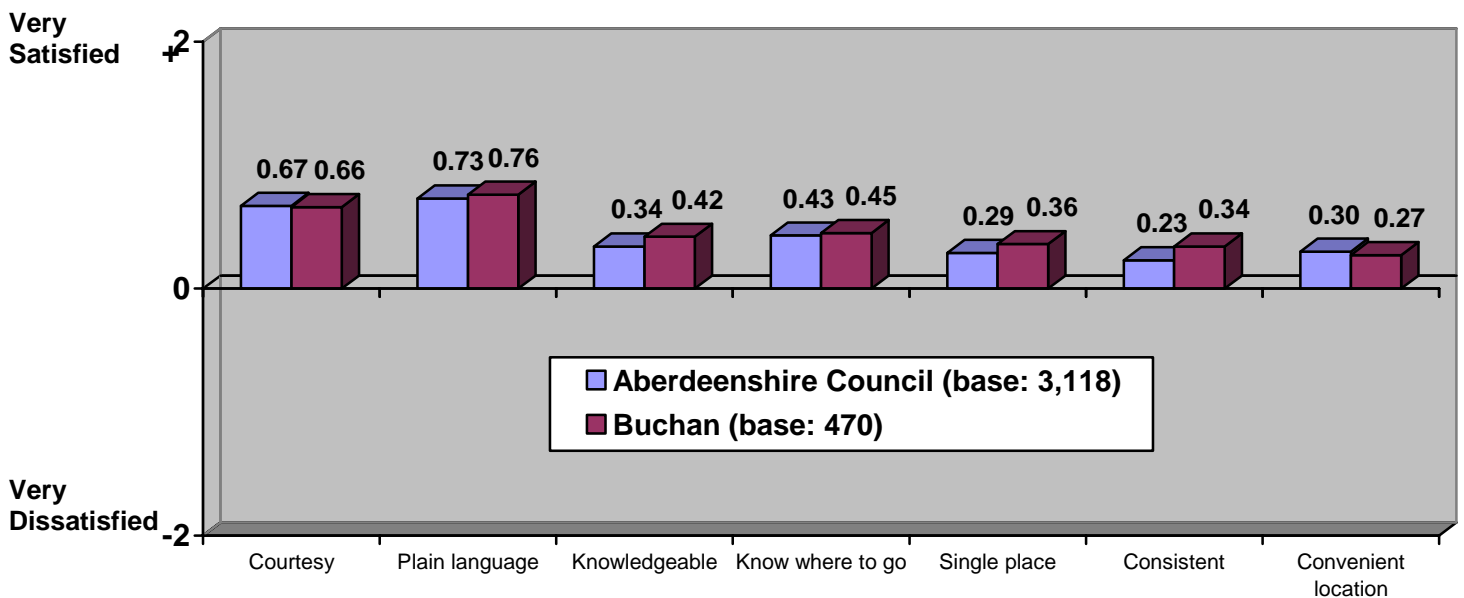
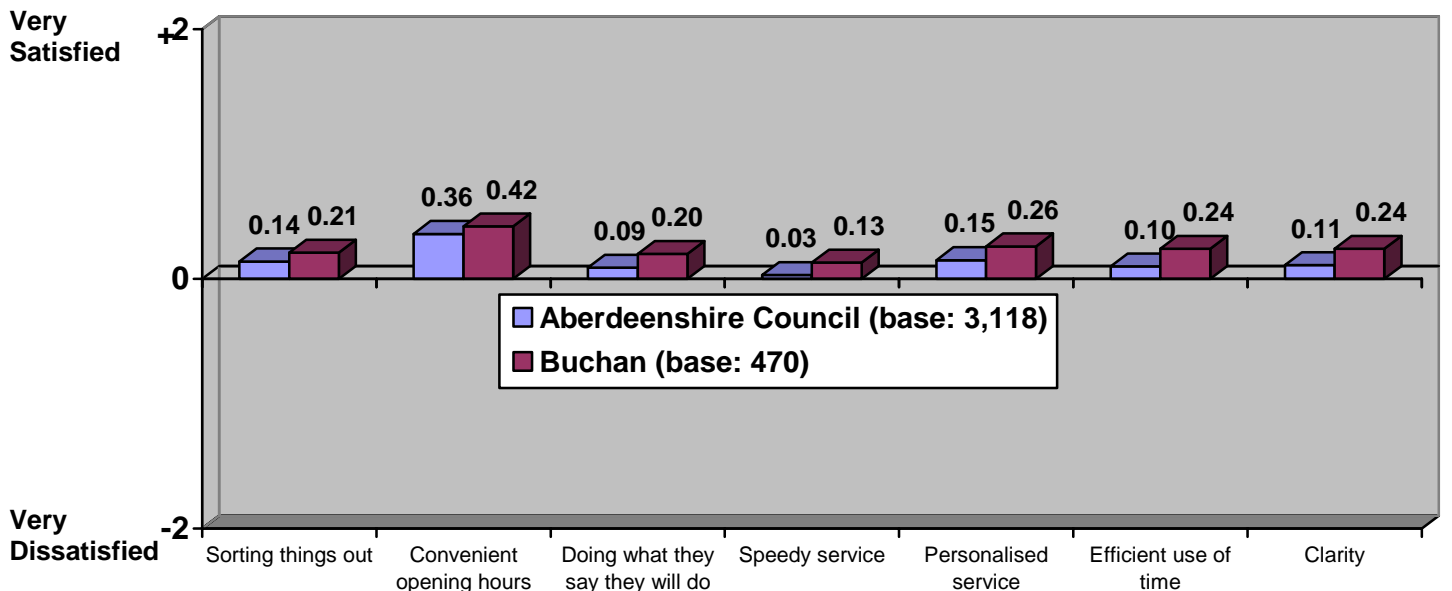


Figure 3.5(b): Customer Service Ratings



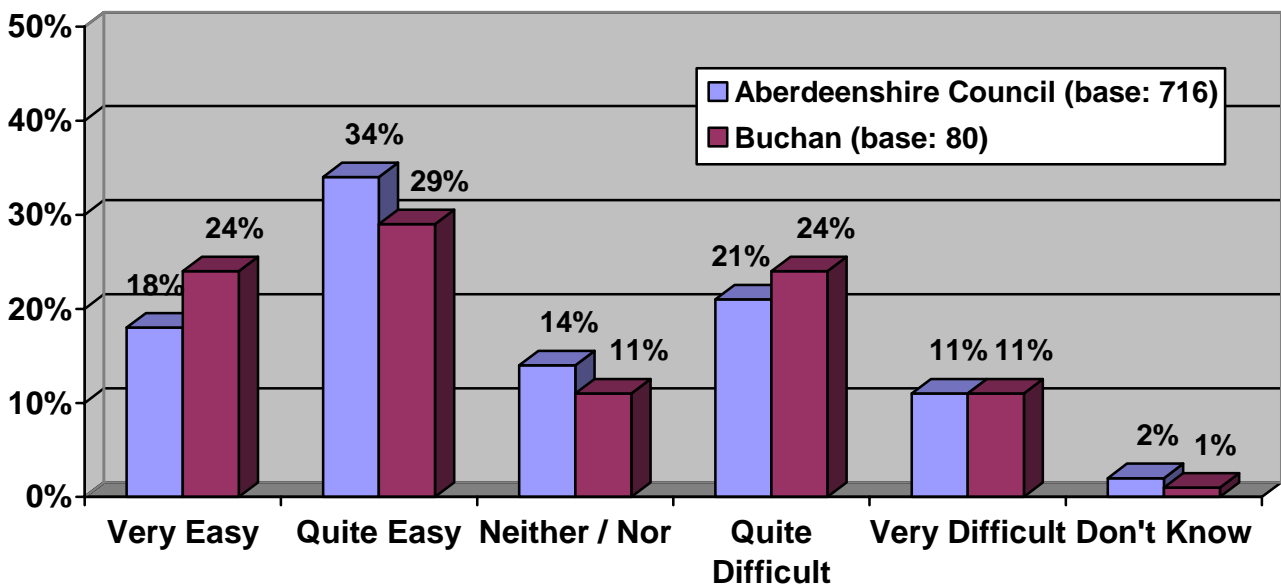
Again, the mean ratings are generally higher when comparing Buchan to the whole Council area.

COMPLAINT HANDLING

3.6 17% of Buchan respondents compared to 23% of the whole sample claimed to have made a complaint to the Council “in the past 12 months”.

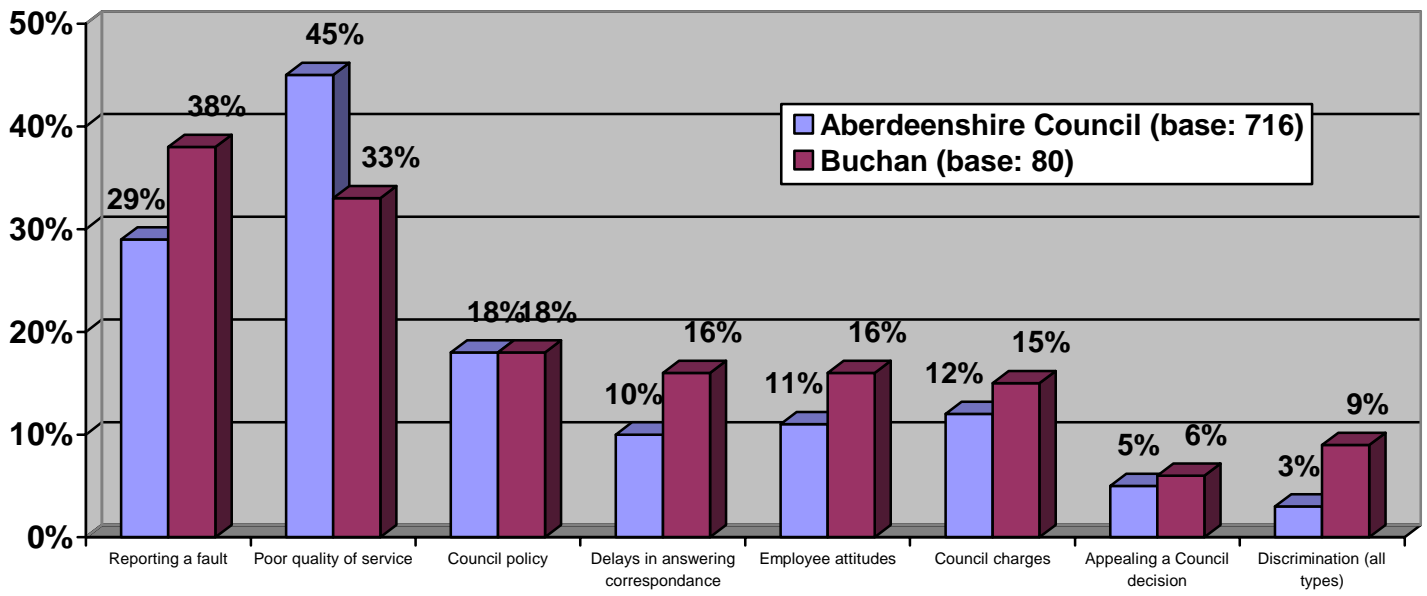
3.7 As illustrated in Figure 3.6 below, the majority of people find it easy to make their complaint, although a minority did not, with Buchan residents finding it somewhat easier to make their complaint.

Figure 3.6: Ease of Making a Complaint



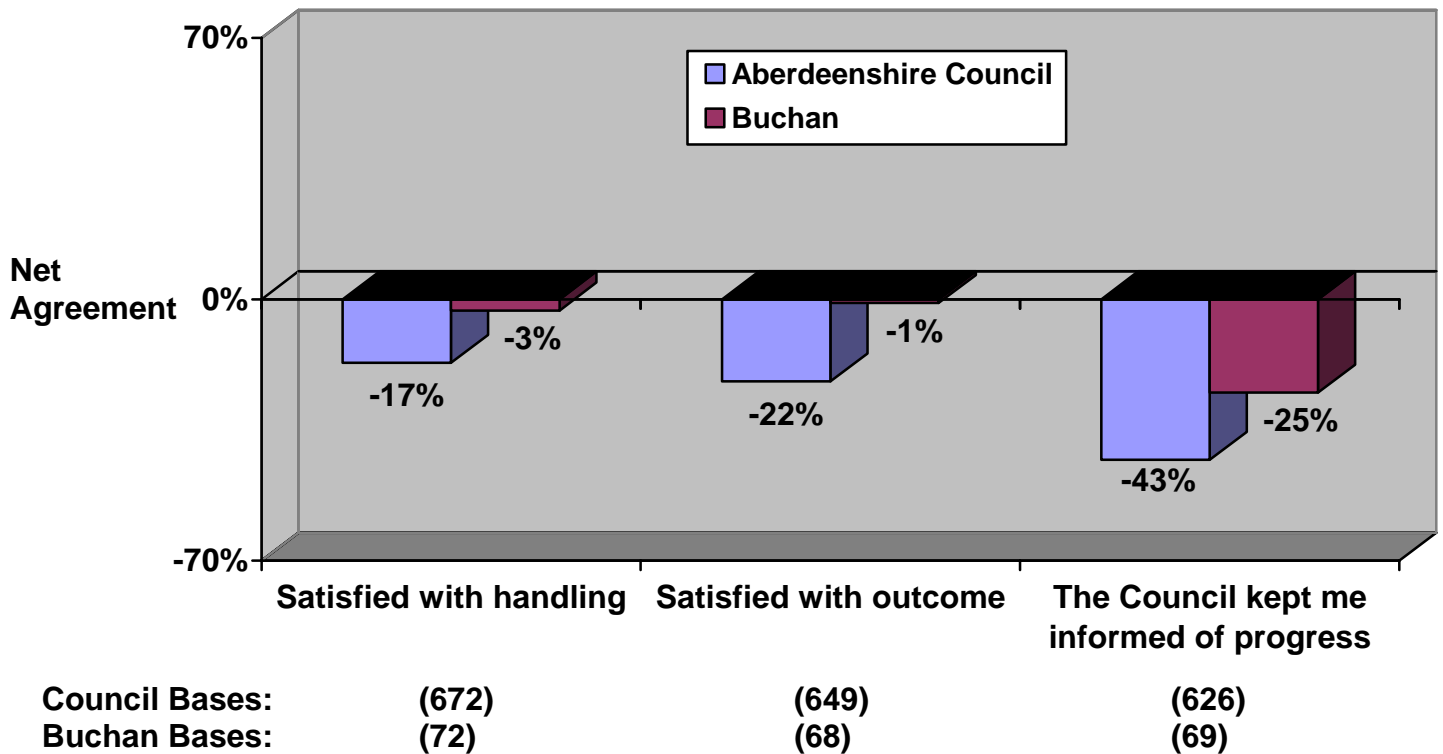
3.8 There are some differences between the reasons for complaints in Buchan when compared to Aberdeenshire as a whole, with some notable variations regarding reporting faults, employee attitudes and delays in answering correspondence, which are all higher in Buchan, and poor quality of service which is considerably lower in Buchan.

Figure 3.7: Reason for Complaint



3.9 The high levels of dissatisfaction with complaint handling continue to persist across Aberdeenshire,. The evidence from the 2006 survey is that people are particularly dissatisfied with how they are kept informed of progress and this is likely to be a contributory factor to the more general dissatisfaction with complaint handling. However, dissatisfaction in Buchan is notably lower while still having negative net satisfaction ratings.

