



University of  
**Reading**

Measuring the social impacts  
of regeneration in South Acton  
*Presentation to Acton Community Board*

18 May 2015

# The research brief

“Measure the social impacts of regeneration on people living in South Acton & surrounding areas”

1. Household survey, 60+ questions, people living on South Acton estate, Acton Gardens phase one & surrounding streets to understand:
  - How much people know, and how they feel, about regeneration of South Acton
  - How people feel about the neighbourhood
  - How people feel about the way Acton Gardens LLP has engaged with local communities



# The research brief

1. Survey sample of people living on South Acton estate, Acton Gardens phase one & surrounding streets
2. Research to provide a base-line to track how residents are affected over a number of years

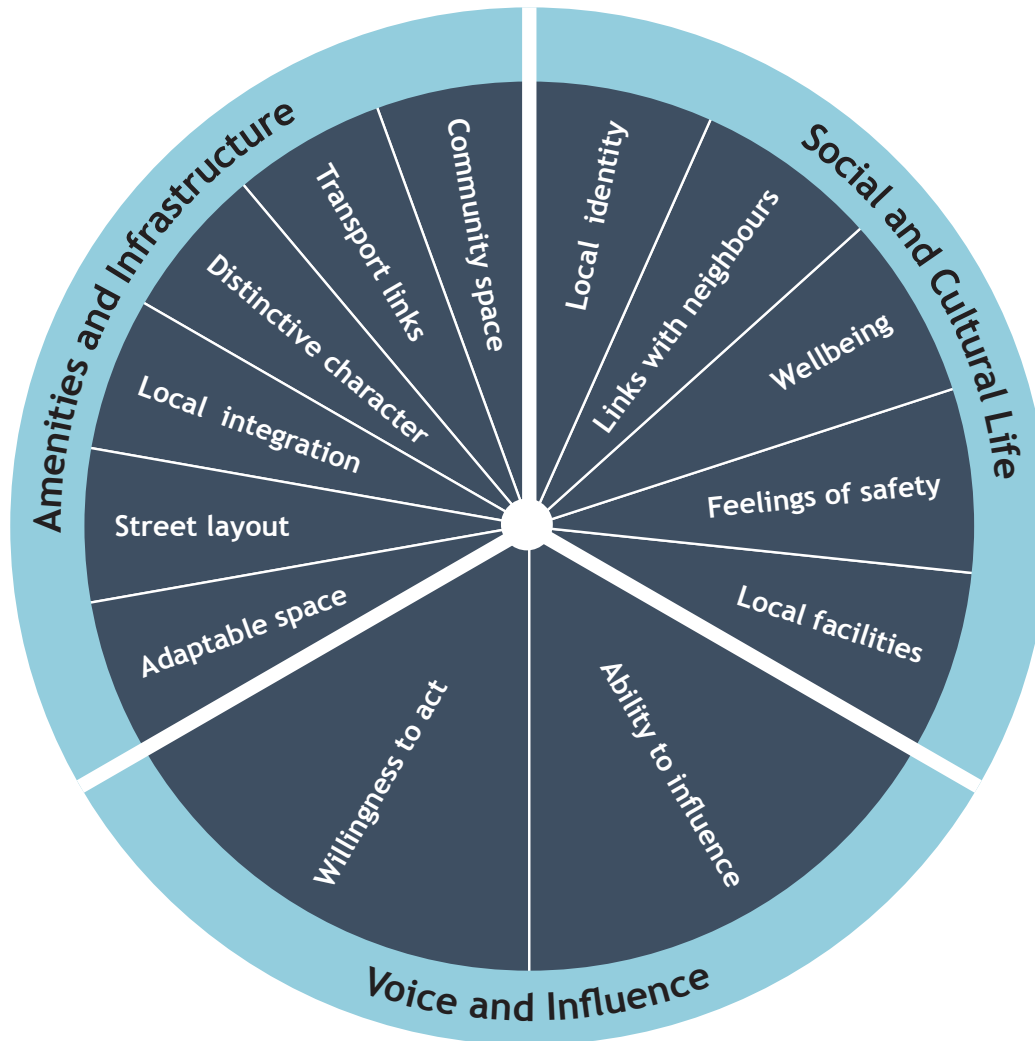


# The research brief

1. Survey sample of people living on South Acton estate, Acton Gardens phase one & surrounding streets
2. Research to provide a base-line to track how residents are affected over a number of years
3. The research will be used by Acton Gardens LLP to inform planning, design and management of the regeneration process



