

Highways Customer Panel

November 2016 Survey Data, Results and Analysis



SURREY

Document Details

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Introduction

Once again I would like to extend my thanks to our Customer Panel for their continued feedback and input into our surveys.

You are now an established and committed group of customers and stakeholders providing feedback to us three times a year.

Over the past year you have helped us by providing feedback on the services we provide and by helping us to put together our forward plan of feedback subjects.

The results of this survey show us that we still have work to do to improve our customer's experience and we will balance this with our current financial challenge.

As the Customer Panel has been established since 2015 we are starting to see emerging trends in levels of customer satisfaction: in general and within the data received for our themes and subjects.

Our ongoing goal is to continue to harness the valuable information provided by you, in everything we do.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Dawson'.

Michael Dawson
Customer Service &
Improvement Manager

Executive Summary

This report presents data collected from the fifth Highways Customer Panel survey released 23 November 2016 and closed 31 December 2016.

The survey asked questions about overall customer satisfaction and the theme that appeared in this survey was: Vegetation.

There is a forward plan of subjects that will be included into future Customer Panel surveys at appendix A. These subjects may change or be added to.

The Customer Panel survey will always include three standard questions. Within this survey, these standard questions appeared as 3, 4 and 5. Asking the standard questions allows a comparison from the previous survey. This information can be seen on page 10, 11 and 12 within this report.

The survey was sent to 1497 customers by email and 601 responses were received which is a response rate of 40%. The previous Customer Panel survey from July 2016 received a response rate of 70%.

The Results

The results of the survey are mainly presented in graph format. The question asked is displayed and followed by the number of responses received to that question.

The survey included a mixture of open, closed and multiple choice questions. Some questions were compulsory and some were not, which is reflected within the number of responses.

The survey results will not immediately affect the way that Surrey County Council Highways and Transport Service deliver services to its customers. The information is used in a number of ways.

The results help design the policies that guide service delivery. There is a list of these policies and guides below:

The Highway Safety [Inspection Policy](#)

The [Customer Charter](#)

[Project Horizon](#) (current in-year programme)

Our [Highways and Transport Strategic Business Plan 2016-2021](#) and the Highways and Transport Asset Management Strategy (to be published in winter 2016).

Other areas improved as a result of feedback received from the Customer Panel are summarised in the Customer Panel Annual Summary. Current members of the Customer Panel will receive an emailed copy of the Annual Summary.

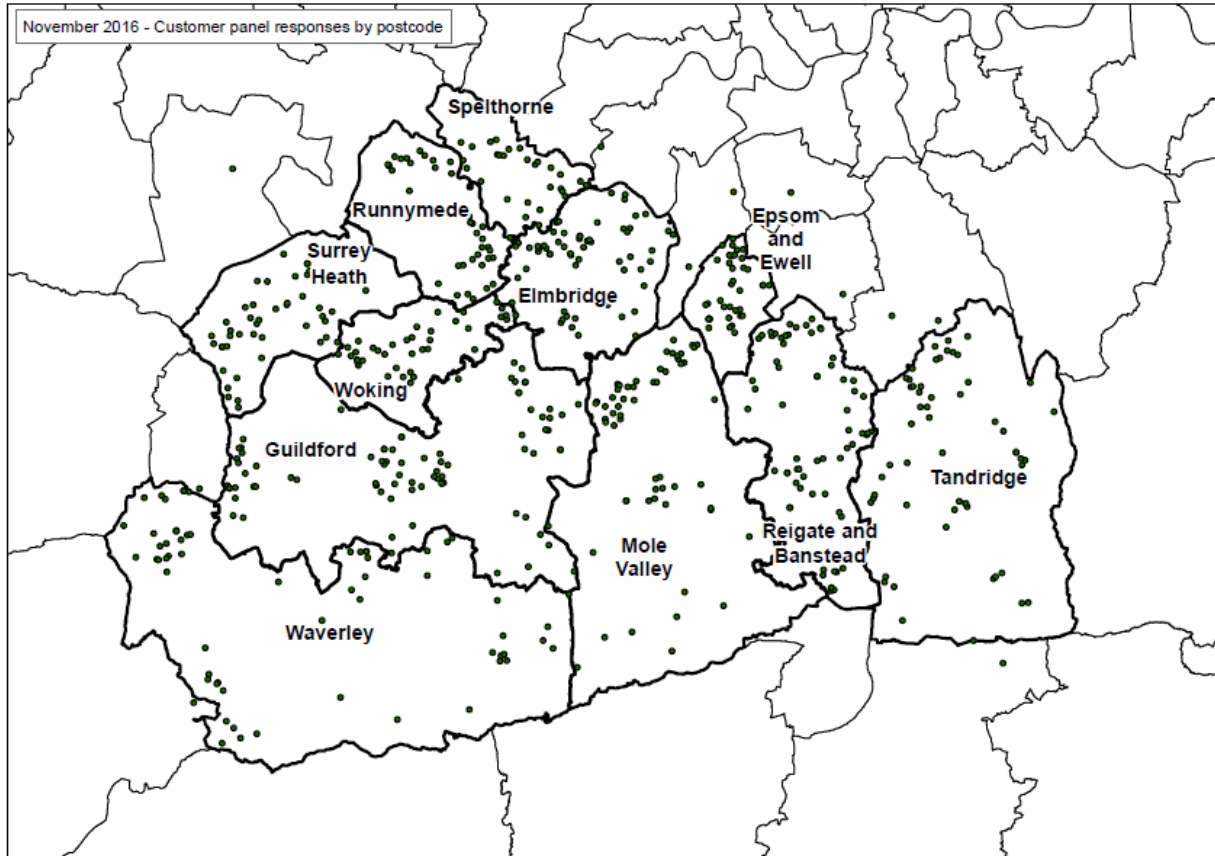
Survey Questions

- Question 1 What is your Postcode?
- Question 2 What age group are you?
- Question 3 How satisfied are you with aspects of Surrey County Council Highways customer service?
- Question 4 Regarding Surrey County Council Highways roadworks, how satisfied are you?
- Question 5 How satisfied are you with aspects of Surrey County Council Highways works?
- Question 6 How satisfied are you with how Surrey County Council (SCC) deals with Vegetation Issues.
- Question 7 Have you ever reported a vegetation issue to us?
- Question 8 If you have reported a vegetation issue to us, how satisfied were you with the following aspects of your enquiry?
- Question 9 If you have reported a vegetation issue to us, how satisfied were you with the outcome of the enquiry?
- Question 10 We continuously look to identify new ways of receiving your feedback. Are there any alternative methods of contacting us which we do not currently use? If so, please provide these below, so we can explore using them in the future.
- Question 11 To help us continue to improve our highways services, please suggest what topics you feel could be included in our next surveys.