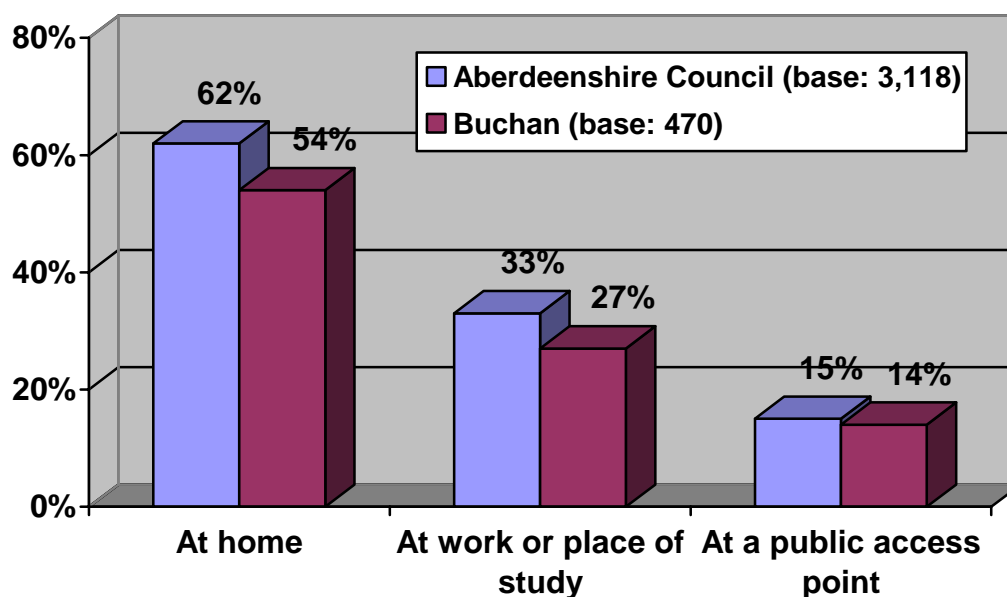
Figure 3.8: Satisfaction with Complaints



THE INTERNET

- 3.10 Markedly fewer respondents in Buchan have internet access from the three options set out in the survey compared to Aberdeenshire Council as a whole

Figure 3.9: Internet Access

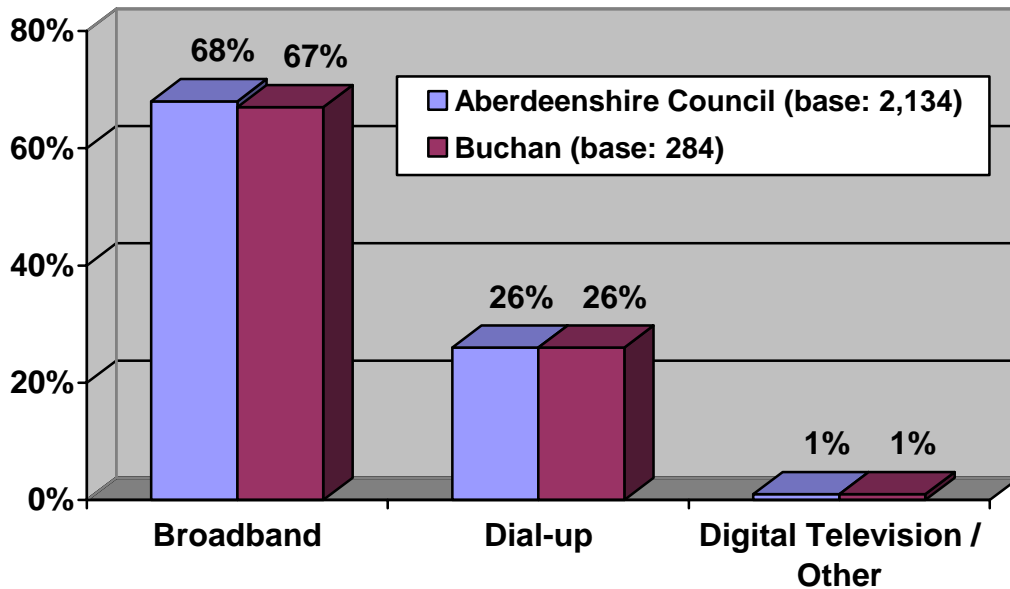


The level of home internet access is lower in Buchan when compared with the whole of Aberdeenshire, although this compares reasonably favourably with the UK-wide average (the Office of National statistics reports this as 57% for the period January to April 2006).

There is little difference in internet penetration by gender although it is closely correlated with age. 83% of 35-44 year olds have home internet access compared to 17% of 65-74 year olds and 10% of those aged 75+. Interestingly, penetration is notably higher in the countryside (65%) than in towns and villages (52%).

3.11 As can be seen from Figure 3.10, broadband has now become much more evident within Aberdeenshire households, but to a slightly lesser extent in Buchan.

Figure 3.10: Type of Connection (most commonly used for personal business)

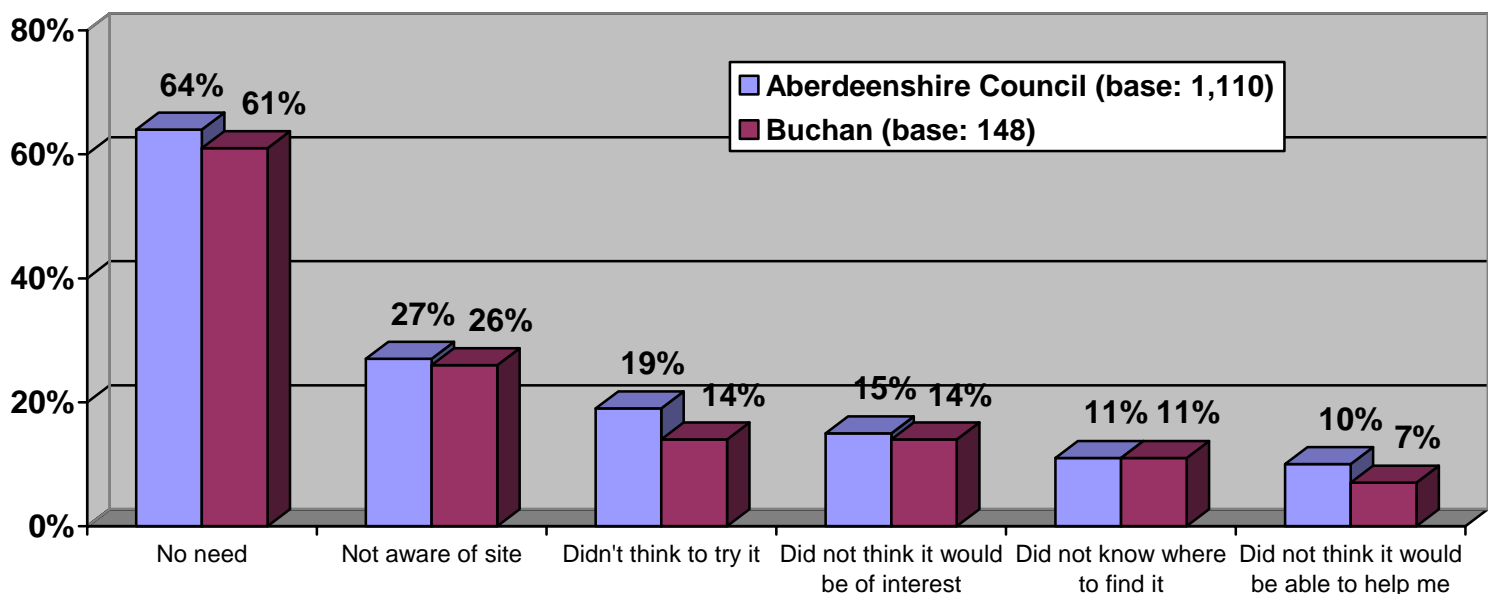


N.B. balance was "don't know" responses

3.12 In Buchan, 48% of people had previously visited the Council's web site the same proportion as the whole Council sample.

Individuals' reasons for not visiting the site are set out in Figure 3.11

Figure 3.11: Reasons for not visiting Council Web-Site



Clearly, very many people do not consider there to be any particular need to visit the site, with no significant variation between Buchan residents and Aberdeenshire residents in total.

3.13 As illustrated in Figure 3.12(a) and (b) below, there is a significant minority of internet users who express a willingness to use the Council's website for a wide range of services, with slightly lower levels of interest from Buchan residents.

Figure 3.12(a): Services Willing to Transact Through Council Website

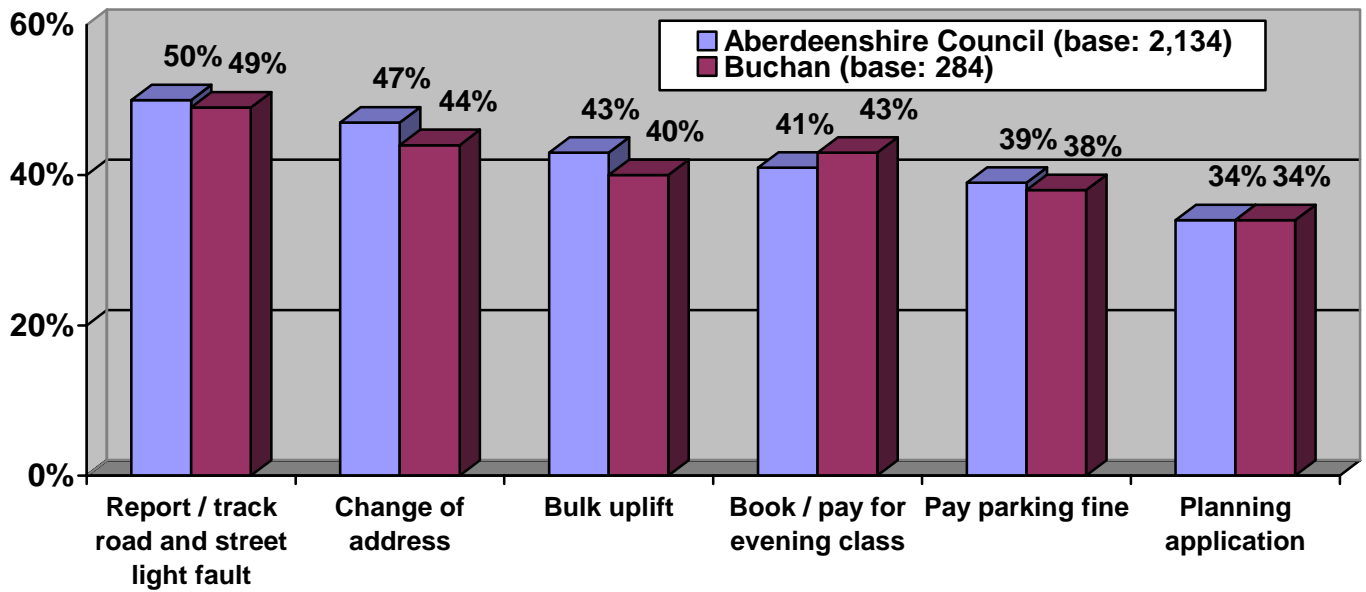
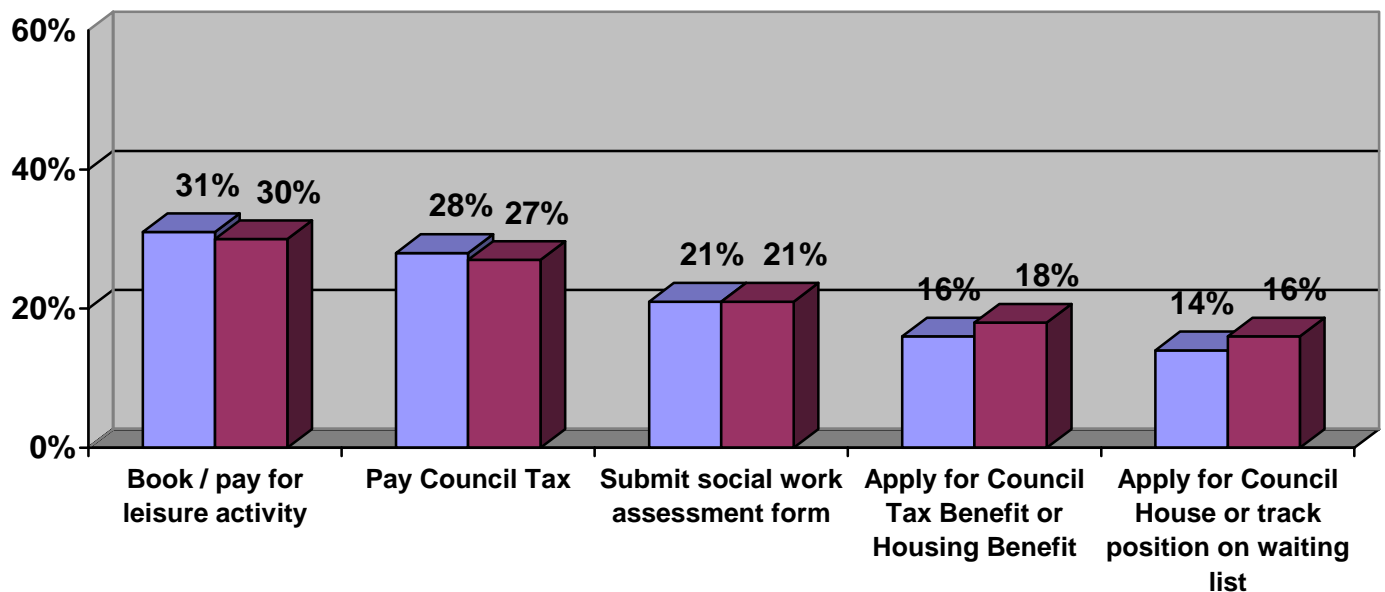


Figure 3.12(b): Services Willing to Transact Through Council Website



The implication is that there is continued scope to further enhance the functionality of the site and to continue to promote this.

Summary of Key Points

Telephone is typically the preferred method of contacting the Council for most service users.

Buchan residents are in general more satisfied with their contact with the Council than for Aberdeenshire residents as a whole.

Satisfaction with complaint handling remains a concern, however, including the extent to which people are kept in touch with regarding their complaint.

Home internet penetration is lower than the Aberdeenshire and UK figures at 54%, with 48% of internet users having visited the Council's web site. There is a willingness amongst internet users to use the Council's web site to transact a range of business, slightly lower than the rest of respondents from the Council area as a whole.

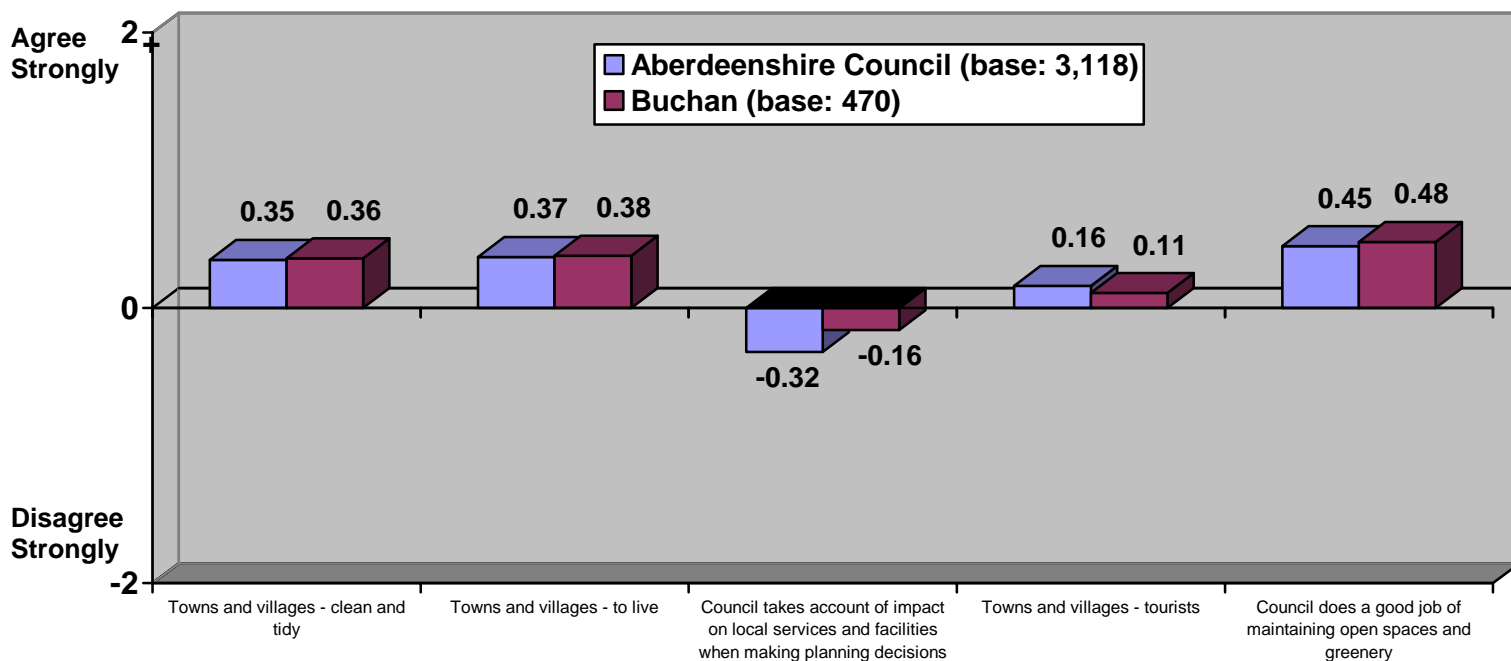
4.0 THE COMMUNITIES OF ABERDEENSHIRE

4.1 A series of agree/disagree questions were asked in relation to the impact which the Council has had on Aberdeenshire. These statements, the results to which are summarised in Figure 4.1 below, included:

- “The Council does a good job in keeping towns and villages clean and tidy”.
- The Council does a good job in making towns and villages in Aberdeenshire attractive places to live”.
- “The Council does a good job in making towns and villages in Aberdeenshire attractive places for tourists”.

