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***Gedling Borough Council  
'Contacts'  
Special Budget Consultation Survey 2007***

***Prepared for Gedling Borough Council  
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Ref 27/37report***

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

Gedling Borough Council circulated a budget consultation questionnaire to all 47,000 households in the Borough via the council magazine, 'Contacts'.

Residents could either return the questionnaire via the post or complete it on-line via the Gedling Borough Council website.

A prize draw was included to encourage residents to respond to the survey. Five winners were selected at random from the returned questionnaires (both postal and on-line) to win a cash prize equivalent to the Gedling Borough Council element of the council tax bill.

A total of 6001 completed questionnaires were received, 150 of which were completed on-line. This represents a response rate of 13% which for a survey of this nature is exceptional.

This report summarises the main findings from that survey.

A copy of the questionnaire used is appended to this document.

### ***Effects of Rounding***

Where figures do not add to exactly 100% this is due to rounding.

### ***Interpreting Results***

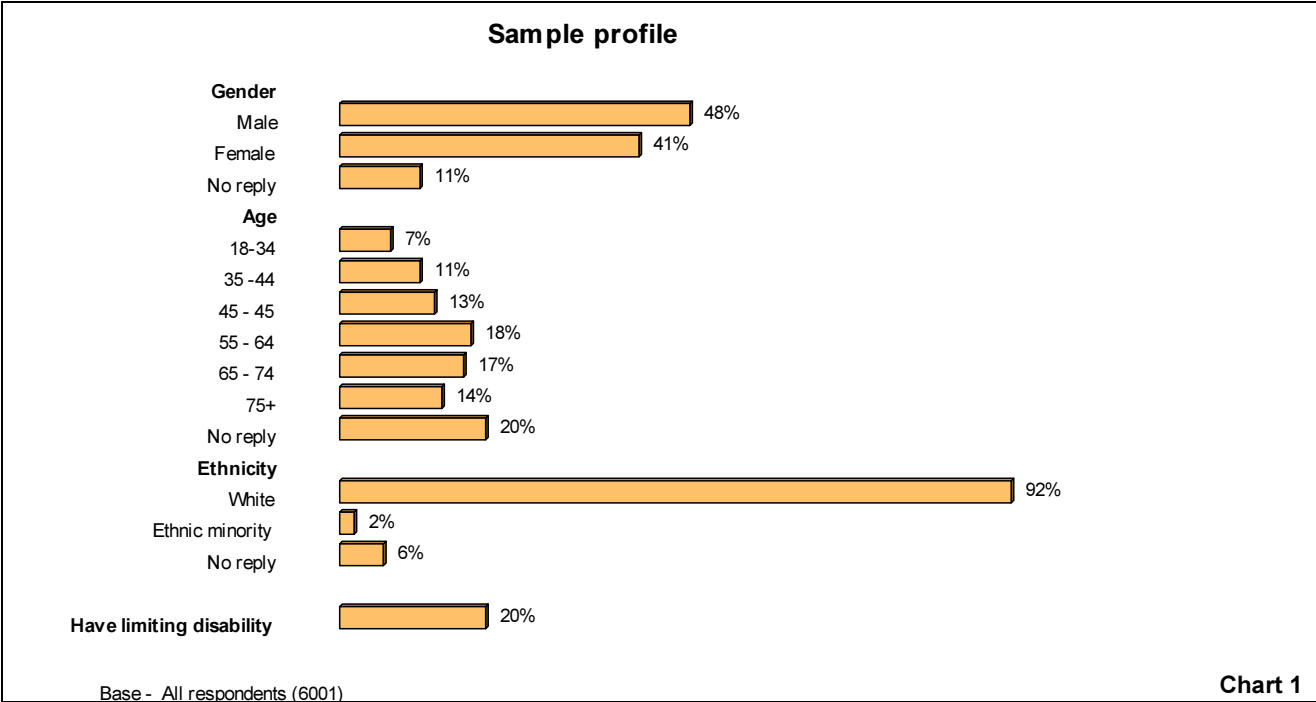
All survey data is subject to a statistical margin of error, and the larger the sample size the smaller the margin of error. Given the large response achieved for this survey results are very reliable with a maximum margin of error of  $\pm 1.3\%$  on results based on the total sample of 6001.

**Sample profile**

The chart below shows the profile of the sample of respondents for this survey in terms of gender, age, and ethnicity.

Just under half were male (48%). There is a wide spread of ages, ranging from 7% who are under 35 to 20% over 75 years of age.

One in five respondents indicated that they suffer from a long-standing illness or disability which limits their daily activities or work (20%).



***Executive Summary***

***Paying for PCSOs in the future***

More than half of those responding to the survey think the council should stop paying for six extra PCSOs in the Borough (54%), with the remainder divided in their opinion between continuing to pay for six extra PCSOs (25%), and continuing to pay for some additional PCSOs but not as many as six (16%).

***Attitudes towards frequency of emptying grey bins***

Only 8% of residents selected the option to empty grey bins every week all year round.

Amongst the remainder, slightly more selected the option to empty grey bins every week during the summer months and every fortnight for the rest of the year (49%) than the option to empty every fortnight throughout the year (42%).

***Raising money to pay for service improvements***

On balance residents would find it more acceptable to increase existing charges for services or introduce new charges than reducing spending on services. Just under half would find charging for car parking at shopping centres, and introducing new charges or increasing charges for other services acceptable, compared with 29% who would find reducing spending on some services acceptable and 26% who would find reducing spending on all services acceptable.

While there would be some degree of tolerance to increasing the Borough Council's part of the council tax bill by 3% (42% finding this acceptable), the suggestion of increasing it to 5% emerges as the least acceptable of the six proposals put forward (16% finding it acceptable).

