

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>PLANNING</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>30 August 2016</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>RESULTS OF PLANNING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY FROM (April – June)</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>Anna Clare Specialist Advisor - Planning</b>

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<b>WARDS</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>This report provides a summary of responses to the Customer Satisfaction Survey for the period April 2016 to June 2016.</b>
<b>CONTACT</b>	<b>Anna Clare</b> <a href="mailto:anna.clare@eastbourne.gov.uk">anna.clare@eastbourne.gov.uk</a>
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>That Members note the content of this report</b>

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1** Since June 2015 we have been taking part in a National Project to improve the way local council planning departments work. This has been run/facilitated by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) and includes a Customer Satisfaction Survey.
- 1.2** This survey is sent to all Applicants and Agents following our decision on their planning applications, and also those who made representations on applications (where an email address is available). This survey requests their views on how well we had dealt with the applications.
- 1.3** The results of this survey were previously reported to Planning Committee in February. The purpose of this report is to update Members on subsequent responses and improvements which have been implemented to our service following survey responses.

## **2. Update on Improvements/Recommendations raised in previous reports**

2.1 New website - Remains outstanding:- As set out in previous reports, a new website (showing the planning pages) has been developed to improve how members of the public view applications and comment online. At present the roll out of this enhancement is planned for late 2016 after being delayed.

2.2 Customer contact via the web – remains outstanding:- It will be ensured that the new website is clear that comments on planning applications are limited to 2000 characters and that the page will 'time out' after a period of time which has been commented on by a few interested parties through the Customer Satisfaction Survey.

2.3 Neighbour Consultation Letter Improvements – remains outstanding:- Improvements to the neighbour consultation letter to make it clearer how to comment online and view the application documents and decision, is reliant on the improvements to the website (timeline as above). Therefore this update to the consultation letter will be finalised following the implementation of the new 'My Service Planning' website. At present it is felt that the consultation letter is clear how to access the documents and decision of an application.

2.4 Ongoing training for issues highlighted:- Training for those indexing planning documents continues, to improve (shorten) the time it takes from receipt to indexing and the quality of indexing.

### **3. New comments from last quarter responses**

3.1 Pre Application:- A comment was received that pre-application advice had been useful and informed their application which was dealt with more promptly when submitted as the correct information was submitted etc. We encourage pre-application discussions on more complex applications and continue to offer this as a free service.

3.2 Inform of Decision:- Further comments were made that those commenting on the application are not informed of the outcome. The current neighbour notification letter makes it clear that all applications can be tracked-monitored online and for those that are commenting on the web text will be inserted on the new website to mirror the advice. In addition following the launch of the new website the neighbour notification letter will need to be rebuilt (new web links etc.) and at this time text will be inserted outlining that if you formally request to be informed of the outcome of the application then the Council will use its best endeavours to inform/update.

3.3 Prompt Decision:- A comment was received that the process had been quicker than expected for the Agent, and two comments that the Planning Officer had been very helpful and responded quickly to emails.

3.4 Payment for planning applications online:- A comment requesting payment for planning applications online was submitted. This is something that has frequently been raised times that payment is only available either by submitting an application via the portal or by cheque which is not convenient for all people. This is being looked into but falls outside of Specialist Advisors control.

3.5 Type of Decision may influence response:- The majority of neighbour comments could not differentiate between how the decision was made, how the application was advertised or how easy it was to view the documents and why the decision was made. The majority of comments from neighbours/interested parties is that they do not agree with the decision.

### **4. Survey Response Data**

4.1 The following charts show the outcomes of the survey comparing the whole survey period date with the last quarter responses. The left hand column contains current survey period in isolation April – June 2016 and right hand column contains entire survey period June 2015 – June 2016.

4.2 Attached below are a series of graphs that show the survey data

## Agents

Table 1: How helpful were the council in dealing with your application?