Survey Results

Information about the Customer Panel

Question 1 What is your Postcode?



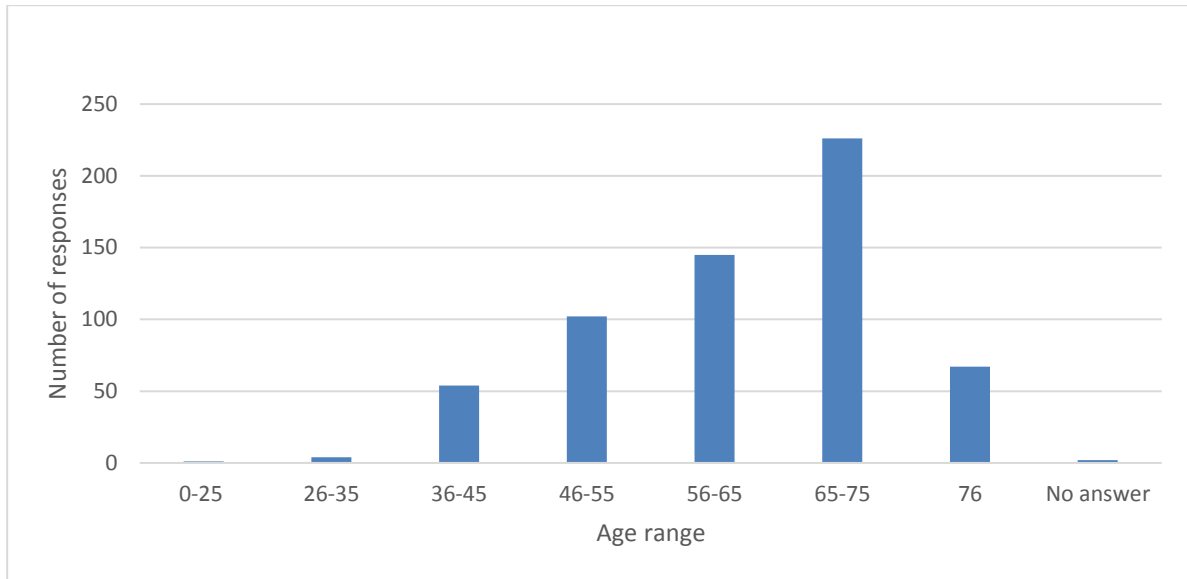
The map displays where respondents to the survey live.

The response to this question simply allows an analysis of where the active Customer Panel membership is greater and where there is a smaller representation. There is a good spread of responses across the County giving a good reflection of views.

No correlation can be drawn from the responses to the survey and the postcode provided, as our customers will all use varying areas of the Highway.

Question 2 **What is your age group?**

599/601 of the Customer Panel responded to this question.



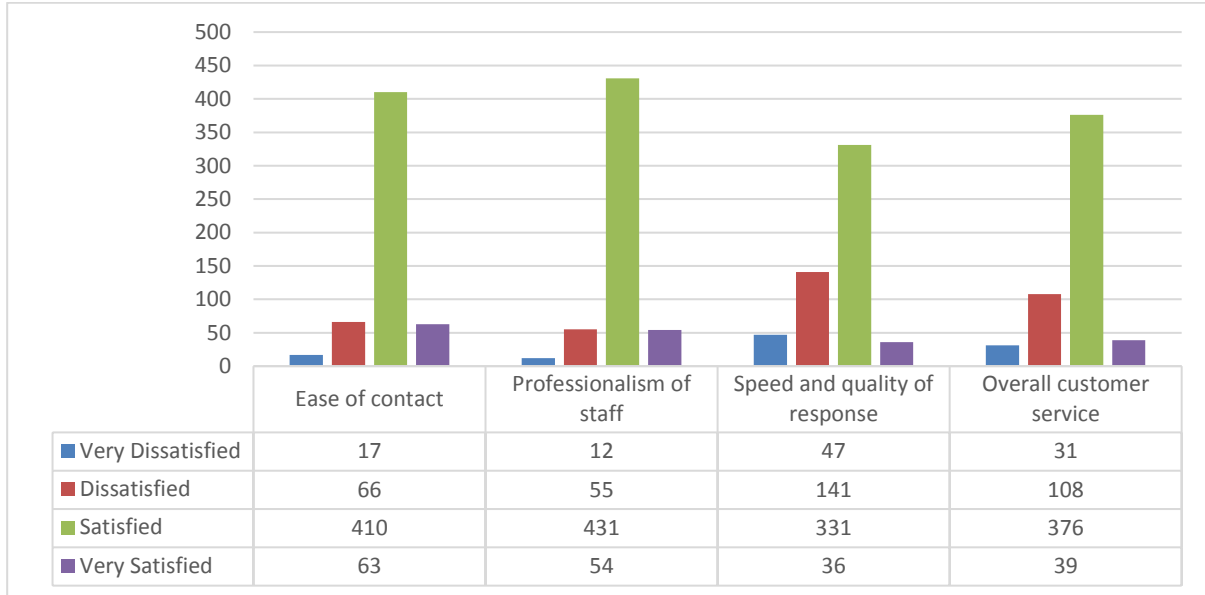
The largest group of Customer Panel responses were provided by those in the 65-75 age range. The 65-75 age range continues to be the most represented group of the Customer Panel. As with question 1, no conclusions are drawn from the age group of respondents.