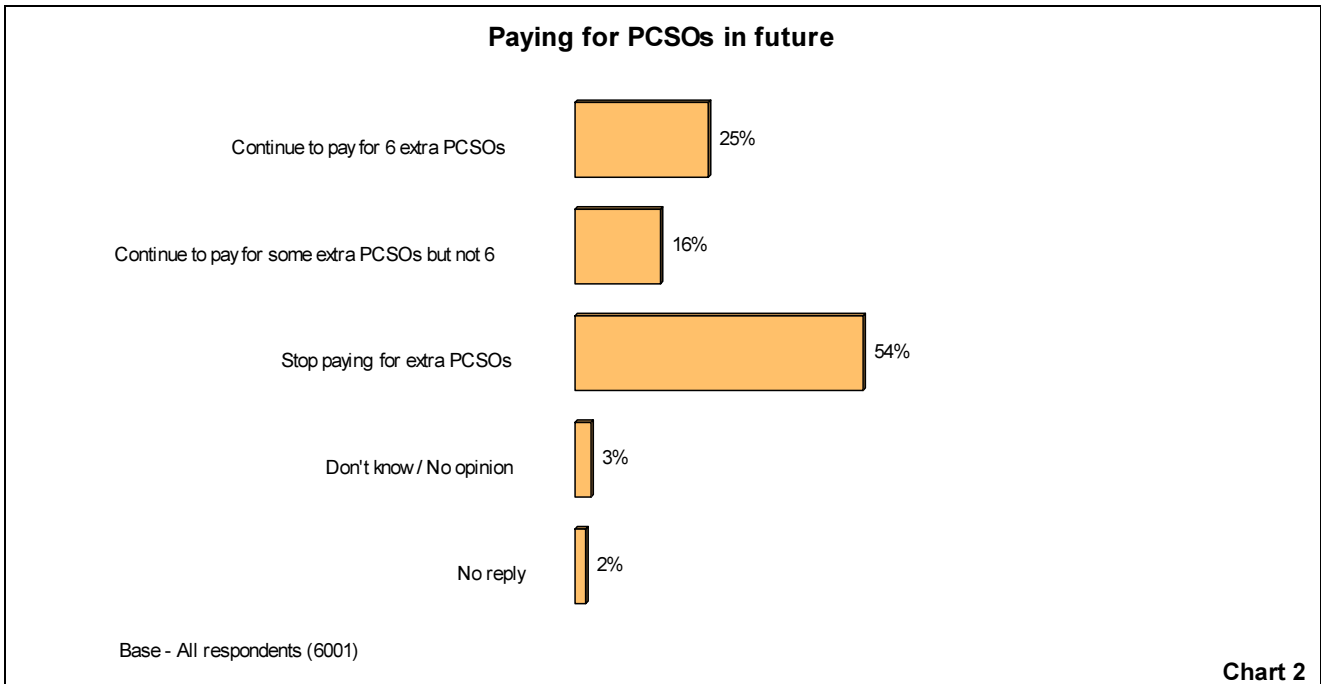
***Detailed Results***

**Paying for PCSOs in the future**

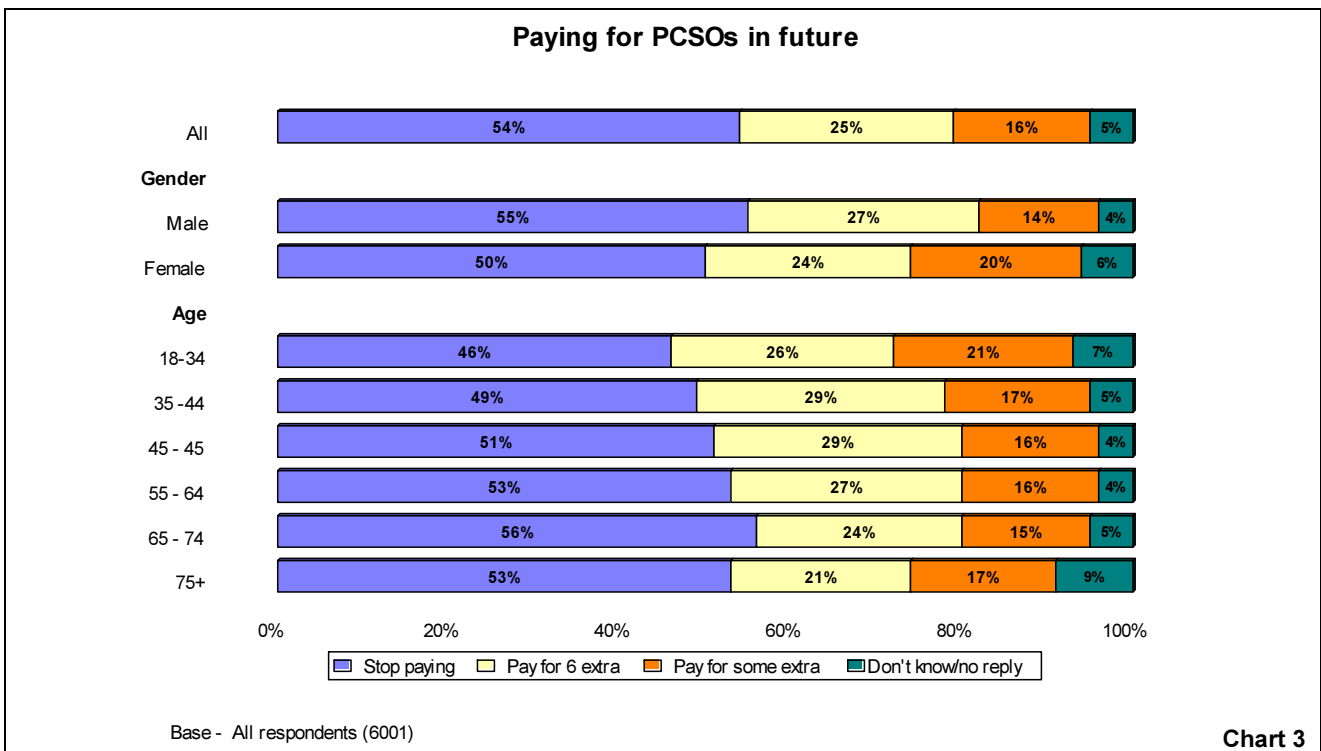
Residents were presented with three options for the funding of PCSOs in the Borough; alongside each option the cost to the average council tax payer was indicated.

More than half of those responding to the survey think the council should stop paying for six extra PCSOs in the Borough (54%).

The remainder of those who expressed a view were divided in their opinion; a quarter think that the council should continue to pay for six extra PCSOs, and 16% that it should continue to pay for some additional PCSOs but not as many as six.



As shown on the chart below, the pattern of response to this question was broadly similar across the gender and age range, though the younger the resident the more acceptable the concept of paying for PCSOs seems to be e.g. 47% of those aged between 18 and 34 selected either the option to continue to pay for six PCSOs or to pay for some extra, compared with under 40% of over 65s.