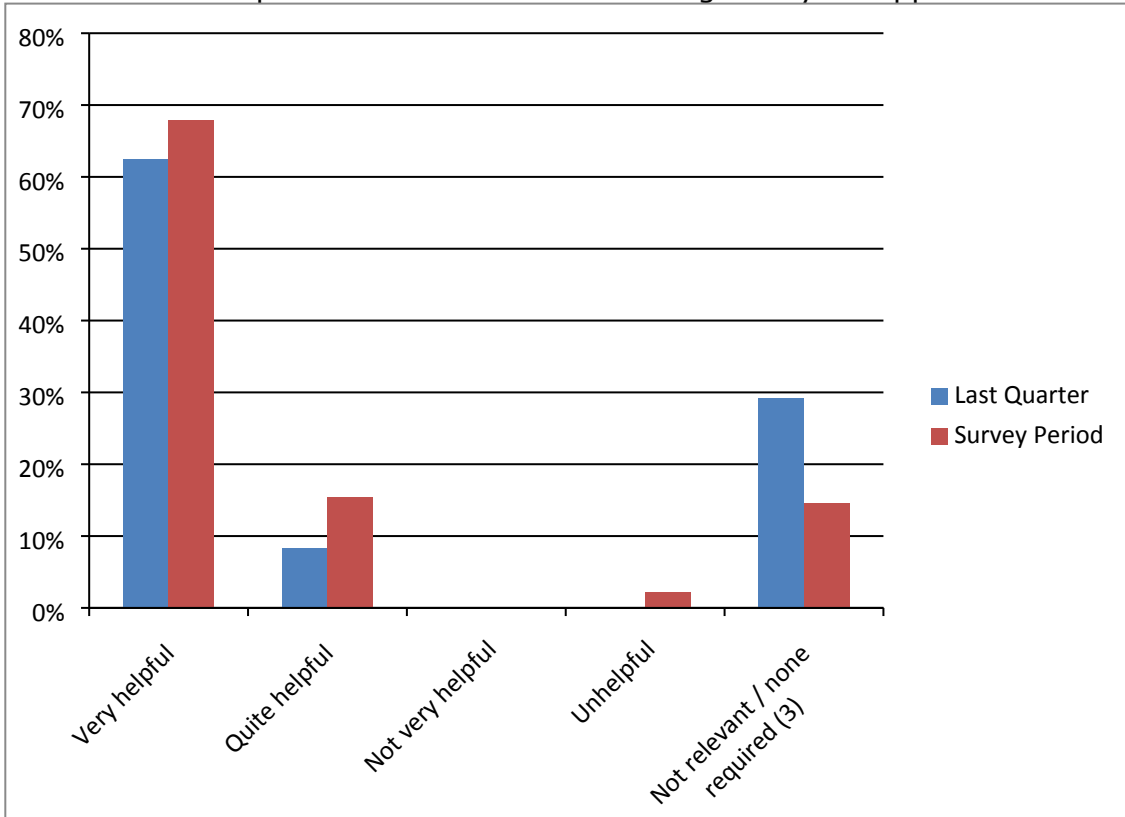


Table 2: How well did the council manage the time taken to make a decision?