Where a Postcode and an age range was provided by Customer Panel members, it was possible to create a visual representation of this data. A map of this data can be seen at appendix B.

Standard Questions

Question 3 How satisfied are you with these aspects of Surrey County Council Highways customer service?

Up to 522 of the Customer Panel responded to this question.



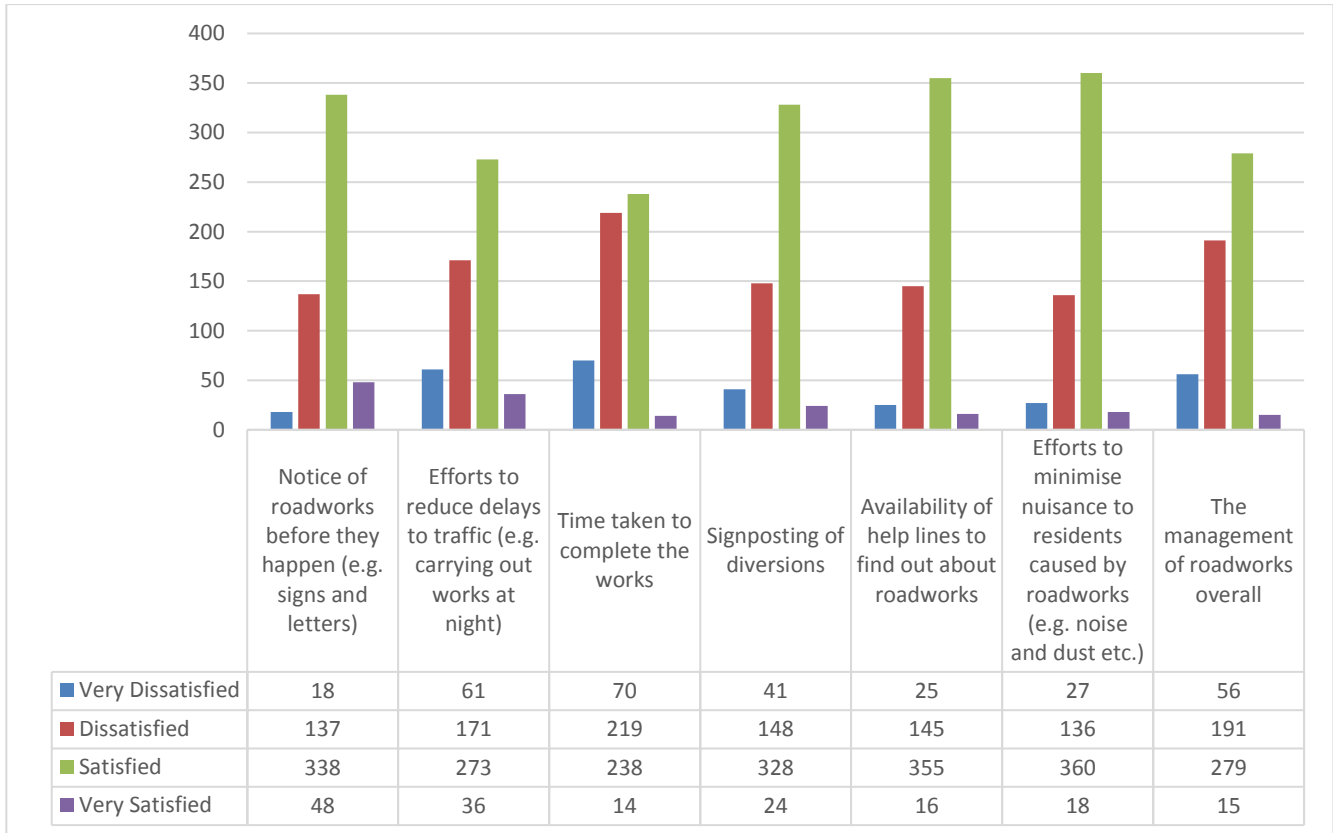
The results of our November survey showed a decrease in very satisfied or satisfied responses within a range of 61% to 81% compared to 69% to 88% in July 2016.

Customer Panel members who chose dissatisfied or very dissatisfied in November increased by 1% and range from 11% to 31% compared to 11%-30% in July 2016.

A full breakdown of how the comparisons have been made can be found at Appendix C.

Question 4 **Regarding Surrey County Council Highways roadworks, how satisfied are you with the following?**

Up to 541 of the Customer Panel responded to this question.