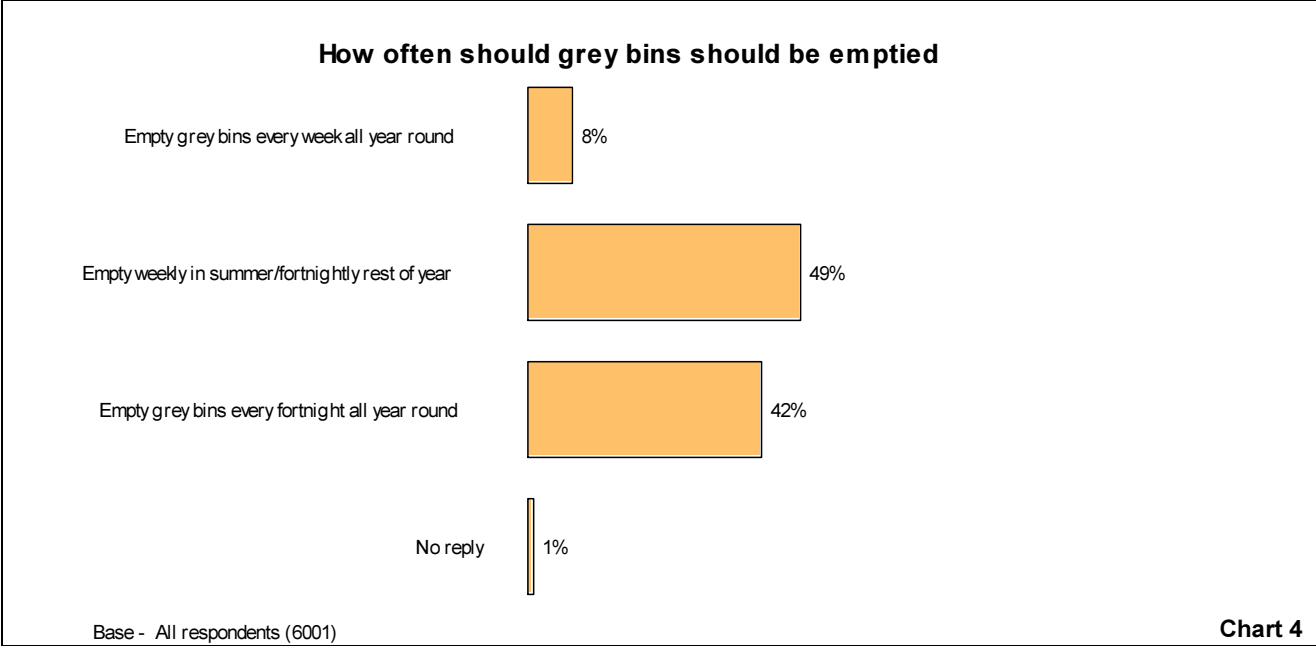


**Attitudes towards frequency of emptying grey bins**

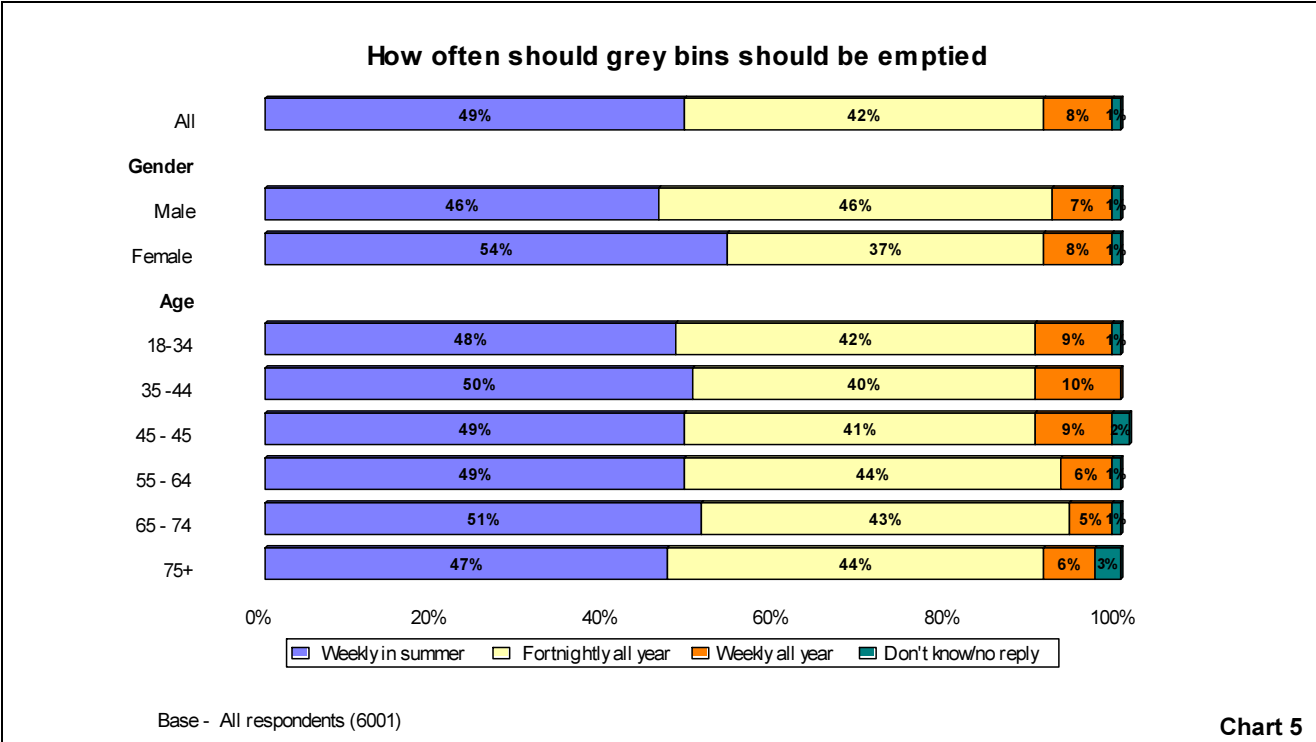
Residents were presented with three options for the frequency with which grey bins could be emptied. Again, alongside each option the cost to the average council tax payer was indicated.

As shown on the chart below, few selected the option to empty grey bins every week all year round (8%).

Opinion amongst the remainder was divided, with 49% selecting the option to empty grey bins every week during the summer months and every fortnight for the rest of the year, and only slightly fewer thinking that grey bins should be emptied every fortnight throughout the year (42%).



The chart below shows that women are more likely to opt for a weekly summer service (54% selecting this option) than are men (46%). Across the age range, on the other hand, there was little difference in the pattern of response.

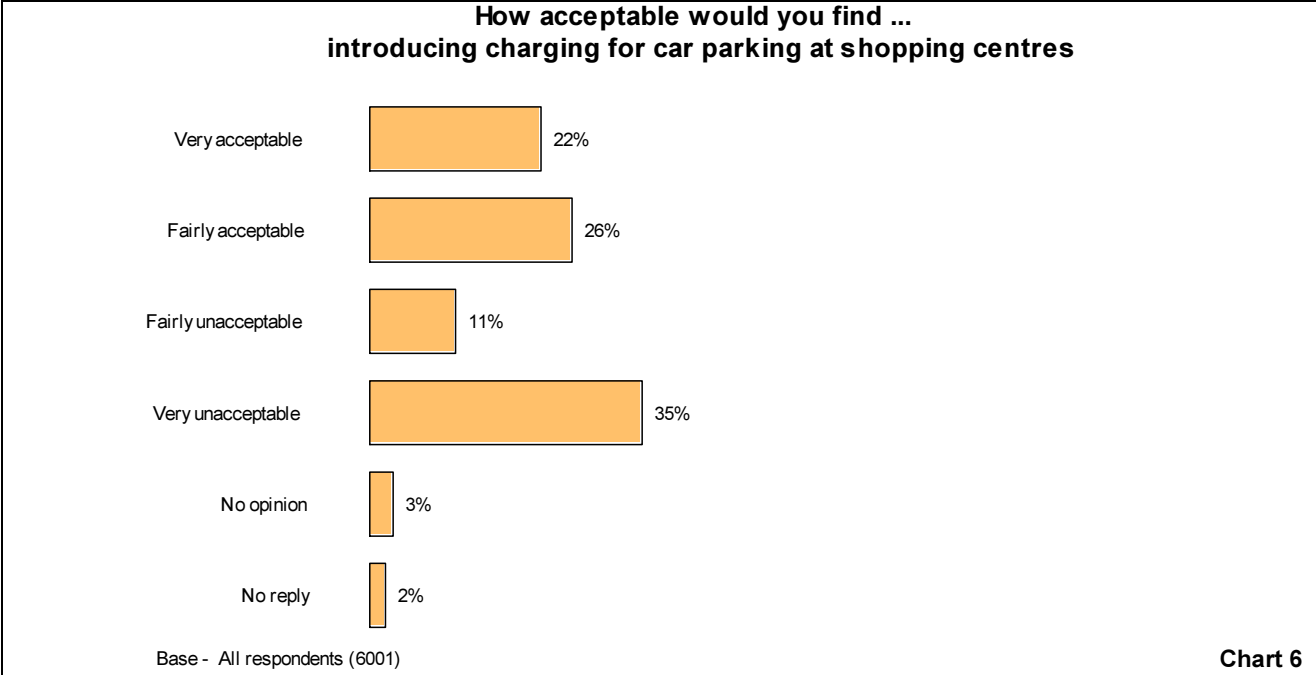


**Raising money to pay for service improvements**

Residents were presented with six possible options for raising money to pay for service improvements, and were asked to indicate how acceptable they would find each solution.

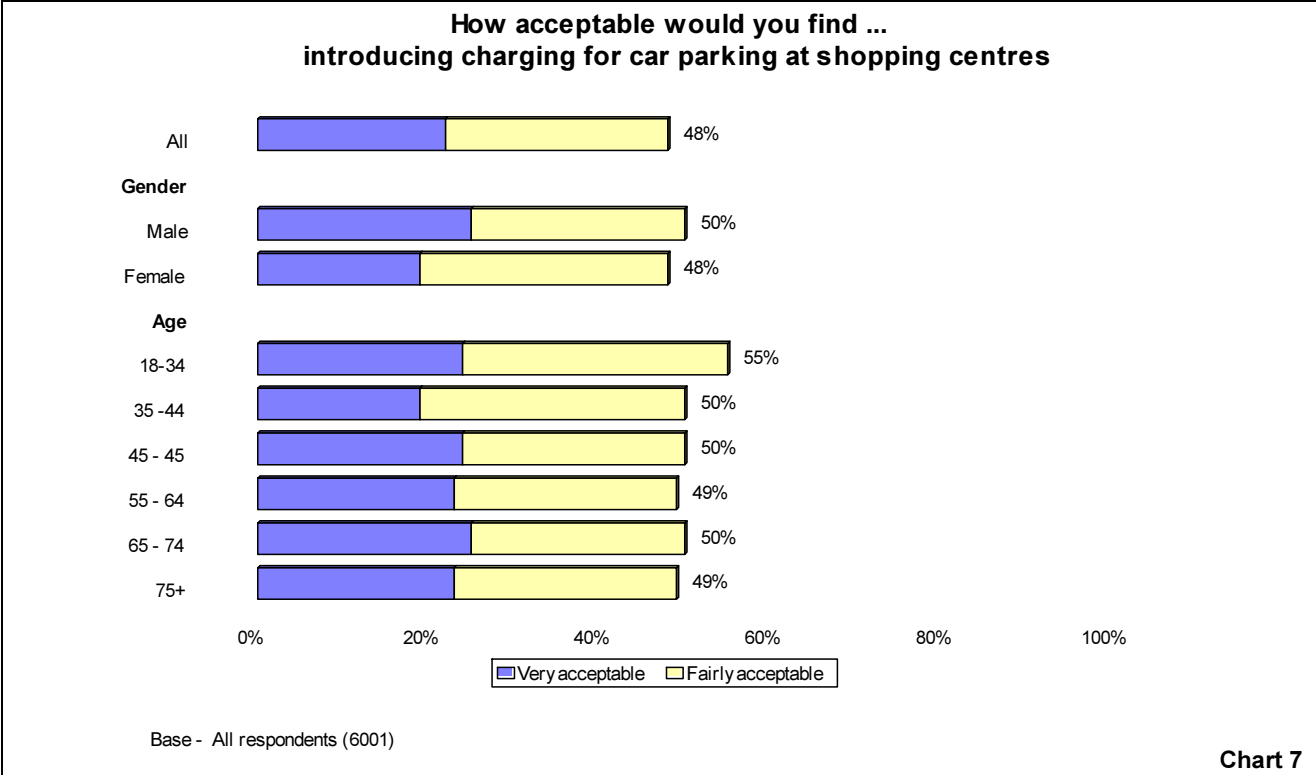
**Introduce charging for car parking at the Borough’s shopping centres**

As shown on the chart below, opinion was divided on the issue of charging for car parking at the Borough’s shopping centres, with roughly equal numbers finding the proposition acceptable (48%) as unacceptable (46%).



