

# *Can't get no Satisfaction?* *Towards a better understanding of* *Public Satisfaction*

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***A challenging environment***



## A failure to impress...

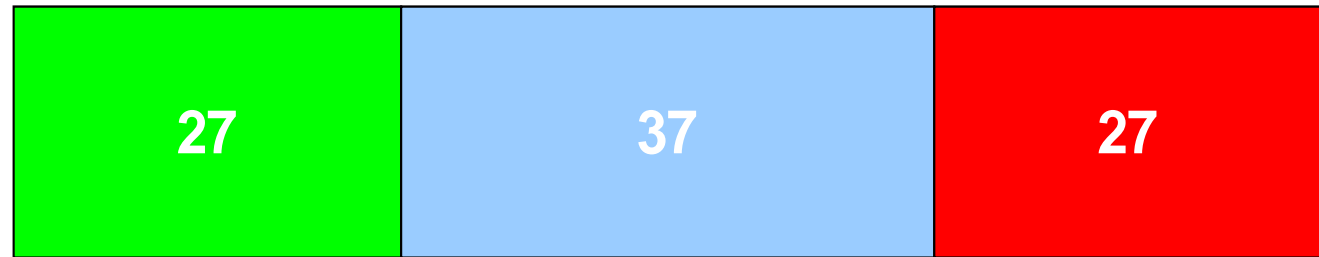
Q *When Tony Blair stands down at the of this month, do you think **public services** will be in a better state, a worse state or the same state as they were when he became Prime Minister 10 years ago?*

 % Better

 % Same

 % Worse

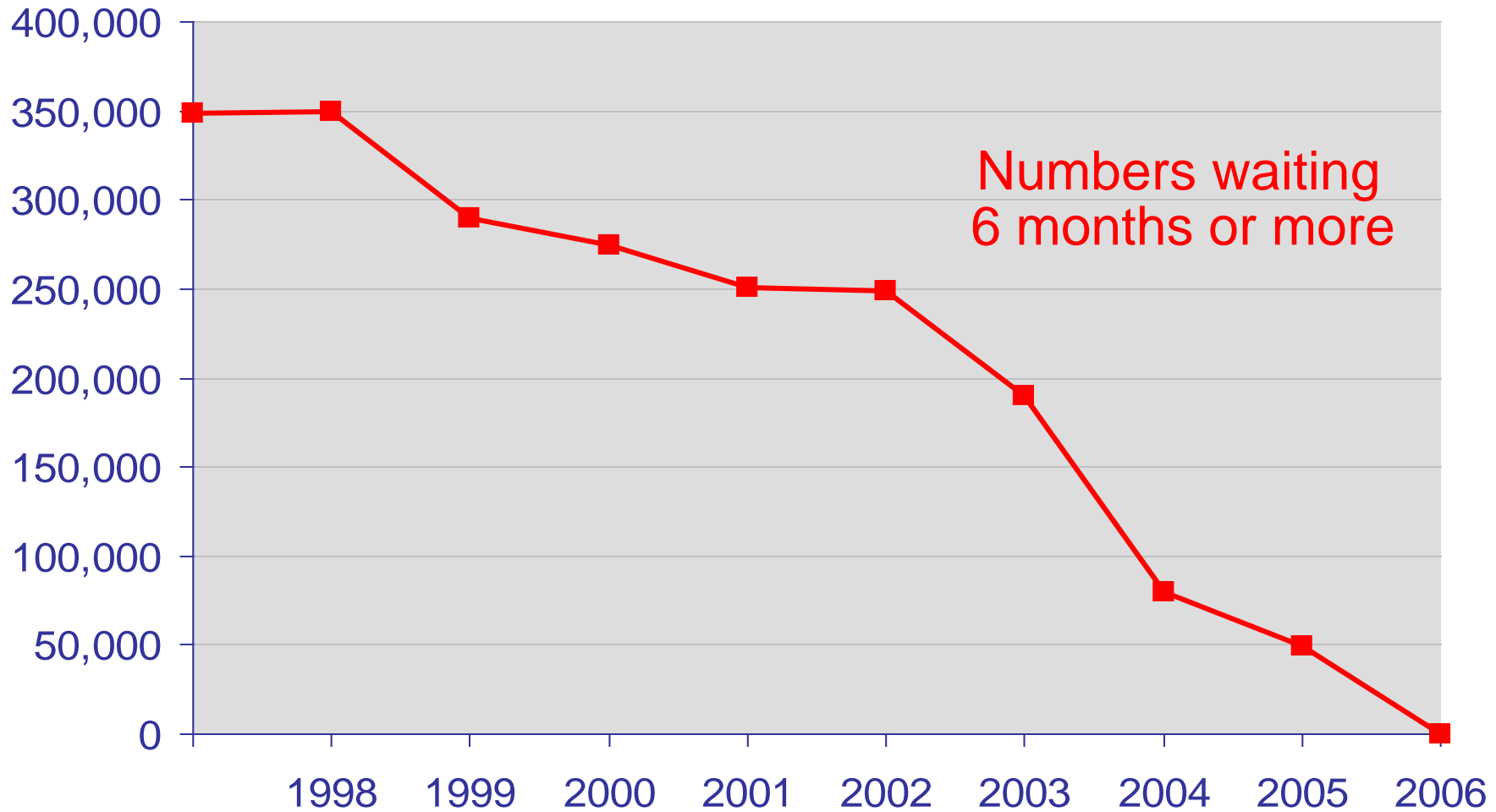
**General public**





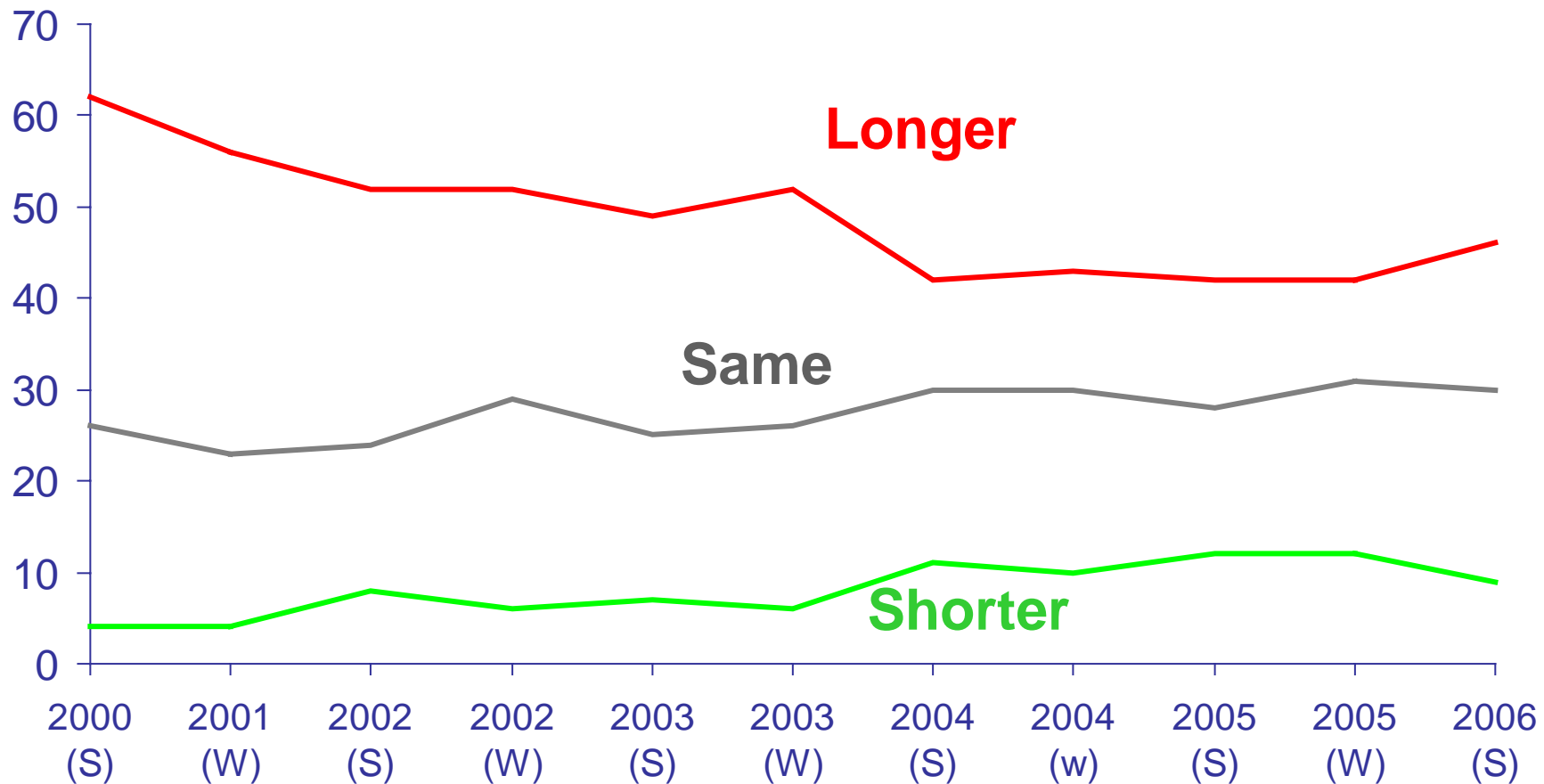
***Lies, damn lies and statistics***

# Hospital waiting times have plummeted



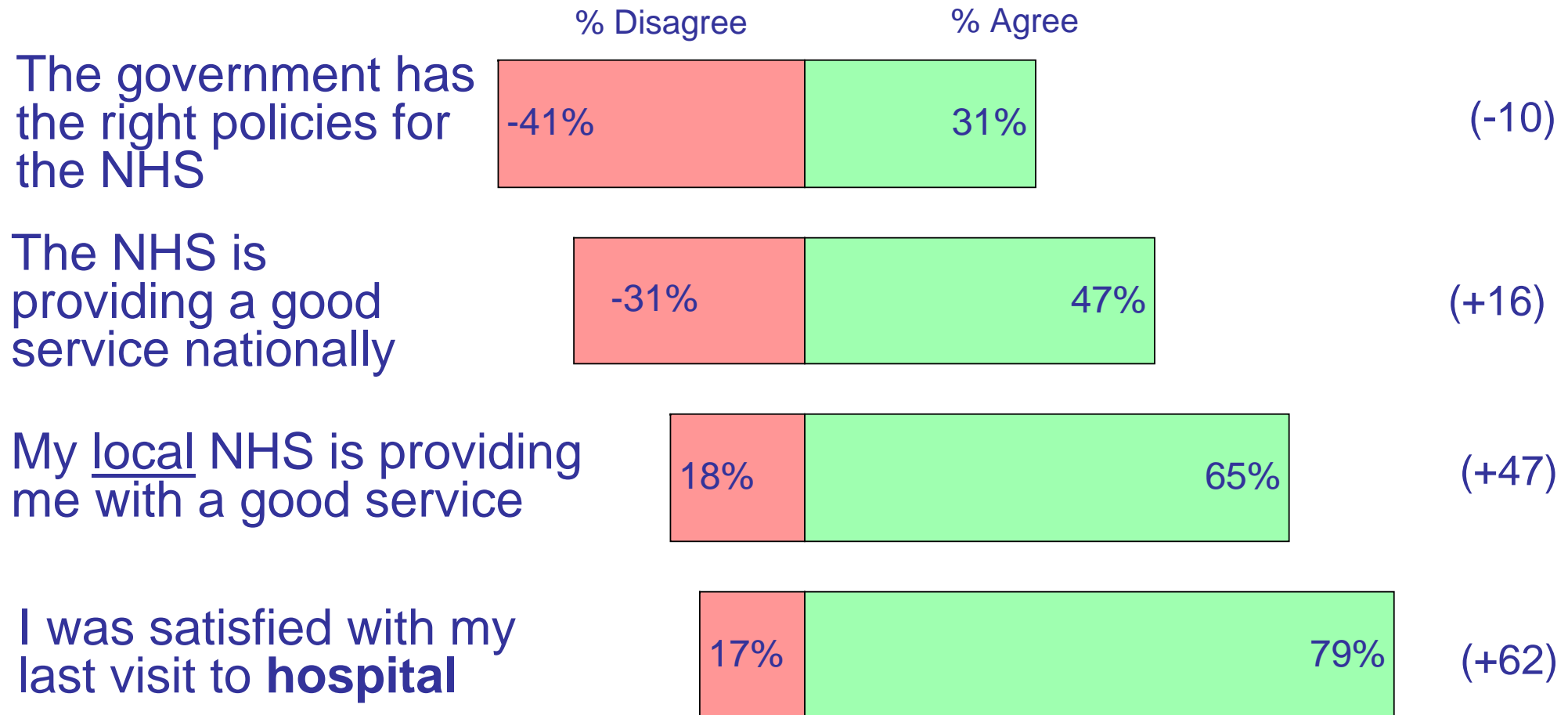
# ...but people don't believe it...