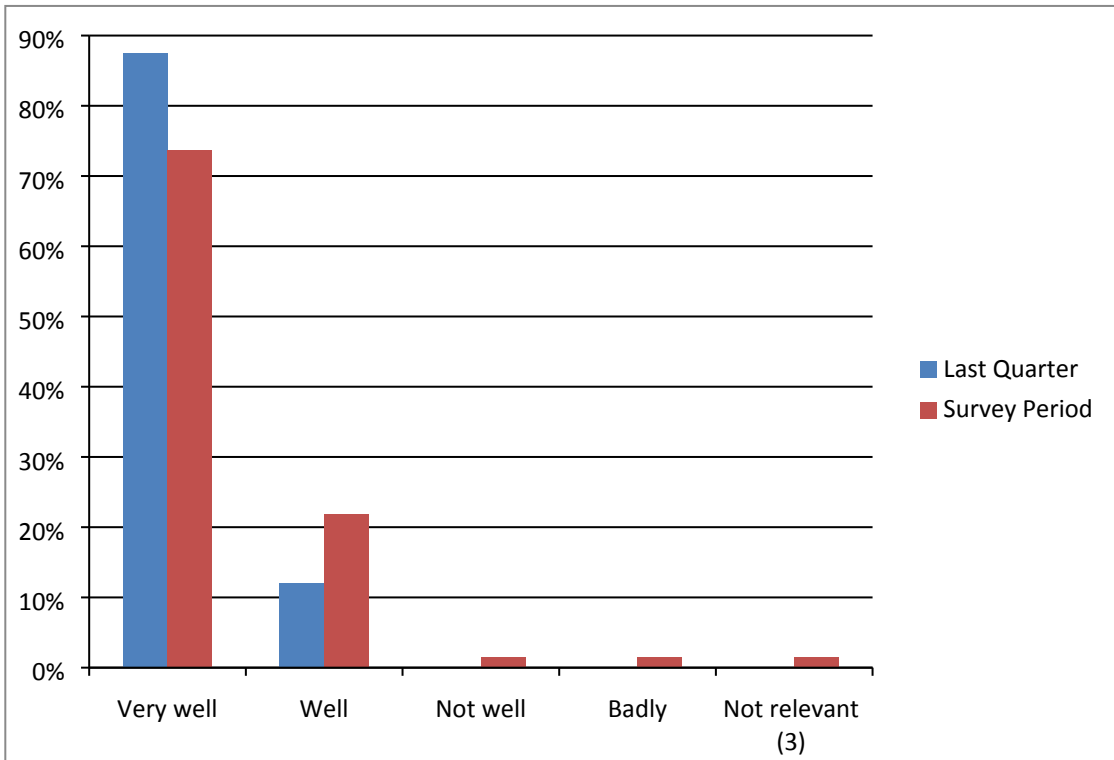


Table 3: The council usually asks you to send in supporting information with the planning application. Did they use this supporting information well?

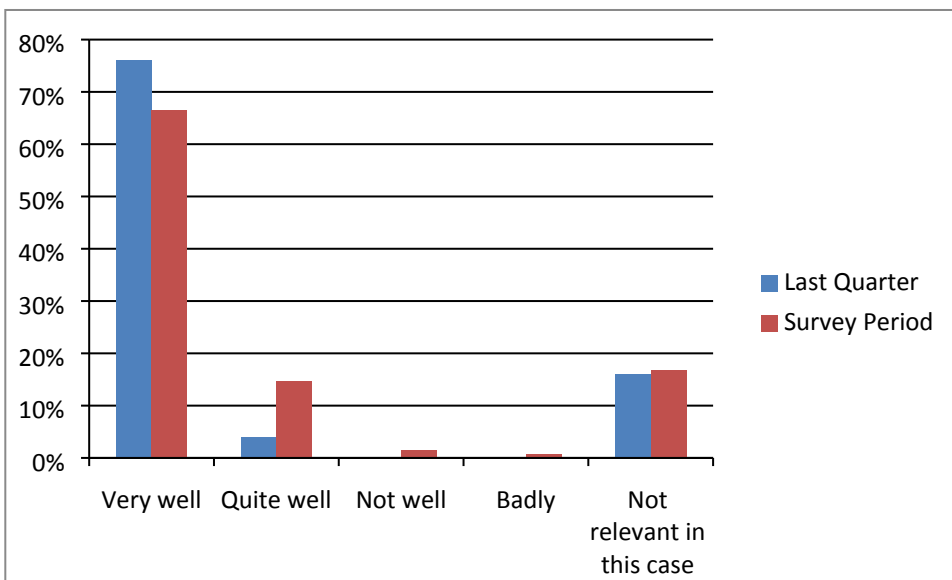
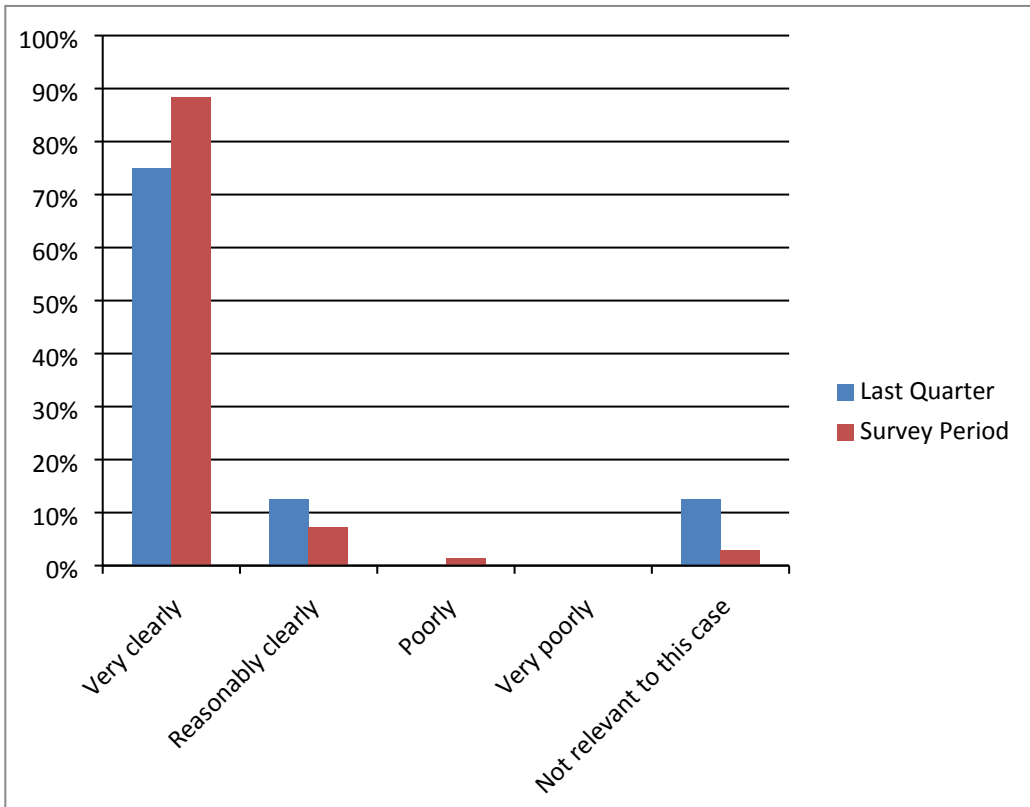