Again, this chart is presented in the form of “mean ratings” to ensure comparability between Buchan and Aberdeenshire Council as a whole. Thus, an “agree strongly” response is accorded a score of +2, and “agree” a score of +1 and so on, with the aggregate result being expressed as a mean rating.

Figure 4.1: The Communities of Aberdeenshire – Towns and Villages

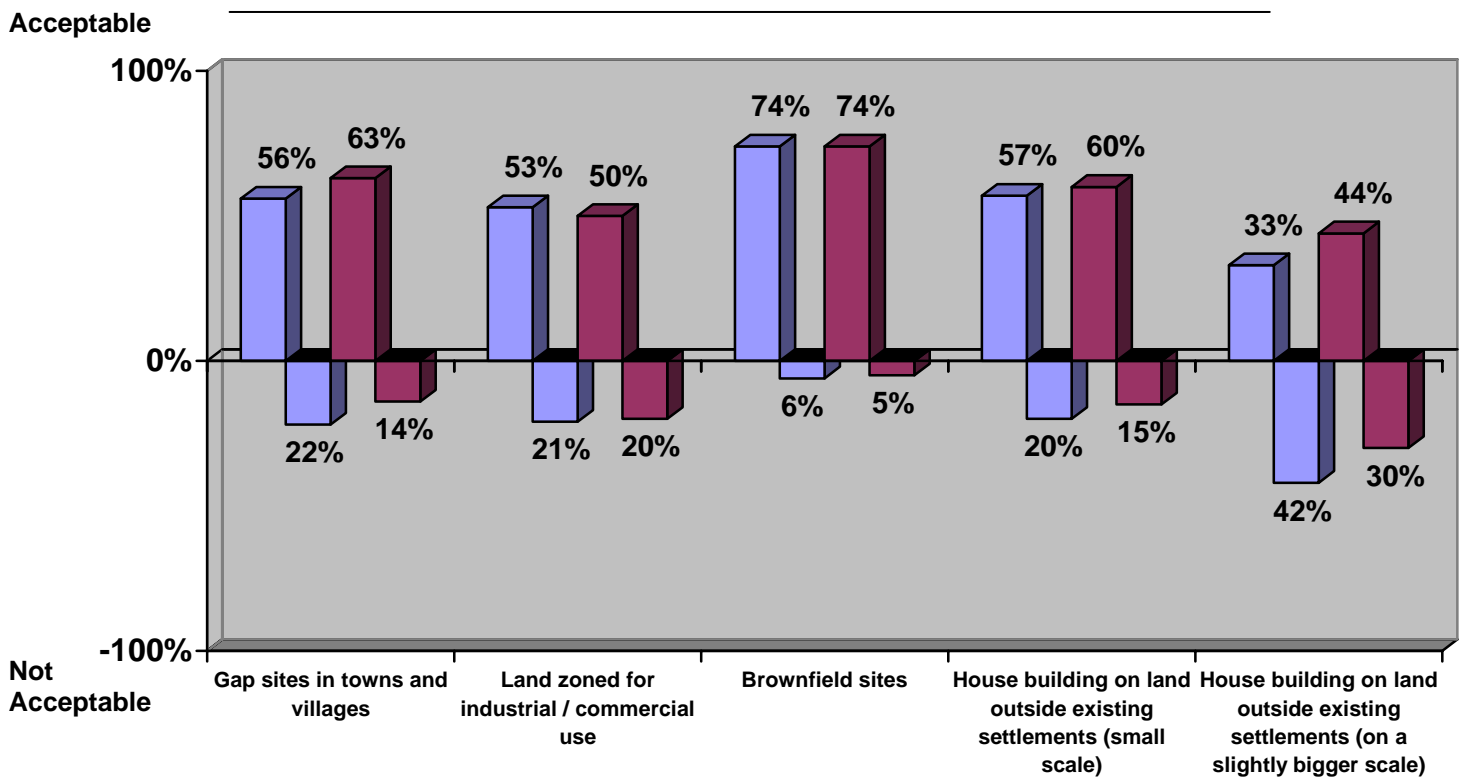


Buchan residents are generally slightly more likely to agree on all of the issues laid out in Figure 4.1.

4.2 Clearly, however, there remains a concern as to whether the Council takes account of the impact of its planning decisions on local services and facilities, although this is less pronounced in Buchan.

4.3 The 2006 survey asked respondents to comment on the acceptability of housing developments under a range of circumstances. As Figure 4.2 illustrates, there is considerable support for housing developments to be allowed on gap sites and on land which is either zoned for industrial or commercial use or “brownfield sites”. There is also a strong consensus in support of allowing “small scale” housing developments on land outside existing developments. In Aberdeenshire as a whole, a slight majority opposes the idea of larger scale house building on land outwith settlements, although this is reversed in Buchan with a small majority considering it acceptable.

Figure 4.2: Attitudes to Planning Decisions



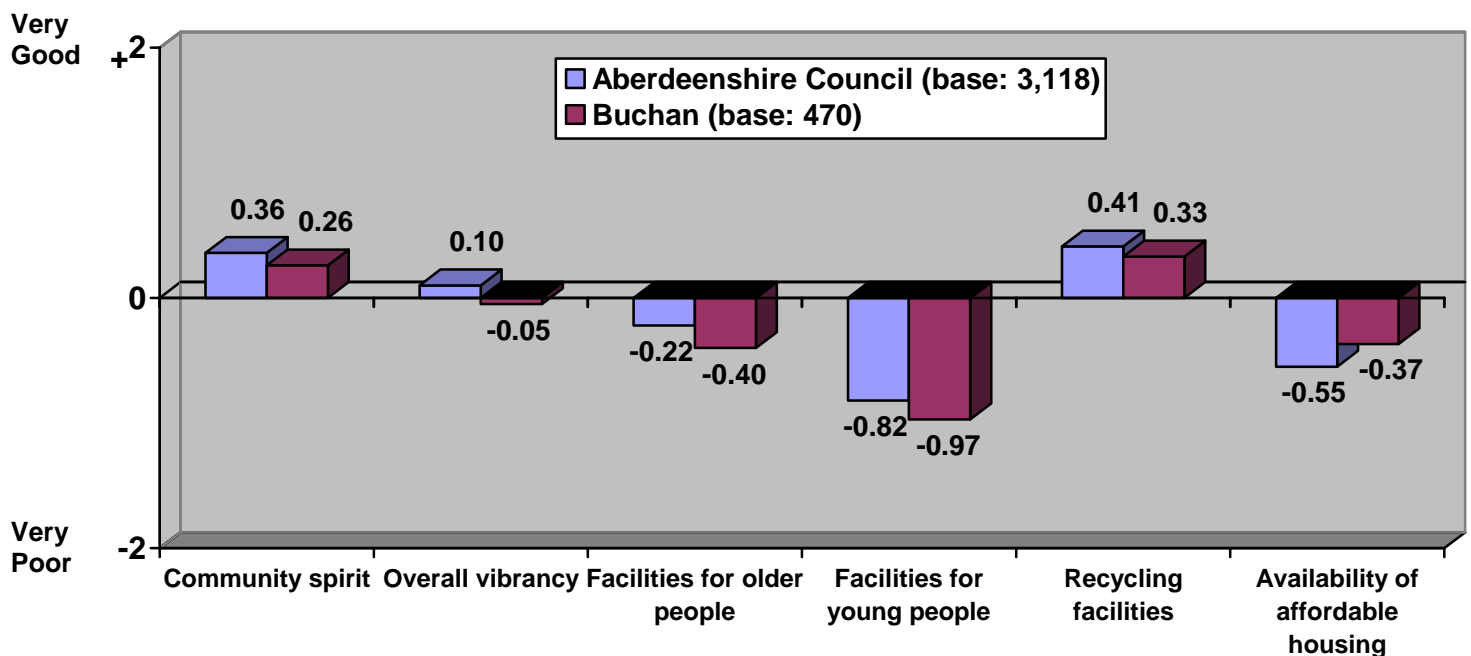
N.B. balance is “don’t know” responses

4.4 Wider questions were also repeated from the 2002 and 2004 surveys in relation to a number of community issues including:

- Sense of community spirit
- The overall vibrancy of the community
- Facilities for older people
- Facilities for young people.

The results of this are set out in Figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.3: The Communities of Aberdeenshire – Community Issues

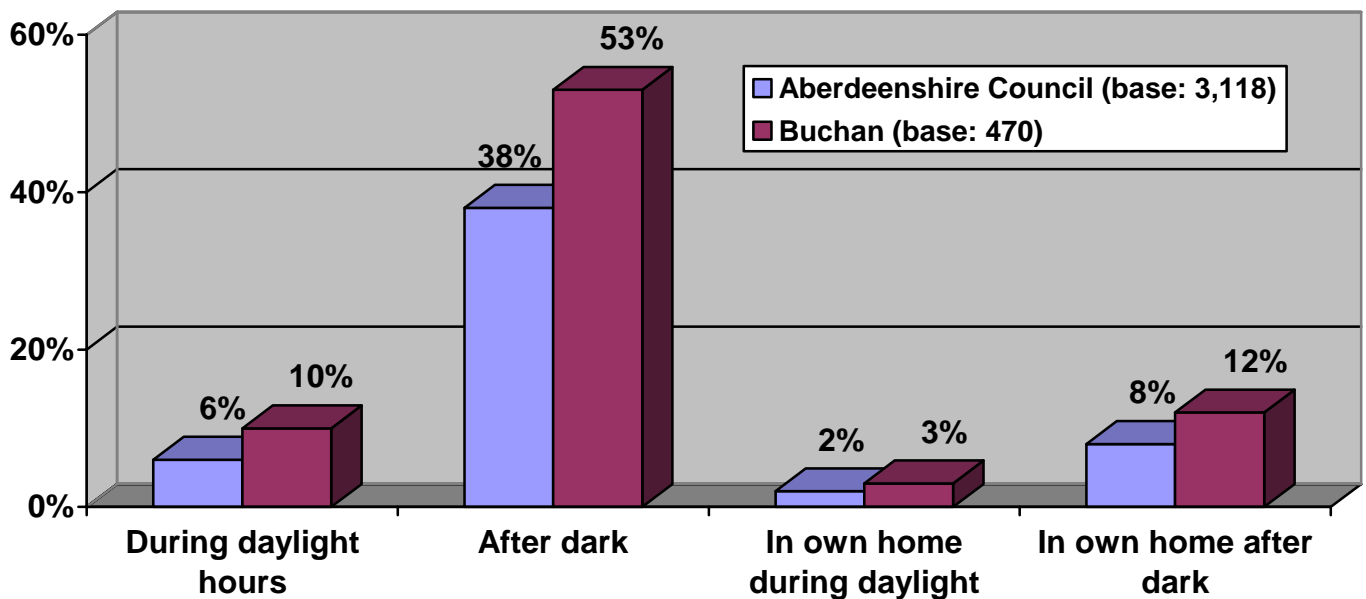


There does appear to be a generally less positive response in Buchan in comparison to the Council as a whole when the related concepts of community spirit and vibrancy are considered, and also with regard to selected facilities. There is, however, a less strongly held belief that there is a lack of affordable housing in Buchan when compared to the rest of Aberdeenshire.

4.5 A further issue investigated under the “communities” theme was personal safety. As can be seen from Figure 4.3, there is a considerably higher proportion of residents in Buchan who feel unsafe to some extent in a range of scenarios, with 53% of respondents feeling unsafe after dark in Buchan compared to 38% for the entire Council.

Figure 4.4: Personal Safety

% feeling either a bit or very unsafe

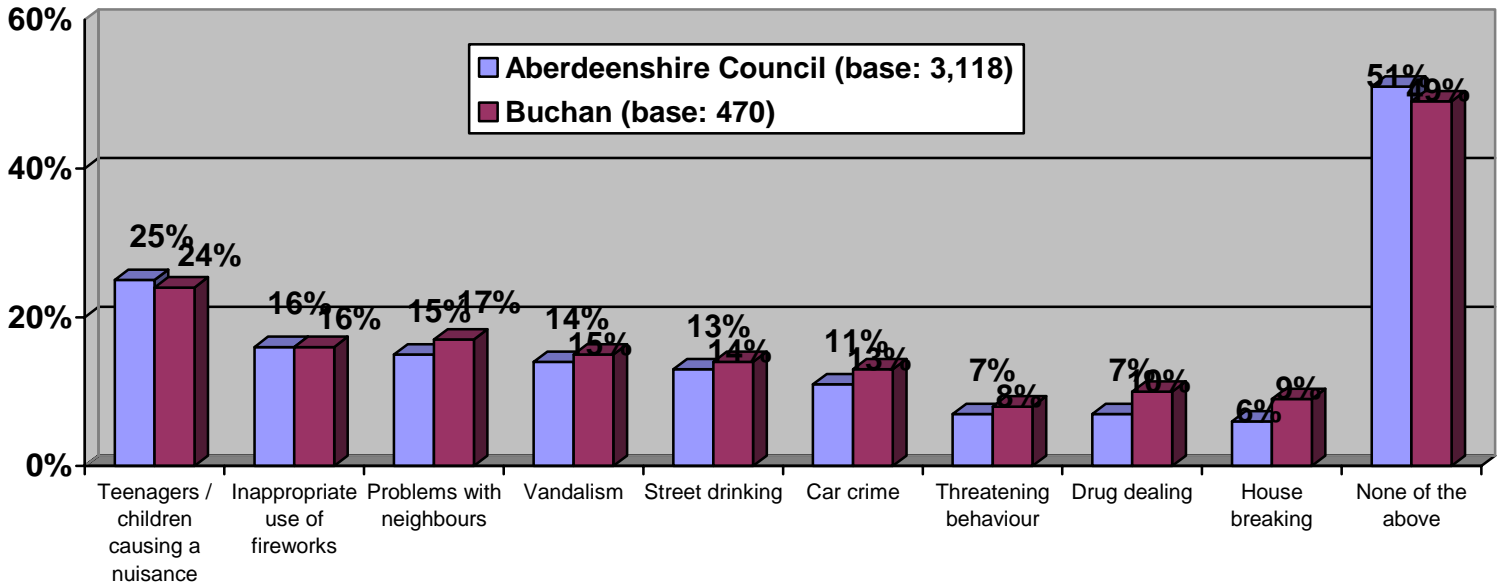


Amongst the groups of people in Buchan who were most likely to feel unsafe after dark were the following:

- Those aged 55-64 (61%).
- Females (58%).
- Those living in a town or village (52%).

4.6 Figure 4.5 below summarises the extent to which respondents had been a victim of various aspects of anti-social behaviour: Experience of these forms of behaviour is slightly higher in Buchan.

Figure 4.5: Experience of Anti-Social Behaviour



Other items (assault, harassment, domestic abuse) were reported by a small minority of people.

Clearly, much of people's actual experience of anti-social behaviour is of the low-level, albeit persistent, kind.

POPULATION

- 4.7 Table 4.1 outlines the movement of population within the Buchan area in the last 20 years.

Table 4.1: Population Movement

	Less than 1 year	Between 1 and 5 years	Between 6 and 10 years	Between 11 and 20 years	More than 20 years
Current home (base: 461)	2%	25%	18%	29%	27%
Current town or village (base: 434)	1%	13%	12%	22%	52%
Buchan (base: 430)	1%	7%	7%	17%	69%
Aberdeenshire (base: 474)	1%	6%	5%	14%	74%

- 4.8 This table indicates that there has been a considerable movement within Aberdeenshire and Buchan in the past 5 years, with one quarter of respondents having moved home. There has also been a reasonably high level of inward migration to Buchan, representing 7% of all respondents. Of those to move into Buchan, 40% have been non-Scottish Europeans.
- 4.9 Age is also a factor in the movement of population, with 48% of respondents under 45 having moved in the last 5 years, compared to only 17% of those aged over 45.
- 4.10 As a consequence of using the electoral register for invitations to take part in the survey, care must be taken when considering those who have moved within the past year, as an unknown number of people within Buchan will have moved since the register was last updated.

4.11 Table 4.2 gauges the level of access that respondents had to retail, leisure and public services and where they accessed these services.