% who think waiting times are getting...



# ...despite being positive about their own experience

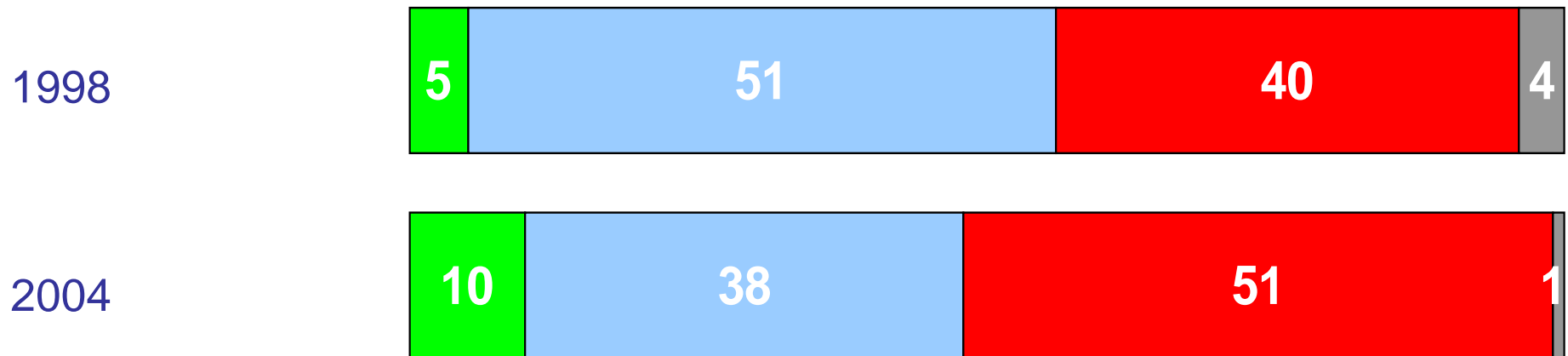
Q To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



# But generally expectations outstripping improvements?

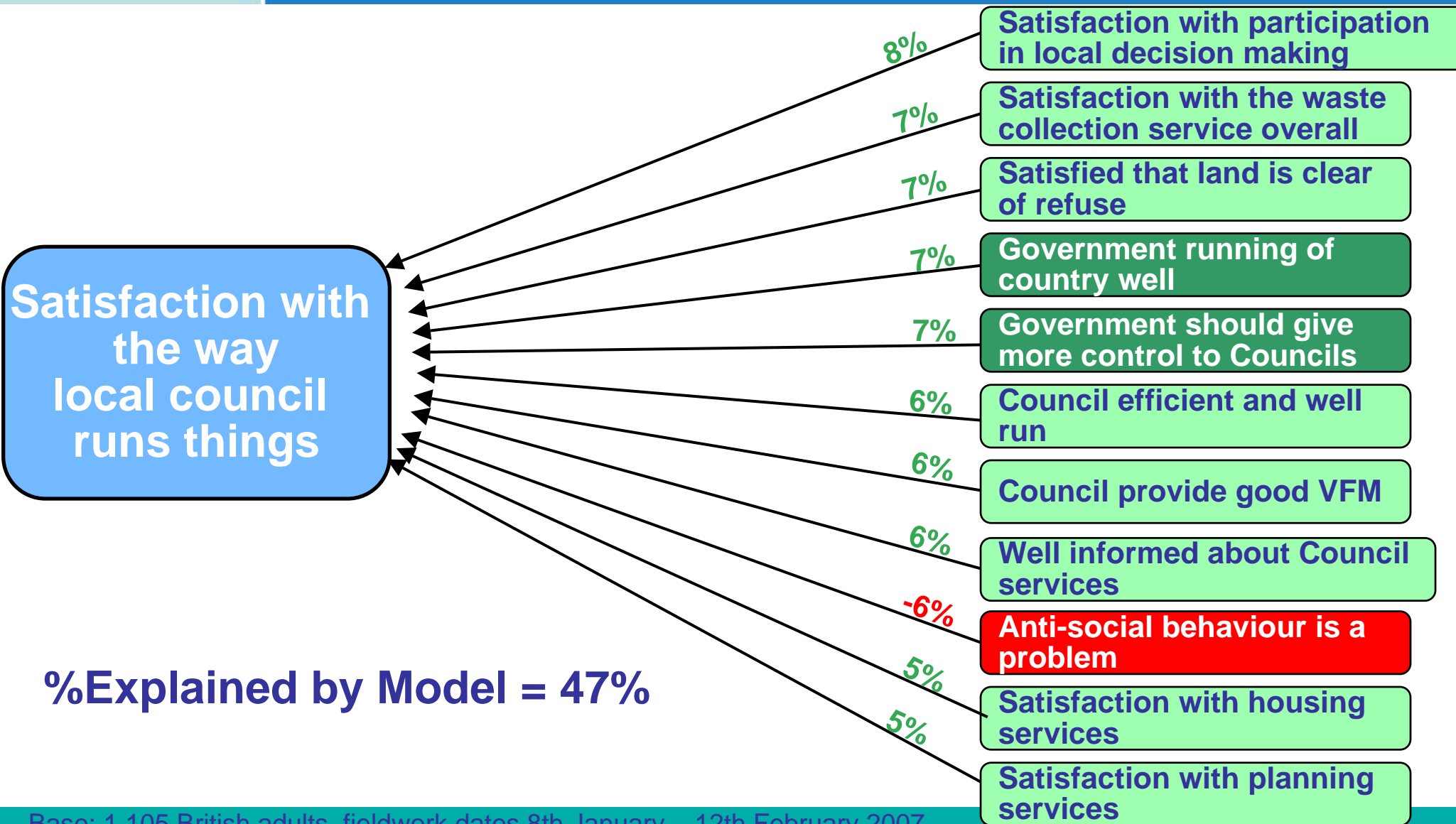
Q Thinking generally about what you expect of public services like local councils, schools, would you say they greatly exceed or slightly exceed your expectations, are about what you expect, fall slightly short or fall a long way short of your expectations?

 % Exceed     % About what you expect     % Fall short     % Don't know





# Myriad of factors at play



**%Explained by Model = 47%**



***“We now expect more of  
government than we do of God”***

Anne Widdecombe, November 2006

## Some of the reasons for “perception gaps”

- **General lack of trust in government information**
- **Political views are important – and influence ratings of national services more than ratings of personal experience**
- **The negative and sensationalist focus of the media**



88 items



96 items

Guardian Unlimited

136 items

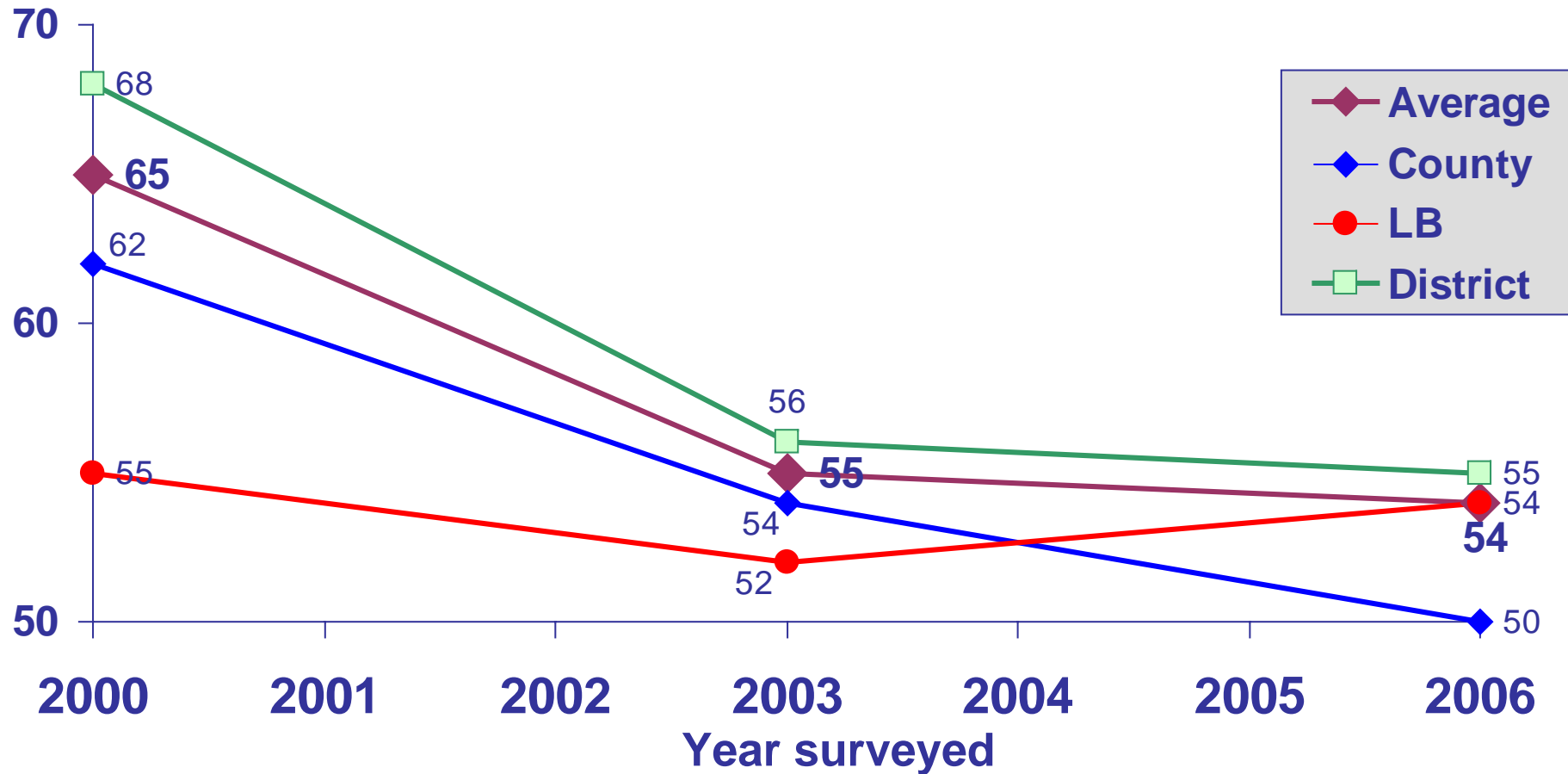


“about 660”

# Tracking BVPI Satisfaction Data over Time

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your local council runs things?

## Satisfied (BV3)



# General rises in satisfaction with LG services

# General rises in satisfaction with LG services



Satisfaction with cleanliness - 60% to 68%



Satisfaction with recycling facilities - 68% to 70%



Satisfaction with local tips – 75% to 79%



Satisfaction with sports/leisure facilities – 54% to 58%



Satisfaction with libraries – 67% to 73%




Satisfaction with parks and open spaces – 71% to 73%



Satisfaction with h/hold waste collection – 84% to 79%

# Some councils hide their light under a bushel

 = Service Delivery Average

 = BV3

Gap (pp)  
(BV3-Av.)

