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**The Highland Council**  
**2006 Performance Survey**  
**FINAL 23 August 2006**

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## **Section One**

### **Survey Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

The 2006 Highland Council Performance Survey was conducted independently by Snedden Economics Ltd during June and July 2006. This report addresses key issues of relevance to The Highland Council's overall performance and compares the 2006 results with those from previous years wherever questions are identical and direct comparisons can be made.

The 2006 questionnaire contained additional questions examining child protection and the role of agencies and the community.

#### **Survey Sample**

The 2006 survey questionnaire was issued by post to 9,000 named householders on the Register of Electors. Questionnaires were issued randomly in proportion to the general population living in each of the eight Highland Council areas. Pre-paid return envelopes were provided.

#### **Survey Response**

Of the overall sample of 9,000, approximately 150 were returned to sender, the addressee having moved or being unknown at that address. 1,467 completed questionnaires were received and analysed – an effective response rate of almost 17%. The response rate was also 17% in 2005, 15% in 2004 and 20% in 2003.

The profile of respondents to the survey is shown in the following tables in Section One of this report. The data provided in Tables 1.1 to 1.7 are not weighted. Thereafter, in Sections 2-5, all results are weighted by age and gender. Weighting compensates for an under-representation in responses particularly from the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups and an under-representation in responses from males. Some columns do not sum exactly to 100% due to rounding.

#### **Confidence Levels**

The level of confidence varies for each question. In places, confidence levels do not allow robust inferences to be drawn from the survey data. Generally, this is where analysis is being conducted on a sub-sample of the data set, for example analysis at the area level.

Where appropriate throughout the report, attention is drawn to notable differences in response by age group, gender, geographic area or other such variables as may be relevant to each question.

The statistical reliability of any random quantitative research result depends upon the percentage value of the result itself and the sample size on which that result is based.

The most commonly used measure of probability within the market research industry is the 95% confidence level. Therefore, the expressed level of accuracy refers to the margin of error around any research result within which we can be 95% certain the true value would lie (the value obtained if the entire population were to be questioned).

Assuming a truly random sample, the following levels of confidence apply. These figures are provided for information purposes only.

Sample Size	Percentage Giving Particular Answer		
	10% / 90%	30% / 70%	50%
100	± 6.0	± 9.2	± 10.0
200	± 4.2	± 6.5	± 7.1
300	± 3.5	± 5.3	± 5.8
500	± 2.7	± 4.1	± 4.5
1,000	± 1.9	± 2.9	± 3.2
2,000	± 1.3	± 2.0	± 2.2

As an approximate guide, the confidence range for questions which draw on the entire sample of 1,467 responses is plus or minus 1.8-2.8% at the 95% level. That is to say, the chances are approximately 95 in 100 that a range of plus or minus 1.8-2.8 percentage points on either side of the sample result includes the true percentage (were the entire population within the Highland Council area to be questioned).

Table 1.1, below, shows the pattern of responses to the survey compared with the general population of The Highland Council area.

**Table 1.1 Survey Response by Area**

	2006 Survey Response (Number)	2006 Survey Response (%)	Population 2001 Census (%)
Badenoch and Strathspey	75	5	6
Caithness	179	12	12
Inverness (incl. Ardersier, Beauly, Drumnadrochit, Fort Augustus)	354	24	32
Lochaber	154	11	9
Nairn	62	4	5
Ross and Cromarty	427	29	24
Skye and Lochalsh	98	7	6
Sutherland	109	7	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,458</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents (N=1,458)

Table 1.2, below, shows that nine out of 10 respondents to the 2006 survey had lived in the Highland Council area for over five years.

**Table 1.2 Length of Time Lived in The Highland Council Area**

	%
Less than 1 year	1
1-2 years	3
3-5 years	6
Over 5 years	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents (N=1,442)

Table 1.3, below, illustrates the differing propensity to respond by age and gender. Overall, males (37% of the sample) were less likely to respond than females (63%). Male responses were also skewed towards the over 55s.

**Table 1.3 Age Profile of Survey Respondents**

	Survey Response Male %	Survey Response Female %	Survey Response Total %	Population Male and Female %
16-24 years	4	4	4	12
25-34 years	6	9	8	15
35-44 years	10	18	15	19
45-54 years	17	19	18	19
55-64 years	27	23	24	15
65-74 years	21	16	18	12
Over 75 years	16	11	13	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents (N=1,440)

The working status of respondents is shown below in Table 1.4.

**Table 1.4 Profile of 2006 Survey Respondents by Occupation**

	%
Working for a single employer full-time	27
Working for a single employer part-time	11
Working for more than one employer	2
Self-employed	10
At school or other full-time education	1
Unemployed	1
Unable to work because of long-term sickness	2
Unable to work because of disability	3
Retired	36
Looking after the home or family	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents (N=1,435)

Respondents were asked if they currently work with The Highland Council. The responses are shown in Table 1.5, below.