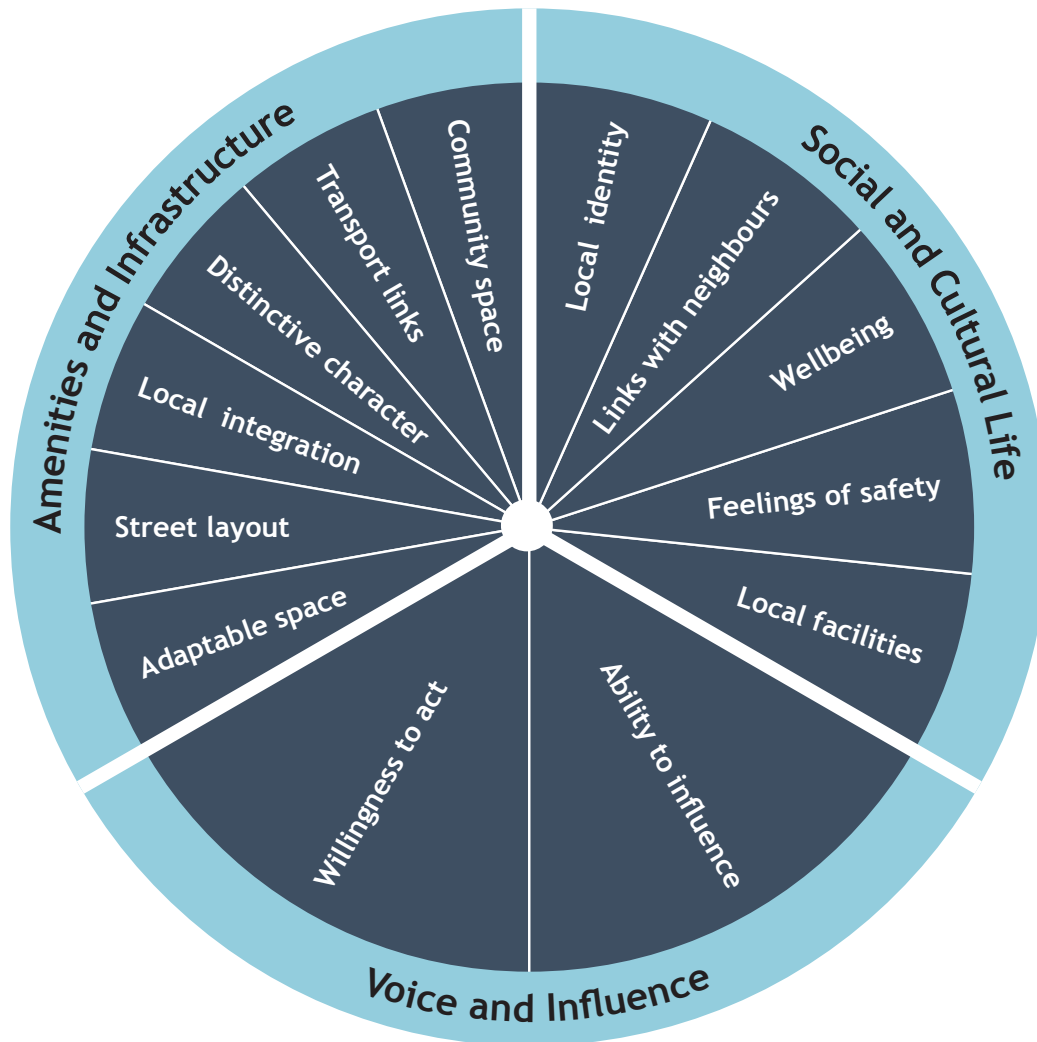
# What is social sustainability?



A way for housing providers to think about the many different factors that influence quality of life and wellbeing in neighbourhoods.

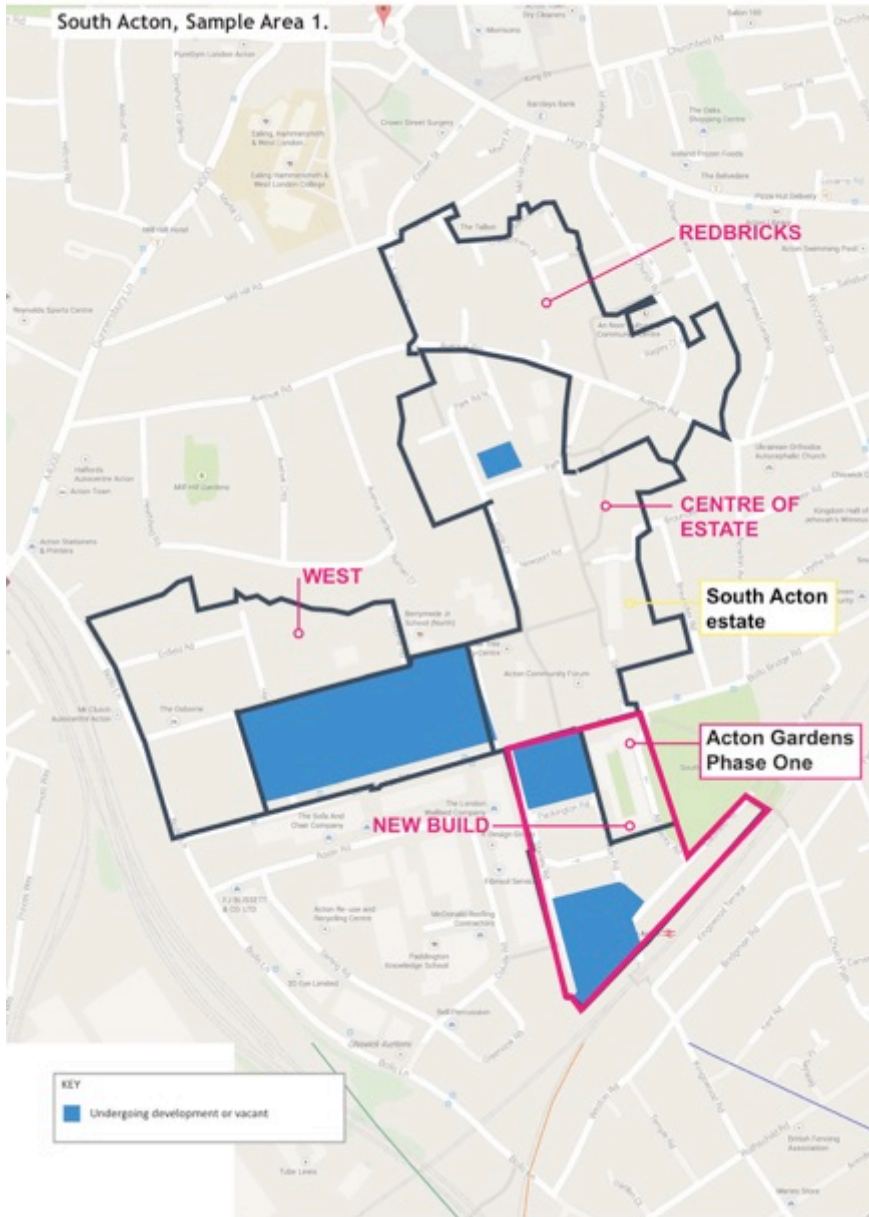
University of Reading & Social Life have identified a set of measures based on academic research & evidence.