-27

-25

-24

-24

-24

-24

-24

-24

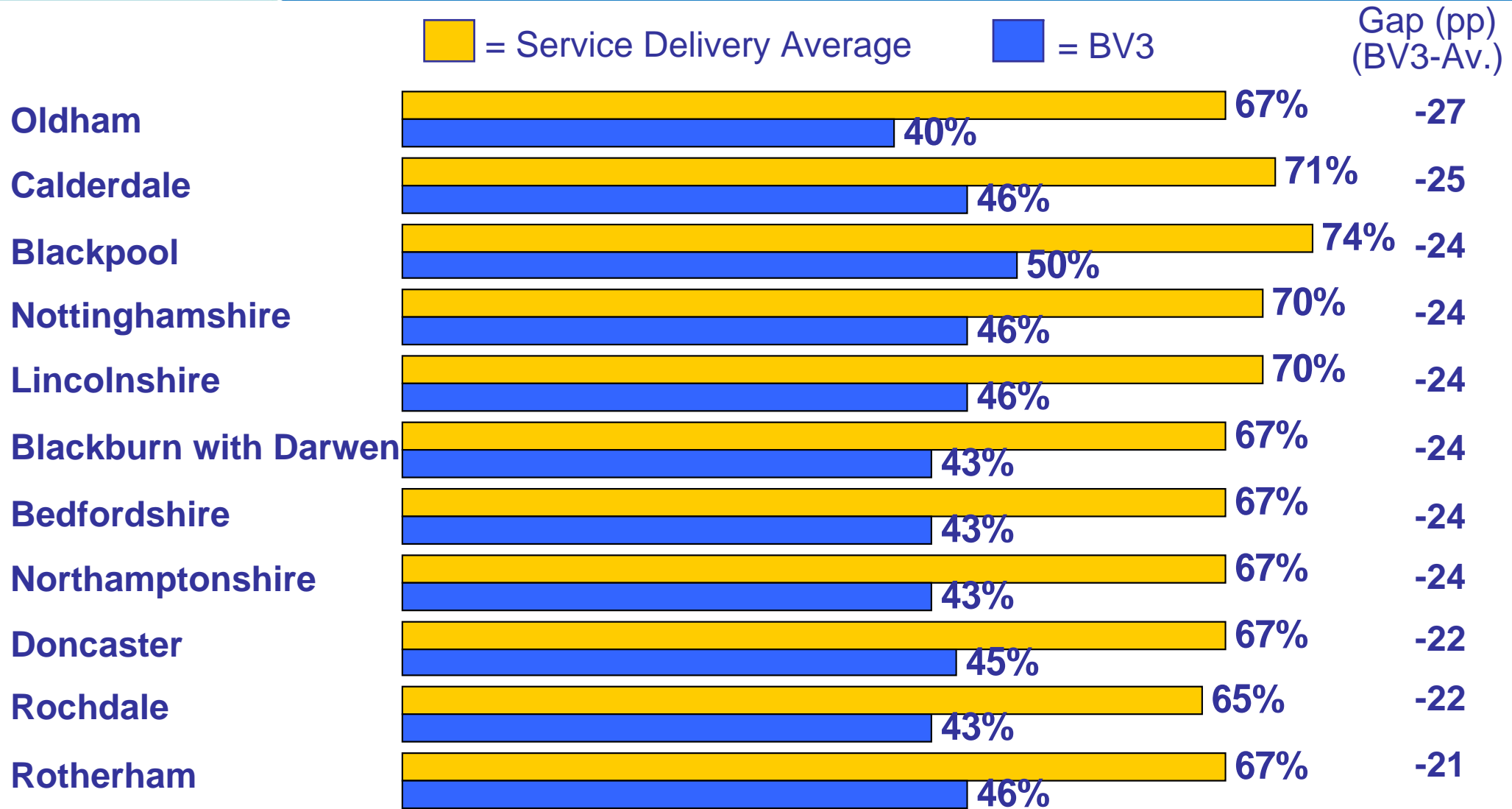
-22

-22

-21



# Some councils hide their light under a bushel



# The Gap by Authority Type

- Average overall satisfaction (BV3)
- Service delivery average

District

County

Unitary

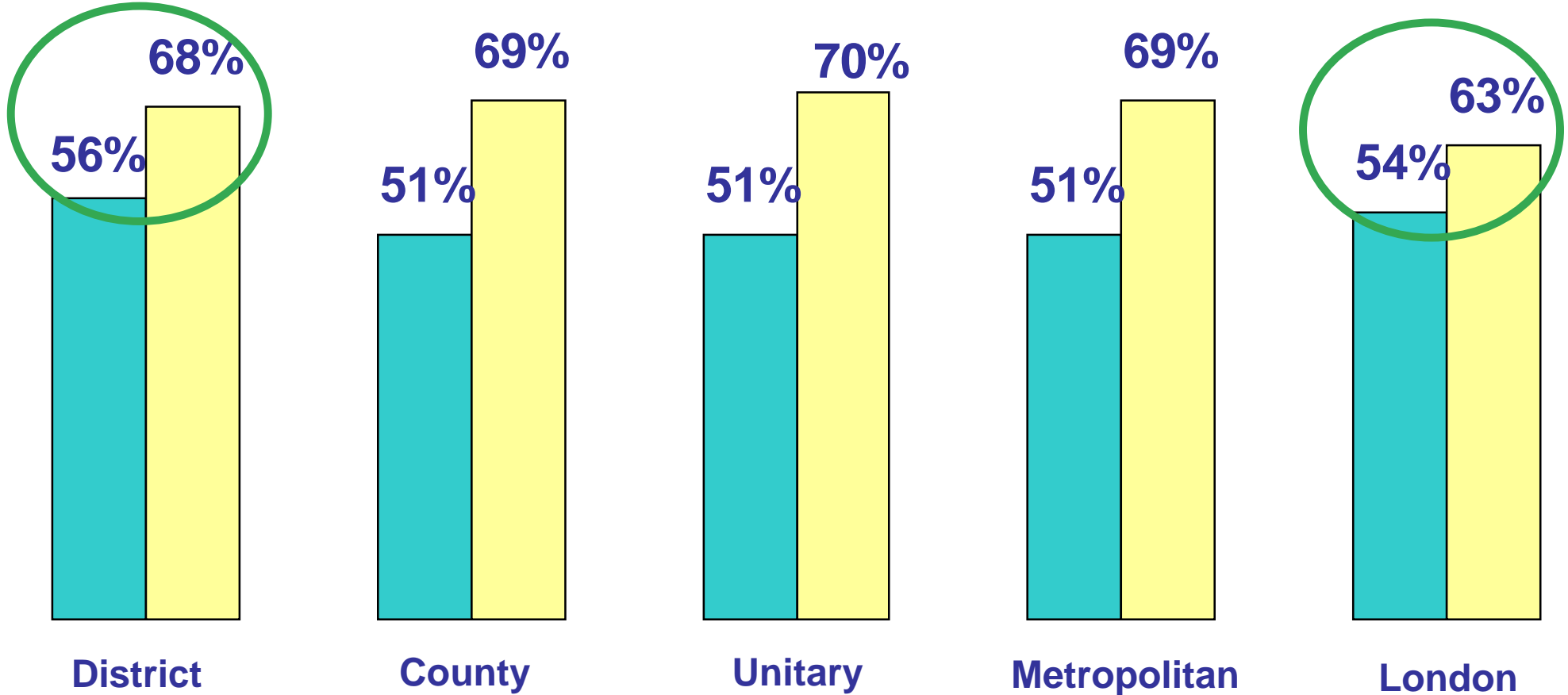
Metropolitan

London

# The Gap by Authority Type

■ Average overall satisfaction (BV3)

■ Service delivery average



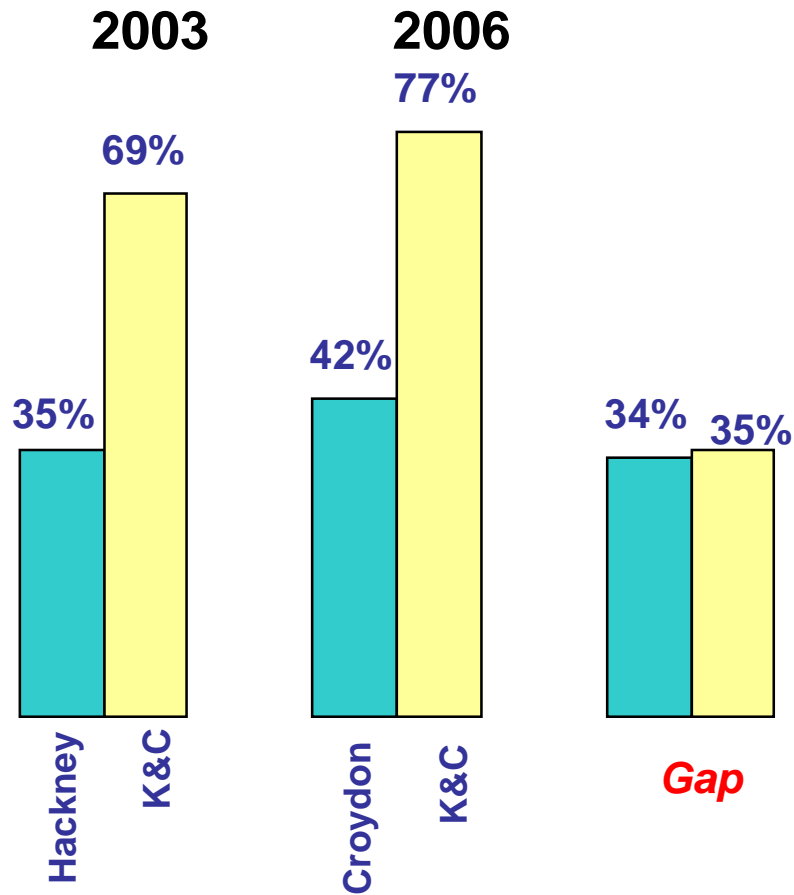
# But what is the Broad Pattern? The London Case Study