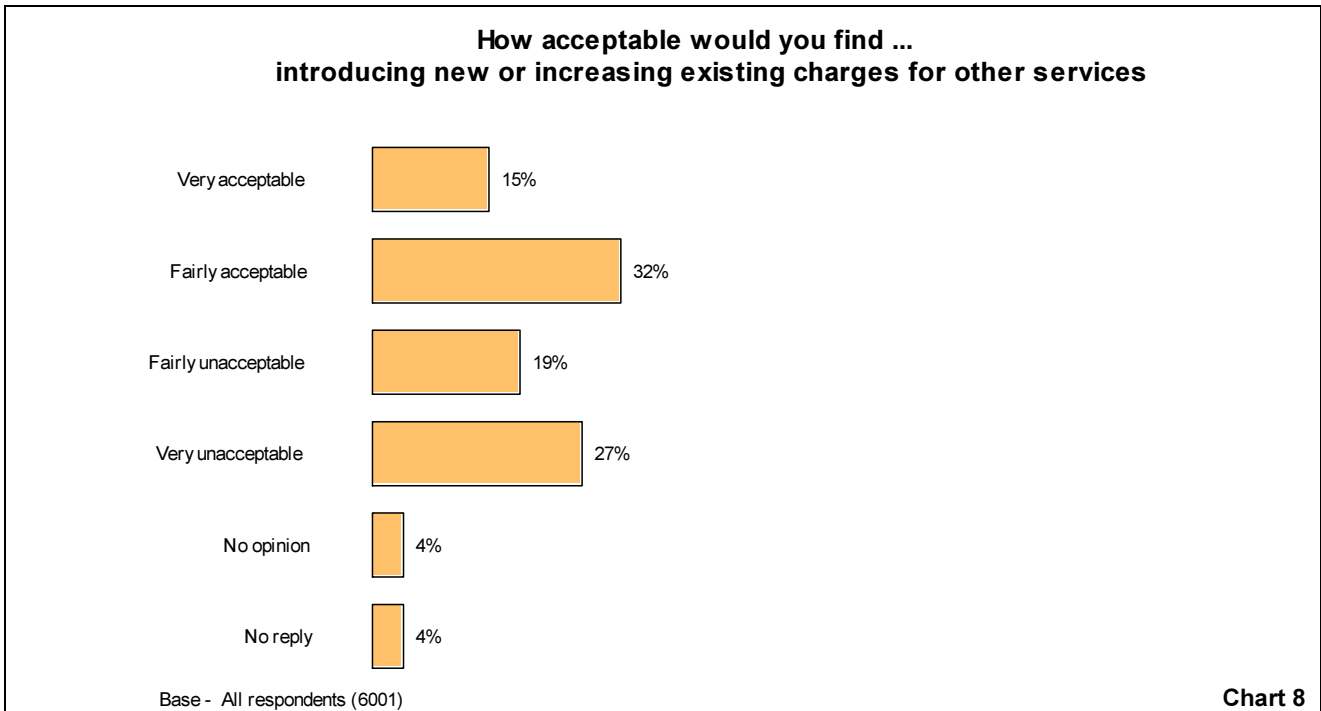
There was little difference across the age range in relation to the acceptability of charging for car parking at shopping centres, though those under 35 are slightly more amenable to the proposition.

Though there was little difference overall between men and women, women were less likely to say that this proposition is very acceptable (25% compared with 19% of men).



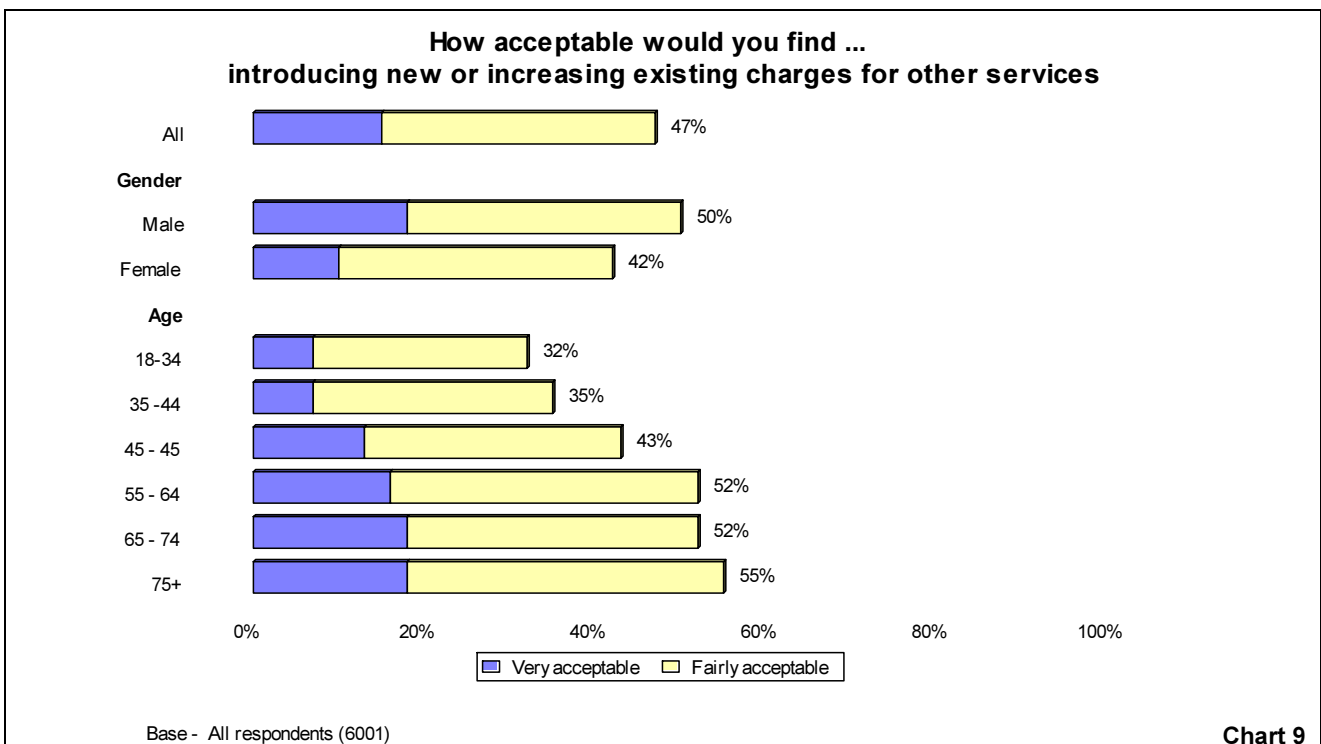
**Introduce new or increase existing charges for other services, such as leisure centres entrance**

Overall, opinion on whether or not introducing new charges or increasing charges for other services (e.g. leisure centres) is acceptable is equally divided – 47% finding it acceptable and 46% unacceptable.