# What is social sustainability?



The South Acton survey uses an independent household survey, 60+ questions, to measure social & cultural life and voice & influence.

An independent site survey carried out by an architect is used to measure amenities & social infrastructure.



## The research: South Acton & Acton Gardens Phase 1

293 residents of South Acton & Acton Gardens (Sample Area 1) surveyed between March 19 and April 15

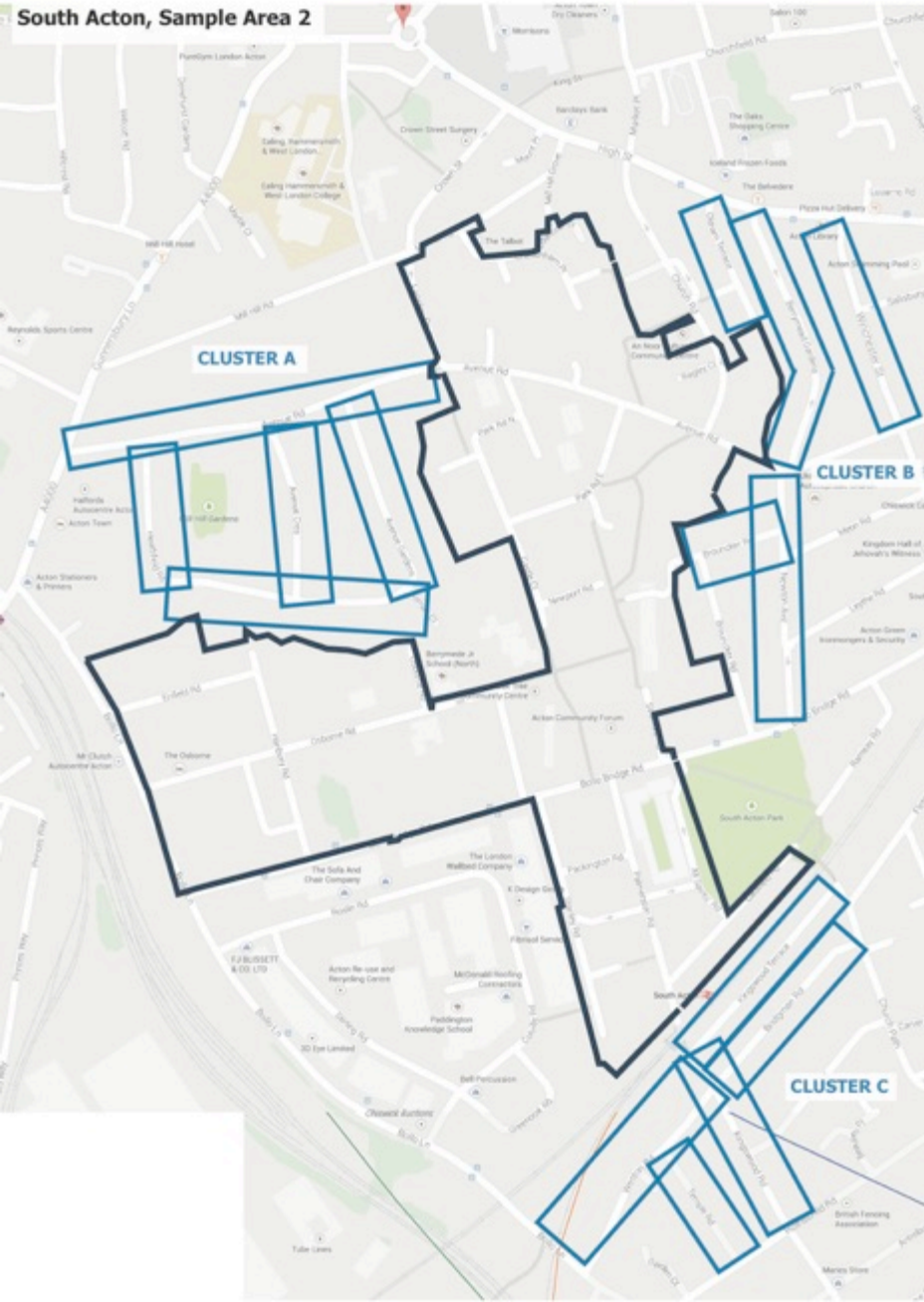
Random sampling carried out by block, tenure-based quotas to reflect overall population of South Acton & Acton Gardens

Interviews completed:  
South Acton & Acton  
Gardens Phase 1

	Council tenant	Private owner	Housing Association	Shared ownership	<b>TOTAL</b>
New Build	0.00%	43.90%	48.80%	7.30%	41
Redbricks	69.40%	30.60%	0.00%	0.00%	85
Centre of estate	84.70%	14.50%	0.80%	0.00%	124
West	88.40%	11.60%	0.00%	0.00%	43



## South Acton, Sample Area 2



## The research

251 residents of the wider area (Sample Area 2)