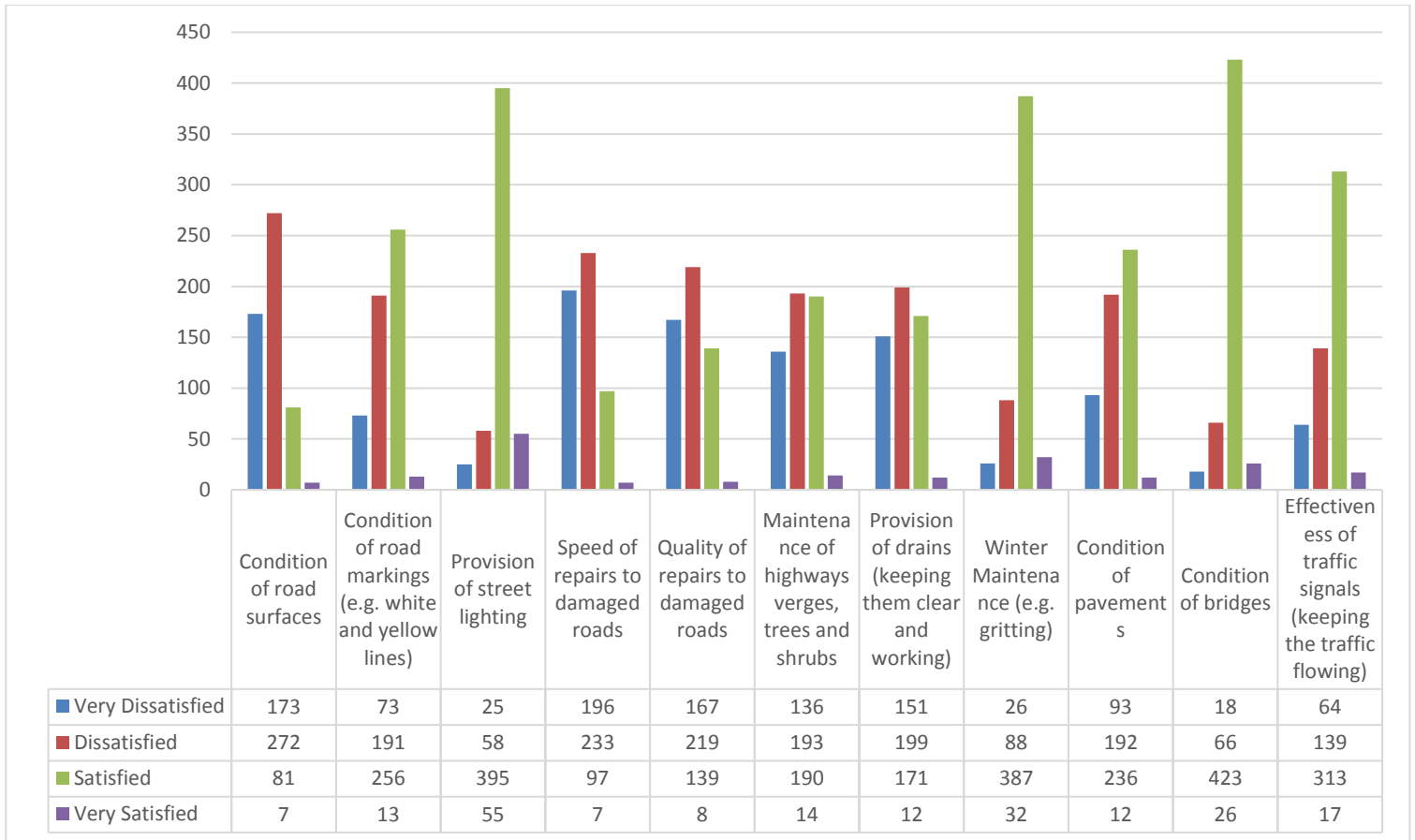
The results for our second standard question, between 42% and 64% of our Customer Panel were either very satisfied or satisfied compared to a range of 47% to 72% at the time of the July 2016 survey.

The Customer Panel members who chose dissatisfied or very dissatisfied in November ranged from 26% to 48% compared to the previous survey in which 27% to 52%.

A full breakdown of how the comparisons have been made can be found at Appendix C.

Question 5 **How satisfied are you with these aspects of Surrey County Council Highways works?**

Up to 533 of the Customer Panel responded to this question.



For the last of the standard questions the range of responses was varied. The range of very satisfied and satisfied responses was between: 12% and 75% compared to 13%-86%.

Customer Panel members who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied ranged from: 14% and 74%.

The highest satisfaction scoring on Highways Works was for Provision of Street Lighting at 75% very satisfied and satisfied. The lowest scoring on Highways Works was for Condition of Road Surfaces at 12% very satisfied and satisfied.

This was the first time that the Customer Panel was asked to provide satisfaction scores on: Condition of Pavements, Condition of Bridges and Effectiveness of Traffic Signals. Scores range from 41% to 74% very satisfied and satisfied for these new questions and 14% to 47% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

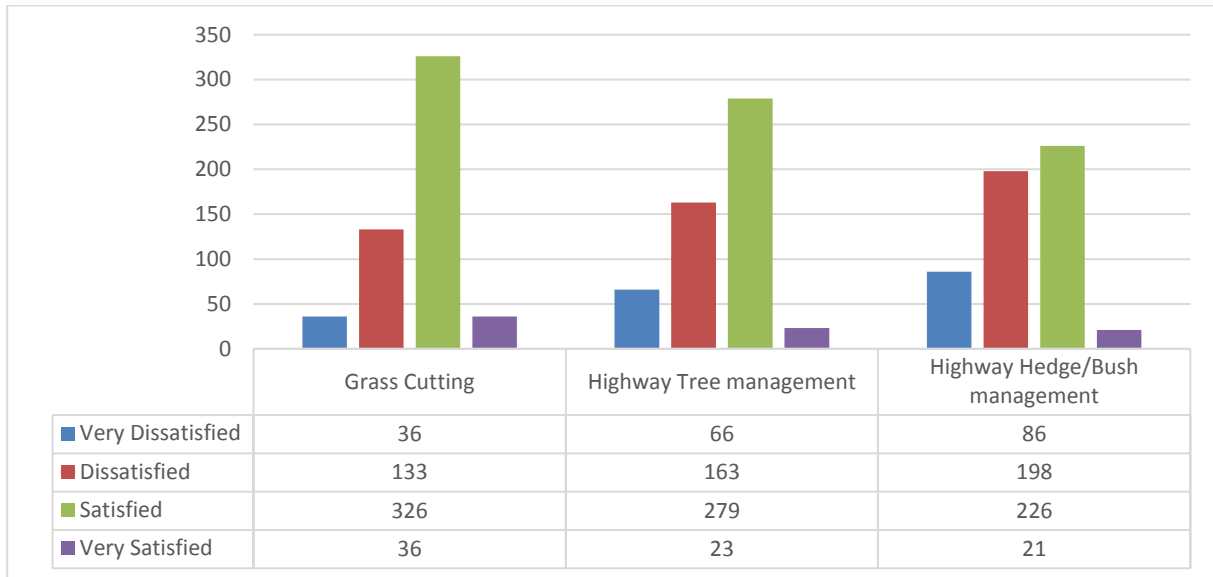
A full breakdown of how the comparisons have been made can be found at Appendix C.

Vegetation

Question 6

How satisfied are you with how Surrey County Council (SCC) deals with the following?

531 of the Customer Panel responded to this question.



The Customer Panel were last asked this question in October 2015.

The Grass Cutting programme scored 60% either very satisfied or satisfied compared to 55% in October 2015.