**Table 1.5 Work Relationship with The Highland Council**

	%
None	91
Part-time employee of The Highland Council	4
Full-time employee of The Highland Council	5
Temporary employee of The Highland Council	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents (N=1,430)

\* denotes less than 0.5%

The housing profile of respondents is shown below in Table 1.6.

**Table 1.6 Housing Profile of 2006 Survey Respondents**

	%
Own home/mortgage	81
Rent from The Highland Council	10
Rent from a housing association	3
Rent from a private landlord	5
House comes with job	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents (N=1,423)

**Table 1.7 Ethnic and Cultural Origin of Respondents**

	%
White Scottish	76
White Other British	21
Any other white (excluding Irish)	1
Irish	1
All other ethnic and cultural origins	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents (N=1,509)

\* denotes less than 0.5%

## Section Two

### Contact with the Council

#### Reason for Contacting The Highland Council

66% of respondents had contacted The Highland Council during the 12-month period preceding the survey. Their reasons for contacting the Council are given in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Reason for Contacting The Highland Council**

Reason for Contact	2006 %	2005 %	2004 %	2003 %
To make a payment	38	37	41	34
To obtain a service	37	33	29	34
To make a personal enquiry	28	28	27	25
To make a housing repairs request	11	12	17	12
To make a complaint	11	11	13	12
To make a business enquiry	8	8	8	9
Other	3	8	3	5

Base: Respondents who had contacted The Highland Council during the preceding 12 months (N=969)

Note: Multiple responses were accepted.

The pattern of contacts across the years is broadly consistent. The majority of contacts in the “other” category were either work related, or related in some way to a Council service such as planning applications, or notifying change of address etc.

#### Location of Council Office Contacted

The profile of contacts made in the 12-month period preceding the 2006 survey is shown in Table 2.2 overleaf. The table shows the location of the Council office contacted as well as place of residence of respondents. For comparison, the place of residence of the whole population from the 2001 Census is also provided. There is a close match between the location of the office contacted and the place of residence of respondents.

**Table 2.2 Location of Council Office Contacted**

	<b>Office Contacted 2006 %</b>	<b>Place of Residence 2006 (Respondents) %</b>	<b>Place of Residence (Population) 2001 Census %</b>
Badenoch and Strathspey	4	5	6
Caithness	14	12	12
Inverness	29	24	32
Lochaber	10	11	9
Nairn	4	4	5
Ross and Cromarty	27	29	24
Skye and Lochalsh	7	7	6
Sutherland	6	7	7

Base: Respondents who had contacted The Highland Council during the preceding 12 months (N=958)

**Type of Office Contacted**

The type of office contacted by respondents in the 12-month period preceding the 2006 survey is shown in Table 2.3, below, compared with the corresponding results from previous years.

**Table 2.3 Type of Office Contacted**

	<b>2006 %</b>	<b>2005 %</b>	<b>2004 %</b>	<b>2003 %</b>
Service Point	56	58	51	51
Transport, Environmental and Community Services	10	10	8	8
Housing	10	8	17	13
Planning and Development	7	9	8	8
Finance	3	4	6	7
Education, Culture and Sport	1	2	2	3
Social Work	1	2	1	2
Chief Executive's Office	*	*	*	*
Corporate Services	*	*	1	1
Property and Architectural Services	*	*	*	2
Head Office / no service specified	10	7	6	4

Base: Respondents who had contacted The Highland Council during the preceding 12 months (N=898)  
\* denotes less than 0.5%

**Method of Contact**

The main methods of contact used by respondents to contact The Highland Council are shown in Table 2.4 below.

**Table 2.4 Method of Contact**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
By telephone	54	60	59	56
Personal visit	53	52	53	51
By letter	12	15	14	15
By E-mail	4	5	4	2
During a visit at home by Council staff	2	3	4	3
Through a Councillor	3	1	4	5
By fax	*	1	1	*

Base: Respondents who had contacted The Highland Council during the preceding 12 months (N=969)  
 Note: Multiple responses were accepted.  
 \* denotes less than 0.5%

During the year leading up to the 2006 survey, the most frequently used methods of contacting The Highland Council were telephone (54% of respondents) and personal visits (53%). The pattern of behaviour over time appears to be stable.

**Satisfaction with Information on Highland Council Services**

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the information they receive on Highland Council services. In 2006 the question was asked to all respondents, whereas in previous years it was only asked if someone had contacted The Highland Council during the previous 12 months. The base is therefore larger in 2006 and includes feedback relating to contact that had been made with the Council over a year prior to the survey. The responses are shown in Table 2.5, below.