Table 4: How clearly did the council explain its decision?



Those who commented on applications (Neighbours) Table 5: How did you find out about this application?

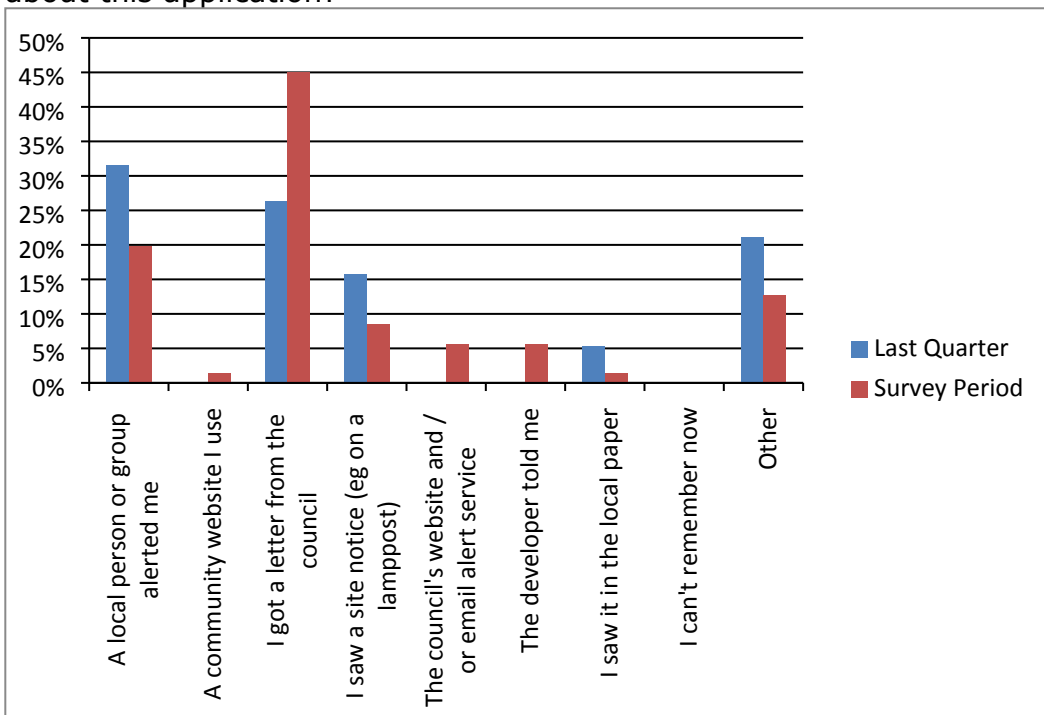


Table 6: How we assess planning applications can sometimes be difficult to comprehend. How well did we help you understand the planning process and engage with it?