Same questions (60+) in 15-minute survey completed on doorstep

# Household survey results

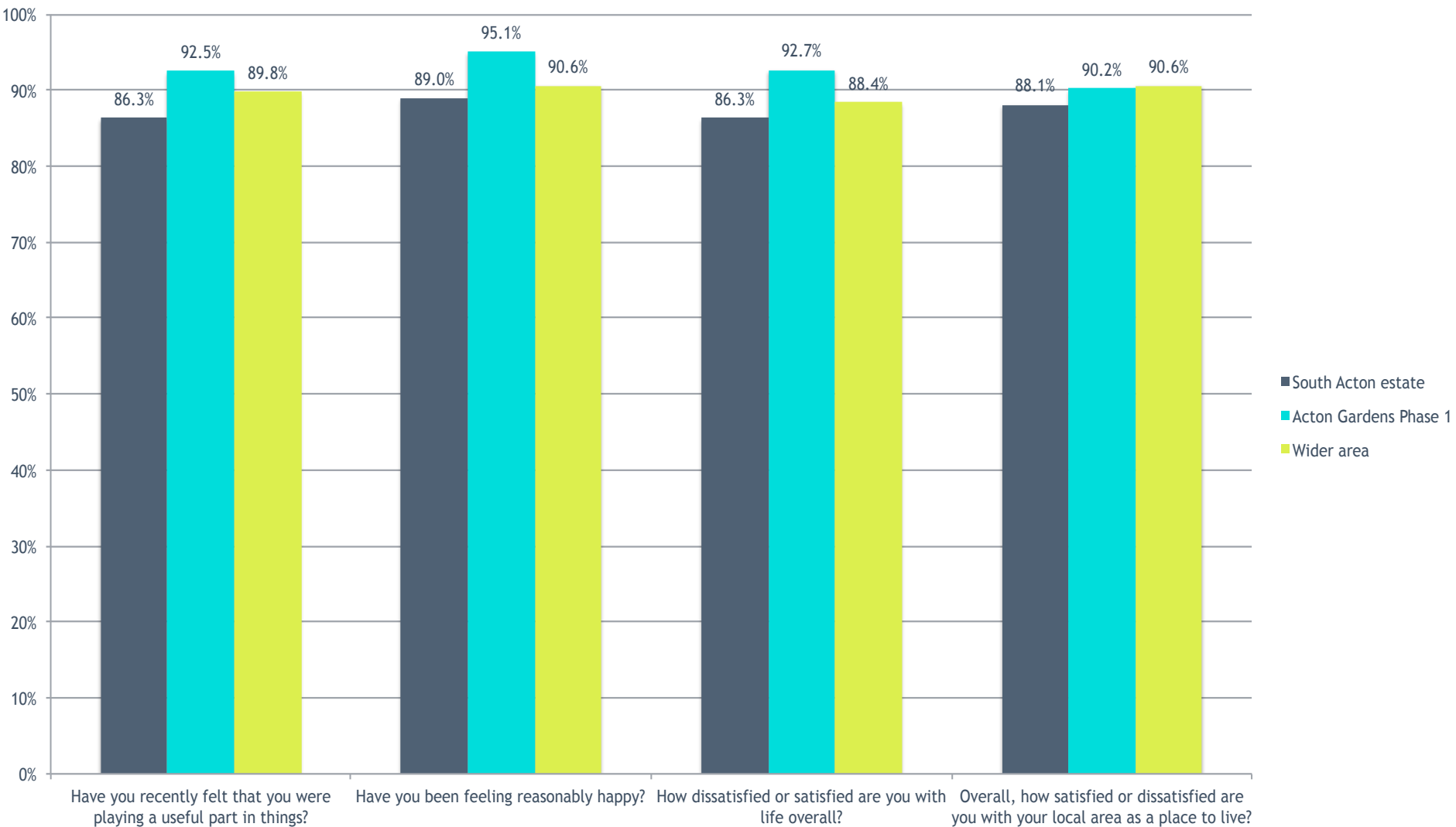


# What is it like to live in South Acton?

- 293 people living in South Acton & Acton Gardens Phase 1
  - 91% of people said they are “satisfied with the area as a place to live”
  - There is a close-knit community: 75% say they regularly talk to their neighbours
  - People feel safe at night and during the day
  - 65% of people said it was important for them to feel they can influence decisions about the regeneration
  - People said the area was previously a difficult place to live but is now improving