**Table 2.5 Satisfaction with Information on Highland Council Services**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Very satisfied	20	34	27	12
Fairly satisfied	40	37	39	41
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	31	15	17	31
Fairly dissatisfied	6	8	10	11
Very dissatisfied	4	7	7	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents (N=1,377)

The percentage of respondents indicating satisfaction and dissatisfaction both dropped in 2006, with a corresponding rise in the number of respondents indicating neither.

**Views on Services**

Views were sought on a number of aspects of service received by respondents at their last contact with the Council. These are reported in Table 2.6, below. The table shows the percentage of respondents answering “good” and “poor” under each category for the years 2003 to 2006.

The table is most useful to rank respondents’ views across types of contact. In terms of comparisons with earlier years, the 2006 results show an overall improvement in satisfaction relating to staff performance and personal visits. Satisfaction with services sought via letter, e-mail and fax is relatively stable over time.

67% of requests made to The Highland Council were dealt with by the first person contacted (65% in 2005, 60% in 2004 and 62% in 2003).

**Table 2.6 Views on Contact with The Highland Council**

	2006		2005		2004		2003	
	“Good” %	“Poor” %	“Good” %	“Poor” %	“Good” %	“Poor” %	“Good” %	“Poor” %
<b><i>For all types of contact:</i></b>								
Helpfulness of staff	73	6	69	8	68	7	68	8
How well the staff understood what was wanted	76	5	71	7	69	7	69	7
Overall satisfaction with the service given	68	12	64	14	62	14	62	16
<b><i>For personal visits:</i></b>								
Waiting time	61	8	54	15	58	9	57	12
Privacy	44	23	32	27	36	28	29	32
Ability to reach the right person	63	12	49	17	51	14	54	11
Facilities for people with a disability	60	8	52	12	45	20	45	19
Opening hours	56	7	53	7	51	6	59	5
<b><i>For telephone contact:</i></b>								
Speed with which the telephone was answered	60	5	59	7	56	7	63	5
How easy it was to get through to someone who could help	57	12	55	16	50	16	46	13
Opening hours	53	5	54	5	51	6	56	6
<b><i>For letter, e-mail and fax:</i></b>								
Length of time taken for a response	37	21	38	24	37	23	33	27

Base: N ranges from 312 to 882

**Additional Advice/Support Available Through Service Points**

Respondents were asked what additional advice or support they would like to access through Highland Council Service Points. Multiple responses were accepted to the question. The ranking in 2006 is similar to previous years. The most sought after service via a Service Point was *Access to a local Councillor*, followed by *Information and Advice on Benefits*. In addition to those listed in Table 2.7, a small number of other responses were given which included recycling and waste management information (less than 1%).

**Table 2.7 Additional Advice or Support Respondents Would Like to See Accessed Through Highland Council Service Points**

<b>Type of Additional Advice/Support</b>	<b>2006 %</b>	<b>2005 %</b>	<b>2004 %</b>	<b>2003 %</b>
Access to local councillor	41	47	52	41
Benefits information and advice	38	40	45	38
Information on jobs	31	33	32	22
Drop in surgeries for Planning	28	33	29	28
Drop in surgeries for other Council service	22	26	28	23
Tourist information	22	24	22	24
Careers advice	16	22	18	12
Community meeting space	14	14	14	10
Support to return to start work	13	15	16	13
Drop-in surgeries for Social Work	3	12	14	10
Other	1	2	3	4

Base: All respondents (N=948)  
Multiple responses permitted.

## Contacting The Highland Council

Respondents were asked which methods they would use to contact The Highland Council if all the methods listed below in Table 2.8 were available to them. The ranking of options was almost identical in 2006 compared with previous years.

**Table 2.8 Methods Participants would Use to Contact the Council**

	2006 %	2005 %	2004 %	2003 %
Telephone	77	81	84	84
Personal Visit to Office / Service Point	54	64	66	62
Letter	54	59	60	61
Personal Computer at Home	52	55	47	41
Touch Screen Information Point	32	36	29	19
Through a Councillor	24	29	32	35
Electronic Information Point in Post Office	18	19	21	13
Public access computer (e.g. in a school, library)	14	16	17	12
Fax	10	13	12	7
Interactive Television	9	14	11	11
Video Game Console	2	2	2	1

Base: All respondents (N=1,381)

Note: Multiple responses were accepted.