Table 4.2: Access to Services

	Your Town or Local Village	Peterhead	Fraserburgh	Somewhere else in Aberdeenshire	Aberdeen City	Somewhere outwith Aberdeenshire	Online
Main grocery shop	9%	68%	15%	2%	4%	0%	2%
'Top-up' grocery shop	43%	47%	4%	4%	2%	0%	0%
Large items like furniture, white goods	3%	30%	6%	9%	45%	1%	3%
Books, CDs, DVDs	2%	41%	5%	4%	23%	2%	15%
Using sports / leisure facilities	9%	45%	4%	6%	10%	1%	0%
Going to a doctor	49%	41%	2%	7%	0%	0%	0%
Going to a dentist	16%	52%	11%	9%	4%	1%	0%
Going to a library	34%	43%	4%	4%	1%	0%	0%
Taking part in a club / society or other interest	28%	40%	3%	7%	2%	0%	0%
Going to work	11%	25%	5%	8%	10%	1%	0%

N.B. Balance of responses occurred where respondent gave no reply

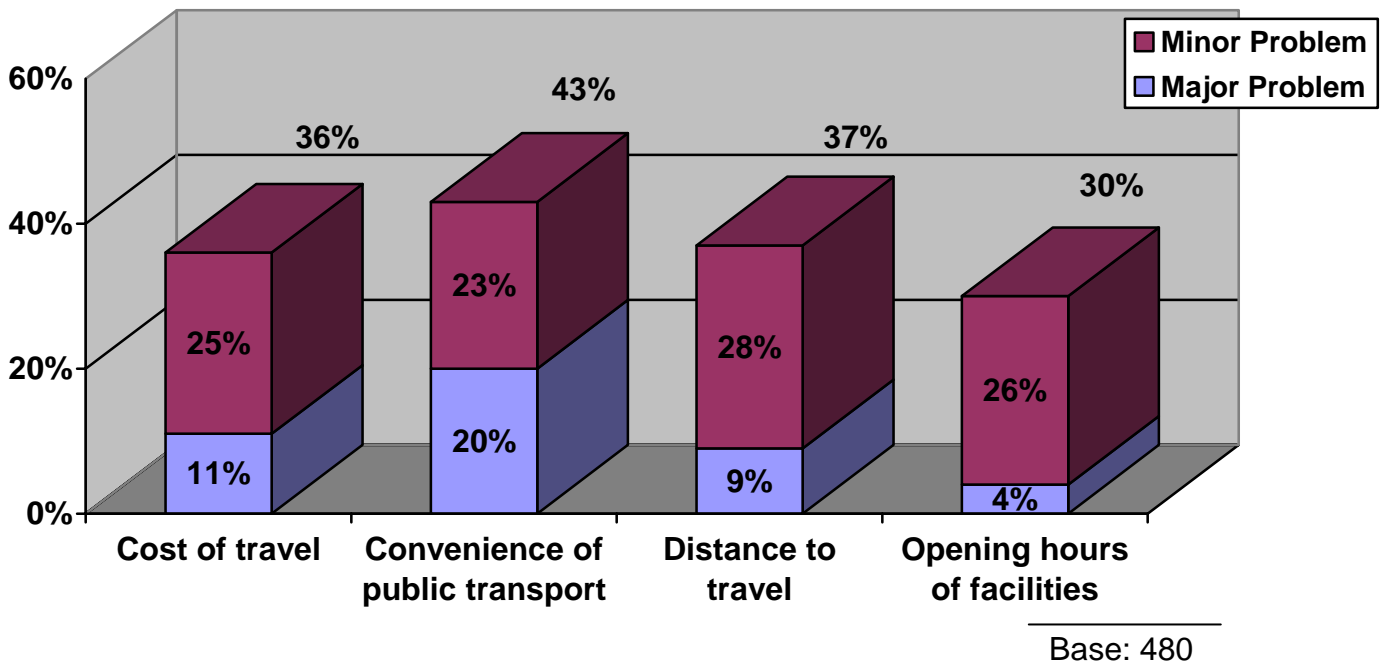
The majority of money spent on groceries is spent in Buchan, whether locally or in Peterhead and Fraserburgh. For large “big ticket” items, there is significant “leakage” to elsewhere in Aberdeenshire and, in particular, to Aberdeen City.

4.13 Although there are a notable proportion of respondents (15%) who use the internet for their purchases of Books, CDs and DVDs, there is little evidence of widespread use of the internet for retail purposes.

4.14 For leisure activities, access to public services and employment, the majority of respondents stay within Buchan to do so, particularly for health services like the dentist and doctor.

4.15 Respondents were then asked to identify whether certain factors affected their ability to access these opportunities, and this is detailed below in Figure 4.6.

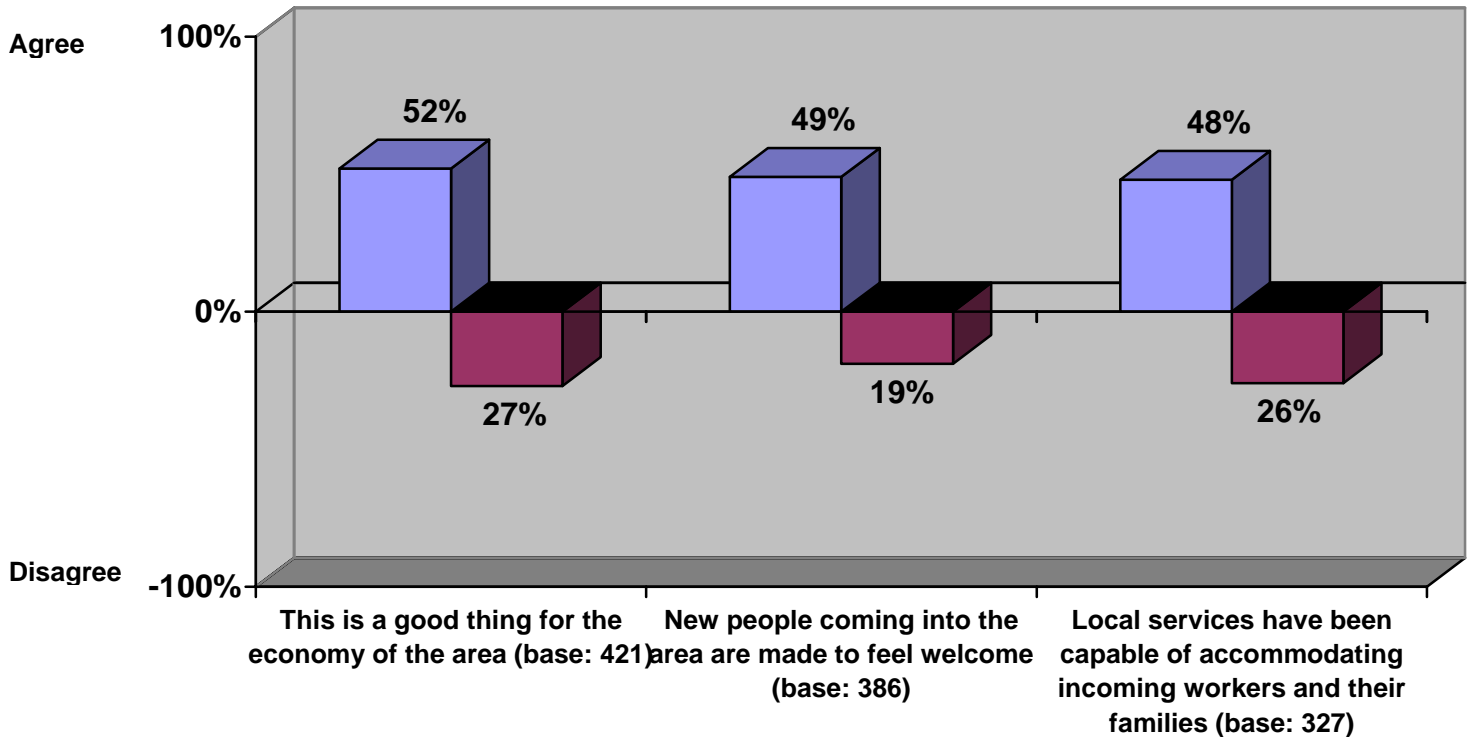
Figure 4.6: Barriers to Accessing Services



Clearly, there are significant minorities of residents who experience barriers to their opportunities due to their location and the ability of public transport to get them to their destination. With regard to convenient public transport, this problem is more pronounced in rural areas, with 59% believing it to be a minor or major problem, compared to 41% of urban residents.

4.16 In the survey insert, residents were asked for their opinions on new workers moving into the Buchan area to take employment in local industries, and the extent to which they agreed with certain statements, the outcome of which can be seen in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7: Agreement With Attitudinal Statements



N.B. balance is "don't know" responses

In general, it is encouraging that a clear majority of residents view the issue of incoming workers in a positive light. However, younger respondents are less likely to agree with these statements while still being in overall agreement.

Summary of Key Points

Buchan residents feel the Council does as good a job of making towns and villages attractive compared to other Aberdeenshire residents.

There is a concern, however, about the extent to which the Council is perceived to be taking account of the impact of its planning decisions on local facilities and services, although to a lesser extent in Buchan.

Summary of Key Points (continued)

Affordable housing is seen as an important issue and residents are willing to countenance house building in a variety of places although there is less resistance to large-scale house building outwith existing settlements. It is noted that residents in Buchan are less likely to feel there is a shortage of affordable housing.

Community spirit and vibrancy in Buchan is rated notably higher in Buchan when compared to the rest of the Council area.

However, people continue to rate the availability of community facilities poorly, particularly in Buchan.

There are higher levels of perceived danger when respondents' personal safety is concerned when they are outside after dark in Buchan. However, most people's actual experience of anti-social behaviour is of the low-level, albeit persistent, kind, with Buchan residents more likely to claim to have been the victim of anti-social behaviour than the average for the Council as a whole.

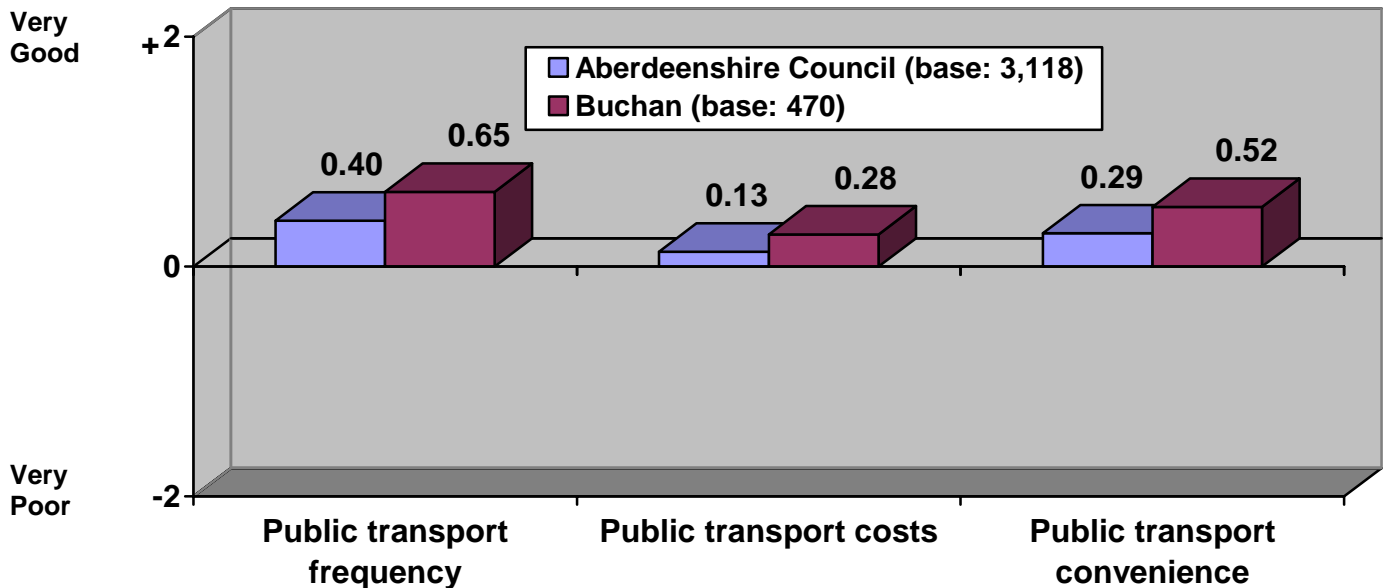
There has been a substantial movement of population within Buchan in the past 5 years, as well as an inward migration of 7% from ouwith the area.

Grocery shopping tends to be done locally, but "big ticket" items such as white goods see some leakage to the rest of Aberdeenshire and in particular to Aberdeen City. Public services and leisure facilities are, in general, accessed locally, as are employment opportunities. However, a significant minority have difficulty in accessing these services and opportunities due to a number of factors.

5.0 TRANSPORT AND ROAD SAFETY

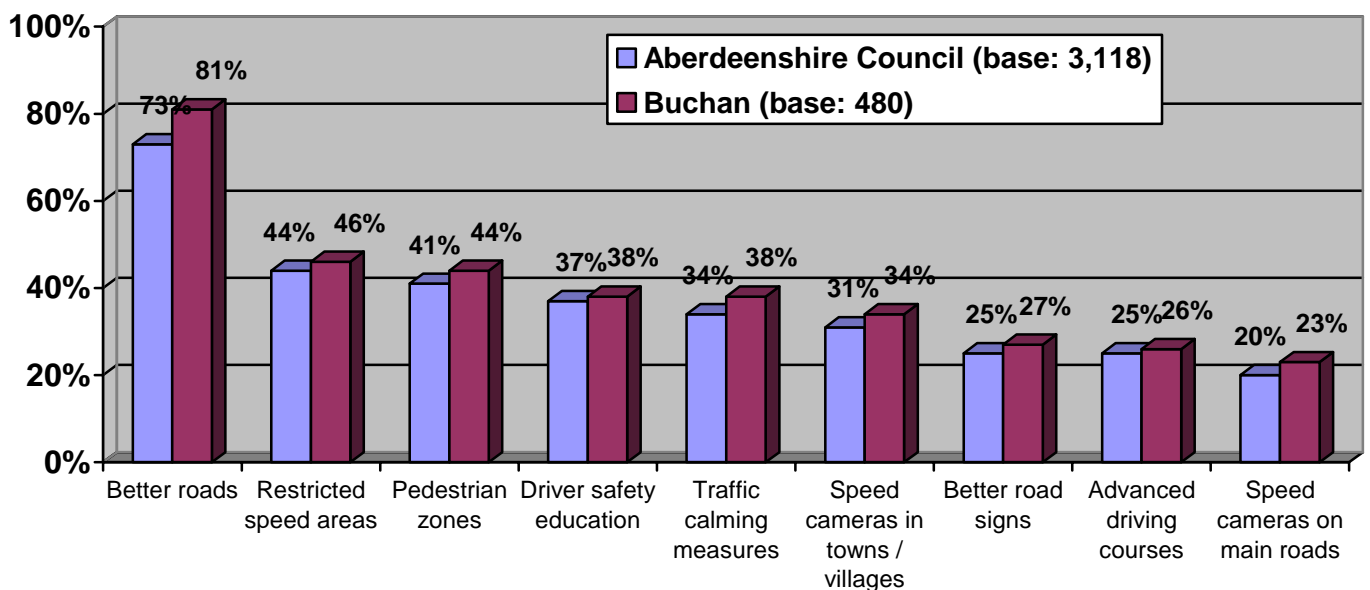
5.1 As illustrated in Figure 5.1 below, respondents in Buchan generally rate the questioned aspects of public transport more highly than Aberdeenshire residents as a whole.

Figure 5.1: Public Transport



5.2 The 2006 survey explored a range of issues around the theme of the safety measures that citizens would like to see within Aberdeenshire. The results of this are set out in Figure 5.2 below:

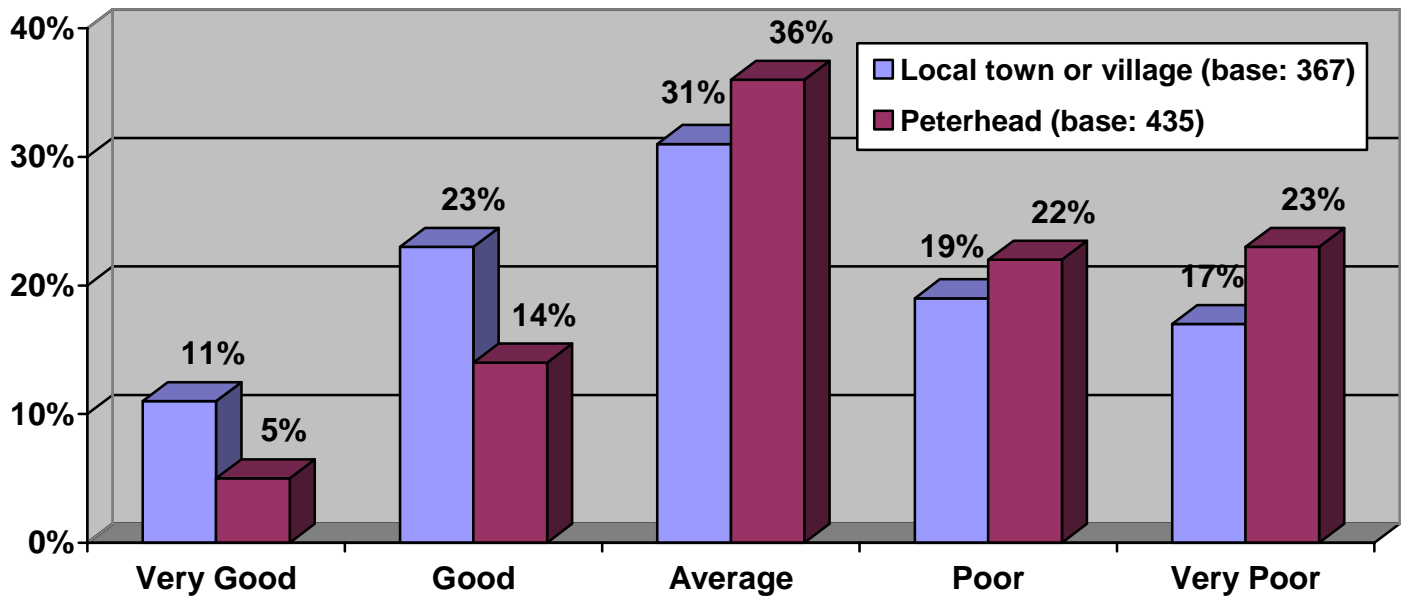
Figure 5.2: Preferred Road Safety Measures



Clearly, there is little difference between Buchan residents and residents in the rest of the Aberdeenshire Council area, with the exception of the need for better roads.