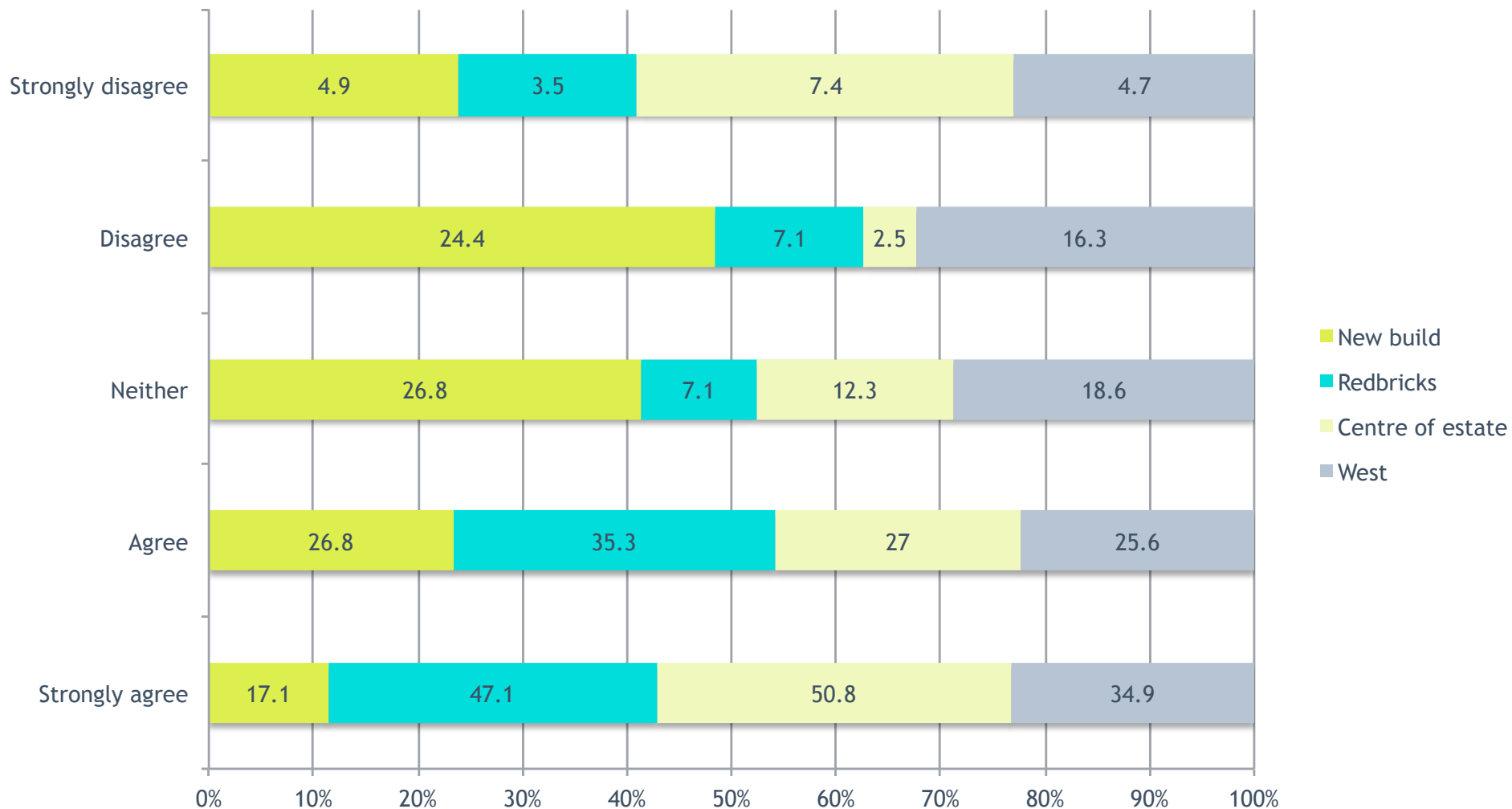
# WELLBEING



Overall, 91% of survey respondents from South Acton and Acton Gardens Phase 1 said they are satisfied with the area as a place to live.

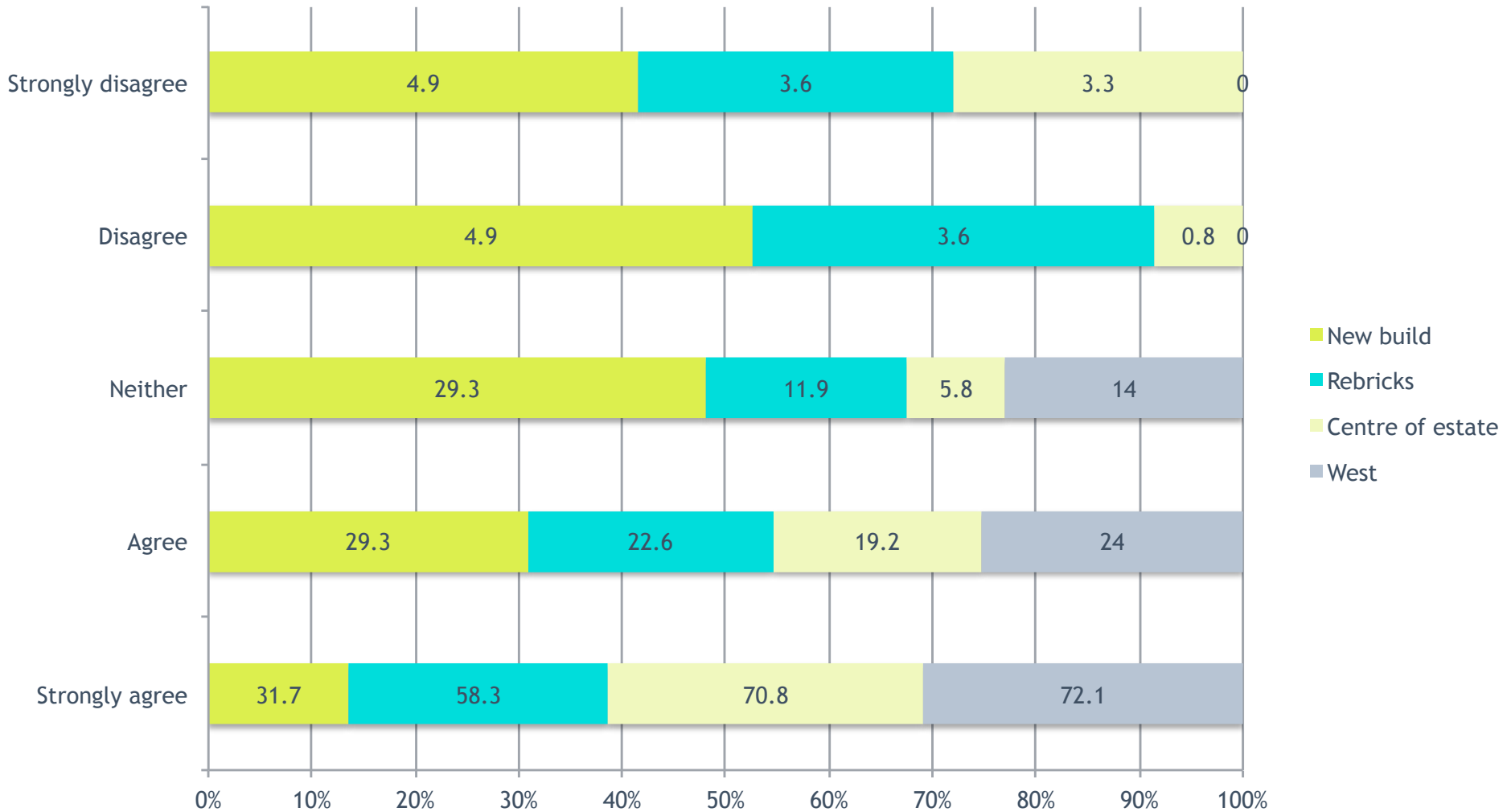


# I regularly stop and talk with people in my neighbourhood



Overall, 77% of survey respondents regularly stop and talk to their neighbours and 76% say they feel they can go to someone local for advice (76%). This chart shows how responses vary in different parts of the estate.