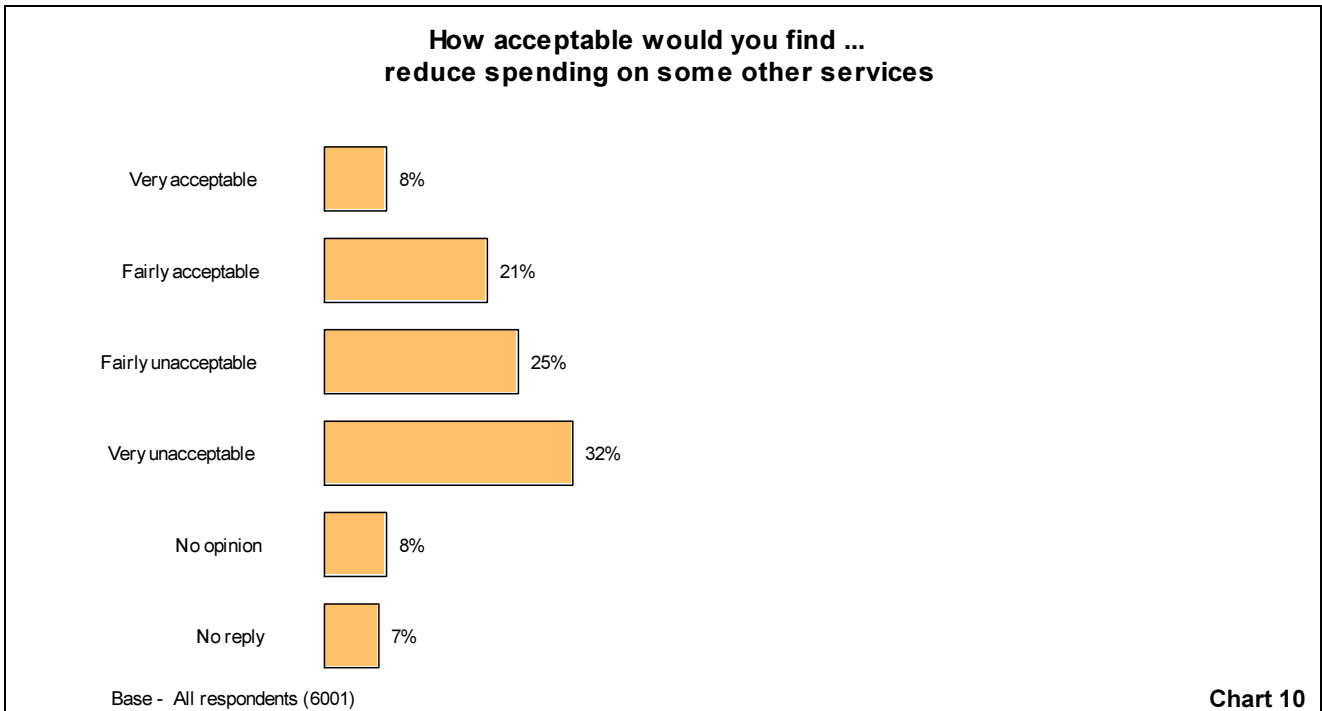
As shown on the chart below, there was a marked difference on this issue between men and women and across the age range. While half of the men responding to the survey say they would find such charges acceptable, only 42% of women would, with few saying it would be very acceptable (10%).

Generally speaking, the younger the resident the less likely they are to find this proposition acceptable. The 18 to 34 age group show the most resistance, with only 32% in favour of introducing or increasing charges for services.



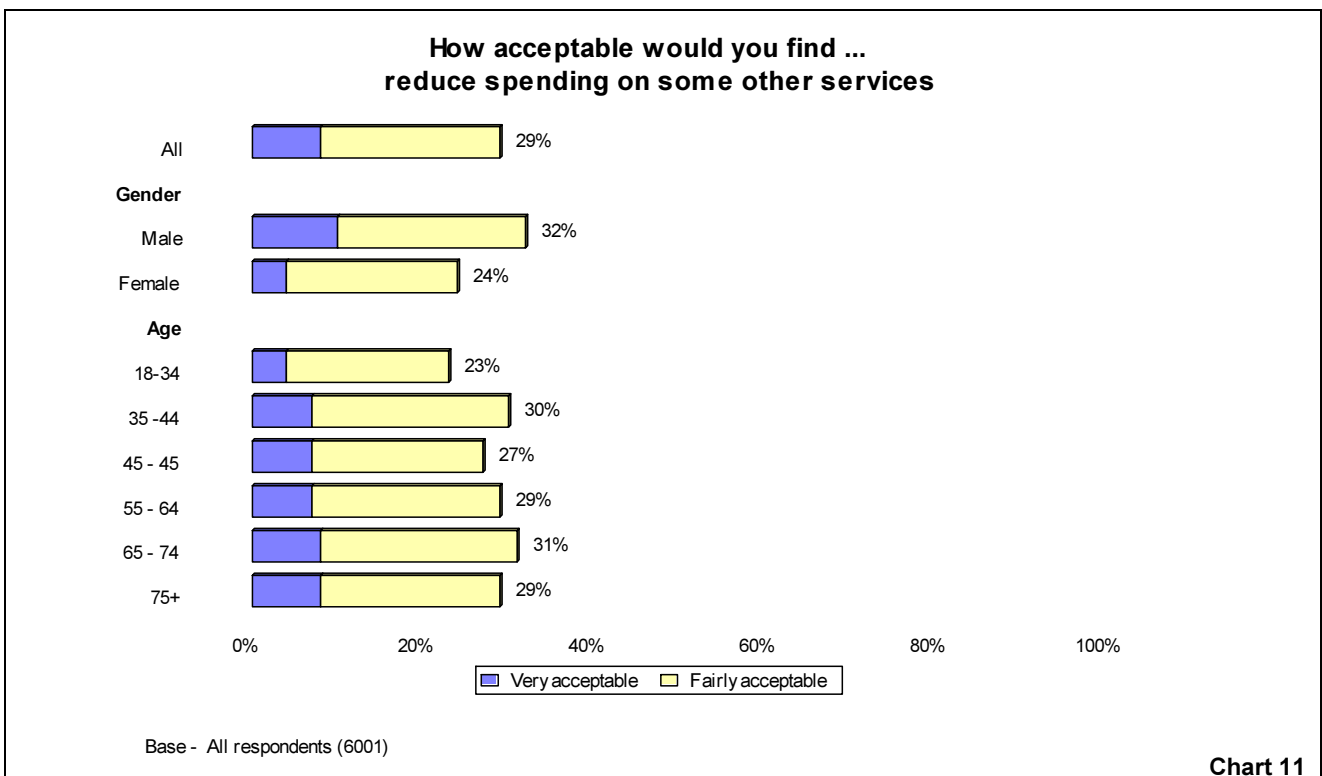
**Reduce spending on some other services (and therefore reduce level of service provided in these areas)**

More than half would find the idea of reducing spending, and therefore the level of service, on some other services unacceptable (57%).



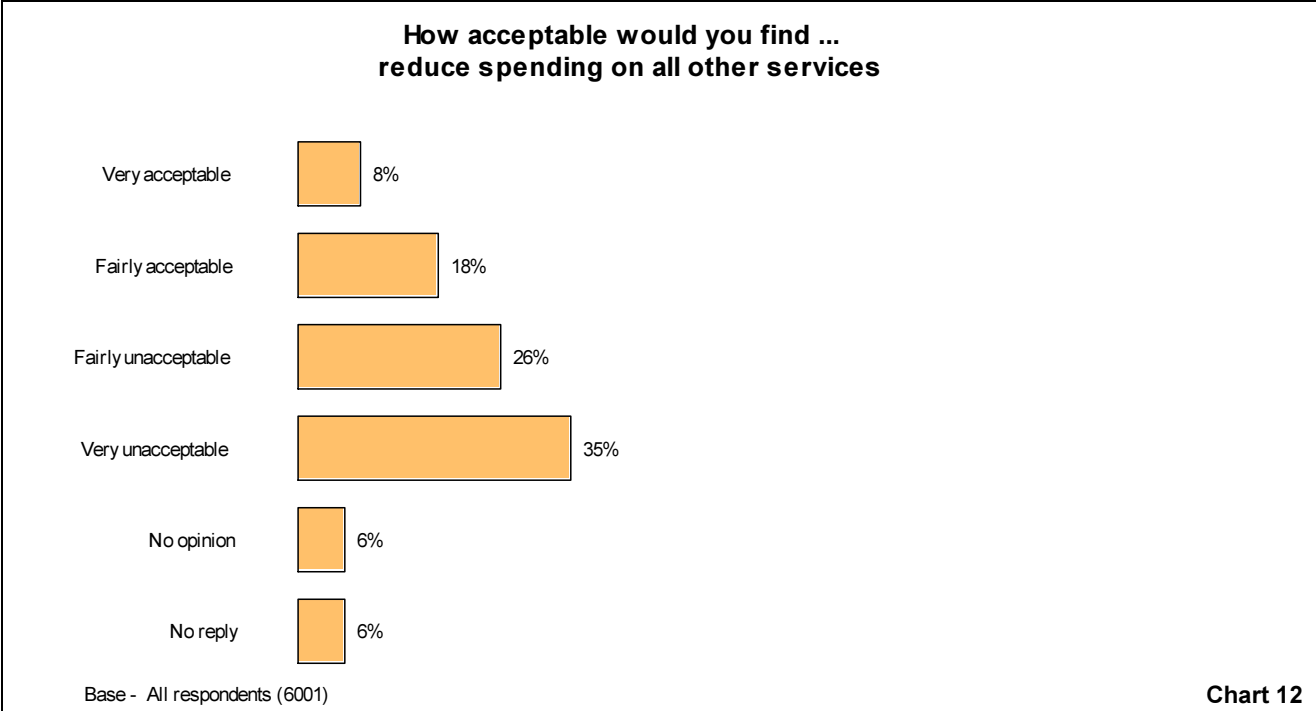
Again there is a marked difference between men and women on this issue – 32% of men finding it acceptable, compared with 24% of women.