# Change in London: Poor Performers Bridging the Gap, but how?

■ worst    ■ best

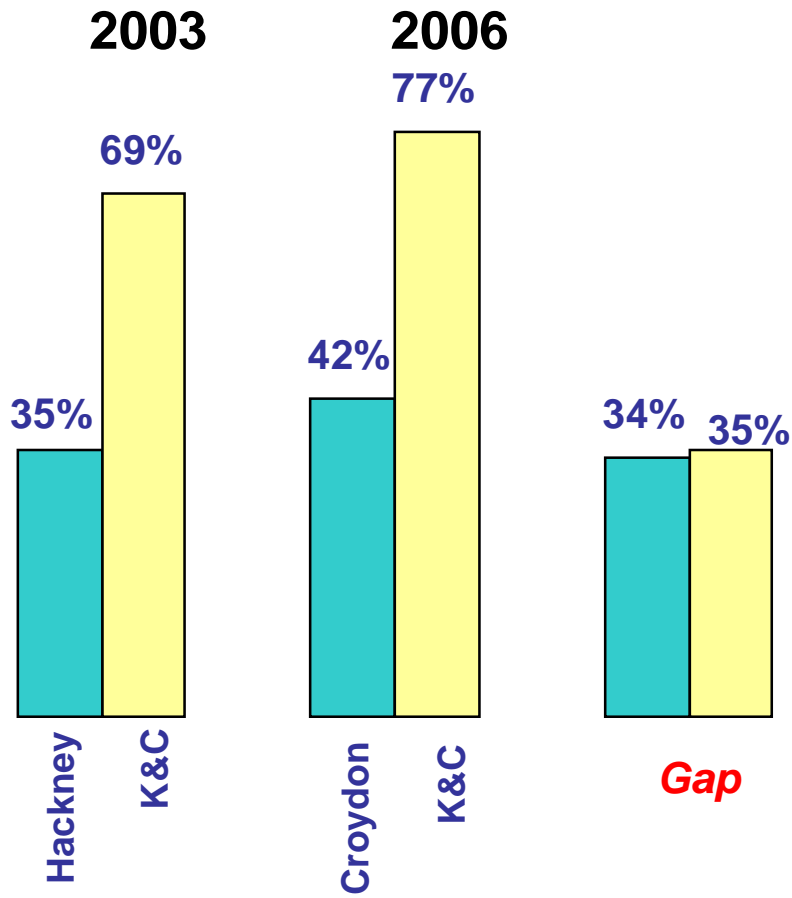
## Overall Satisfaction



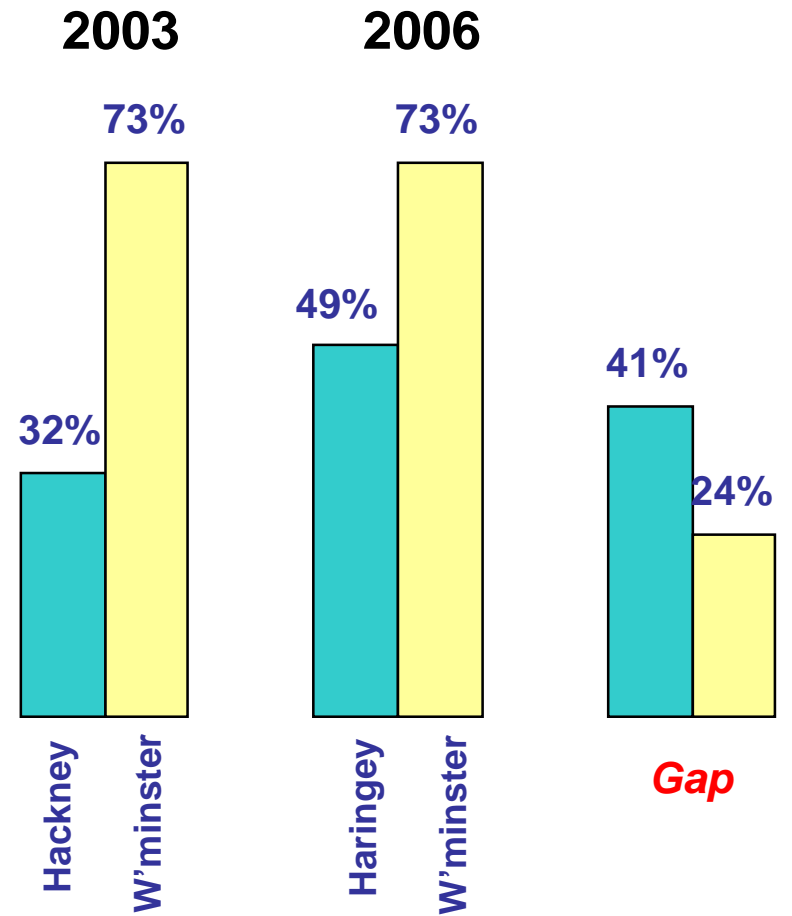
# Change in London: Poor Performers Bridging the Gap, but how?

■ worst    ■ best

## Overall Satisfaction

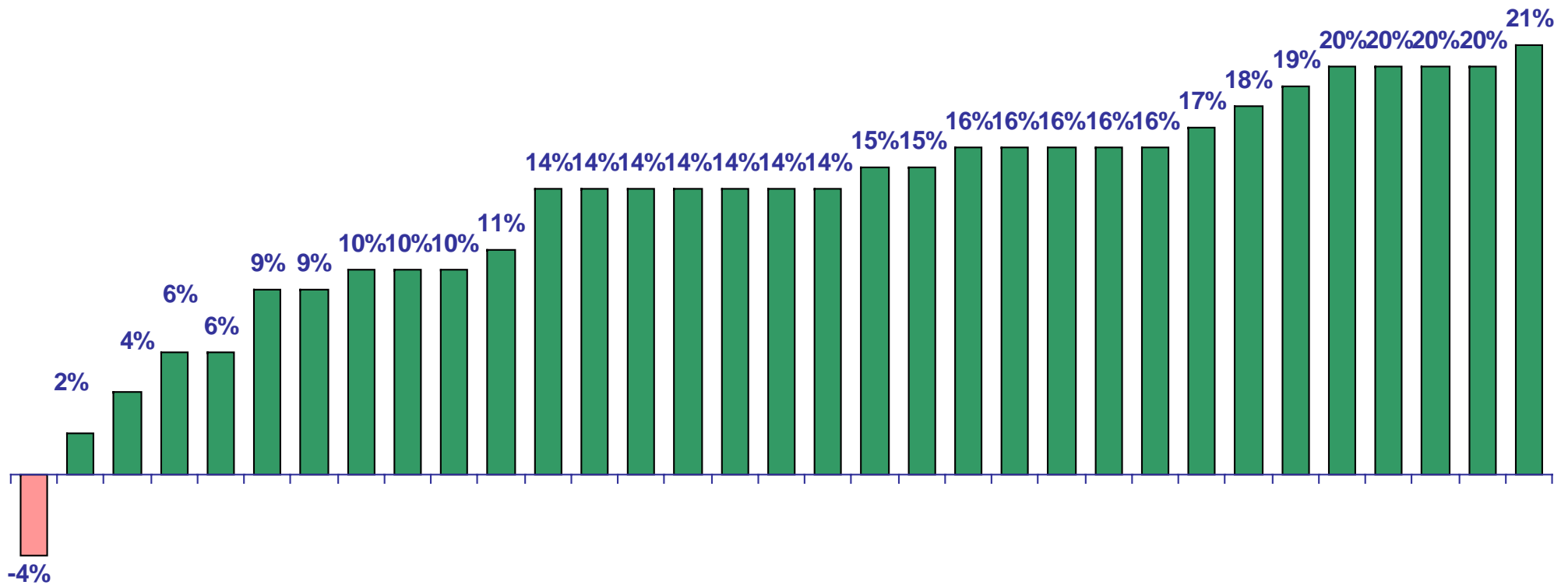


## Cleanliness



# Raising the Game on Cleanliness: the London Example

Percentage point change in satisfaction that land is kept clear of litter/refuse 2003/4-2006/7



# Money: the root of all evil?

***“council tax to soar  
300% in ‘nice areas’”***

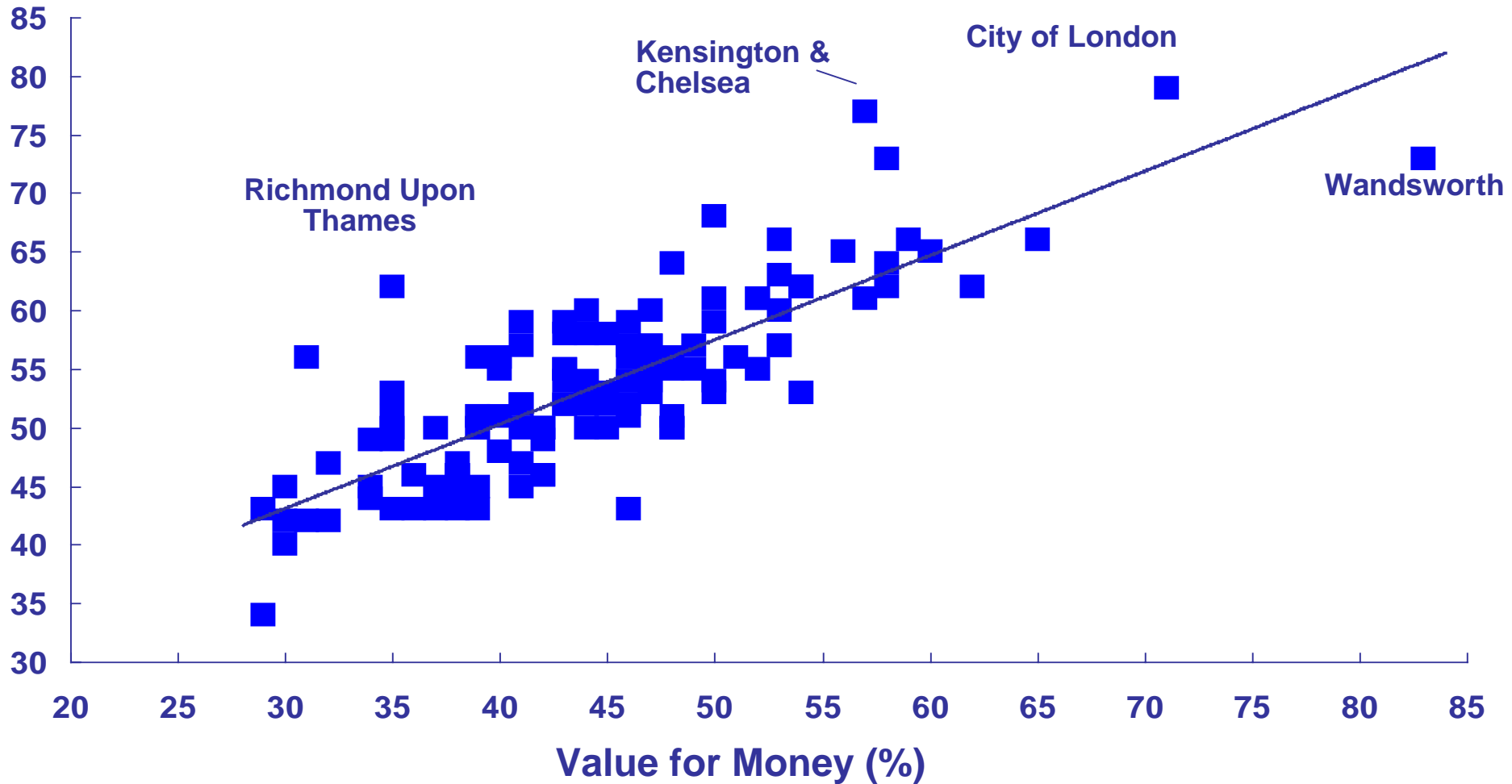




# Perceived VFM really matters.....

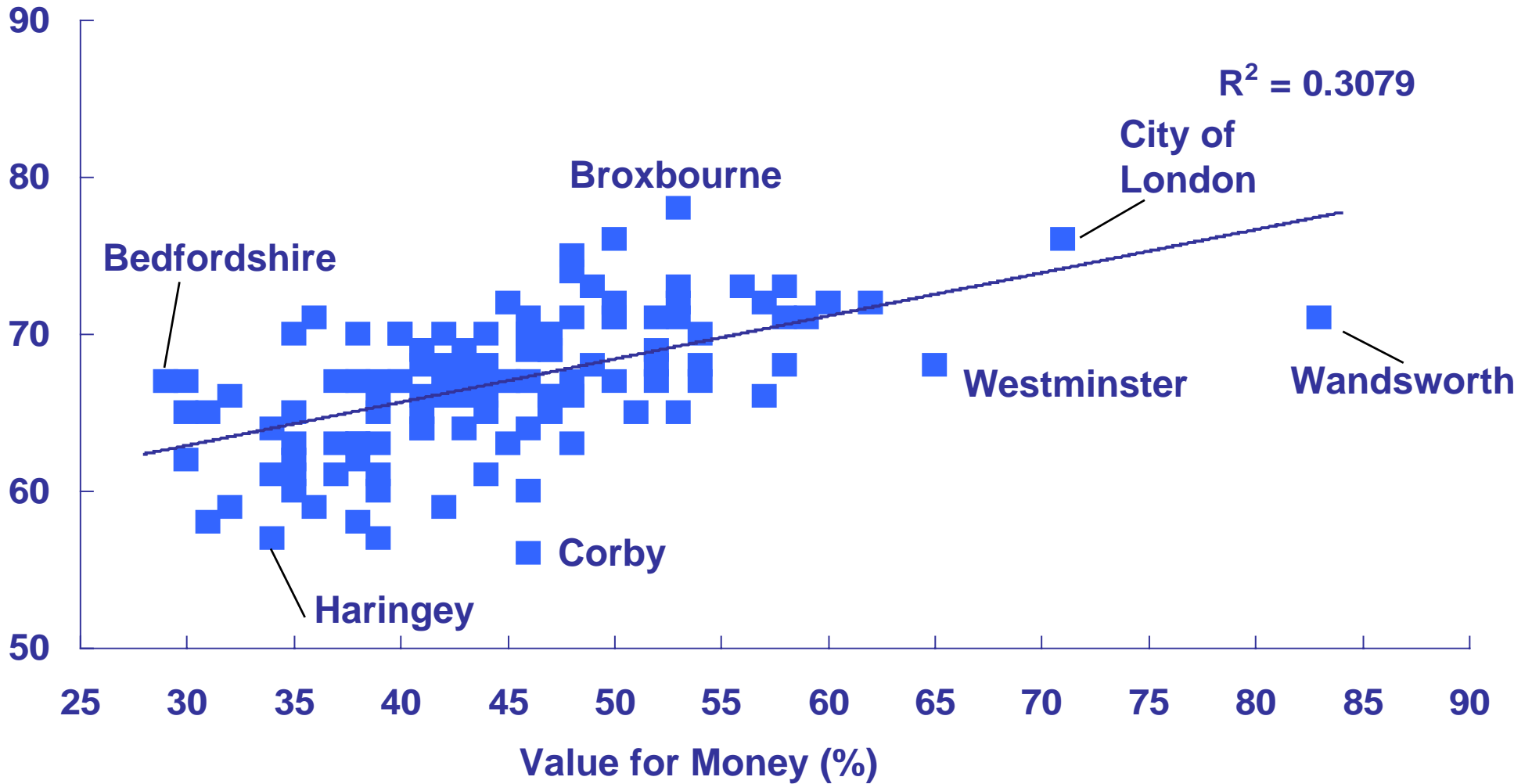
Satisfaction with council (%)