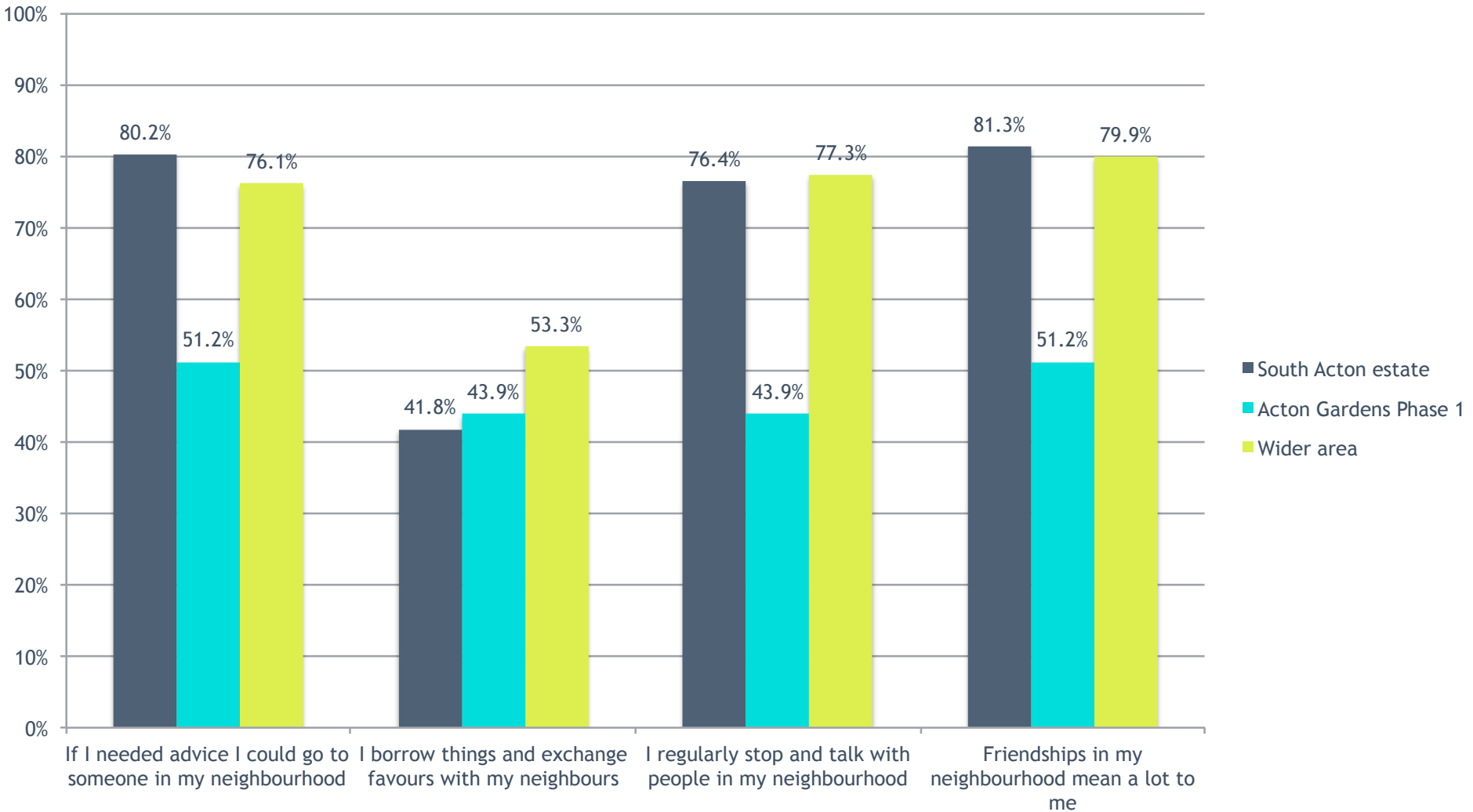
# I feel like I belong to the neighbourhood



Overall, 84% of survey respondents said they feel like they belong to the neighbourhood. This chart shows how responses vary in different parts of the estate. People living in Acton Gardens phase one are less likely to feel like they belong (61%) than people living in the Redbricks (81%), Centre (90%) and West (96%).