There is less difference across the age ranges, though under 35s seem to have least tolerance of the idea.

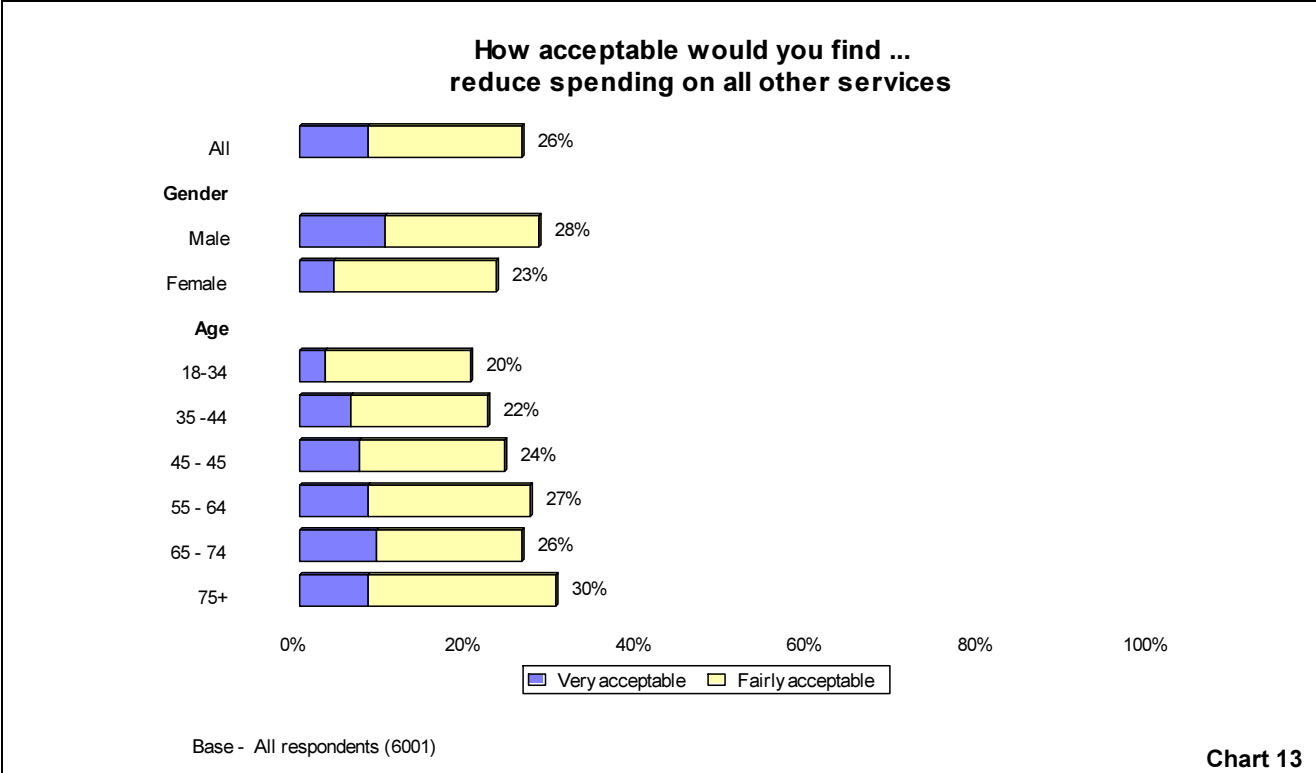


**Reduce spending on all other services (and therefore reduce level of service slightly in all areas)**

Just over a quarter of residents would find the concept of reducing spending on all other services acceptable, with more than a third saying it would be very unacceptable (35%).

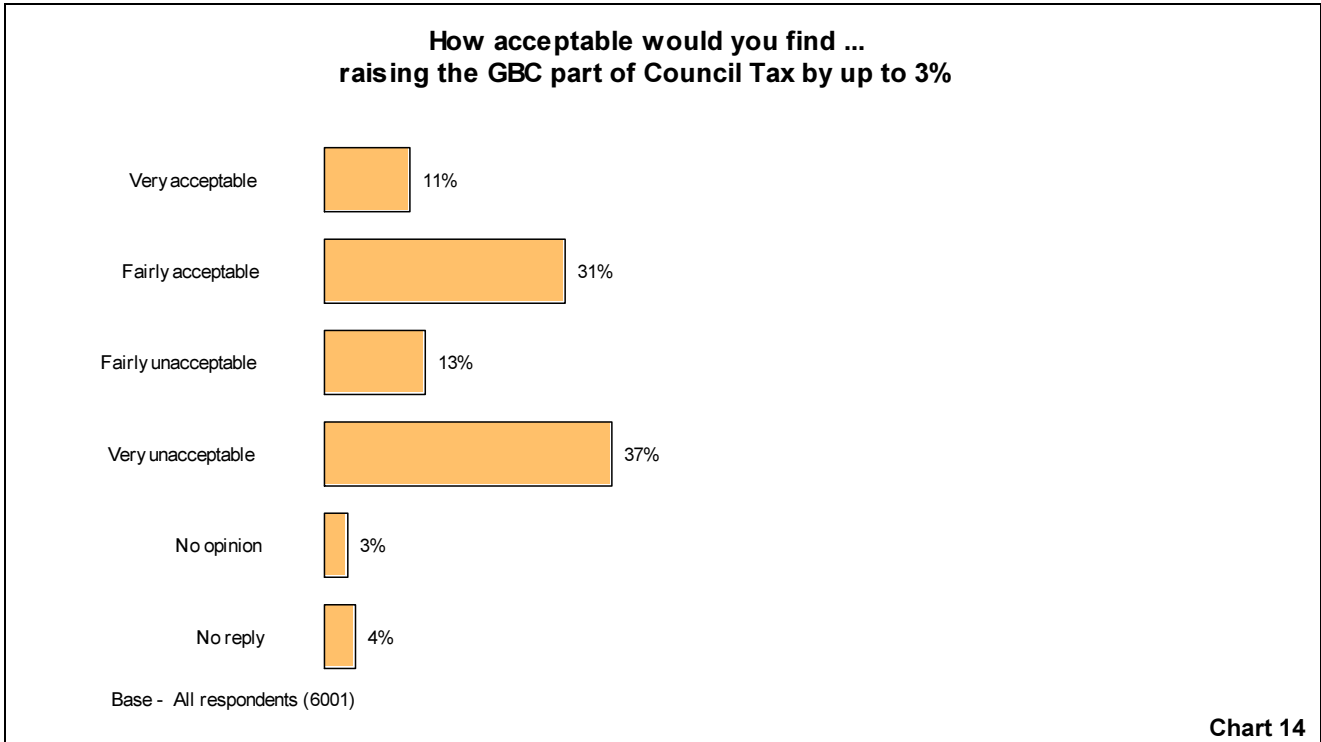


Again, women are less accepting of this idea than men. Although the degree of acceptance tends to increase slightly with age, the maximum level reached is only 30%.