5.3 In the insert questionnaire for Buchan residents, opinions on the adequacy of parking in certain areas were sought, the results of which are detailed below in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3: Rating of Car Parking Facilities



Generally lukewarm views on parking are evident, particularly regarding parking in Peterhead.

5.4 Less than half of respondents nominated any of the other elements (although it is worth noting that they were not asked to agree or disagree with the options, simply to state those that they would like to see).

Given this, quite a number of people would like to see measures such as:

- Restricted speed areas
- Pedestrian zones
- Driver safety education
- Traffic calming measures
- Speed cameras *within towns and villages.*

There is, however, less apparent demand for improved road signage, more advanced driving courses and speed cameras *on main roads*.

Summary of Key Points

Perception of the quality of public transport is higher in Buchan when compared to the rest of Aberdeenshire.

There is a strong desire for road improvements within Buchan, though at a slightly higher level than that of the whole Council.

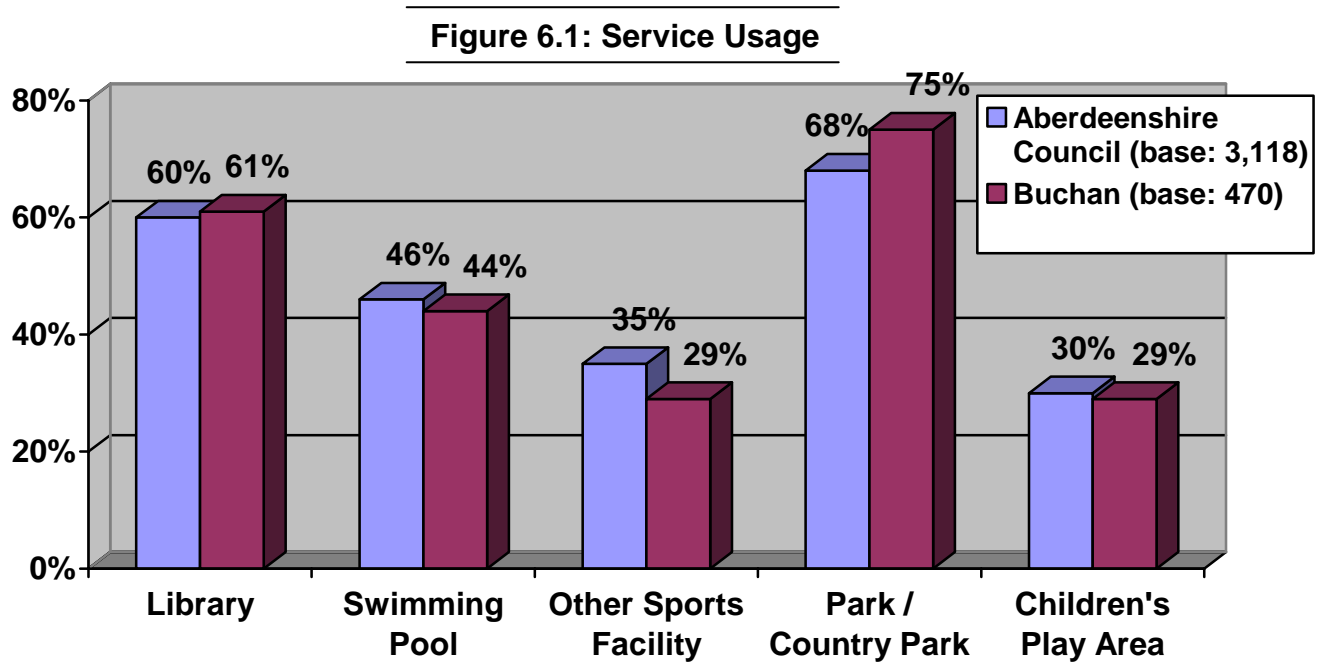
Some desire is evident for safety measures such as more restricted speed areas, pedestrian zones, driver safety education and traffic calming measures.

There is also some desire for speed cameras within towns and villages (but less demand for such speed cameras on main roads).

6.0 SATISFACTION WITH KEY SERVICES

SATISFACTION RATINGS

6.1 Figure 6.1 profiles usage of a range of Council facilities. The figures represent the aggregate figure of those who use the service either regularly or occasionally.



With the exception of libraries and parks, respondents from Buchan are less likely to use these services, but clearly, such facilities continue to play an important part of individuals' lives within their communities.

SERVICE SATISFACTION

6.2 Figures 6.2(a) and (b) profile the trend in relation to levels of satisfaction with a range of specific Council services.

Figure 6.2(a): Services You Use – Specific Services

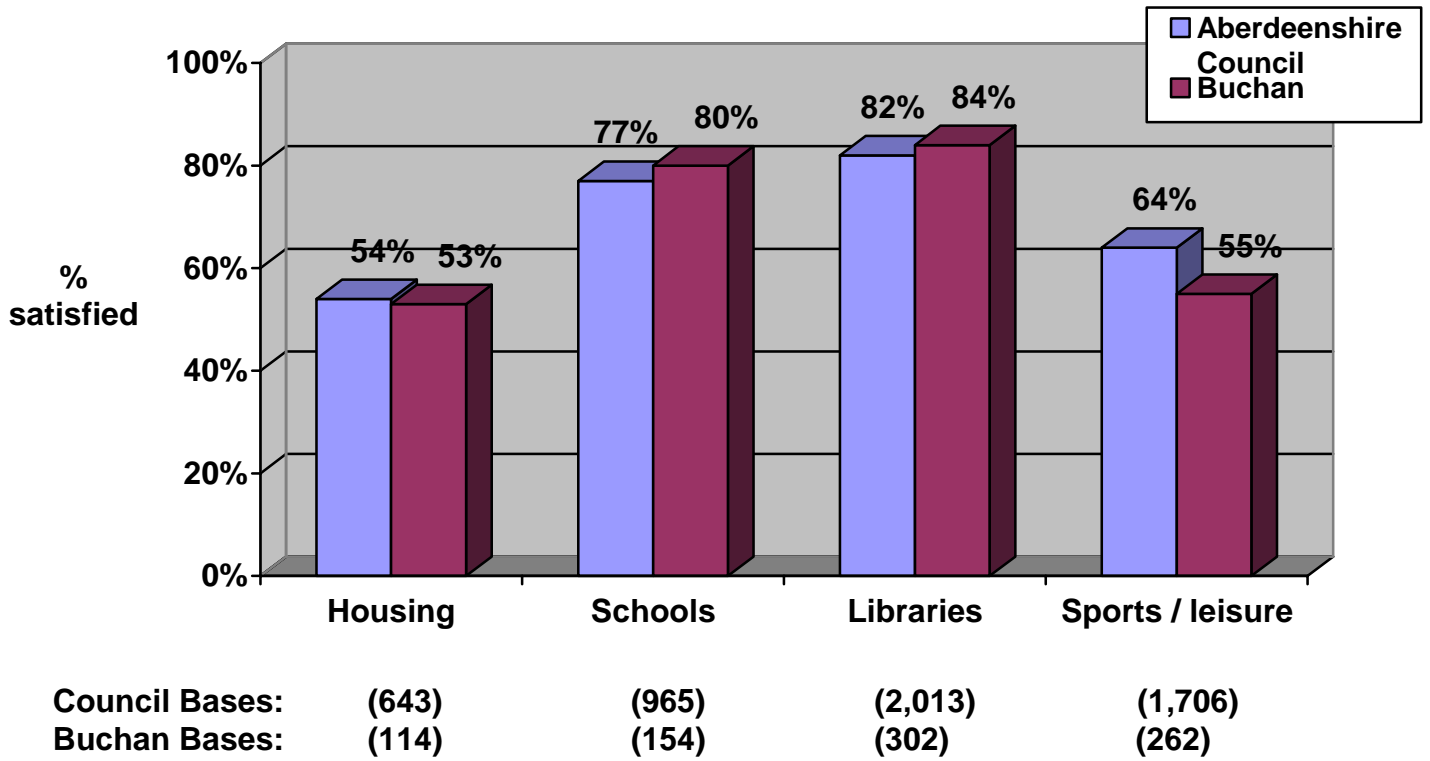
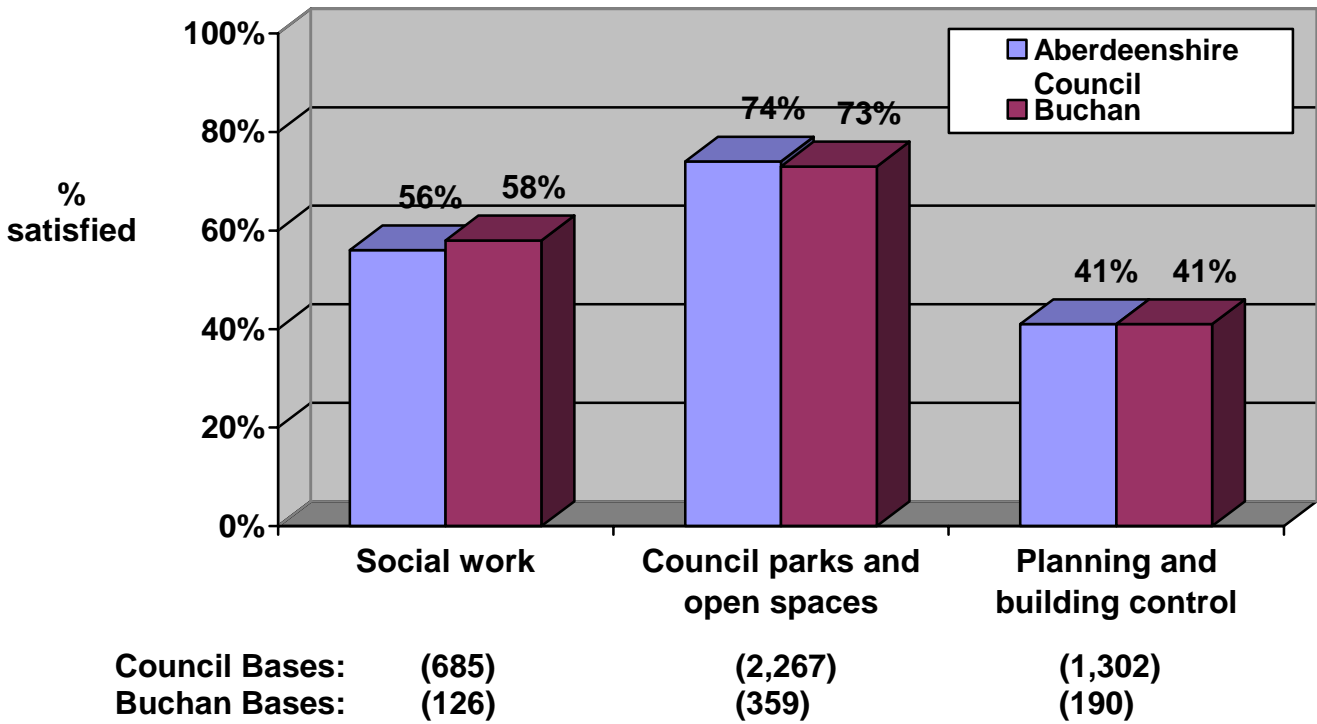


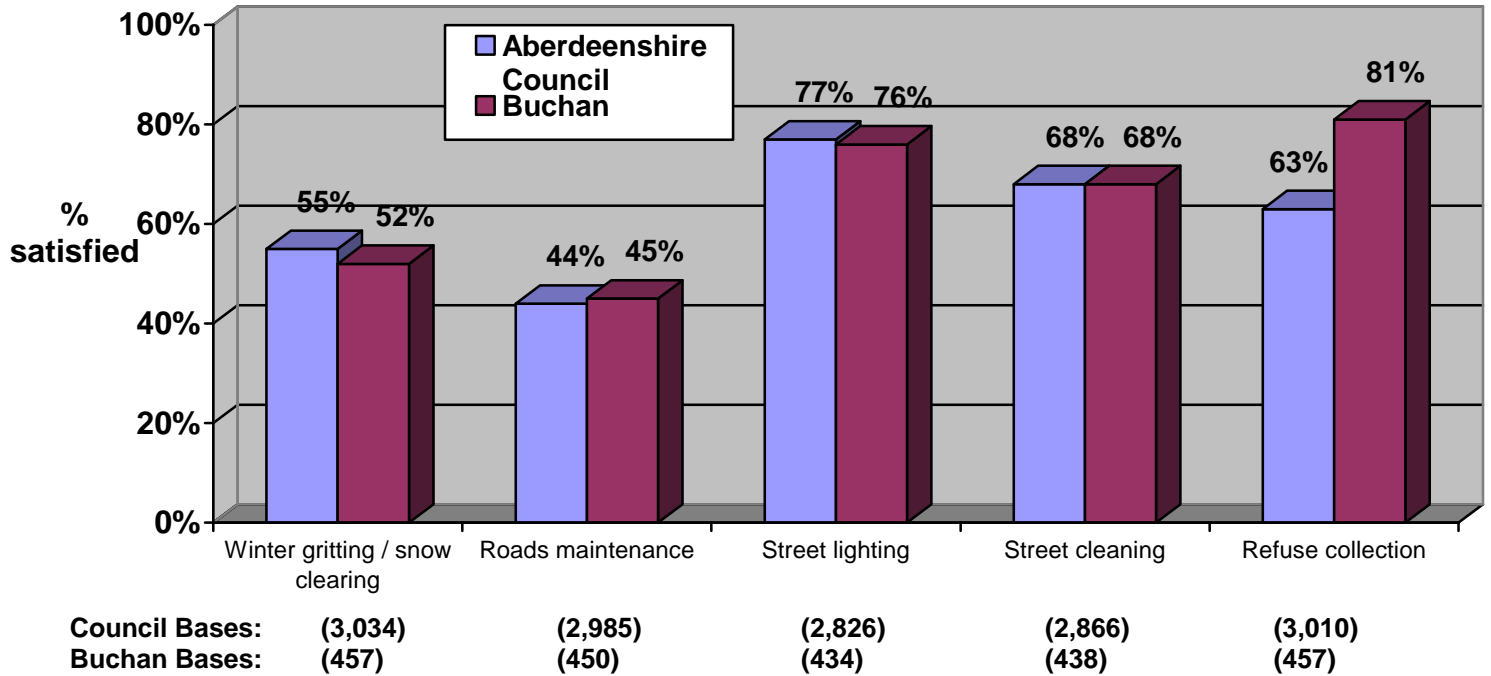
Figure 6.2(b): Services You Use – Specific Services



These results are generally positive in Buchan in comparison with Aberdeenshire with the exception of sports and leisure facilities; Buchan respondents are significantly less satisfied than respondents from the rest of Aberdeenshire.