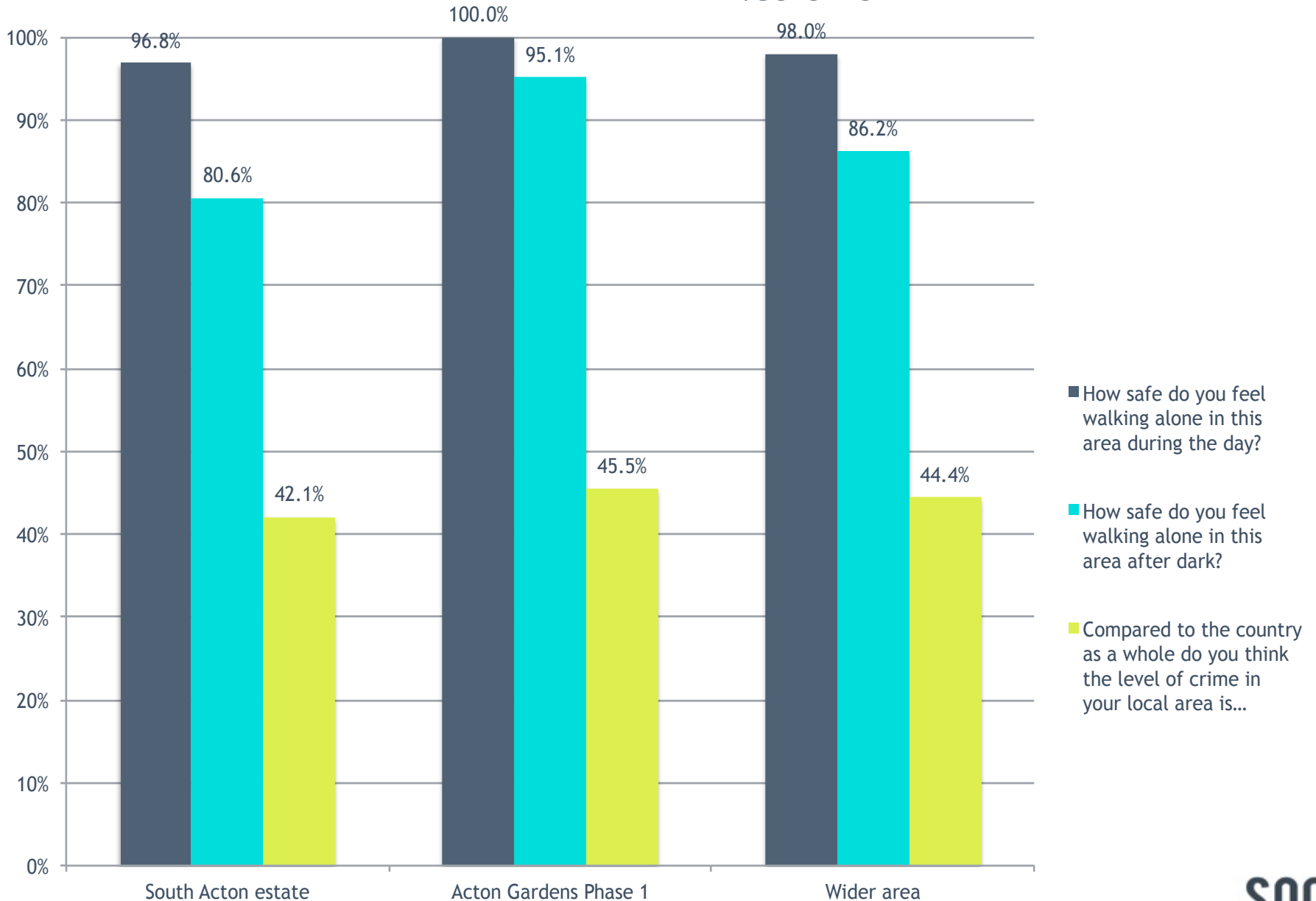
# LINKS WITH NEIGHBOURS



The survey results show that people living in the Redbrick, Centre and West of the estate report strong local relationships; they regularly talk to their neighbours, say local friendships are important to them & feel they have support networks in the neighbourhood. Survey results show people living in Acton Gardens Phase 1 are less likely to talk to their neighbours, feel local friendships matter or have support networks to call on.