Respondents were also asked to list which were the three most important methods of contacting the Council. The ranking in 2006 was very similar to previous years, namely:

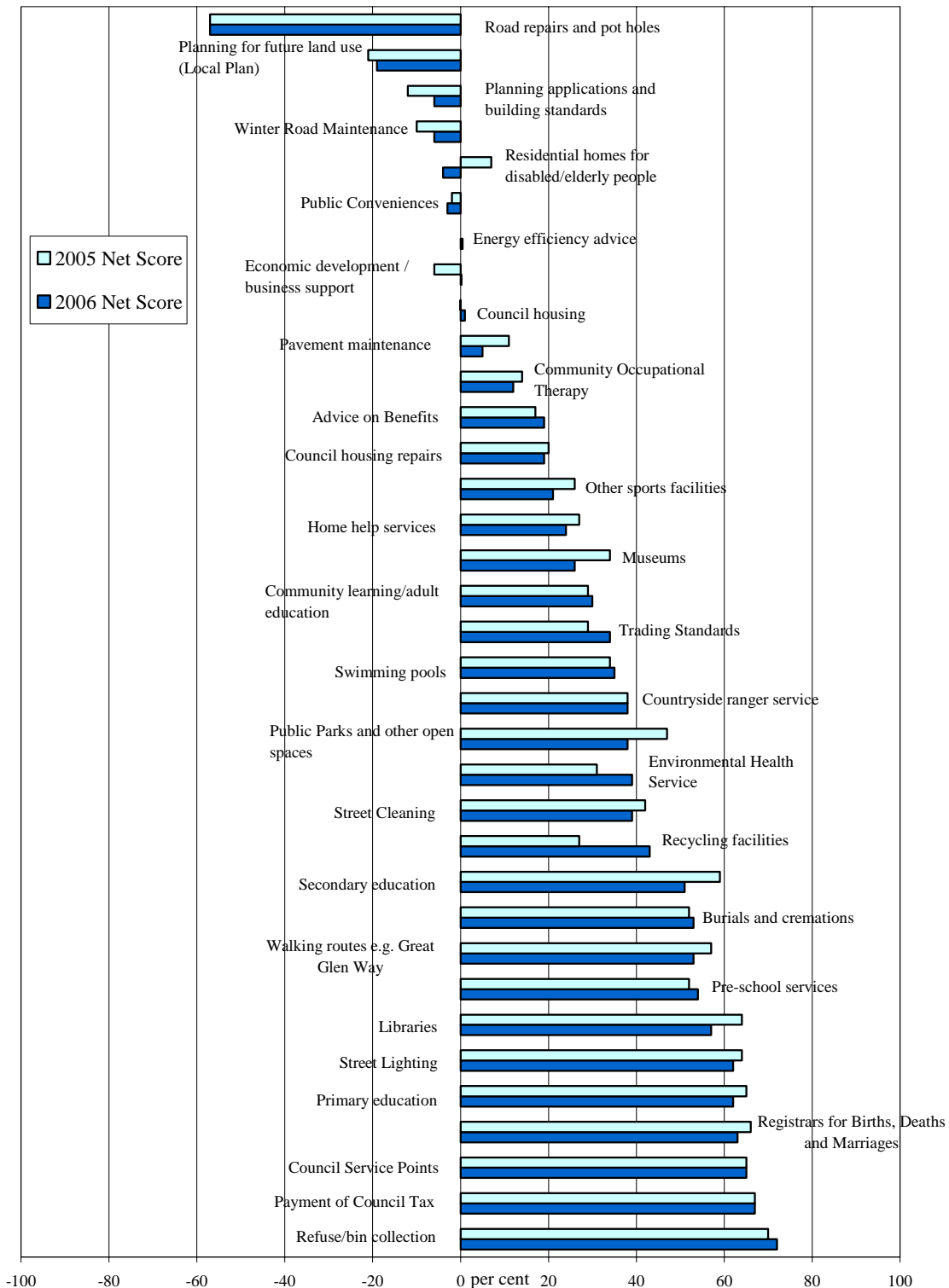
- Telephone 72%
- Personal Visit to Office / Service Point 49%
- Personal Computer at Home 47%

Overall, 90% of respondents felt that it was easy to contact the Council compared with 89% in 2005, 88% in 2004 and 86% in 2003.

### Section Three: Satisfaction with Services

The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate their satisfaction with a range of services on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high). A “net score” is shown in Chart 3.1, below. The net score is the percentage of respondents who said “very satisfied” or “satisfied” minus the percentage who said “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied”. The chart shows the corresponding score in 2005, where available. Appendix 1 provides 2003 to 2006 data.

**Chart 3.1 Satisfaction with Services Net Score** (Base: All respondents)



The most notable increase in satisfaction in 2006 was for recycling facilities, which follows a rise in satisfaction in all three previous years. Other notable improvements in satisfaction included Environmental Health Services, Trading Standards and Winter Road Maintenance.

Notable decreases in satisfaction in 2006 included Residential Homes for the Elderly/Disabled (an issue which had featured prominently during the year as The Highland Council considered options for future provision of residential care). Public Parks and Other Open Spaces and Secondary Education also experienced notable decreases in satisfaction. Energy Efficiency Advice (which had a neutral score) was a new service introduced in the 2006 survey, therefore no comparison with 2005 is possible.