6.3 In Figure 6.3, ratings for universal services that are used by all residents are shown.

Figure 6.3: Services Everybody Uses – Universal Services



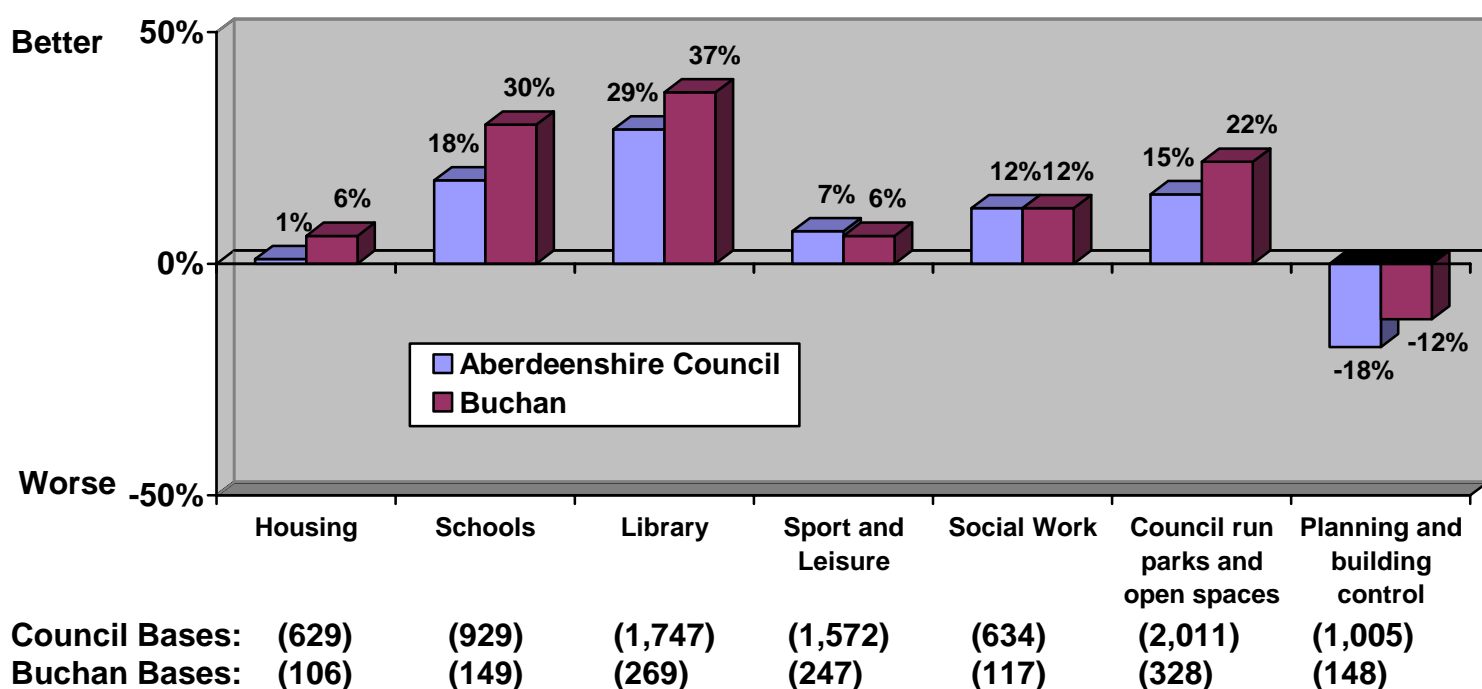
With regard to services that are used by all residents, those in Marr are generally likely to be similarly satisfied compared to Aberdeenshire Council as a whole, with the exception being that of refuse collection, where a new collection regime has not yet been established.

PERCEIVED CHANGES

6.4 The survey also asked people to comment on whether they perceived services to have got better or worse over the past three or four years. This is a robust method of measuring changes in perceptions of services, as it does not rely on the sampling methodology for previous years being identical. The calculations are based on the proportion of respondents who believe services have improved, less the proportion of respondents who believe they have got worse.

6.5 Results for a number of specific services are summarised below.

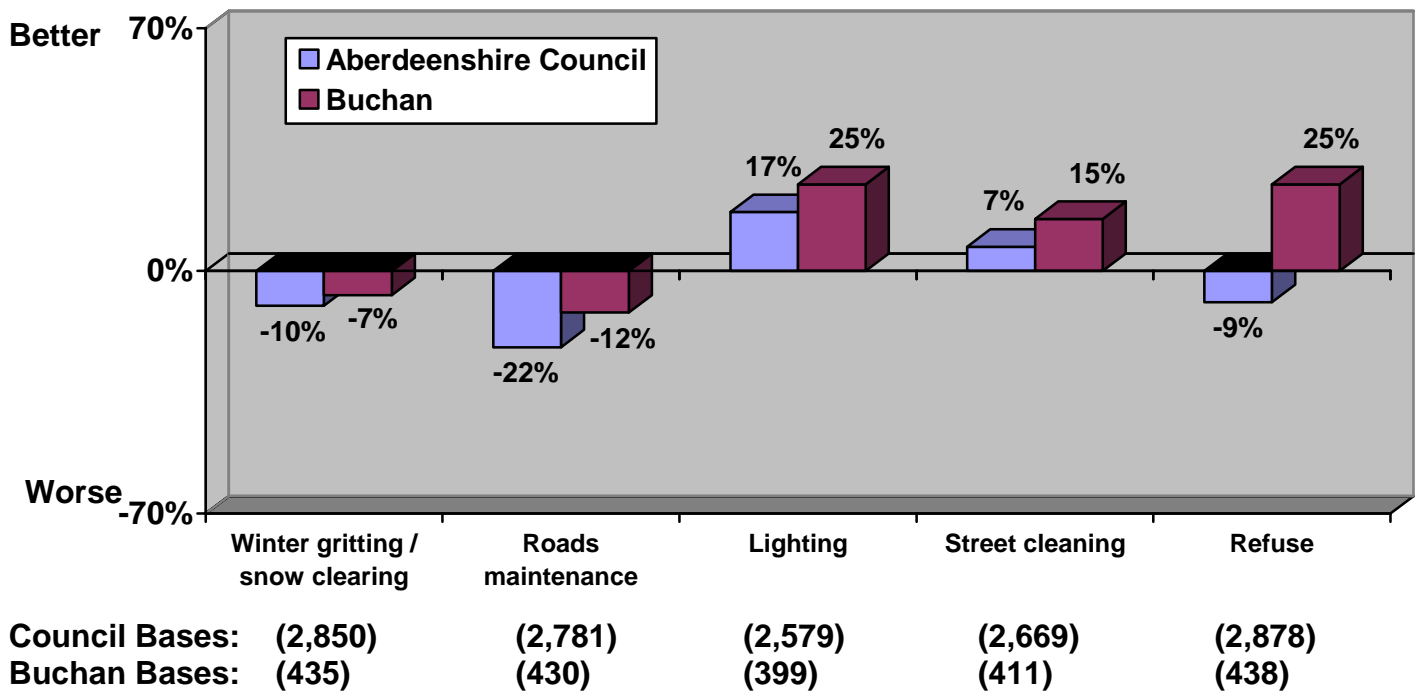
Figure 6.6: Pattern Data in Relation to Specific Services



Improvement has been perceived in all areas with the exception of planning. As can be seen, the extent of improvement varies when compared to the Council area as a whole, with Buchan residents perceiving particular improvements in schools and libraries.

6.6 A similar analysis for a number of “universal services” is set out below.

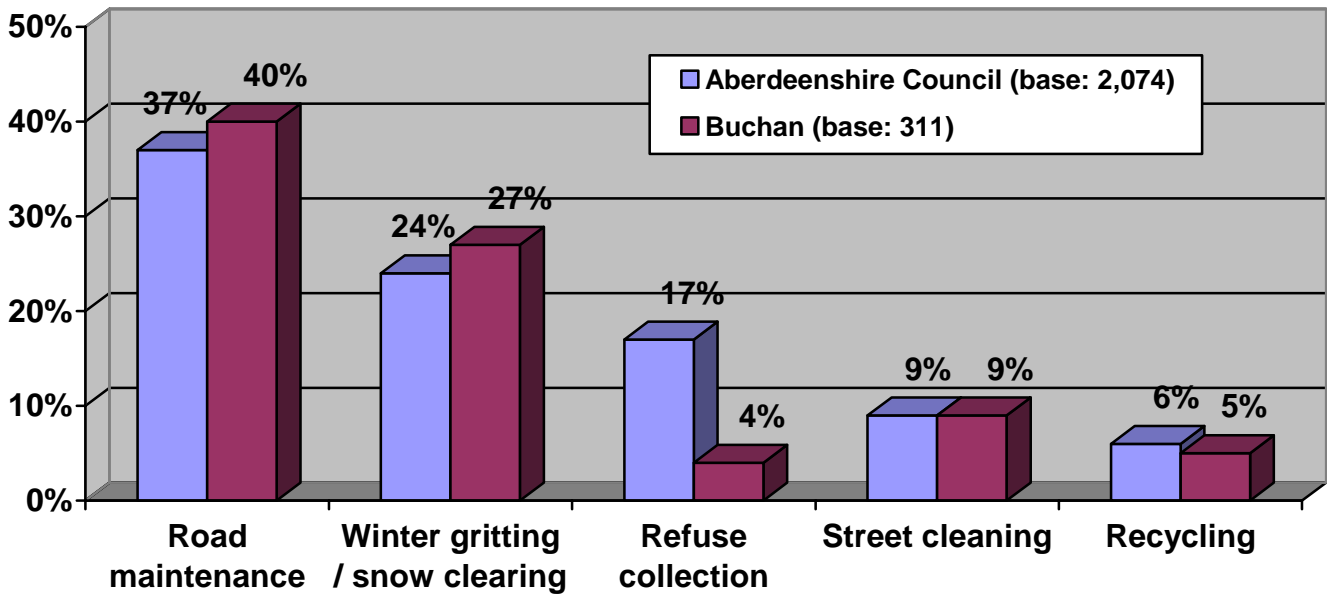
Figure 6.7: Pattern Data on Perceived Changes to Universal Services



The patterns of perceived changes is most notably different in the area of refuse collection, while the perception of a worsening in road maintenance is less pronounced in Buchan. As noted previously, the new refuse collection arrangement is the most likely explanation for the differential between Buchan and the whole Council sample.

6.7 Respondents were asked to say on which services they felt the Council should have spent more money on in the past year. The selected services are the 5 most cited services by all survey respondents.

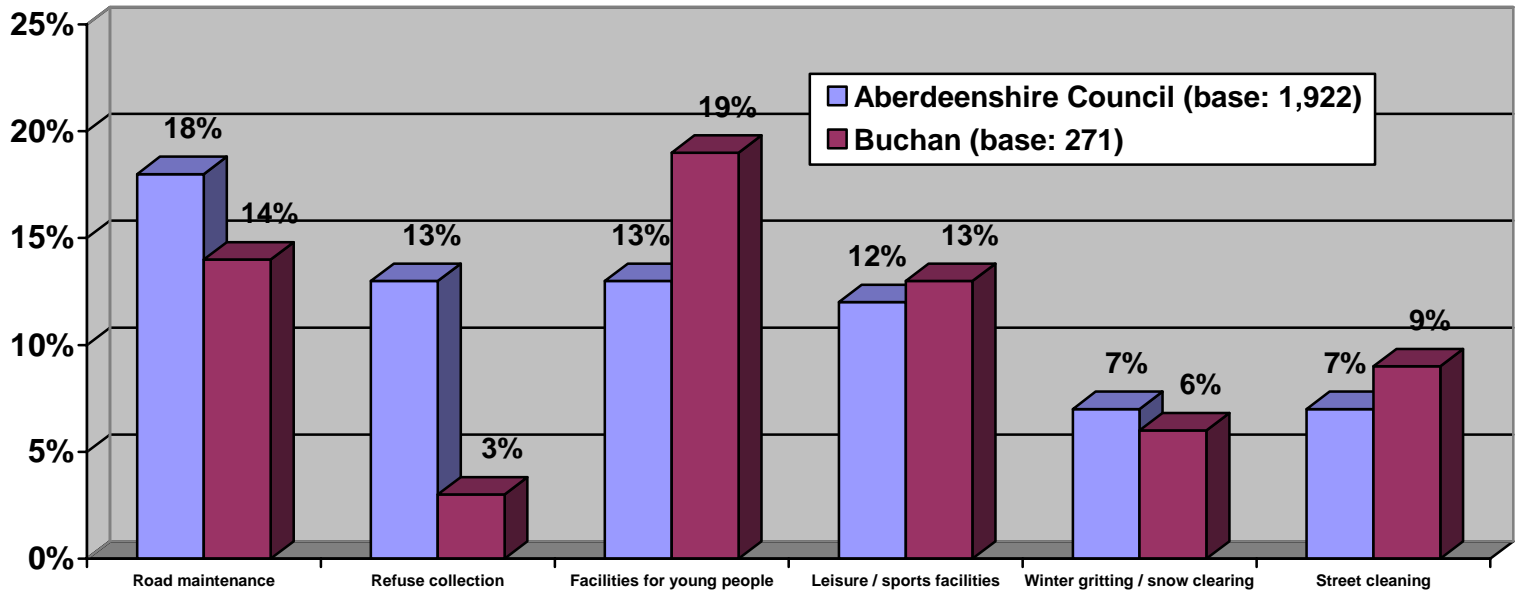
Figure 6.8: On which services should the Council have spent more money last year?



There are some variations between where Buchan residents and Aberdeenshire residents as a whole felt more money should have been spent last year, notably: refuse collection (fewer respondents in Buchan) and winter gritting / snow clearing and road maintenance (more respondents in Buchan).

6.8 The same is true to some degree of suggestions for which services the Council should give priority.

Figure 6.9: What facilities or services should be given priority?



Clearly, Buchan residents have facilities for young people as priorities for attention.

Summary of Key Points

For those Council services that citizens elect to use, satisfaction ratings from Buchan are generally slightly higher than those for Aberdeenshire as a whole, though the rating for sport and leisure facilities is notably lower.

With regard to a range of “universal services”, Buchan residents rate these services very similar to the main sample of residents, with the exception of refuse collection.

The level of perceived improvement in services is, in the main, much higher in Buchan.

Buchan residents would prioritise road maintenance and facilities for young people.

7.0 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

7.1 Respondents were asked a number of questions around the themes of Corporate Social Responsibility. The results of this are illustrated in Figures 7.1(a) and (b) below:

Figure 7.1(a): Measures of Council as Socially Responsible Organisation

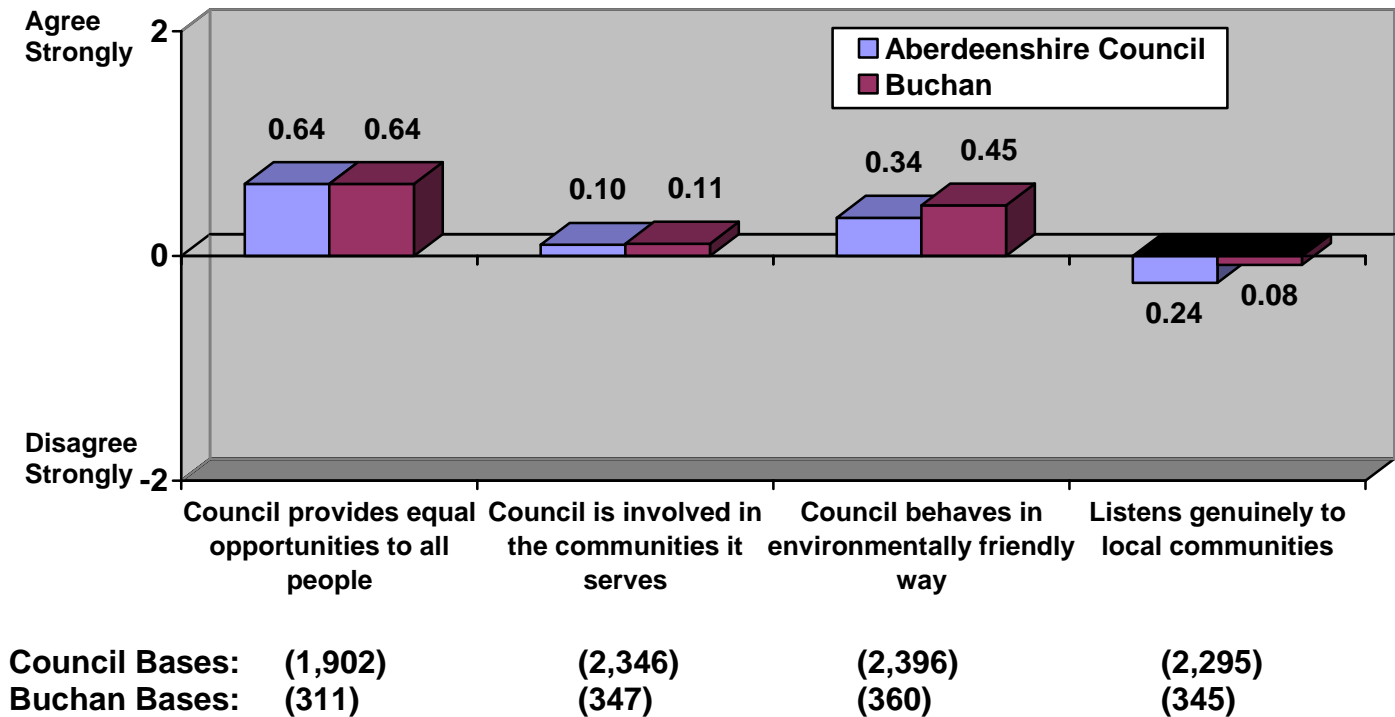
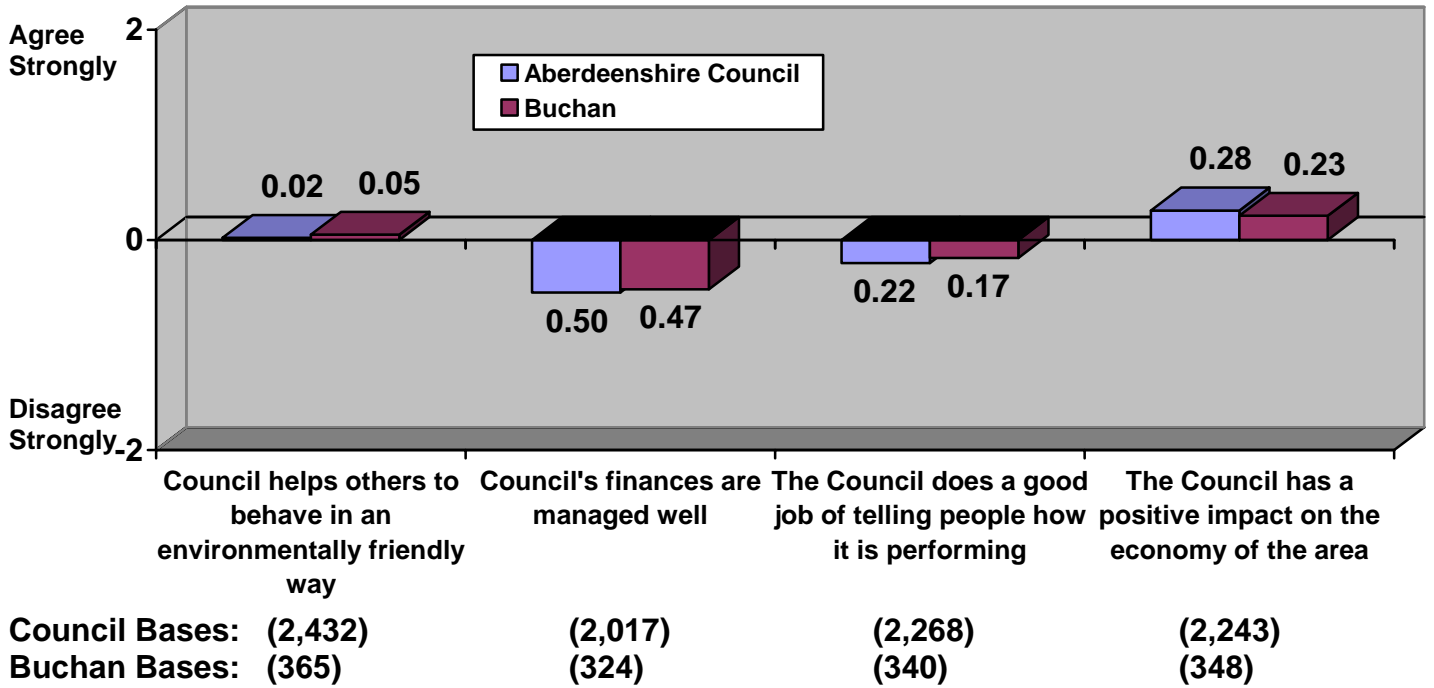


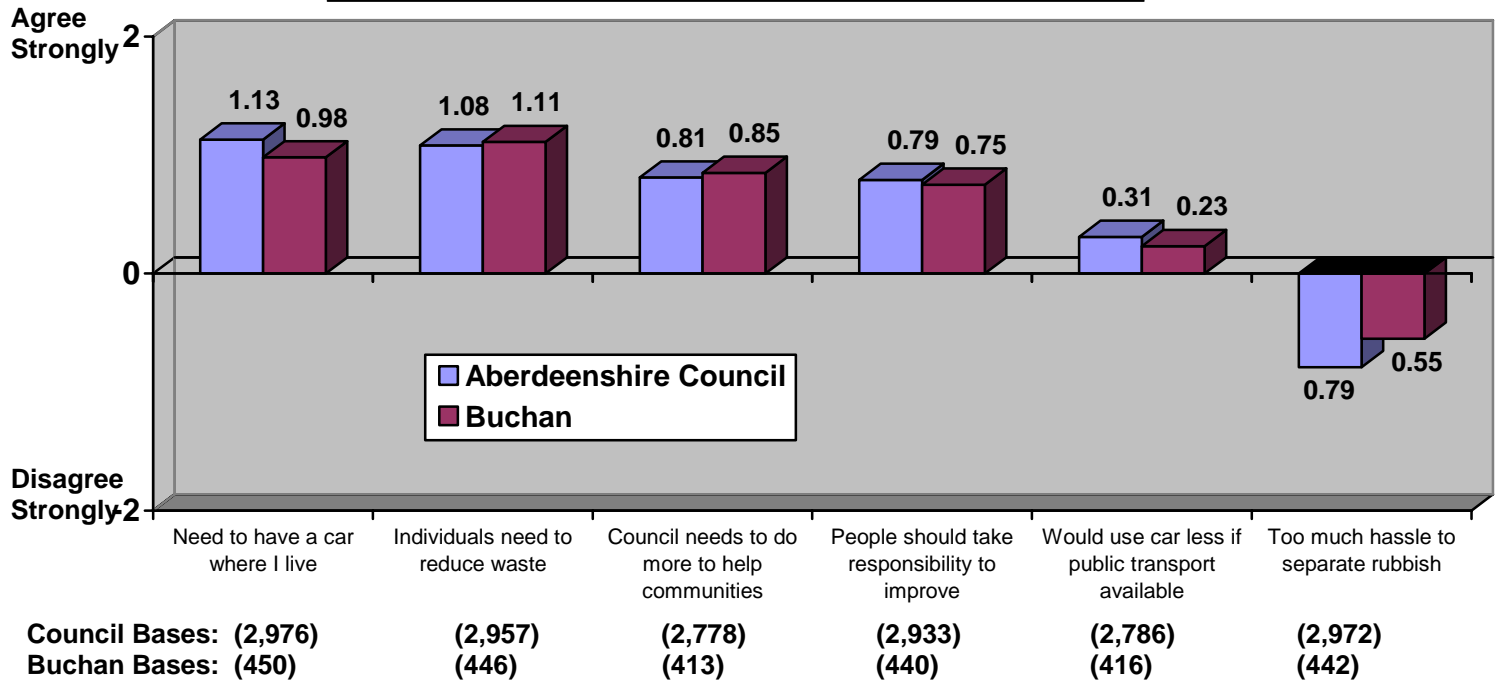
Figure 7.1(b): Measures of Council as Socially Responsible Organisation



7.2 The levels of agreement amongst Buchan residents are, in general, slightly higher when compared to those for all survey respondents.

7.3 A further element of the social responsibility section related to public attitudes. Responses to a series of attitudinal statements are laid out in Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.2: Social Responsibility – Public Attitudes



Attitudes towards personal social responsibility are broadly similar in Marr in comparison to the whole of Aberdeenshire, although there are some variations worthy of note:

- More Buchan residents agree that separating rubbish out is too much hassle
- Buchan residents believe more strongly that the Council needs to do more to help communities and less strongly that individuals should take more responsibility to improve their communities
- Residents in Buchan agree to a lesser extent that it is necessary to have a car, which may owe to the greater urban character of the area.

Summary of Key Points

Buchan residents' views to those in the rest of Aberdeenshire with regard to their attitudes towards to the Council as a socially responsible organisation are generally more positive.

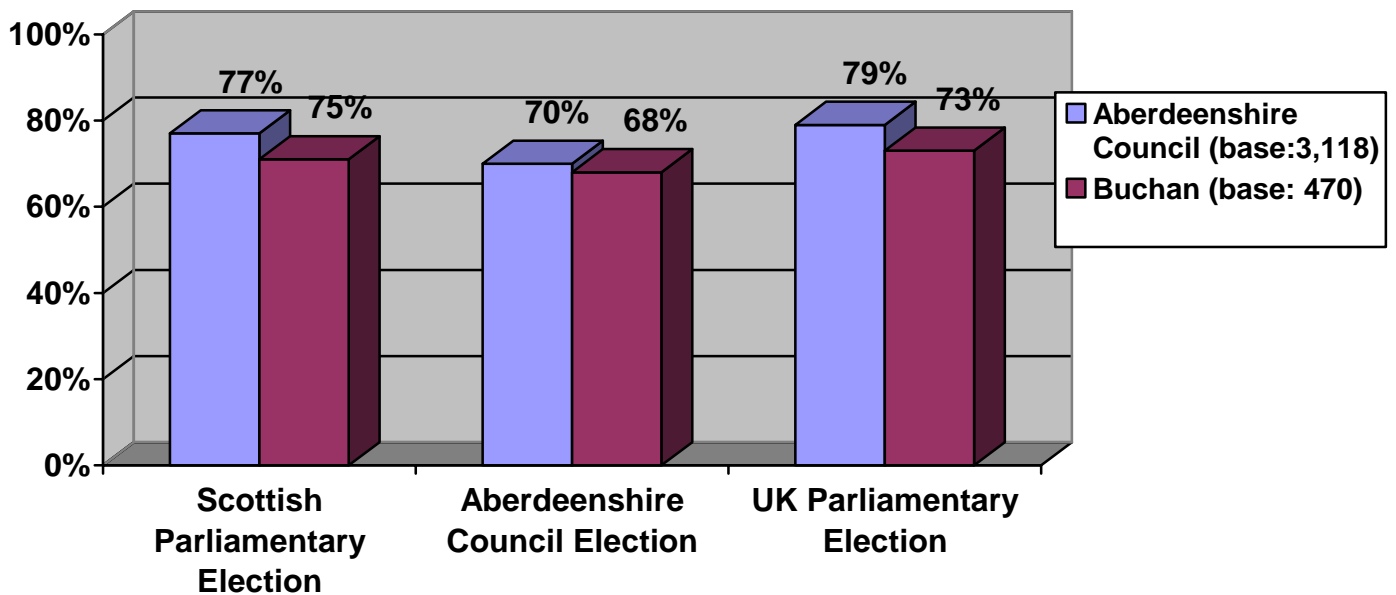
That the Council should be doing more to help communities is a more prevalent view in Buchan, whilst fewer residents feel that individuals should do more to improve their communities.

8.0 COUNCIL DECISION MAKING, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

8.1 A further strand of the research related to people's attitudes to Council decision making, consultation and communications.

8.2 Figure 8.1(a) provides data as to whether people voted in the last round of a number of elections

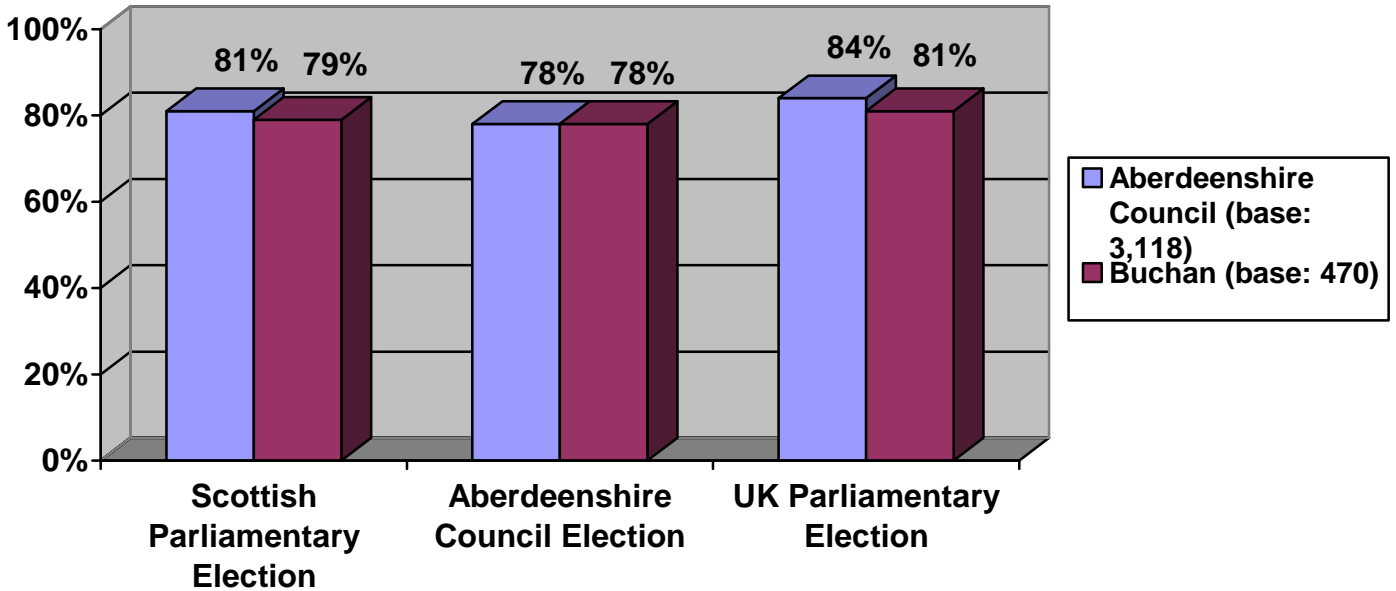
Figure 8.1 (a): Voted in Last Elections



Clearly, a high proportion of the survey samples claim to have voted in these elections, although to a lesser extent in Buchan for all of these elections.

Figure 8.1 (b) below provides information as to whether they intend to vote in these elections in the future.

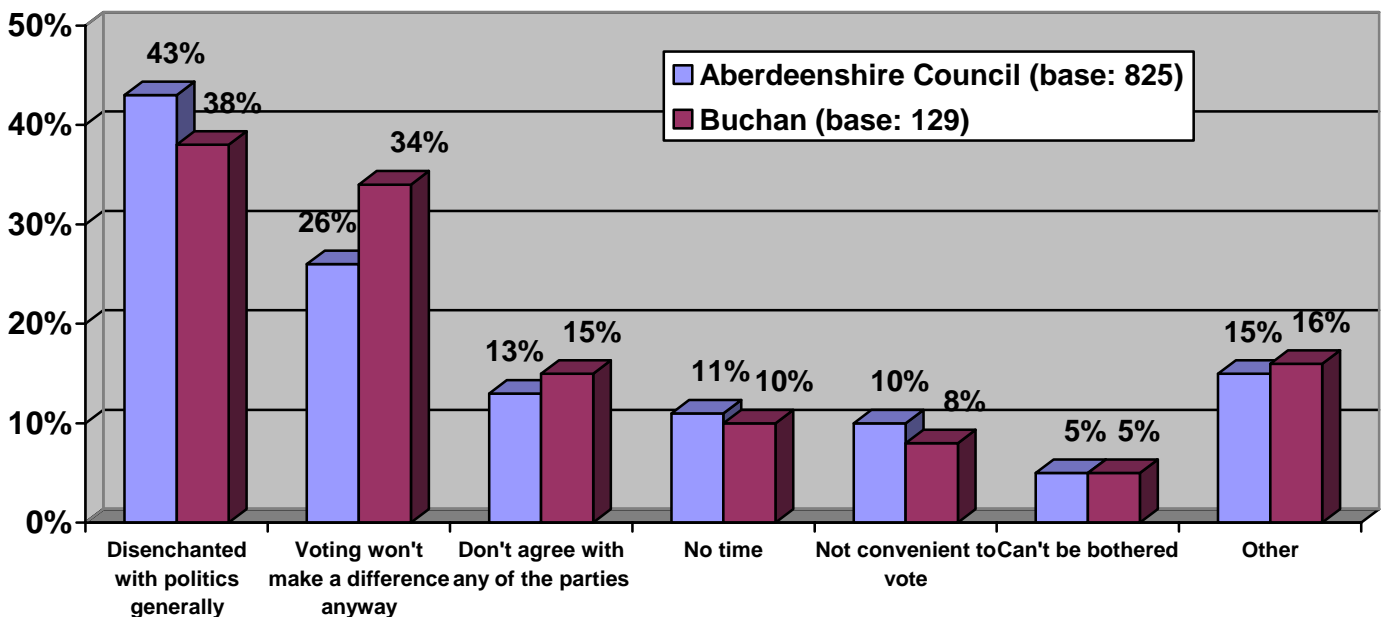
Figure 8.1 (b): Intend to Vote in Next Elections



These figures correlate closely to those who voted on previous occasions, with more Buchan residents intending to vote in these elections next time.