$R^2 = 0.6511$



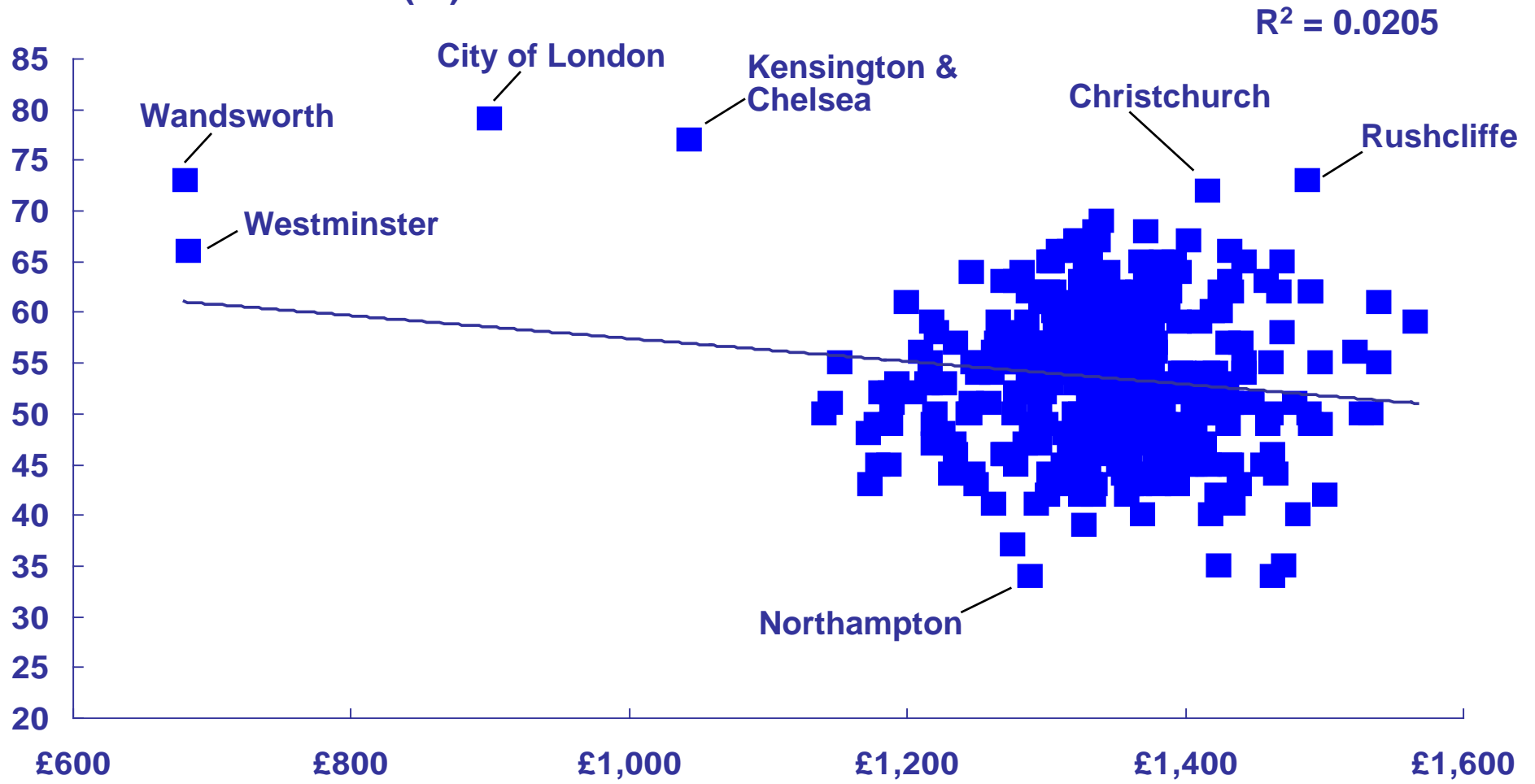
# Service Delivery Average and Value for Money among Ipsos MORI Local Authorities

Service Delivery Average (%)



# But not Actual Council Tax!

Satisfaction with council (%)



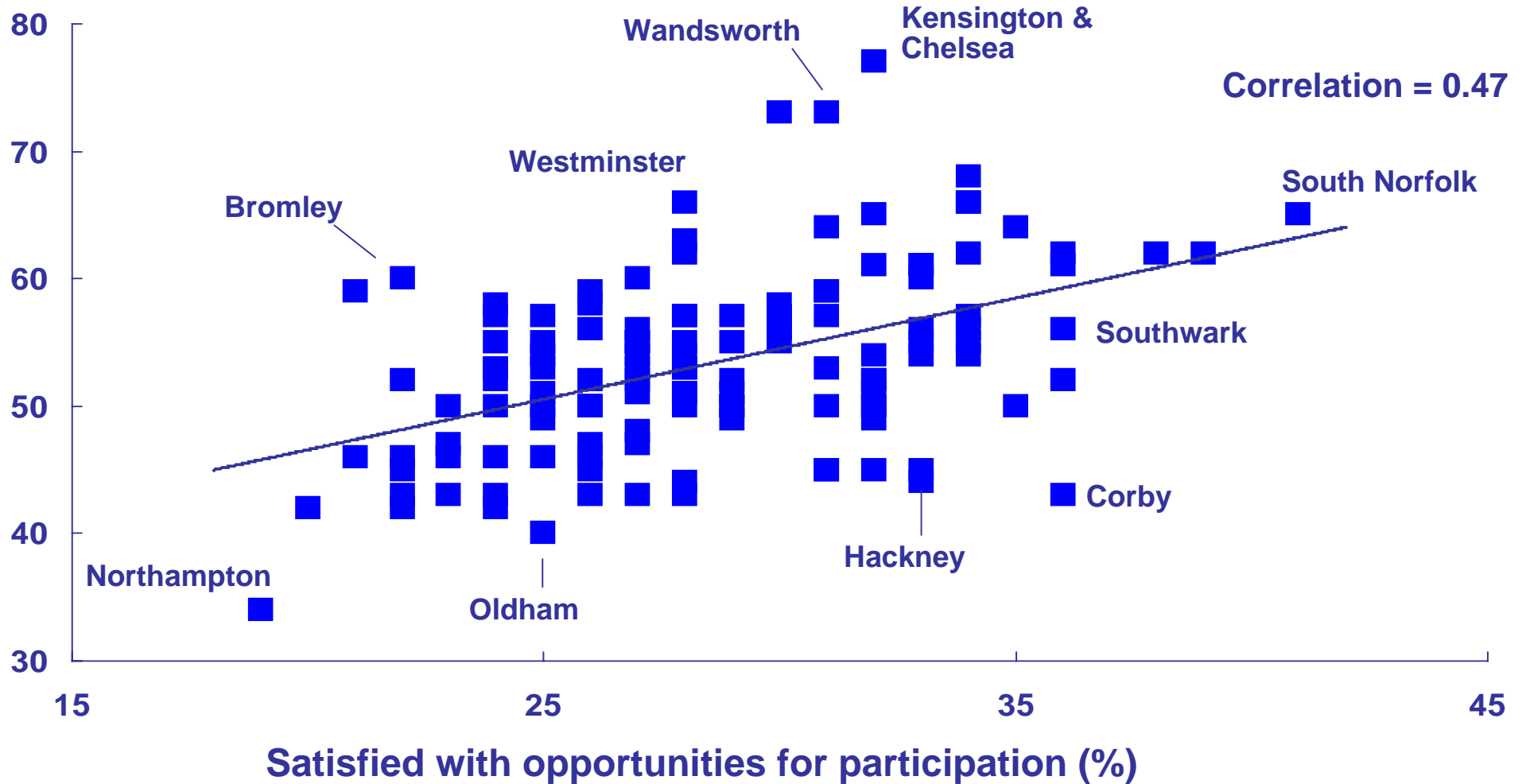
Average Council Tax per Dwelling (%)

# What about the Engagement and Empowerment Agenda?



# “Opportunities for Participation” do seem to matter.....

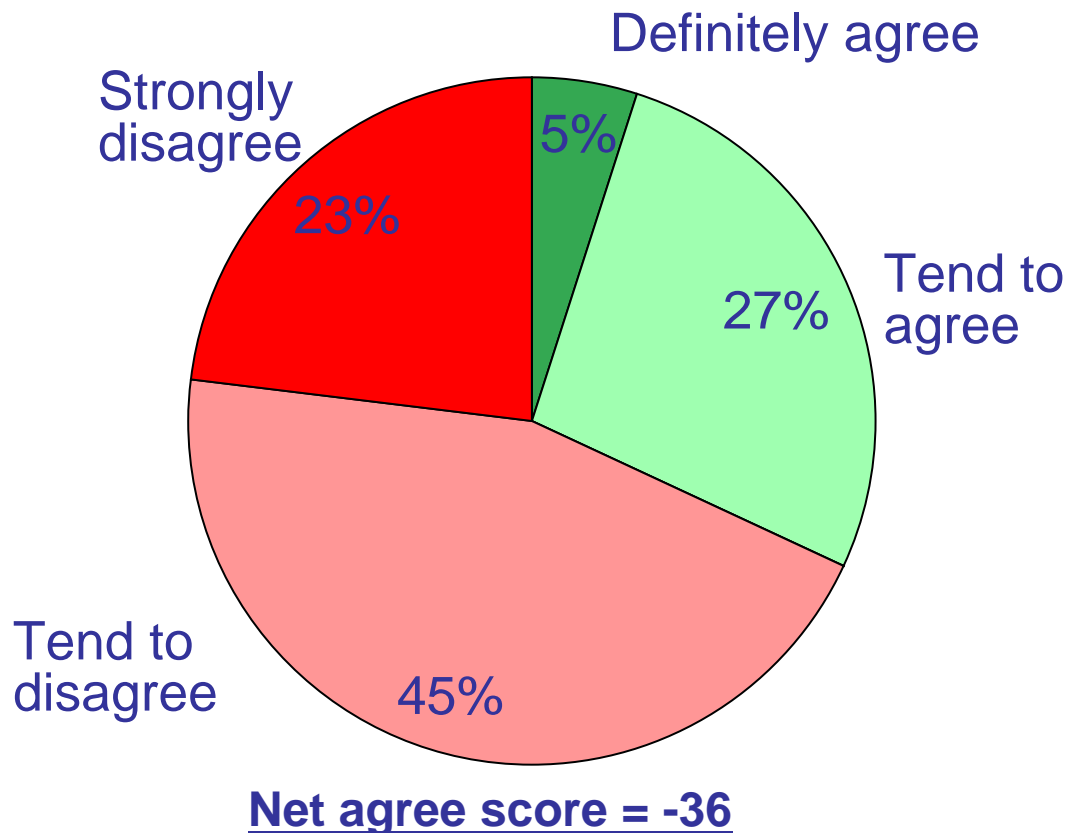
Satisfaction with council (%)



# But Feelings of Influence Low...

Q Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?