### Importance of Services

Respondents were also asked to rank services by importance. Table 3.1 lists the same services as shown in Chart 3.1, showing the percentage of respondents who mentioned a particular service as one of their top five in terms of importance to them. The list of the five most important services has been stable since 2003.

**Table 3.1 Importance of Services: Appearance in Top Five** (Base: All respondents)

Service	2006 %	2005 %	2004 %	2003 %
Road repairs and pot holes	48	52	47	55
Refuse/bin collection	46	43	39	45
Winter Road Maintenance	44	49	53	61
Recycling facilities	37	37	34	28
Primary education	24	26	21	23
Secondary education	21	22	18	18
Street Lighting	19	10	13	15
Street Cleaning	18	21	22	22
Pavement maintenance	17	16	17	23
Libraries	16	14	18	18
Swimming pools	16	17	16	14
Other sports facilities	15	15	15	11
Payment of Council Tax	15	14	12	15
Council Service Points	14	14	19	15
Public Conveniences	12	8	10	12
Public Parks and other open spaces	12	17	19	16
Council housing	10	10	13	7
Pre-school services	10	11	8	9
Residential homes for disabled/elderly people	10	8	10	13
Environmental Health Service	9	7	8	9
Planning for future land use (Local Plan)	9	14	14	12
Energy efficiency advice	7	n/a	n/a	n/a
Home help services	7	7	7	8
Planning applications and building standards	7	12	9	9
Community learning/adult education	6	4	6	5
Council housing repairs	6	7	11	7

(continued over..)

**Table 3.1 continued**

Walking routes e.g. Great Glen Way	6	7	7	4
Advice on Benefits	5	7	6	n/a
Burials and cremations	3	2	1	4
Community Occupational Therapy	3	3	4	n/a
Economic development / business support	3	4	4	4
Registrars for Births, Deaths and Marriages	3	2	1	2
Countryside ranger service	2	1	3	1
Museums	2	3	4	3
Trading Standards	2	2	2	3

Base: All respondents (N=1,308)

### Satisfaction with the Council

80% of respondents stated that they were satisfied with the services provided by the Council, compared with 78% in 2005, 75% in 2004 and 78% in 2003.

Satisfaction ranged from 84% in Lochaber to 73% in Sutherland. A greater proportion of females (82%) reported overall satisfaction with the services provided by the Council compared with males (77%). Generally, satisfaction rates rose with age, from 79% satisfaction among under 35 year olds to 90% among the over 75 age group.

A further measure of satisfaction is provided in Table 3.2, below, which shows the responses when people were asked if they were more or less satisfied with The Highland Council's performance this year than in the previous year. General satisfaction by this measure is similar in 2006 compared with previous years.

**Table 3.2 Change in Satisfaction with Services**

	2006	2005	2004	2003
	%	%	%	%
More satisfied	7	7	5	5
About the same	70	68	73	76
Less satisfied	17	16	16	15
Don't know	6	11	7	5

Base: All respondents (N=1,408)

### Most Important Features of The Highland Council

From a list of features of the Council and its staff, respondents were asked to select the five most important to them. The percentage of respondents including each aspect in their top five is reported in Table 3.3, overleaf.

The ranking in 2006 was very similar to previous years. Over half of all respondents thought it important to maintain good quality local services; to listen to local people, and to provide value for money.

In addition to calls for greater efficiency, quality of service and value for money, there was an increase in importance given to extended opening hours and being able to fill in forms on the internet.

**Table 3.3 Five Most Important Features of the Council**

	2006	2005	2004	2003
	%	%	%	%
To maintain good quality local services	77	75	75	76
To listen to local people	55	55	57	54
To provide value for money	59	55	53	52
To involve locals in how the Council spends its money	47	49	46	46
To be efficient	57	42	44	41
To tell local people what it is doing	37	37	39	37
To treat all residents fairly	33	32	34	34
To treat all areas it serves fairly	29	28	26	31
To be helpful	24	25	28	n/a
To support local businesses by sourcing goods locally	22	25	24	n/a
To be friendly	12	12	12	n/a
To be a fair employer	8	9	11	n/a
To be able to request forms and services by phone, fax or internet	9	9	6	n/a
To have extended opening hours beyond 9 to 5	11	8	7	n/a
To be able to fill in forms on the internet	9	7	5	n/a

Base: All respondents (N=1,417)

Note: Multiple responses were accepted.

### Complaints to The Highland Council

12% of respondents had made a complaint about one or more Council services during the year preceding the 2006 survey (13% in 2005, 13% in 2004 and 12% in 2003).

Table 3.4, below, shows which services were the subject of complaint during the year leading up to the 2006 and previous surveys. TEC Services and Housing continued to receive most complaints, although the changes in percentages between the years may not be statistically significant due to the relatively small sub-sample.