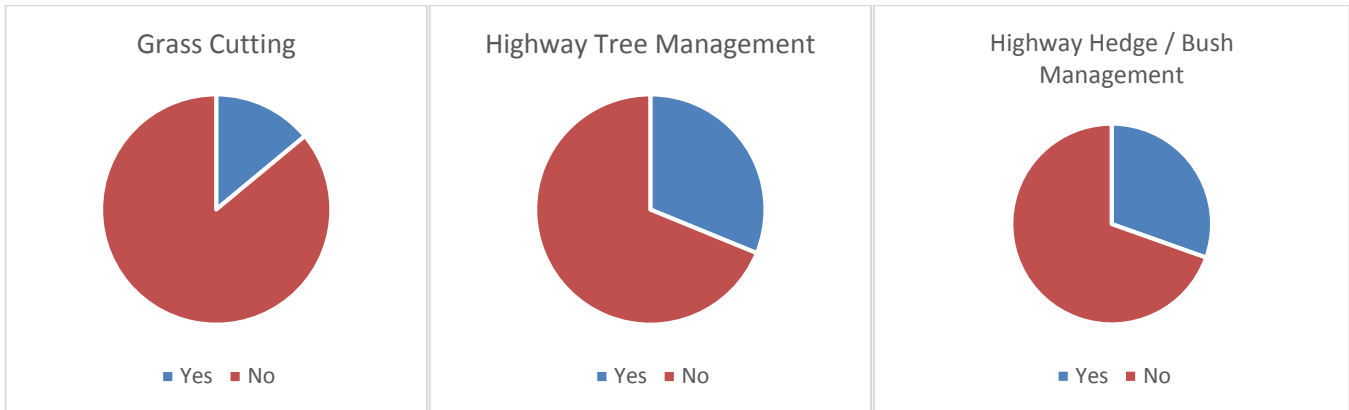
Satisfaction scores around Highway Tree Management have also increased from 38% in October 2015 to 50% in November 2016.

Finally Highway Hedge and Bush Management has increased from 29% to 41% with the Customer Panel being either very satisfied or satisfied.

A full breakdown of analysis can be see in apendix D.

Question 7 Have you ever reported a vegetation issue to us?

529 of the Customer Panel responded to this question.



The Customer Panel have demonstrated that they have experience of reporting vegetation issues. Of the 529 responses received for this question, the majority of reports were about Highway Tree Management and Highway Hedge or Bush Management.

	Yes
Grass Cutting	74
Highway Tree management	165
Highway Hedge or Bush management	161
	400

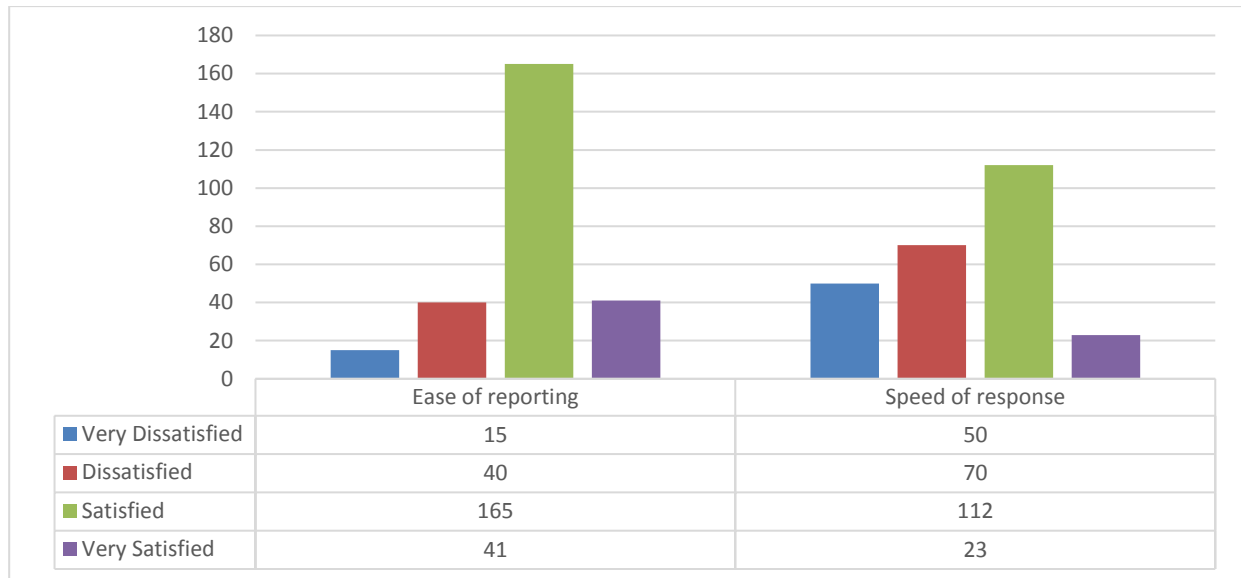
The Customer Panel was also asked to specify if they had reported any other type of vegetation issue, a sample of responses are below:

*“Lack of stump grinding
 Maintenance of mini roundabouts. Due to vegetation visibility
 Non removal of reported and inspected soil dumped on verge and highway.
 Cuttings and leaf fall blocking drains
 Overhanging vegetation from private property
 Road signs covered in green slime, obscuring information
 Still waiting for root to be removed
 Encroaching verges
 Bushes are almost blocking light from the first lamp on the close
 Request for additional trees to ease illegal car parking
 Grass cutting and grass cuttings left on grass
 Excess dead vegetation on road.
 Broken branch partially blocking busy single-track lane
 When is a tree highways or the land owners? Who is the land owner?
 Wet leaves covering trips.
 Overhanging trees
 Footway obstructed by vegetation, brambles etc.
 Roots through paving
 Weeds overgrowing along footpath
 Trees dangerously destabilised by standing in water, will rot the roots out.”*

The council's website holds information about our vegetation work on and around the Highways, Footways and Rights of Way. We provide information about this topic to help our customers find out what work we are able to carry out. The web page can be found by searching for Trees, Grass and Vegetation at: www.surreycc.gov.uk