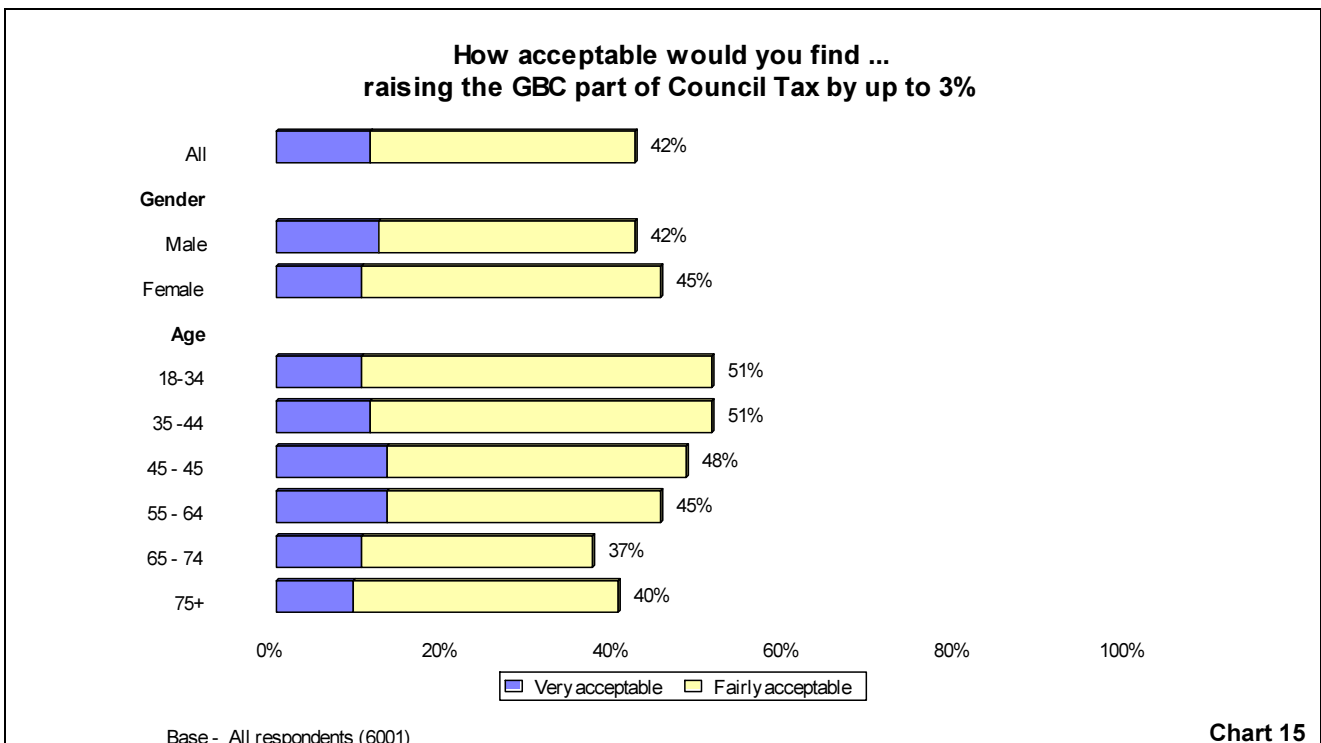


**Raise the Gedling Borough Council part of the Council Tax by up to 3% (adding £3.15 per year to the average Gedling BC Band B Council Tax payment)**

Opinion is divided on the acceptability of raising the Gedling Borough Council part of the Council Tax by up to 3% - 42% finding it acceptable and 50% unacceptable.

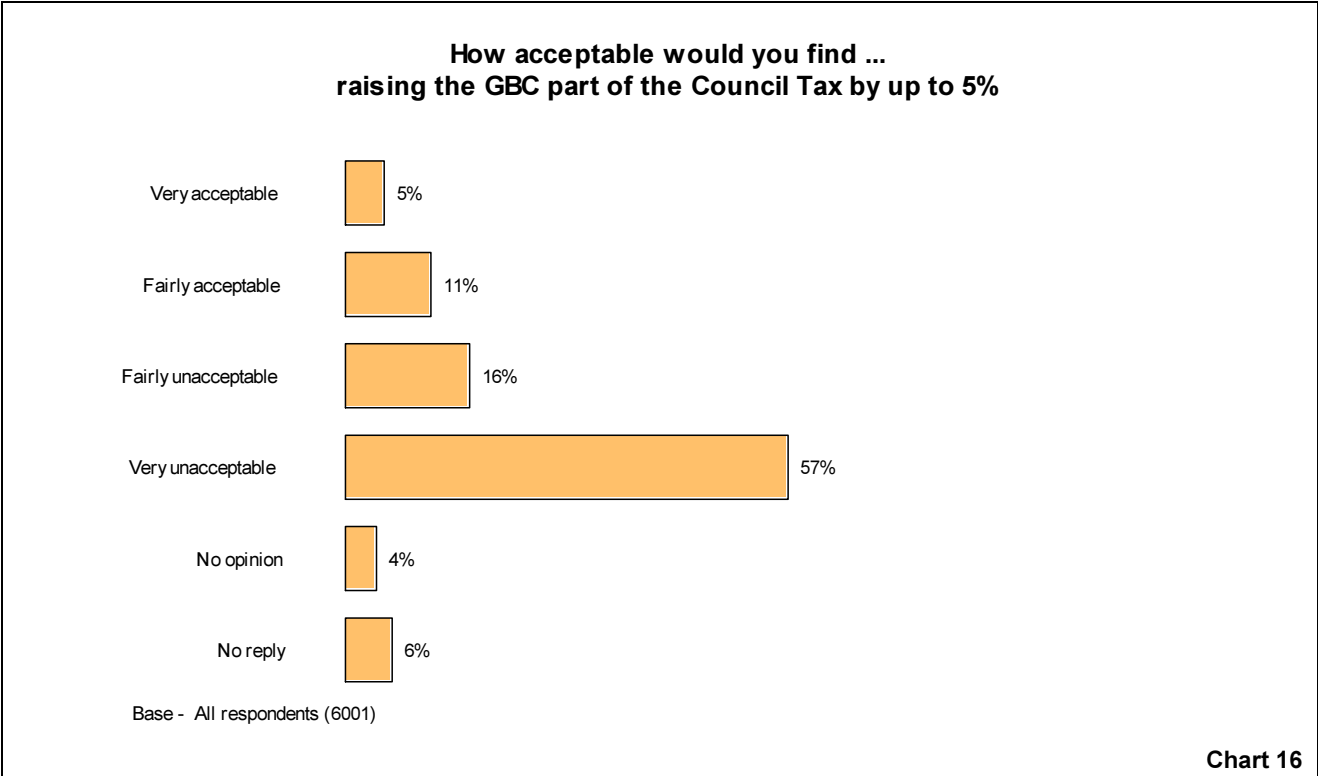


Around half of those aged under 45 would find a 3% increase in the Borough Council's part of their Council Tax bill acceptable, with only slightly fewer in the 45 to 64 age groups agreeing. The level of acceptability drops markedly, however with older residents – 37% of 64s to 75s and 40% of over 75s rating such an increase acceptable.