**Table 3.4 Complaints to The Highland Council**

Service	2006	2005	2004	2003
	%	%	%	%
Transport, Environmental and Community Services	56	61	46	68
Housing	16	15	18	19
No service specified	10	7	7	1
Social Work	6	2	-	2
Planning and Development	5	10	7	5
Education, Culture and Sport	5	4	8	7
Finance	4	10	16	2
Chief Executive's Office	2	-	-	-

Base: 166 respondents who provided details about a complaint to The Highland Council

Note: Multiple responses were accepted.

**Table 3.5 Satisfaction with How The Highland Council Handled Complaints**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Very satisfied	5	5	6	8
Fairly satisfied	17	15	10	17
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	15	18	12	12
Fairly dissatisfied	27	22	33	25
Very dissatisfied	37	41	38	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: 162 respondents

Overall, the satisfaction levels were similar in 2006 in relation to how complaints were handled by The Highland Council compared with previous years. Please note that the base for these findings is only 162 respondents.

### **Views of The Highland Council**

Respondents were asked in general terms whether the Council exceeded or fell short of their expectations. The responses are shown below in Table 3.6. The results show consistency across the four years.

**Table 3.6 Expectations of the Council**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Greatly exceeds expectations	2	1	1	1
Slightly exceeds expectations	5	6	5	4
Is about what is expected	58	58	57	58
Falls slightly short of expectations	23	25	24	26
Falls a long way short of expectations	10	10	12	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents (N=1,377)

Respondents were asked to indicate which of a list of words and phrases they thought applied to The Highland Council. The results are shown in Table 3.7 below. Both the overall ranking and absolute scores are fairly consistent over the years, with no notable trends. The three phrases which consistently head the list are:

- Friendly
- Under-funded
- Does the best it can with the money available

Whereas it is seen to be under-funded and to do the best it can with limited resources, respondents consistently feel that 'good value for money' is not a phrase they readily associate with The Highland Council. The phrase consistently appears at the bottom of the ranking.

**Table 3.7 Words/Phrases which Apply to The Highland Council**

	2006	2005	2004	2003
	%	%	%	%
Friendly	43	40	41	41
Under-funded	42	44	50	48
Does the best it can with the money available	39	45	45	49
Bureaucratic	26	28	26	25
Keen to help	22	27	26	25
Faceless	18	20	20	22
Informative	18	20	18	21
Efficient	18	19	17	18
Unaccountable	18	16	18	16
Hardworking	16	15	16	17
Honest	12	14	16	12
Good at representing people of the Highlands	12	14	15	16
Infuriating	12	13	13	11
Unresponsive	11	14	13	11
Aware of people's needs	10	15	13	14
Provides high quality services	9	9	7	8
Caring	7	11	9	10
Open	7	10	9	9
Good value for money	6	6	5	7

Base: All participants (N=1,348)

Note: Multiple responses were accepted.

**General Comments About the Performance of The Highland Council**

Respondents were invited to give comments about the performance of The Highland Council in an open question. The main topic areas are shown in Table 3.8 below.

In total, 536 comments were received, including multiple comments by the same respondent. Mostly the question was taken as an opportunity to make critical comments, although 10% of respondents answering the question indicated their satisfaction with the performance of The Highland Council.

**Table 3.8 Comments About the Performance of The Highland Council**

	<b>Response %</b>
Good service/satisfied/staff helpful	10
Variable quality of service/staffing	10
Inefficient use of resources/money wasting	10
Better up-keep of roads (general)	8
Issues with the planning decisions/planning process	6
More recycling facilities	5
Council housing/housing repairs	5
Less bureaucracy at The Highland Council	5
Council tax too high	5
Unhappy with Gaelic road signs/money on Gaelic in general	3
Less centralisation around Inverness	3
Negative comments about Councillors	3
Better winter maintenance of roads	2
School cutbacks/education complaints	2
Poor care of elderly/loss of residential homes	2
Poor/lack of leisure facilities	2
Hard to contact/communication difficult	2
The Highland Council is unaccountable	2
Concern at Inverness infrastructure/old town decline	2
Poor cleanliness of streets and parks	2
Overstaffed/poor management	2
Poor/lack of access to public toilet facilities	1
Road signage issues	1
More information	1
More dog bins/less dog fouling	1
Loss of local power/Scottish Executive controlled	1
Poor pavement maintenance	1
State of play parks	1
Under-funding/lack of investment	1

Base: 536 responses

### Communication about the Performance of The Highland Council

A new question was added to the 2006 survey which asked respondents to indicate which from a list of suggestions would be their preferred means of communication about the performance of The Highland Council.