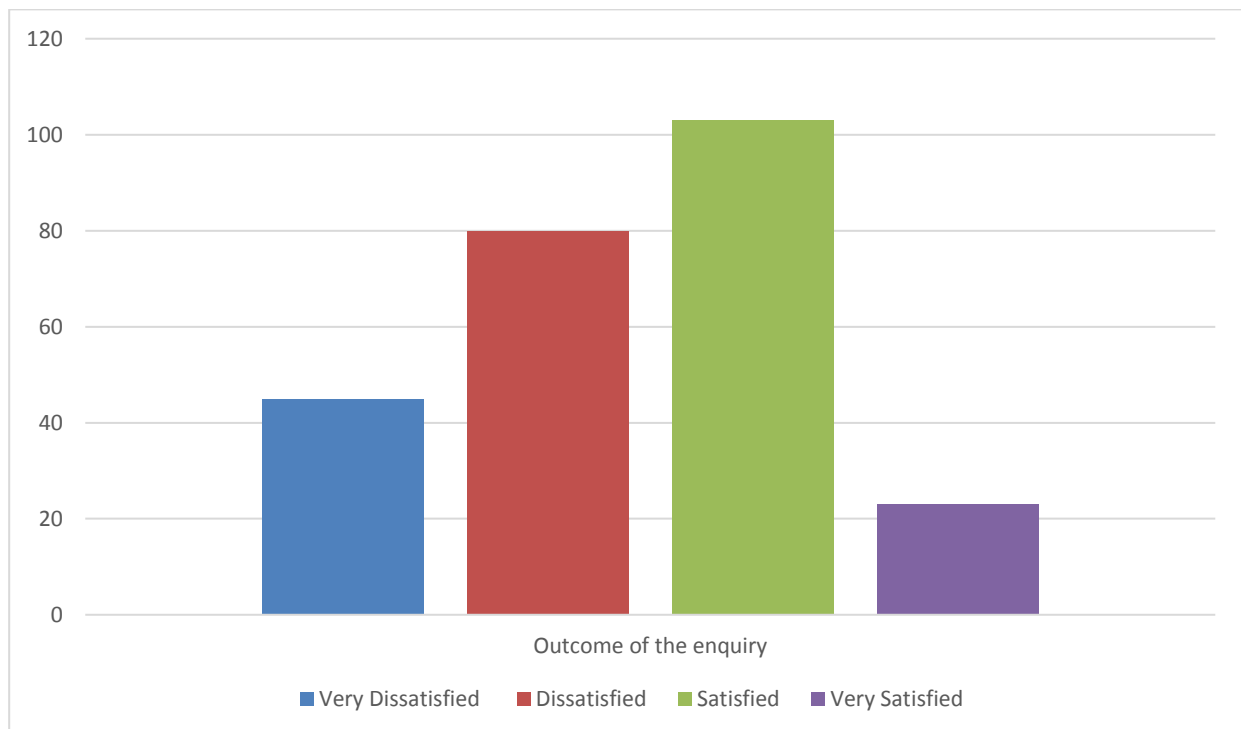
Question 8

If you have reported a vegetation issue to us, how satisfied were you with the following aspects of your enquiry?



Question 9

If you have reported a vegetation issue to us, how satisfied were you with the outcome of the enquiry?



Questions 8 and 9 look at the ease of reporting, the speed of response and the outcome of any enquiry reported about Vegetation on the Highway. We separated the steps in this process into specific questions to enable us to identify individual areas that can be improved within our customer's journey.

We can see that customers are more satisfied with ease of reporting than with the speed of a response and the outcome of the enquiry.

Within question 9, the Customer Panel were also asked to tell us why they picked either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Some of these comments are below. Where we can, we have provided an answer to some of the comments.

Very Dissatisfied	Vegetation Team Response
Basically nothing was done & I got a "there there" response.	With our constantly reducing funding, it is increasingly likely that our responses will include the message that we will not be taking any action.
Still awaiting for the root to be removed.	We will not remove a root (grind out a tree stump) unless it is likely to re-grow and cause an obstruction on the highway.
Why do you have to cut down wild flowers, just because it is the time we cut? and not leave it till later. Get your contractors to use their brains.	We will leave wild flowers where it is safe to do so, but often the wild flowers grow where there are safety critical sight lines, which we must maintain.
There has and still continues to be unnecessary and excessive cutting of verges, roundabouts etc. which it is well known are very valuable wildlife habitats so a reduction would not only help wildlife (and therefore our environment) but also reduce council expenditure, surely a win win situation.	In 2016 we attempted to reduce the grass cutting along our high speed network where verges are a feature of the highway. Unfortunately the increased length of time between cuts lead to safety critical sight lines not being cleared and numerous near-misses reported to us by the police.
The trees in question were not cut back at all.	We operate a policy of minimal intervention for the management of highway trees. The exception is reducing the risk to the highway or adjacent property. Threats of risk are those trees found to be in an unsafe condition, for example: trees in the process of dying, are already dead, or carrying dead wood which likely to cause harm when it falls. We are not obliged to take actions where safety is not affected.
No action has been taken to reduce the overhanging vegetation on the footpath.	Our limited funding is directed to where it is needed most. Safety is our main concern and we prioritise based on risk and volume of use. We work closely in partnership with our Boroughs and Districts to clear overgrown vegetation.

Dissatisfied	Vegetation Team Response
Trees that are behind my house, on the highway, need to be pollarded but was told that might never happen because the maintenance team cover such a vast area!!!	We operate a policy of minimal intervention where the focus is on trees found in poor condition and at greatest risk of causing harm.
I had to report the issue more than once and it took months for the overgrown hedge and brambles to be cut back.	We deal with safety critical issues first. We also try to get back to our customers within 28 days. Our hedge and bramble cutting only happens during specific times of the year so this may have impacted the timeframes.
Why am I doing your highway inspections for you? Tree and shrubs need annual maintenance e.g. Basal growth and growing over footpaths and I have to report every year.	Our highways inspectors inspect for safety defects on or around the highway on a regular basis. If basal growth is recorded by our arboriculture surveyor or local teams, these can be highlighted and potentially included into our programme for basal growth, funded annually.
Took months for the work to be done.	We have to prioritise based on many factors including: risk and funding.
Needed 2 large oak trees pruned and dead wood removed. It never happened.	Our priorities do not include minor deadwood, especially on Oak trees where this is part of the tree's natural biology.
Having had a dead tree removed from the grass verge, the stump still remains despite having reported it as a hazard.	Stumps are left at one metre high as standard and as this is on a verge we are unlikely to carry out more work on this. The stump actually contributes to the biodiversity of the verge area.
The chaps came along to cut down dangerous (dead) overhanging hedges & trees and didn't take away all the waste & cuttings - they just threw it to one side of the Lane (not SCC land) causing the Lane to remain blocked.	There are times where we would not remove cuttings from our work or wood from a fallen tree: time constraints, emergency maintenance, and in some instances – the hedge or tree might not belong to us. Our job is to try and keep the highways clear and safe.