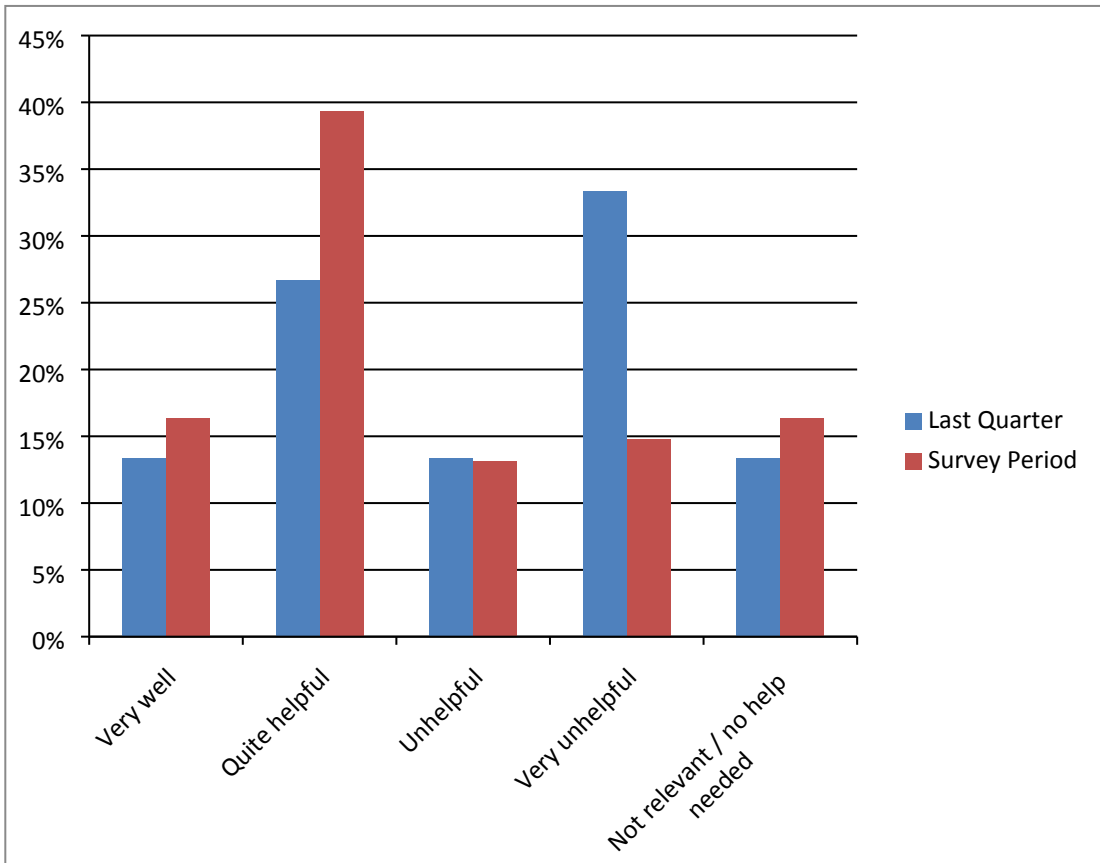


Table 7: Our job is to make a decision as quickly as possible but also to listen to people's views. Did we get this balance right in this case?