8.3 The main reasons why people say that they would not vote are detailed below:

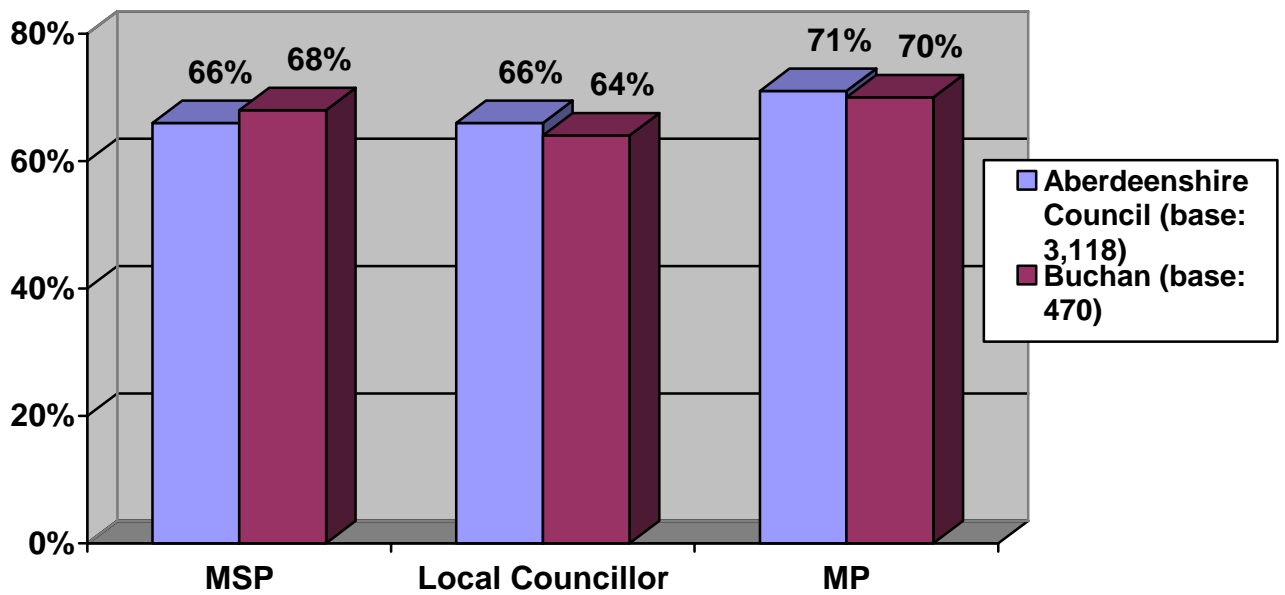
Figure 8.2: Reasons for Not Voting



Marr voters who have not voted in at least one of the named elections are less likely not to have done so due general disenchantment, but rather out of a feeling that voting will not make a difference when compared to Aberdeenshire as a whole.

8.4 Figure 8.3 summarises individuals' knowledge of local elected representatives:

Figure 8.3: Ability to name Local Elected Representatives



8.5 Whilst Aberdeenshire residents display an impressive level of awareness of local councillors (well ahead of the 43% most recently quoted by the Scottish Household Survey) the figures are less so for Buchan residents for each category of elected representative in the survey.

8.6 Attitudes in relation to a number of dimensions of Council decision making and its consultation process are set out below:

Figure 8.4 (a): Council Decision Making and Consultation

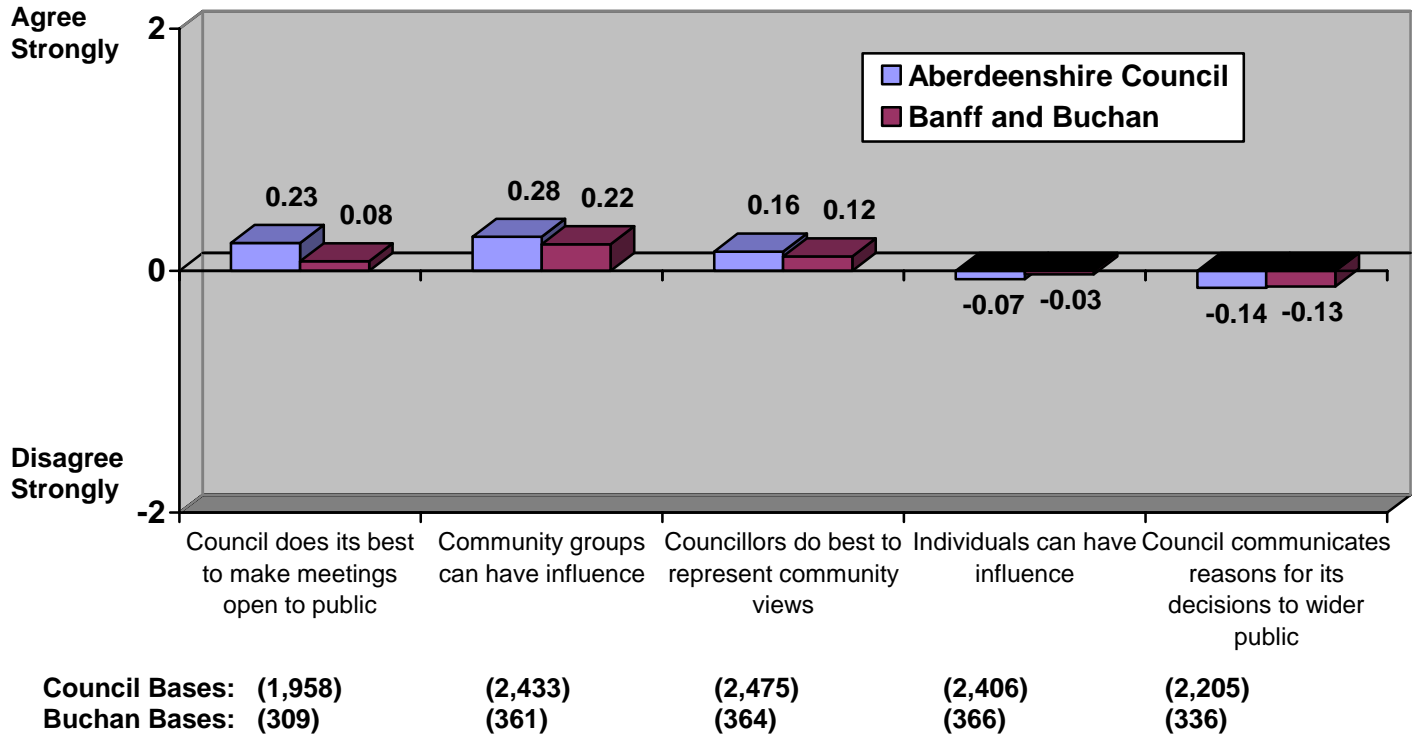
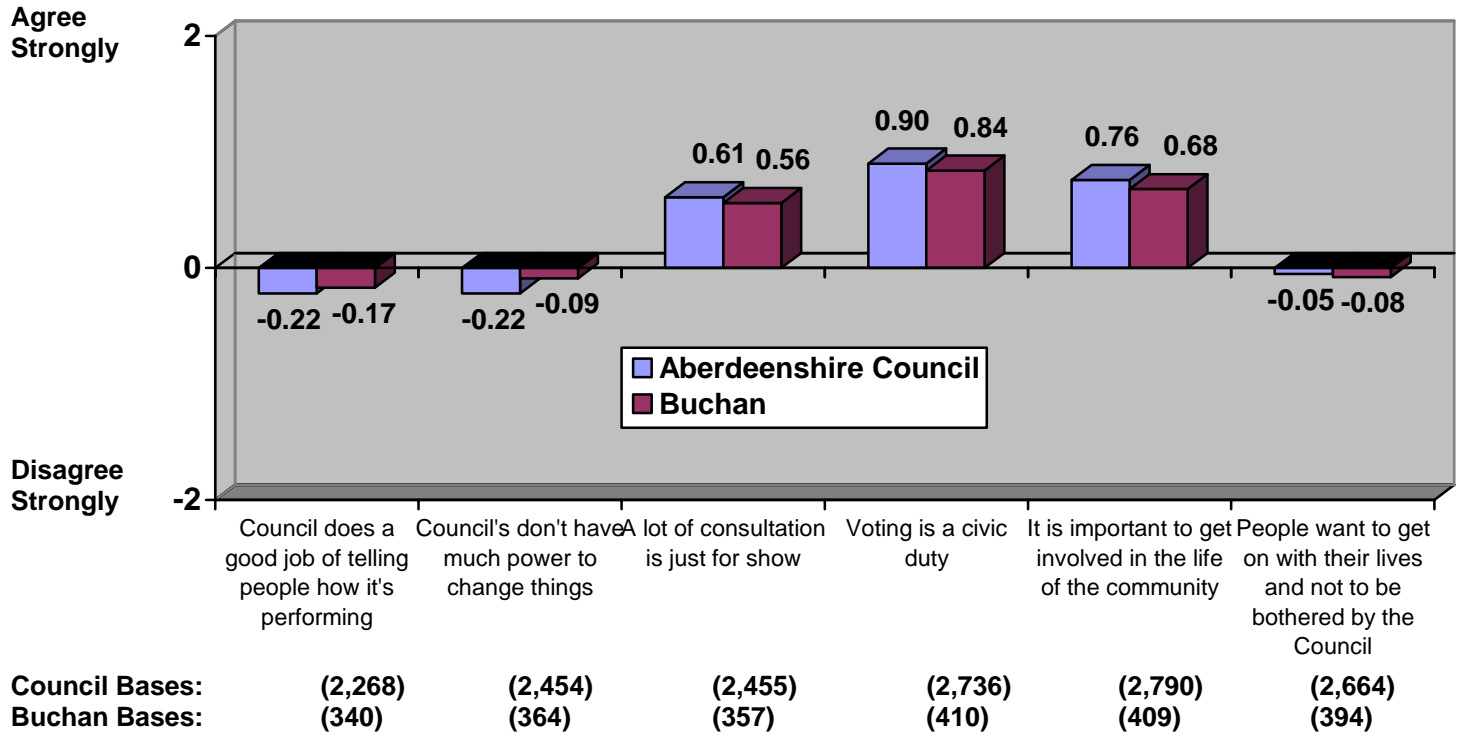


Figure 8.4(b): Council Decision Making and Consultation

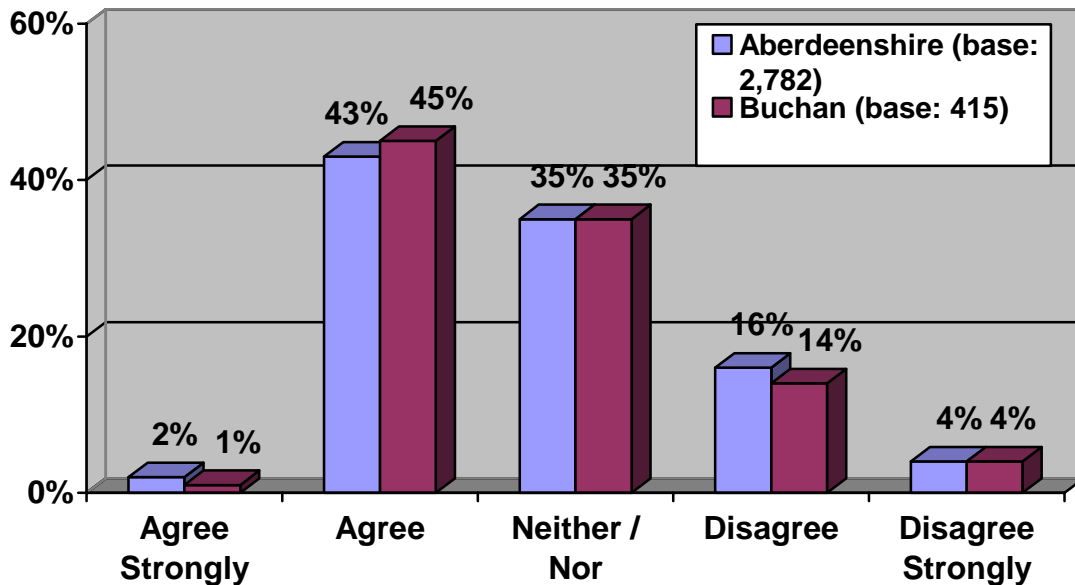


8.7 The majority of responses in Buchan are in line with the average for Aberdeenshire Council, although there are some variations worth noting:

- More Buchan respondents feel that individuals and community groups can influence the Council
- A smaller proportion of Buchan respondents feel that voting is a civic duty and that it is important to get involved in the life of the community.

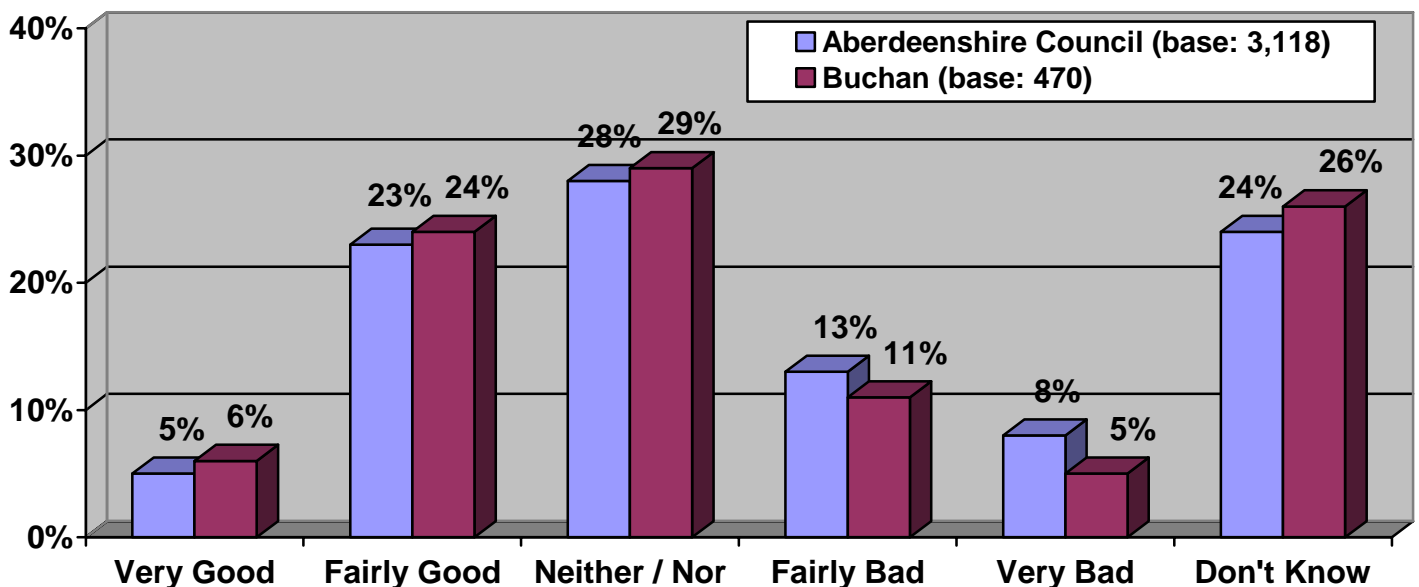
8.8 With effective communication clearly of importance to the Council, it is encouraging that only one in five respondents are not satisfied with the information provided by the Council. This figure only has very slight variation in Buchan when compared to the Council area as a whole.

Figure 8.5: “Overall, I am satisfied with the information I get on Council services”



8.9 There is also some scepticism as to the extent to which the Council will genuinely take account of people’s views (although to a slightly lesser extent than the whole Council sample), as illustrated in Figure 8.6 below.

Figure 8.6: How Good Do You Think the Council is at Taking Account of Your Views over Matters Which Concern You?



The “don’t know” response should be taken into account but, even allowing for this, a significant minority of residents are sceptical as to whether the Council will take account of their view, reflecting some of the scepticism described under the “Social Responsibility” heading.

Summary of Key Points

A large majority of survey respondents claim to have voted in the most recent parliamentary and Council elections, with slightly less claiming to have done so in Buchan.

When people have not voted it has normally been due to a general disenchantment with politics to a lesser extent in Buchan, where there exists a greater feeling of voting not making a difference.

However, a high proportion of Aberdeenshire residents are able to name their elected representatives, though slightly less so in Buchan.

Scepticism is evident with regard to individuals’ ability to influence the Council’s decision making and to have their views taken into account, though to a lesser extent in Buchan

Despite this, there are strong indications of a desire on the part of many people to take part in civic life.

While there is general satisfaction in Buchan with the information they receive from the Council, a notable minority are dissatisfied with this level of information.