Question 10

We continuously look to identify new ways of receiving your feedback. Are there any alternative methods of contacting us which we do not currently use? If so, please provide these below, so we can explore using them in the future

Some of your ideas are shown in the picture below.



Question 11

To help us continue to improve our highways services, please suggest what topics you feel could be included in our next surveys

There were a number of varied answers from the Customer Panel. A snapshot of these answers is below.

Tree and Vegetation Growth blocking clear views of signage	Road Markings	coordination with Highways England works	FLOODING.	Traffic Congestion	The state of pavements	Signs	Parking	Road surfaces for cyclists
Vegetation	Line Painting	sensible coordination of works	Flood prevention	Traffic Flow	pavement condition	Visibility of signage	car parking	Cyclists
Condition of Grass Verges		Co-ordination of planned road works		Road sweeping	safety of pedestrians	Cleanliness of road signs	Parking on verges	Cycle lanes
				Safety	Pavements	Street Sign cleaning	Parking in residential roads	
Which delays aggravate customers the most					Footpaths	Cleaning of Road signs	Commuter Parking parking problems	
Drains					Pathway repairs		On street parking hot spots	
Utility company works					pothole repair			
Air Quality					Quicker way of reporting potholes, maybe through an app?			
Inspection frequency					resurfacing?			
Litter								

Summary and Conclusions

We ask our Customer Panel for their views to feed into longer term results.

We will take the Customer Panel's views into account when optimising the information we provide about Vegetation, which was the theme of November's Survey.

Customer Satisfaction and Performance

We always seek to improve customer service and performance. We can use the Customer Panel feedback and data collected about our commercial suppliers' performance to make improvements. Year on year we and our suppliers receive and handle more and more customer enquiries. As the number of enquiries are raising, our Customer Satisfaction scores remain within a 60% to 80% range for satisfied or very satisfied.

Customer Panel Membership

This survey was sent to nearly 1500 Customer Panel members and received a 40% response rate. Previous surveys have received a very good response rate of 70% and we are considering ways to encourage more of the Customer Panel members to complete the surveys that we are planning for 2017.

A forward plan of surveys can be seen in appendix A which includes additions for 2017 of: Flooding, Pavements and Cycling in direct response to what the Customer Panel have said they would like to provide feedback on.

Vegetation Theme

This is the second time that the Customer Panel have been asked to provide feedback on Vegetation (Trees, Bushes, Hedges) on and close to the Highway. The feedback has allowed a trend to be established regarding customer satisfaction levels between October 2015 and November 2016 and this can be seen in appendix D.

This report also includes a sample of the comments provided following a dissatisfied or very dissatisfied response to question 9: "If you have reported a vegetation issue to us, how satisfied were you with the outcome of the enquiry?"

Alongside each comment, an answer has been provided. Our aim in providing the answers is to help with the understanding of: what we can and cannot achieve with the Vegetation budgets we work with, what works we are required to carry out and what works we are not allowed to carry out.

Asset Management Strategy

Our [Asset Management Strategy](#) is informed by a wide range of stakeholders and intelligence, including Customer Panel satisfaction feedback. In November 2016 we added three questions to standard Question 5: "How satisfied are you with these aspects of Surrey County Council Highways works?" By adding questions about customer satisfaction around: **Pavements**, **Bridges** and **Keeping the traffic flowing** we can feed back up into the delivery and monitoring of the Asset Management Strategy and Highways and Transport Business Plan.

We will continue to seek, collate and analyse satisfaction data and report this back.

We recognise that we have to continually review our customer service provision and the Customer Panel and our Customer Service Excellence standards help us to measure how well we are performing.

Please send any questions you may have regarding this report or anything panel related to highways.customerpanel@surreycc.gov.uk.

If you feel anybody you know would be interested in joining the panel and giving us their feedback, please ask them to visit the [Customer Panel](#) sections of our website.

If for any reason you feel you no longer want to be a part of the Highways Customer Panel you can [cancel your membership](#) using our website.