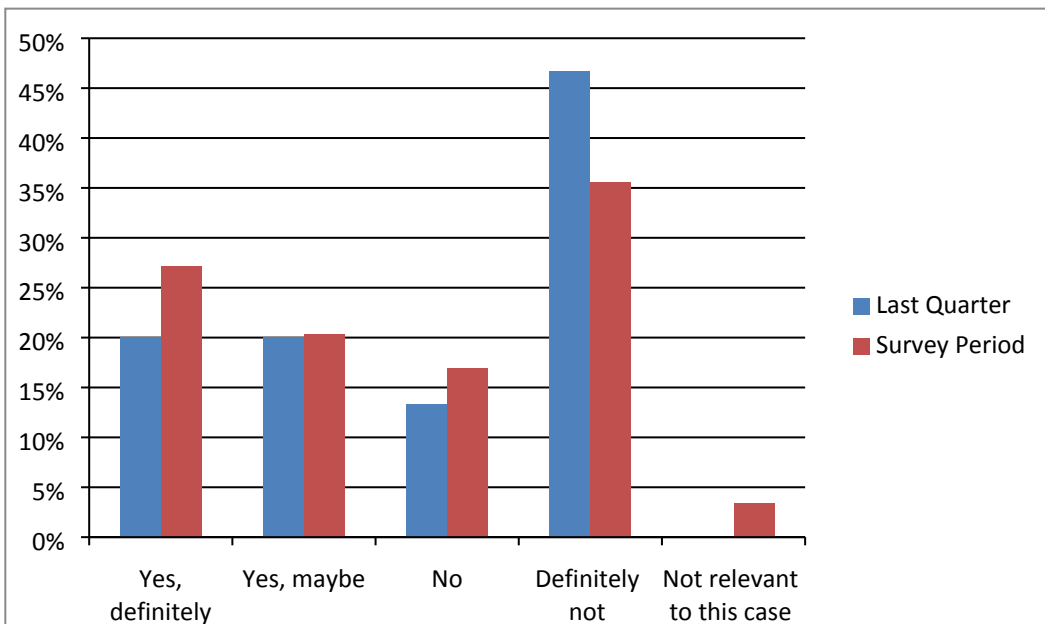


Table 8: Did our website and the paperwork from the application help you understand the proposal?

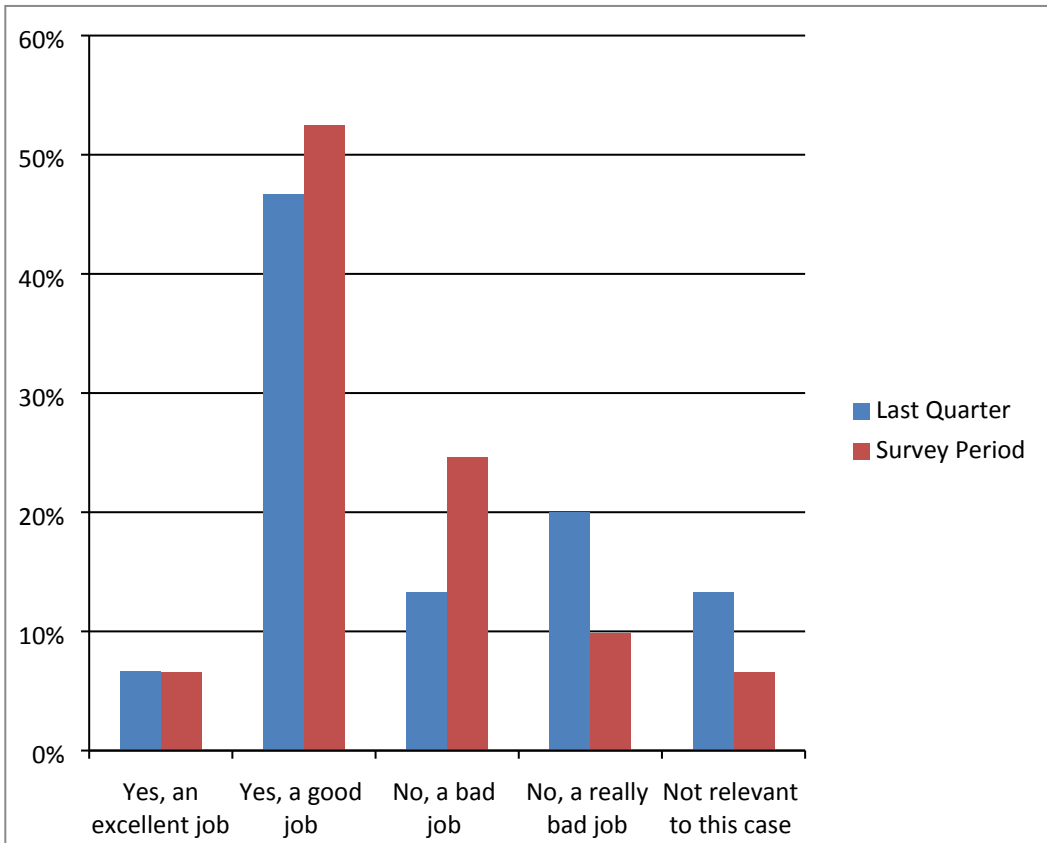


Table 9: How clearly did we explain the reasons for the decision we made?