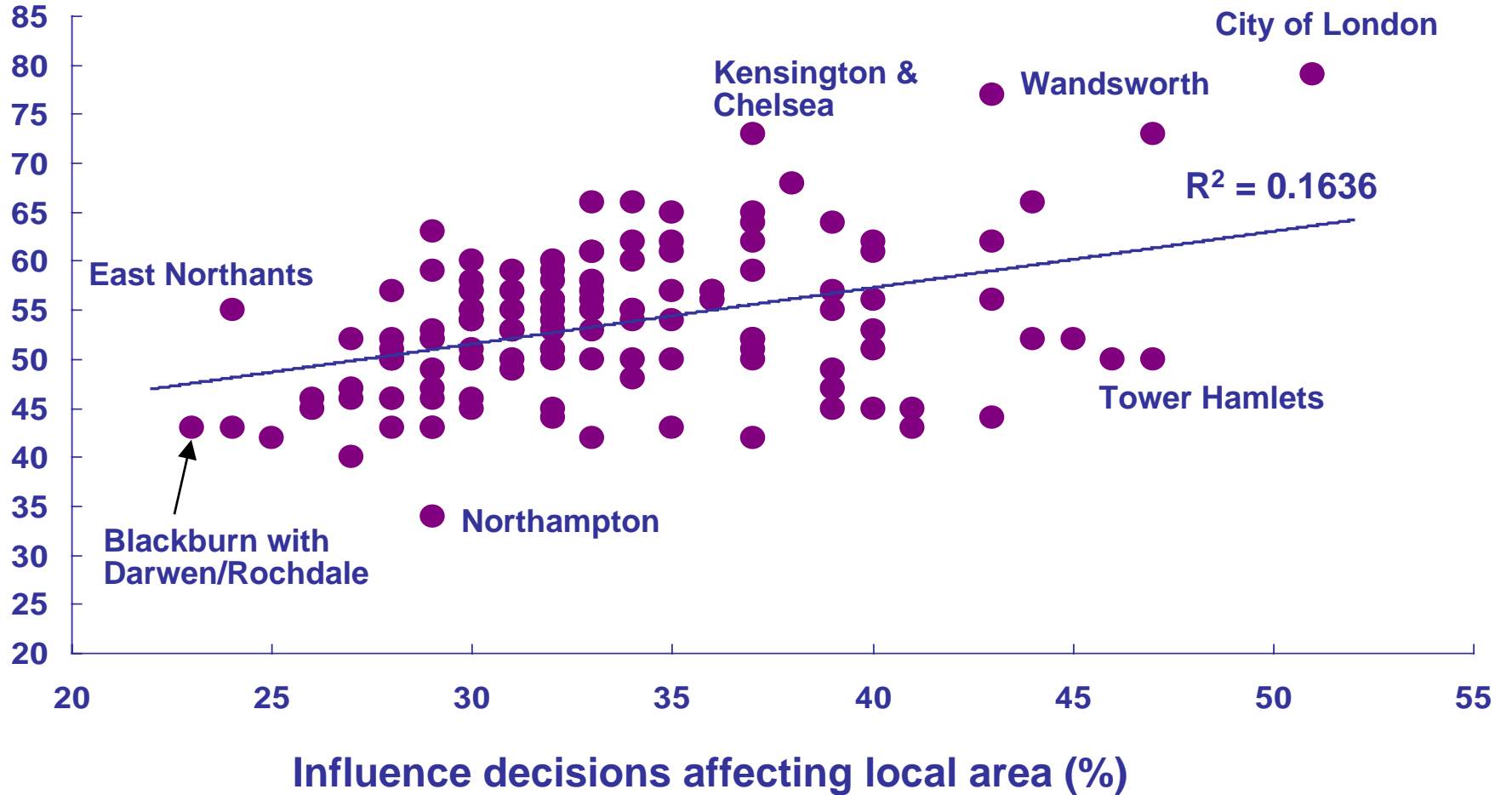
Green = above Herts district average  
Red = below Herts district average



	Agree	Disagree
Three Rivers	40	60
Watford	37	63
Welwyn Hat	34	67
Stevenage	33	67
St Albans	33	68
Herts average	32	68
District Mean	32	68
Hertsmere	30	70
East Herts	29	70
Dacorum	29	72
Broxbourne	28	71
North Herts	25	75

# More evidence that a lack of influence matters less

Satisfaction with council (%)



# Keeping people informed still seems to really matter....

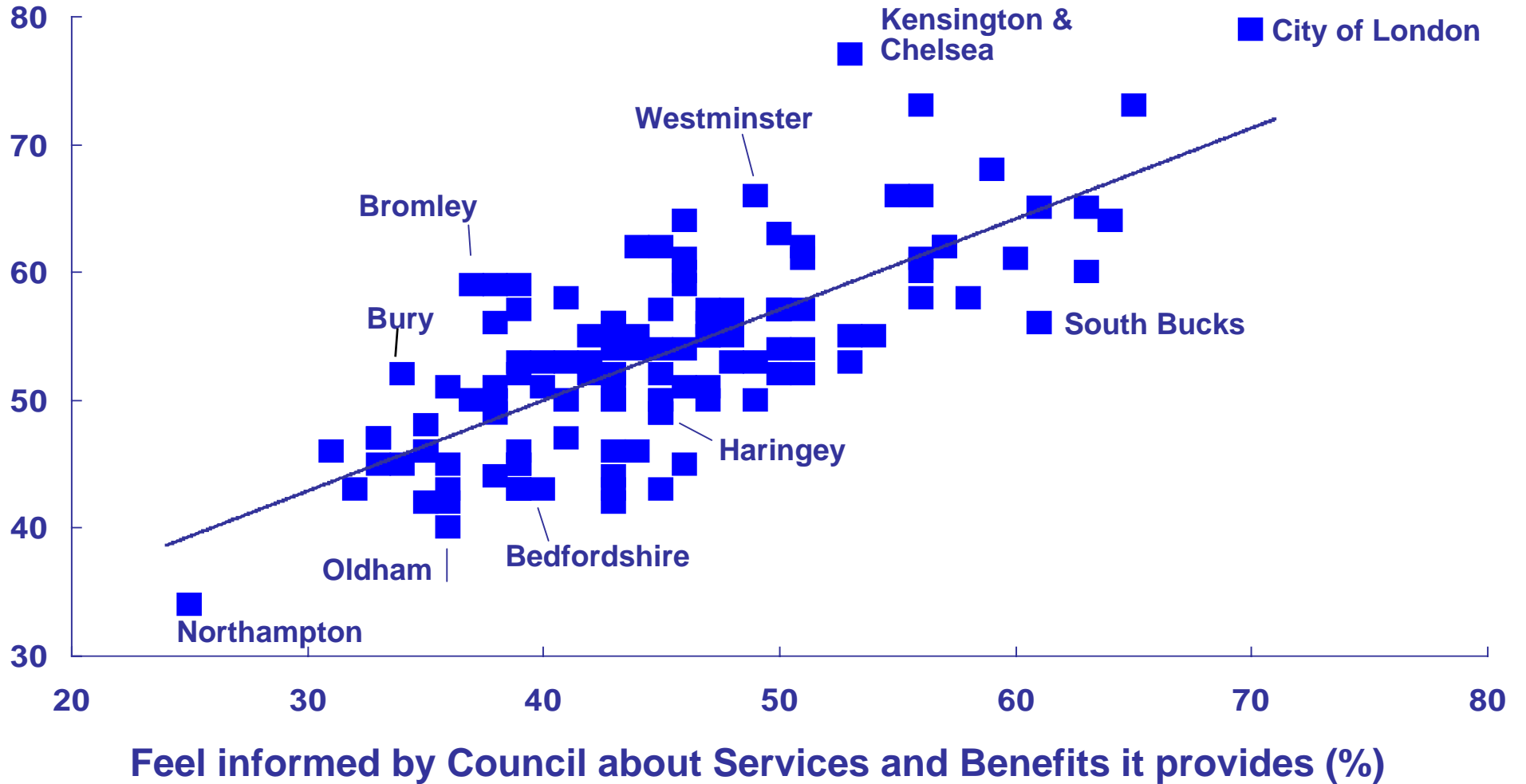




# Satisfaction and Feeling Informed

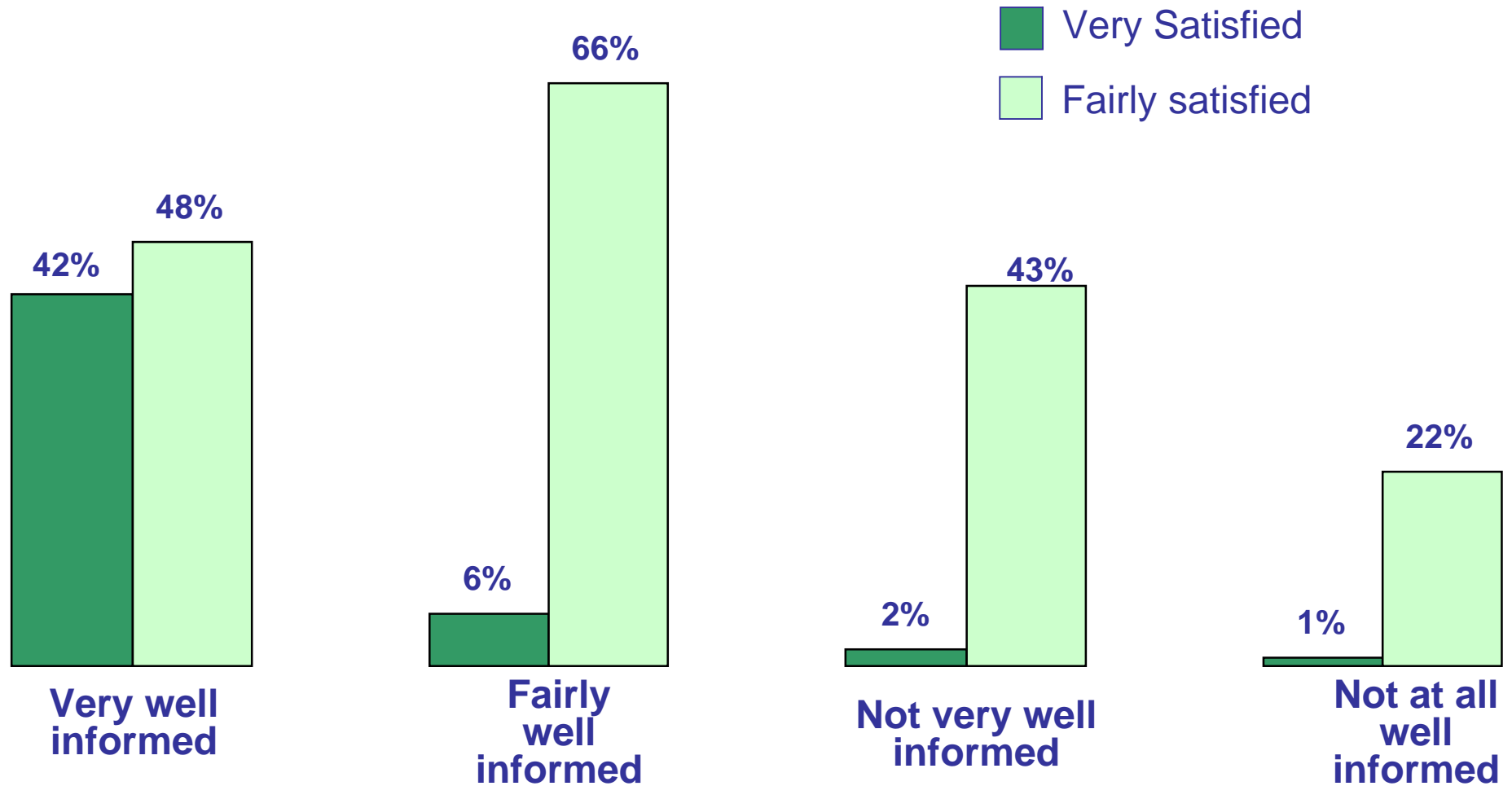
Satisfaction with council (%)