Appendices

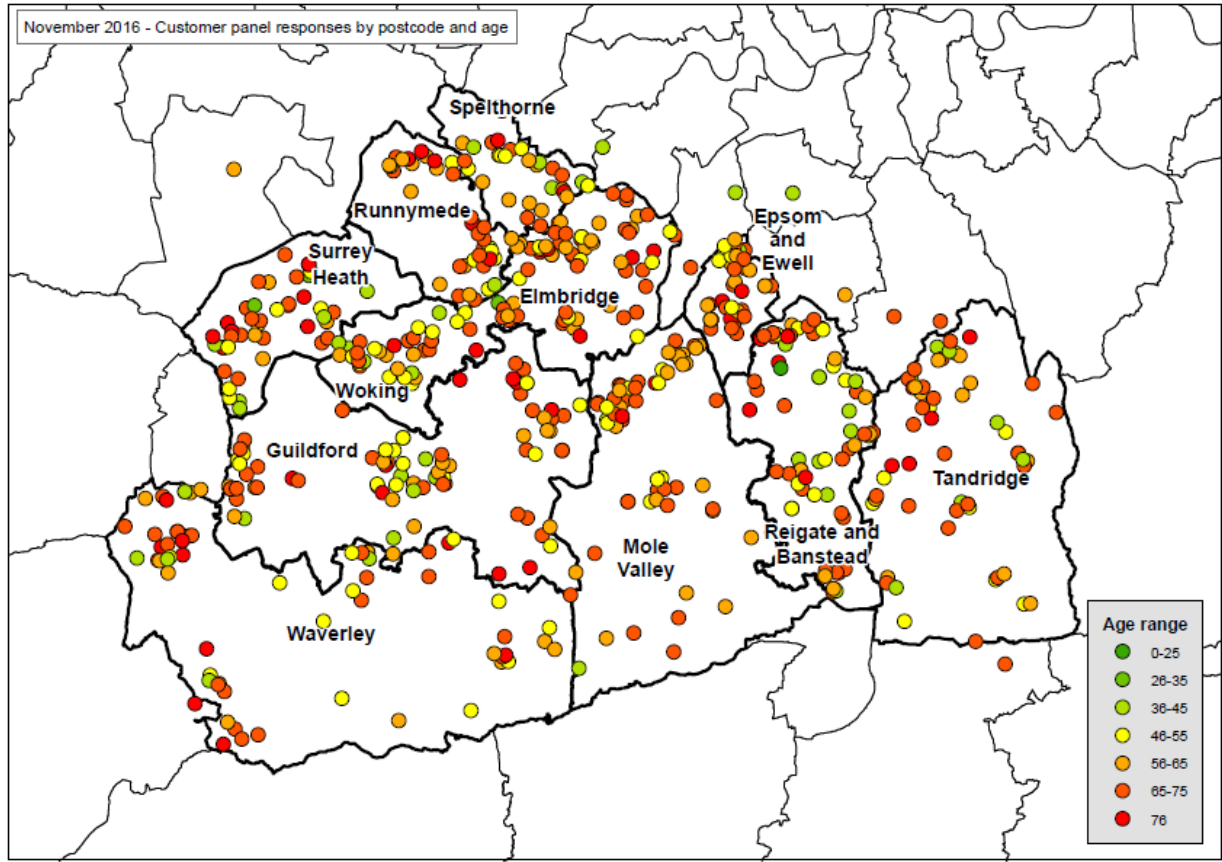
Appendix A

2017	Receive results and produce report	On website	Topics
March	March	April	Drains, Flooding, Gritting & snow
July	August	September	Website, Standards, Pavements & street lighting
November	November	January	Vegetation, Cycling & Roadworks

2018	Receive results and produce report	On website	Topics
March	March	April	Drains, Flooding, Gritting & snow
July	August	September	Website, Standards, Pavements & street lighting
November	November	January	Vegetation, Cycling & Roadworks

Appendix B

Customer Panel results by postcode



Appendix C

Analysis of Standard Questions

Question 3 How satisfied are you with these aspects of Surrey County Council Highways customer service?

November 2016	Ease of contact (Score)	%	% Change	Professionalism of staff (Score)	%	% Change	Speed and quality of response (Score)	%	% Change	Overall customer service (Score)	%	% Change
Very satisfied	63	10	-1	54	9	-2	36	6	-1	39	6	-1
Satisfied	410	68	-5	431	72	-6	331	55	-7	376	63	-5
Dissatisfied	66	11	-1	55	9	0	141	23	+2	108	18	-1
Very dissatisfied	17	3	-1	12	2	0	47	8	-1	31	5	-1
No Answer	45	7		49	8		46	8		47	8	

Question 4 Regarding Surrey County Council Highways roadworks, how satisfied are you with the following?

	Notice of roadworks before they happen (e.g. signs and letters)	%	% change	Efforts to reduce delays to traffic (e.g. carrying out works at night)	%	% change	Time taken to complete the works	%	% change	Signposting of diversions	%	% change
Very Satisfied	48	8	0	36	6	+1	14	2	0	24	4	-1
Satisfied	338	56	-9	273	45	-5	238	40	-5	328	55	-5
Dissatisfied	137	23	0	171	28	-5	219	36	-1	148	25	-4
Very Dissatisfied	18	3	+2	61	10	-1	70	12	-3	41	7	-1
No answer	60	10		60	10		60	10		60	10	

	Availability of help lines to find out about roadworks	%	% change	Efforts to minimise nuisance to residents caused by roadworks (e.g. noise and dust etc.)	%	% change	The management of roadworks overall	%	% change
Very Satisfied	16	3	0	18	3	+1	15	2	0
Satisfied	355	59	-6	360	60	-10	279	46	-7
Dissatisfied	145	24	-2	136	23	+2	191	32	-1
Very Dissatisfied	25	4	-1	27	4	-2	56	9	-2
No answer	60	10		60	10		60	10	

Question 5

How satisfied are you with these aspects of Surrey County Council Highways works?

	Condition of road surfaces %	% Change	Condition of road markings (e.g. white and yellow lines) %	% Change	Provision of street lighting %	% Change	Speed of repairs to damaged roads %	% Change
Very Satisfied	7	+1	13	2	55	9	7	1
Satisfied	81	13	256	43	395	66	97	16
Dissatisfied	272	45	191	32	58	10	233	39
Very Dissatisfied	173	29	73	12	25	4	196	33
No Answer	68	11	68	11	68	11	68	11

	Quality of repairs to damaged roads %	% Change	Maintenance of highways verges, trees and shrubs %	% Change	Provision of drains (keeping them clear and working) %	% Change	Winter Maintenance (e.g. gritting) %	% Change
Very Satisfied	8	1	14	2	12	2	32	5
Satisfied	139	23	190	32	171	28	387	64
Dissatisfied	219	36	193	32	199	33	88	15
Very Dissatisfied	167	28	136	23	151	25	26	4
No Answer	68	11	68	11	68	11	68	11

	Condition of pavements %	% Change	Condition of bridges %	% Change	Effectiveness of traffic signals (keeping the traffic flowing) %	% Change
Very Satisfied	12	2	26	4	17	3
Satisfied	236	39	423	70	313	52
Dissatisfied	192	32	66	11	139	23
Very Dissatisfied	93	15	18	3	64	11
No Answer	68	11	68	11	68	11