**Table 3.9 Preferred Means of Communication about the Performance of The Highland Council**

	<b>Response %</b>
Included with the booklet received with council tax information	45
A separate newsletter	37
Written information from service points and other offices	26
Published on the Council's web pages	25
As a newspaper insert	23

Base: All respondents (N=1,327)

Note: Multiple responses were accepted.

## Section Four

### Children, Families and Communities

This section of the questionnaire was introduced in 2004.

#### Sense of Belonging to a Community

Overall, 72% of respondents felt that their community provides a sense of belonging to “some” or a “great extent” (68% in 2005 and 69% in 2004). Respondents in Inverness (59%) were least likely to think so, whereas respondents in Caithness, Sutherland, Skye and Lochalsh were most likely to feel that way (all over 80%).

**Table 4.1 To what extent does the area where you live provide you with a sense of belonging to a community?**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
To a great extent	20	21	21
To some extent	52	47	48
Not really	21	25	23
Not at all	6	6	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents (N=1,374)

#### Involvement in the Community

Overall, 45% of respondents felt they were “very” or “fairly involved” in the life of their community (48% in 2005 and 46% in 2004). By comparison, residents in Sutherland (63%) and Badenoch and Strathspey (62%) were the most likely to feel involved in their community, whereas residents of Inverness (32%) were the least likely.

**Table 4.2 How involved are you in the life of your community?**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Very involved	9	8	7
Fairly involved	36	40	39
Not really	43	41	42
Not at all	12	11	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents (N=1,389)

**Attitude to People Coming to Live from Outside the Highlands**

Overall, 82% of respondents felt to a “great” or “some extent” that their community is accepting of people coming to live here from outside the Highlands (82% in 2005 and 85% in 2004). There were no clear geographical differences.

**Table 4.3 To what extent do you feel your community is accepting of people coming to live here from outside the Highlands?**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
To a great extent	22	25	26
To some extent	60	57	59
Not really	15	14	11
Not at all	4	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents (N=1,381)

**Sense of Safety within the Community**

Peoples’ perceptions of how safe their community feels is reported below in Table 4.4. The scores represent the percentage of respondents who indicated that their community feels like a safe place “to a great extent” plus those who said “to some extent”. Comparison cannot be made prior to the 2005 survey.

**Table 4.4 To what extent does your community feel like a safe place to be in?**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
	<b>score</b>	<b>score</b>
You	94	93
Your family	92	93
Parents and toddlers	89	91
Young children	86	88
Newcomers to the area	86	*
Older people	82	84
Teenagers (girls)	81	82
Teenagers (boys)	81	83

Base: All respondents (N ranges from 1,060 to 1,333)

\* not asked in previous years

The extent to which people are worried about certain activities in their neighbourhood is reported below in Table 4.5. The scores represent the percentage of respondents who indicated that they were worried “to a great extent” plus those who said “to some extent”. The ranking is almost identical to 2005.

**Table 4.5 To what extent are you worried about any of the following activities in your neighbourhood?**

	<b>2006 score</b>	<b>2005 score</b>
Speeding cars	76	73
Dog fouling/littering	68	*
Anti-social behaviour by young people	59	60
Drink/drugs on the streets	59	55
Youth crime	54	54
Damage to property	51	50
Violent behaviour	42	39
Housebreaking	39	28
Noisy neighbours	31	29
Child abuse	27	28

Base: All respondents (N ranges from 1,207 to 1,311)

\* not asked in previous years

### Other Aspects of the Community

Respondents were asked to rate their community in terms of six amenities. The results are shown below in Table 4.6. A scoring system is used which adds “very good” and “good” and subtracts “acceptable” and “poor”. The question was not asked in 2003.

**Table 4.6 Rating the Local Community in Terms of Amenities**

	<b>2006 score</b>	<b>2005 score</b>	<b>2004 score</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Schools	27	30	47
Health care	22	5	31
Shops	-19	-2	8
Transport	-20	-23	-32
Leisure facilities	-30	-26	6
Other services	-34	-33	n/a

Base: All respondents (N ranges from 1,136 to 1,362)

### Antisocial and Offending Behaviour

A new question was asked in the 2006 survey which sought views about services that address antisocial and offending behaviour among children and young people. The findings are presented below in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7 Views about Antisocial and Offending Behaviour**

	High %	Moderate %	Low %	Don't Know
Level of awareness	17	45	23	15
Confidence that the community concerns are addressed	6	43	31	20
Confidence that effective action would be taken by the relevant agencies	8	48	31	14
Opinion of overall quality	6	51	27	16

Base: All respondents (N ranges from 1,275 to 1,340)

### Support from Services Addressing Antisocial and Offending Behaviour

During the 12 month period preceding the 2006 survey, 13 respondents (less than 1% of the sample) indicated that children or young people in their family had received support from services addressing antisocial and offending behaviour. These respondents were asked to rate certain aspects of the support they had received. The results are shown below in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8 Rating of Response from Support Services**

	Highly	Moderate	Low	Don't Know
(absolute number of responses)				
Joined up working between agencies	1	7	3	1
Quickness of response	2	5	4	-
Sharing the necessary information with those who require it	1	7	1	1
The appropriateness of the support	1	8	2	-
The outcomes achieved	1	1	9	-

Base: N=11 / 12 respondents

## Section Five

### Child Protection and the Role of the Community

Respondents were asked about their awareness of public information regarding child safety in their community. Overall, 33% of respondents were either very aware or fairly aware of such information (30% in 2005). There were no notable differences between geographic areas. There are no corresponding data for Tables 5.1 and 5.2 prior to 2005.