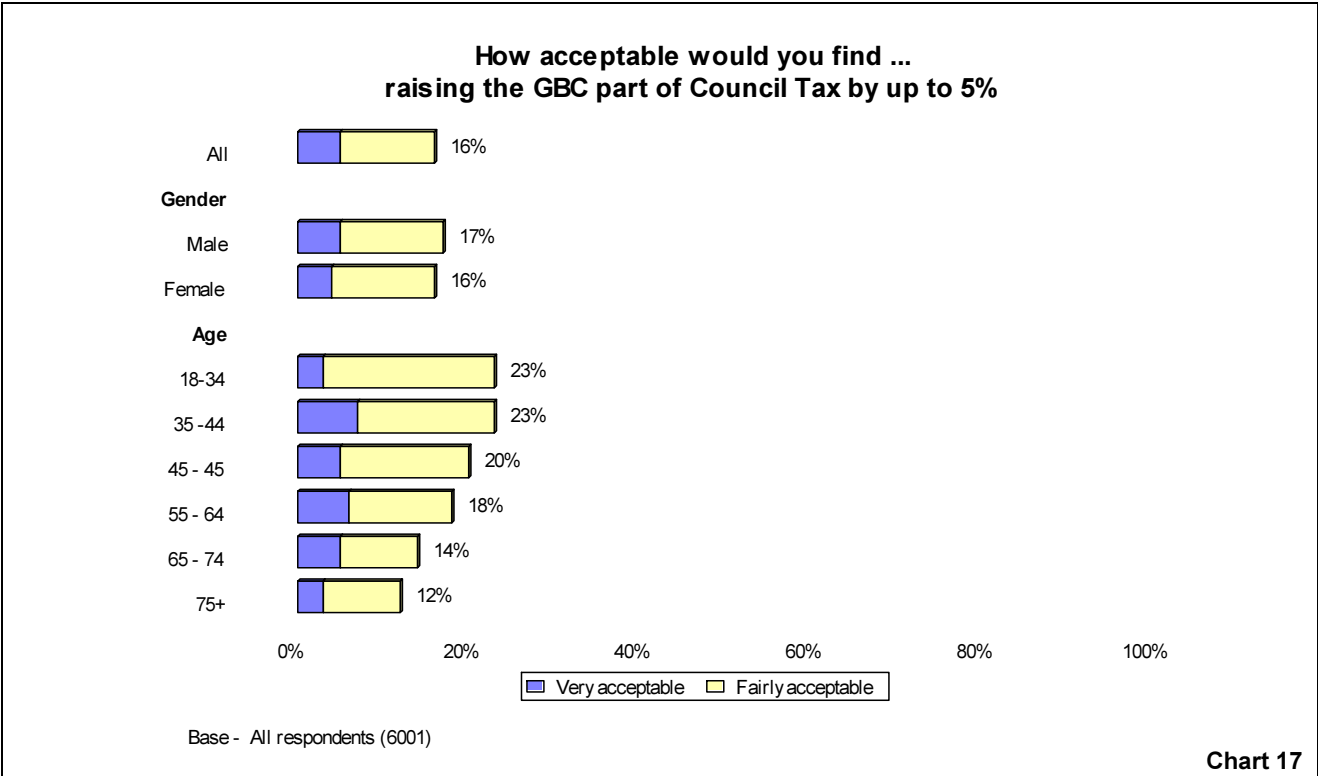


**Raise the Gedling Borough Council part of the Council Tax by up to 5% (adding £5.25 per year to the average Gedling BC Band B Council Tax payment)**

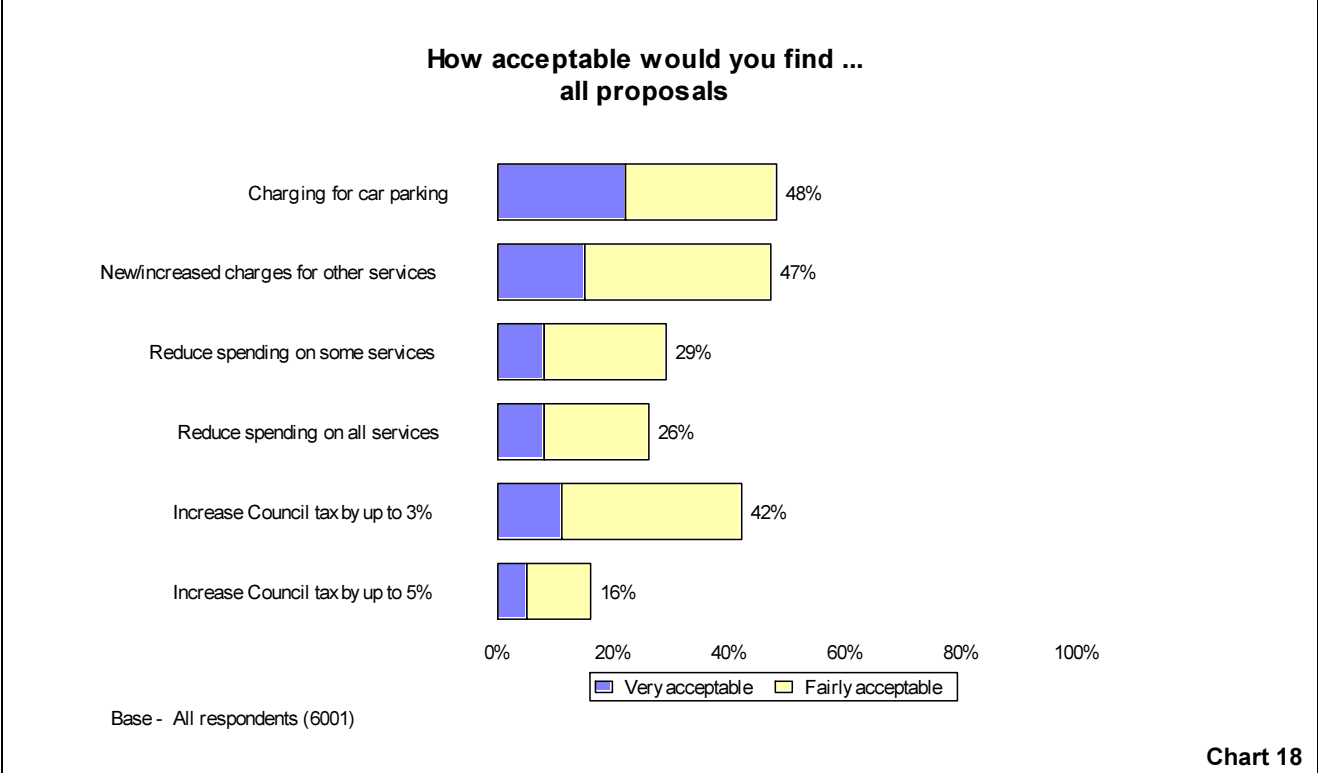
More than half of all residents say that raising the Borough Council’s part of the council tax bill by up to 5% is very unacceptable (57%), with a further 16% finding it fairly unacceptable.



As shown on the chart below, the older the resident the less likely they are to judge this proposition acceptable – while almost a quarter of under 45s say it would be acceptable, this falls to 12% among the over 75s.



The chart below summarises response to each of these propositions, and shows that on balance residents would find it more acceptable to increase existing charges for services or introduce new charges rather than reduce spending on services. While there would be some degree of tolerance to increasing the Borough Council’s part of the council tax bill by 3%, the suggestion of increasing it to 5% emerges as the least acceptable of the six proposals put forward.





***Other services needing improvement***

Residents were asked to indicate any other services which they feel should be improved.

The table below and overleaf shows the range of responses given together with the percentage making each suggestion.

Road sweeping/street cleaning	20%
Look at Council spending/stop wasting money/overspending	14%
Service from police/more police on streets	11%
Recycling	8%
Maintenance of roads/footpaths	8%
Better service from PCSOs/PCSOs waste of money	4%
Leisure provision for youngsters	4%
Drain maintenance/cleaning	4%
Refuse service	4%
Road safety	4%
Inconsiderate/illegal parking	4%
Maintenance of grass verges/trees/hedges	3%
Improve car parks/cheaper car parking	3%
Dog fouling	3%
More/improved services for disabled/ill/elderly	3%
Improve leisure services	3%
Local transport	2%
General efficiency/admin	2%
Public transport	2%
Maintenance of parks/open spaces	2%
Flood prevention	2%
Problems with youths	1%
Street lighting	1%
Planning department	1%
Provide more litter bins	1%
Environmental/sustainability issues	1%
Road gritting	1%
Anti-social behaviour	1%
Graffiti removal	1%
More cycle lanes	1%

CCTV	1%
Public toilets	1%
Free collection of large household items	1%
Problems with neighbours	1%
Affordable housing	1%
Council house repairs	1%
Fly tipping	1%
Improve cemeteries	*
Stop building on green belts	*
Pest control	*
Improve adult education services	*
Maintenance of road/street signs	*
Improvement to council tips	*
Enforcement of parking fines/more traffic wardens	*
Improvements to housing services	*
The Bonnington theatre	*
More neighbourhood wardens	*
Encourage businesses to the area	*
More consultation with residents	*
Arts provision	*
Licensing	*
More support for rural areas	*
More checking of food sales establishments	*
Introduction of farmers markets	*
Less empty/disused buildings	*
Horse fouling	*
Enforcement of fireworks sales/bans	*

\* = less than 0.5%

***Questionnaire***