Correlation = 0.75



# Information and Satisfaction: What do 162,418 People say?

**Q Overall, how well informed do you think your council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?**



# Measuring Peer Performance



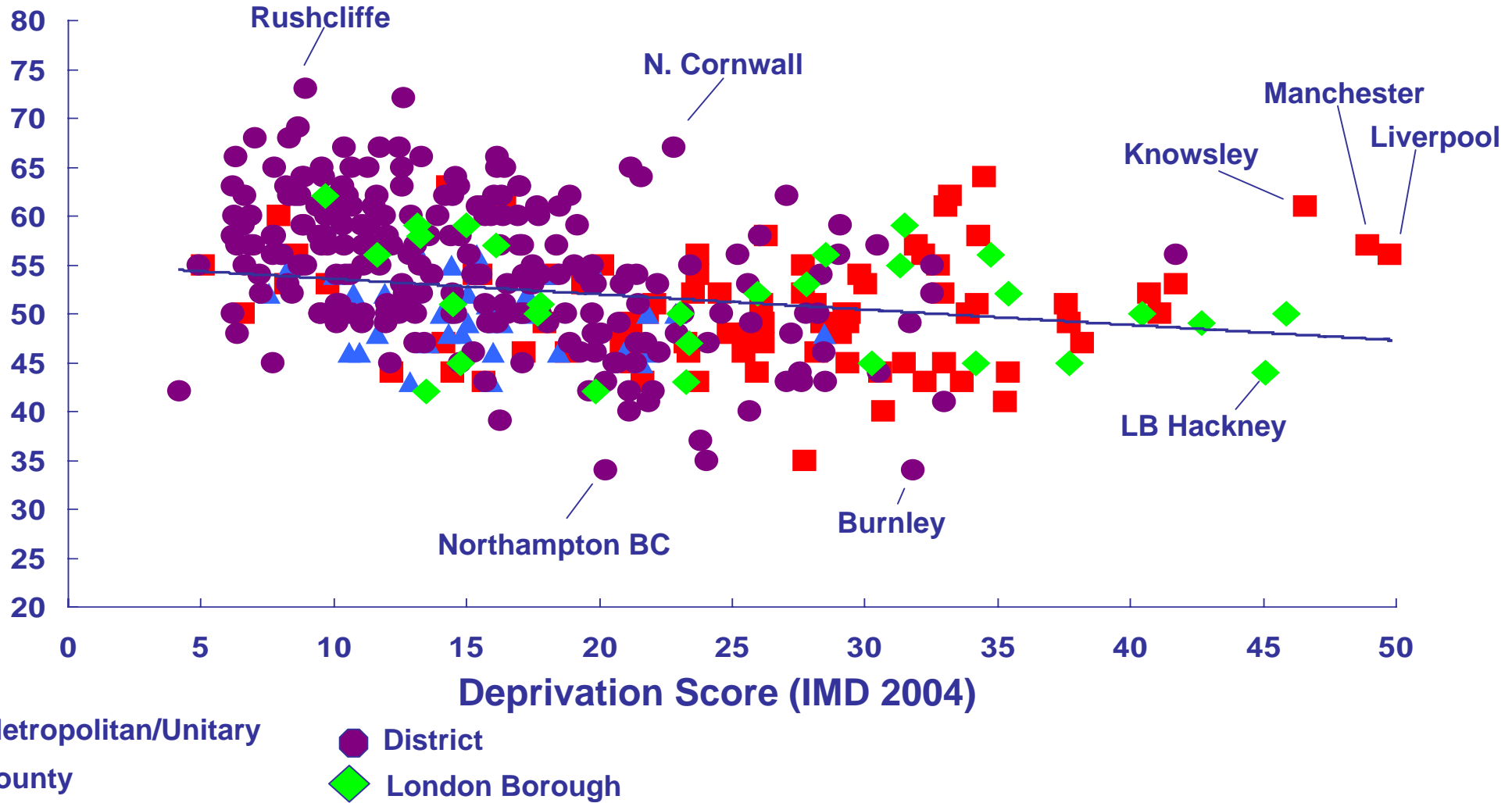
- **Basis of analysis**
  - **Official dataset for S&UT authorities and districts**
- **First stage to examine strength of relationships between overall satisfaction and range of variables**
  - **IMD, ethnic fractionalisation, rurality, social grade (NS-Sec), work status, population churn**
- **Key variables identified through regression**
  - **IMD**
  - **routine occupations (NS-sec) – e.g. salesman, non-technical profession**
  - **Average council tax**
  - **Urban nature of area**

- **‘Stepwise’ multiple regression**
- **Finds the model which explains the most amount of variation in the % satisfied across all authorities**
- **Simulate satisfaction levels for various levels of each**
- **Produces predicted ranges of satisfaction for each authority**
  - **Lower and upper (the frontier of performance)**

# Deprivation matters – but many outliers

Satisfaction with council (%)

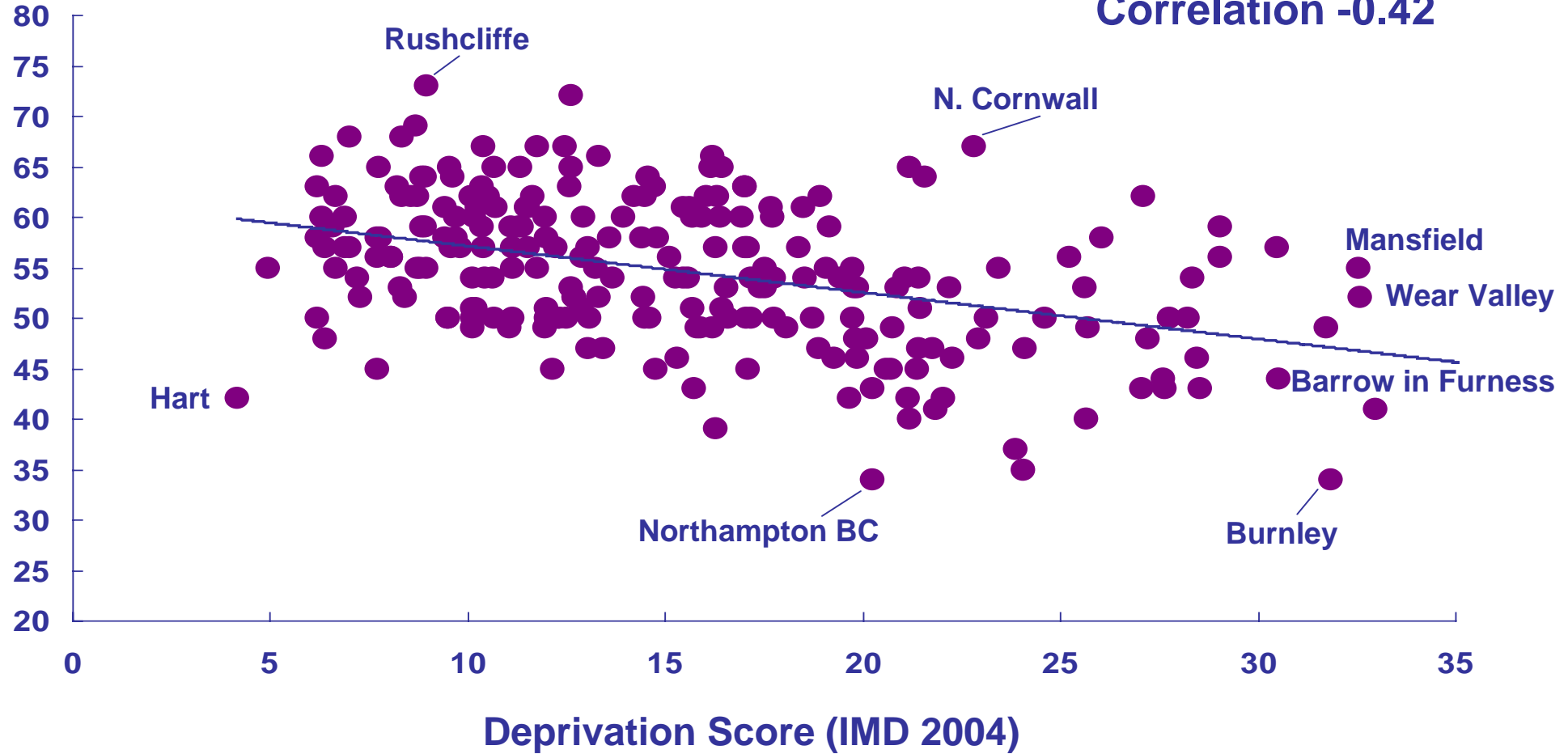
Correlation -0.29



# Strongest relationship in Districts...

Satisfaction with council (%)

Correlation -0.42

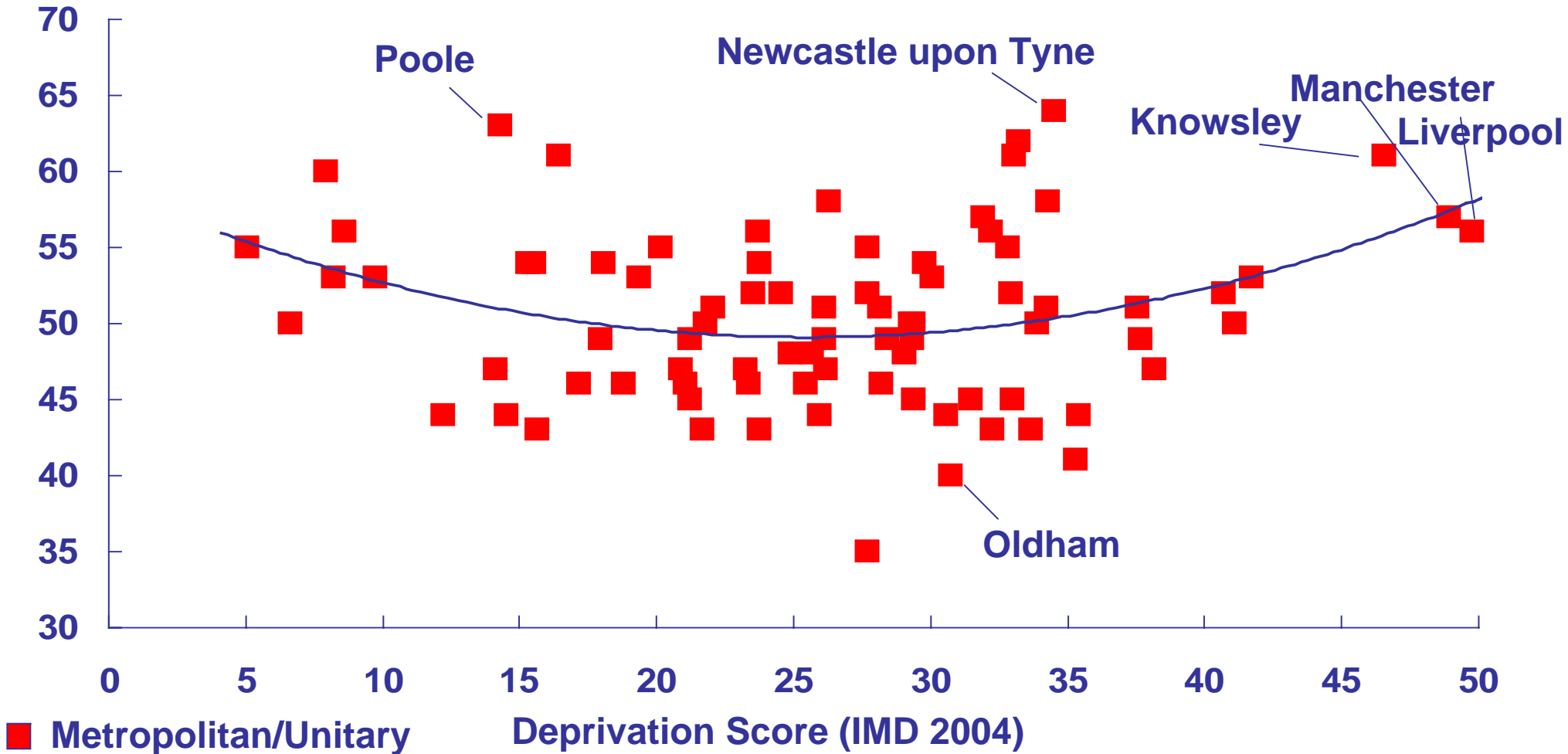


● District

# Extremes do best in Mets and Unitaries

Satisfaction with council (%)