**Table 5.1 Awareness of Public Information about how Members of the Community Can Help in Keeping Children Safe**

	2006 %	2005 %
Very aware	7	8
Fairly aware	26	22
Barely aware	28	16
Not aware	30	37
Don't know	9	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents (N=1,336)

Respondents were asked how likely they would be to contact various individuals and agencies if they believed that a child needed protection. The scores in Table 5.2, below, show the percentage of respondents who indicated either "very likely" or "very likely".

**Table 5.2 If you believed that a child needed protection, how likely would you be to contact any of the following?**

	2006 score	2005 score
Police officer	84	86
Social worker	65	65
Child's school or nursery	65	63
Local GP	60	55
Ring Childline (or similar)	55	56
Parents or carer	54	54
Health visitor	54	52
Another relative	52	52
A neighbour	47	48
School nurse	44	45
Minister or priest	29	33
Children's reporter	29	29

Base: All respondents (N ranges from 891 to 1,142)

Three new questions about care and welfare services were added in the 2006 survey. Views about a number of aspects of care and welfare services are reported below in Table 5.3. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which certain statements reflected their views.

**Table 5.3 Extent to Which Statements Reflect Respondents' Views About Care and Welfare Services for Children**

	High	Moderate	Low	Don't Know
Level of awareness	9	41	34	16
Confidence that community concerns are addressed	6	46	23	25
Confidence that effective action would be taken by the relevant agencies	10	43	22	25
Opinion on overall quality	7	44	19	30
Opinion on what is being done to support children who need support specifically from child protection services	8	38	18	36

Base: N ranges from 1,205 to 1,247

During the 12 month period preceding the 2006 survey, 68 respondents (slightly less than 5% of the sample) indicated that children or young people in their family had received support from care or welfare services. These respondents were asked to rate certain aspects of the support they had received. 38 respondents did so and the results are shown below in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4 Rating of Response from Care or Welfare Services**

	High	Moderate	Low	Don't Know
(absolute number of responses)				
Joined up working between agencies	4	19	11	2
Quickness of response	11	6	19	-
Sharing the necessary information with those who require it	8	9	20	-
The appropriateness of the support	8	15	15	-
The outcomes achieved	9	8	19	-

Base: N ranges from 36 to 38

## Appendix 1      Satisfaction with Services Scores 2003 – 2006

The net score is the percentage of respondents who said “very satisfied” or “satisfied” minus the percentage who said “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied”.

	2006 Net Score	2005 Net Score	2004 Net Score	2003 Net Score
Refuse/bin collection	72	70	74	68
Payment of Council Tax	67	67	65	66
Council Service Points	65	65	64	67
Primary education	63	66	61	59
Registrars for Births, Deaths and Marriages	62	65	59	56
Street Lighting	62	64	62	59
Libraries	57	64	60	69
Pre-school services	54	52	40	54
Walking routes e.g. Great Glen Way	53	57	59	n/a
Burials and cremations	53	52	53	54
Secondary education	51	59	46	50
Recycling facilities	43	27	-3	-8
Street Cleaning	39	42	34	27
Environmental Health Service	39	31	29	30
Public Parks and other open spaces	38	47	44	46
Countryside ranger service	38	38	40	25
Swimming pools	35	34	37	41
Trading Standards	34	29	27	30
Community learning/adult education	30	29	33	35
Museums	26	34	34	42
Home help services	24	27	19	31
Other sports facilities	21	26	25	25
Council housing repairs	19	20	17	17
Advice on Benefits	19	17	n/a	n/a
Community Occupational Therapy	12	14	6	n/a
Pavement maintenance	5	11	2	-16
Council housing	1	0	1	15
Economic development / business support	0.2	-6	-5	14
Energy efficiency advice	0.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
Public Conveniences	-3	-2	1	4
Residential homes for disabled/elderly people	-4	7	7	14
Winter Road Maintenance	-6	-10	-14	-22
Planning applications and building standards	-6	-12	-16	13
Planning for future land use (Local Plan)	-19	-21	-28	-10
Road repairs and pot holes	-57	-57	-57	-52

**Appendix 2**  
**2006 Survey Questionnaire**