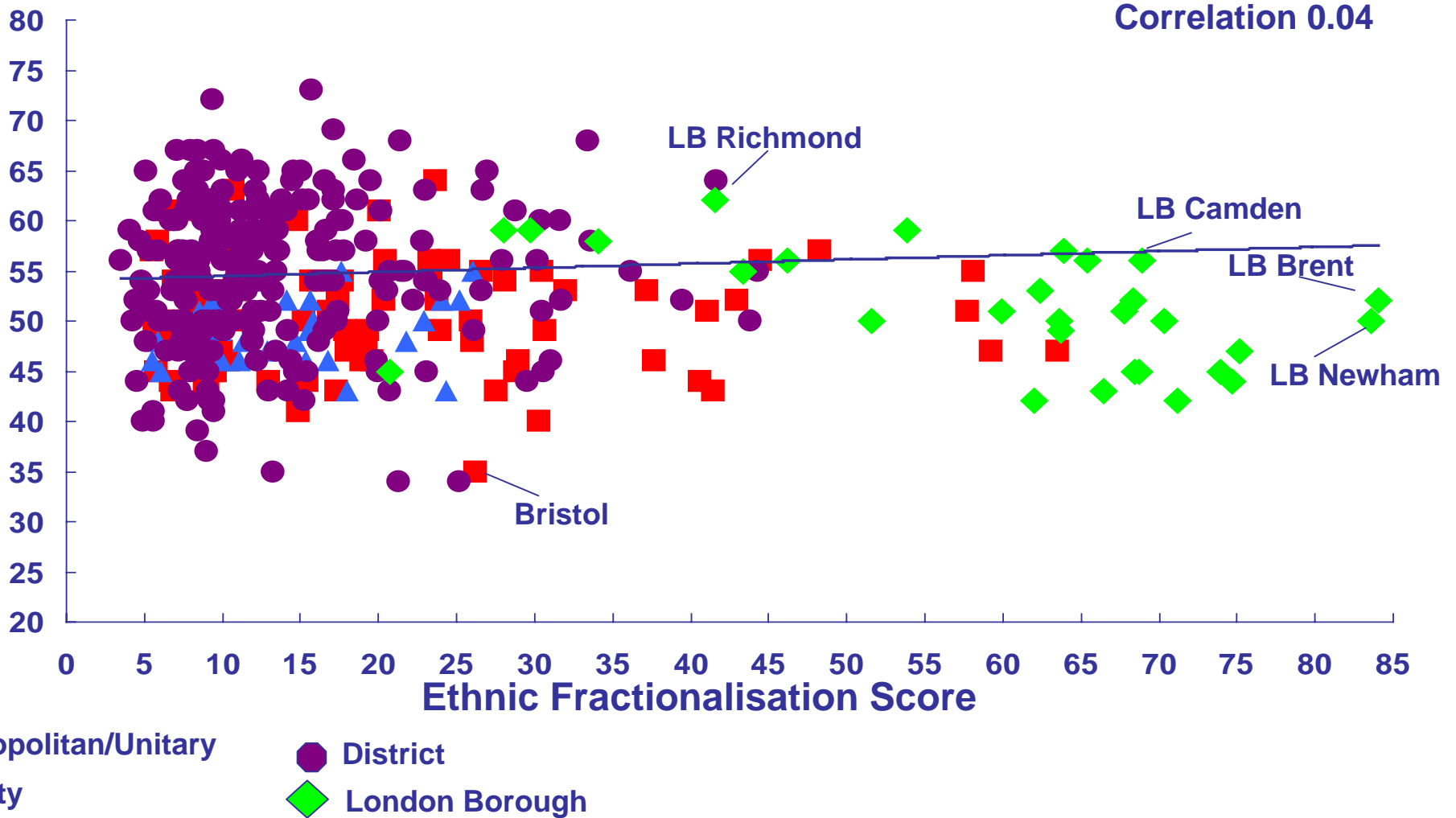
Transformed IMD Correlation +0.41





# How much does ethnic diversity matter?

Satisfaction with council (%)

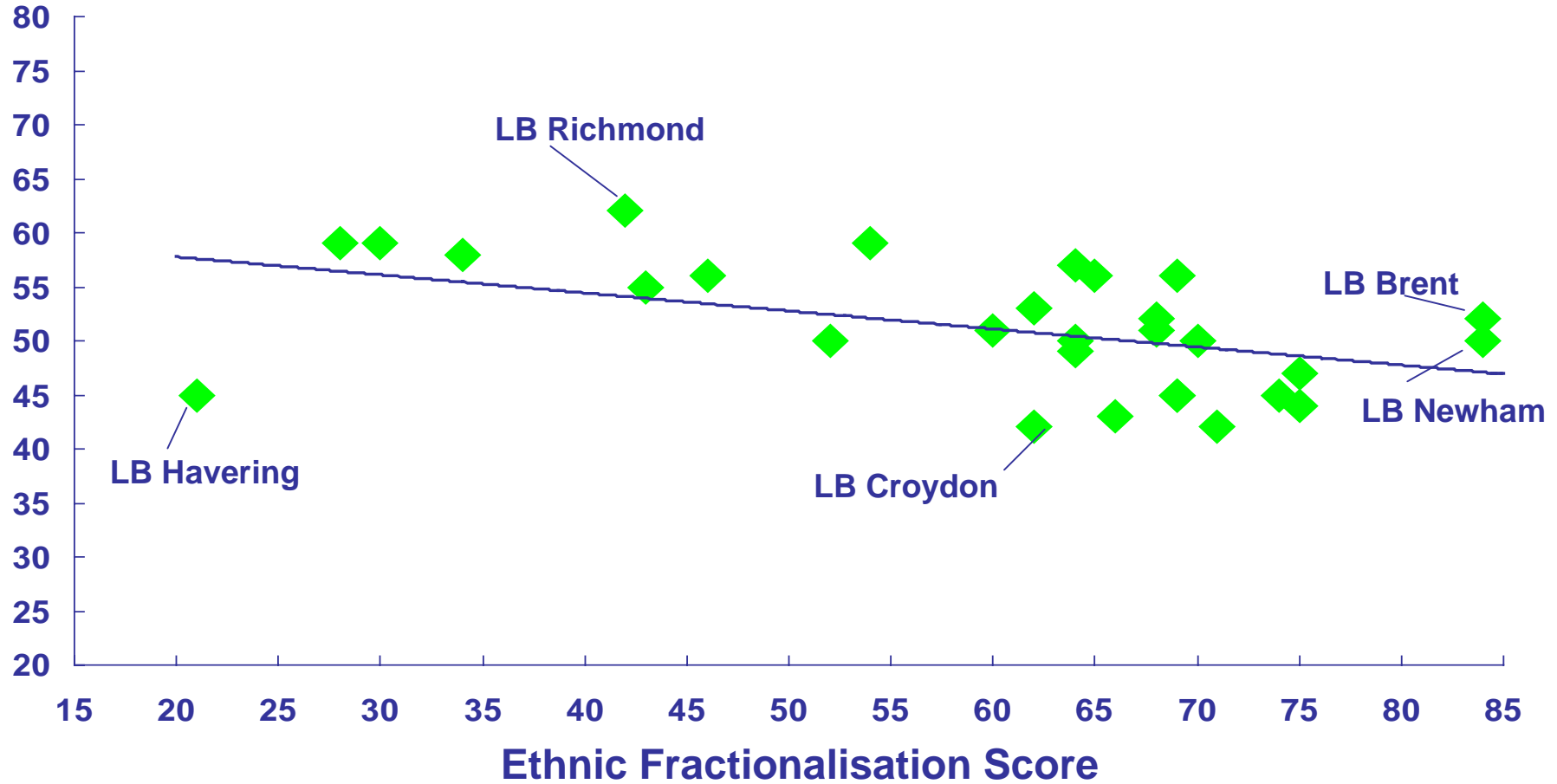


Base: BVPI 2006 (383 Single, Upper Tier and District local authorities)

# But in London it stands out as most acute

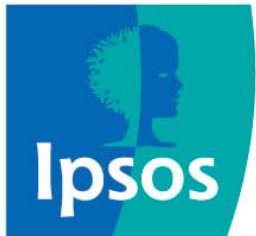
Satisfaction with council (%)

Correlation -0.47



◆ London Borough

# Who is doing best....



# District Councils

 = Predicted satisfaction     = Actual satisfaction

Perception gap (pp)

***OVER-PERFORMING***

+15

+15

+13

+13

+12

+12

***UNDER-PERFORMING***

-13

-14

-16

-16

# District Councils

■ = Predicted satisfaction   ■ = Actual satisfaction

Perception  
gap (pp)

## OVER-PERFORMING

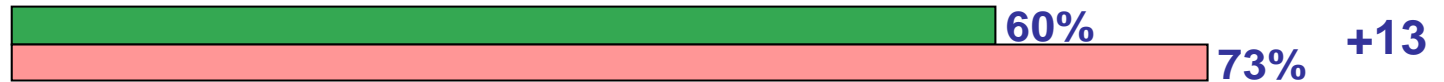
North Cornwall



Nuneaton & B'Worth



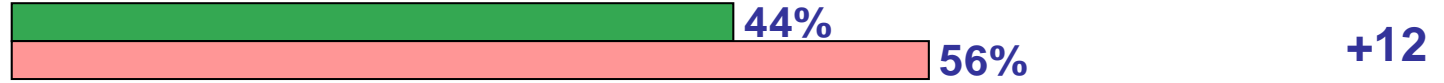
Rushcliffe



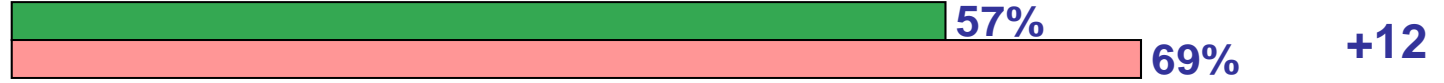
Canterbury



Easington

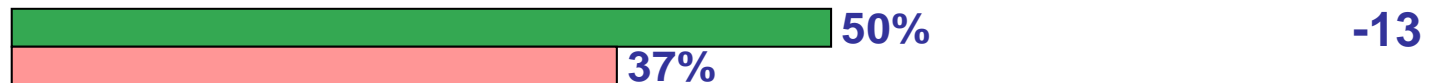


Blaby



## UNDER-PERFORMING

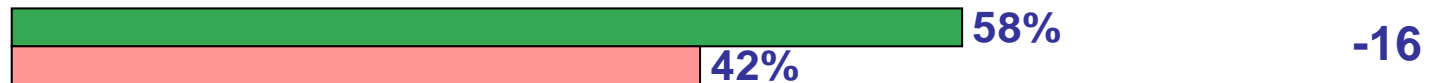
Restormel



Fylde



Hart



Northampton



# Metropolitan and Unitary Authorities

■ = Predicted satisfaction    ■ = Actual satisfaction

Perception  
gap (pp)

## OVER-PERFORMING



## UNDER-PERFORMING



# London Boroughs

■ = Predicted satisfaction   ■ = Actual satisfaction

Perception  
gap (pp)

## OVER-PERFORMING

City of London



+31

Kensington & Chelsea



+31

Wandsworth



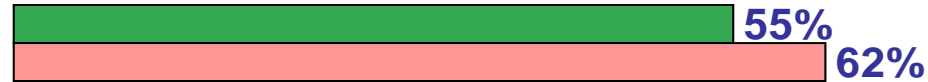
+26

Westminster



+19

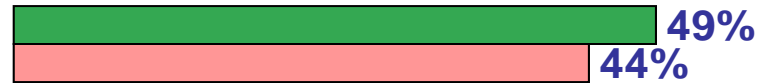
Richmond upon Thames



+7

## UNDER-PERFORMING

Hackney



-5

Hounslow



-6

Harrow



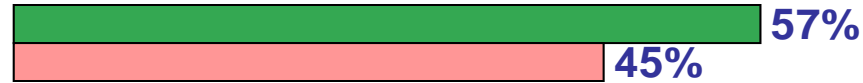
-7

Croydon



-9

Havering



-12

- **Place matters – but highly complex**
- **Other extraneous factors at play too**
- **Still no credit for improving services**
- **Elephant in the room is VFM**
- **Communications matter**
- **Relative importance of involvement and influence**
- **New regulatory regime demands we know more**
- **Ongoing challenge is being seen to matter...**



deliberative forums or asking more of politicians themselves in leading debate, it is vital that fine words on people power do not become ~~handcuffed by institutional dogma~~. We have a powerful opportunity for ~~change~~. The jury is out as to whether this can and will be grasped

Ipsos MORI

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to get out there are see what you are  
doing.

Ipsos MORI

In turn, my door will be open.

We've got a real opportunity today.

Let's seize it.

Thank you for listening  
Thank you.

HAZEL BLEARS



## *LIKELY DIRECTION*

- Single set of national outcome indicators (agreed through CSR)
- Small number of targets agreed with each area (35!)
- Focused on citizen outcomes and LSPs/LAAs

## *OUR THOUGHTS*

- Balance local needs (e.g. researching h-t-r communities effectively) with meaningful performance management
  - Common methodology?
  - Questions?
  - Fieldwork period?
- Risk losing body of data growing in value...

# The New Political Landscape

- Meeting new challenges, without losing sight of the old, with less money;
- New politics of the family – childhood, care, sustainable living;
- New politics of the community – neighbourhoods, young people, policing and safety
- Trust and governance in a post-Iraq world