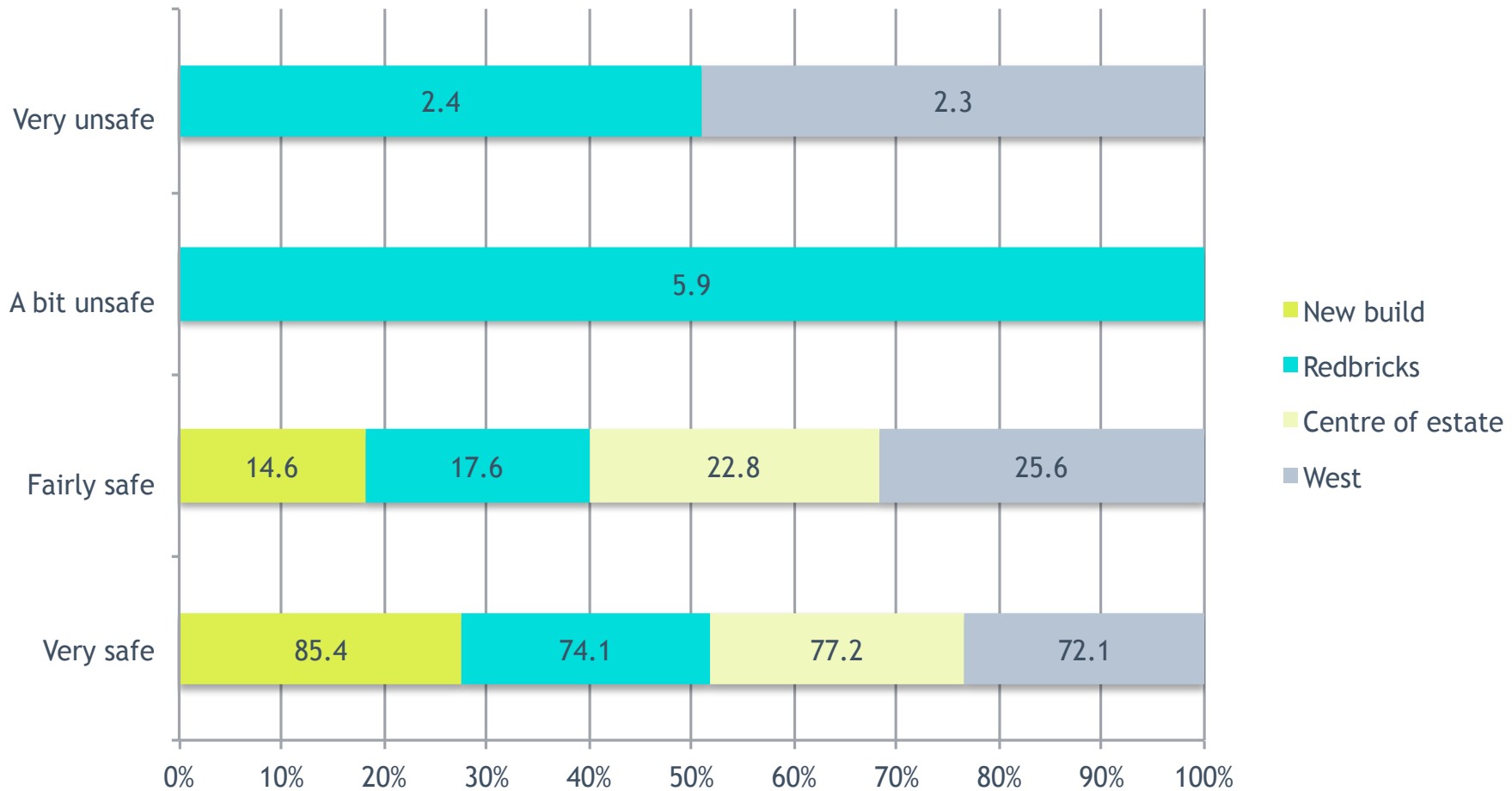


# FEELINGS OF SAFETY



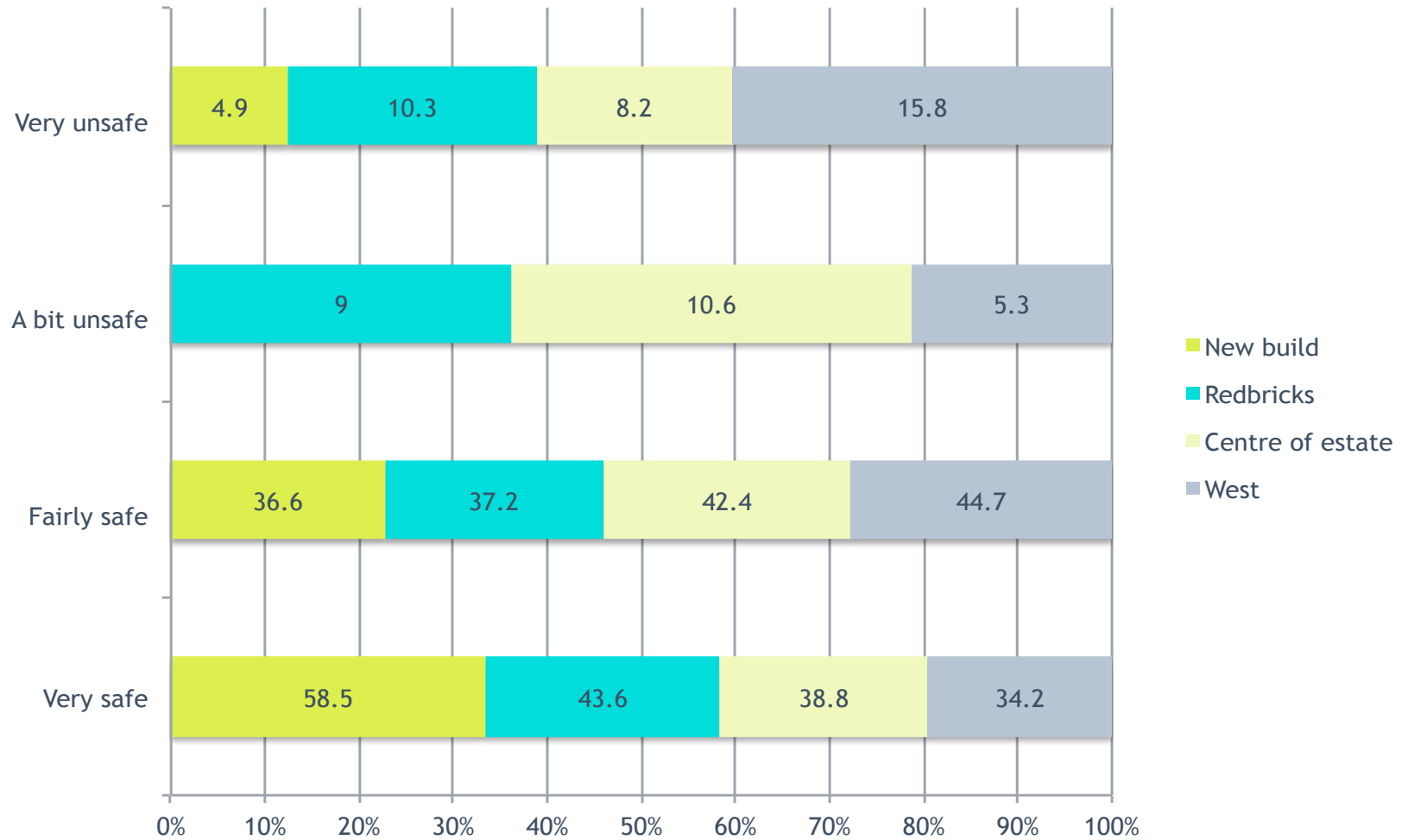


# How safe do you feel walking alone in this area during the day?



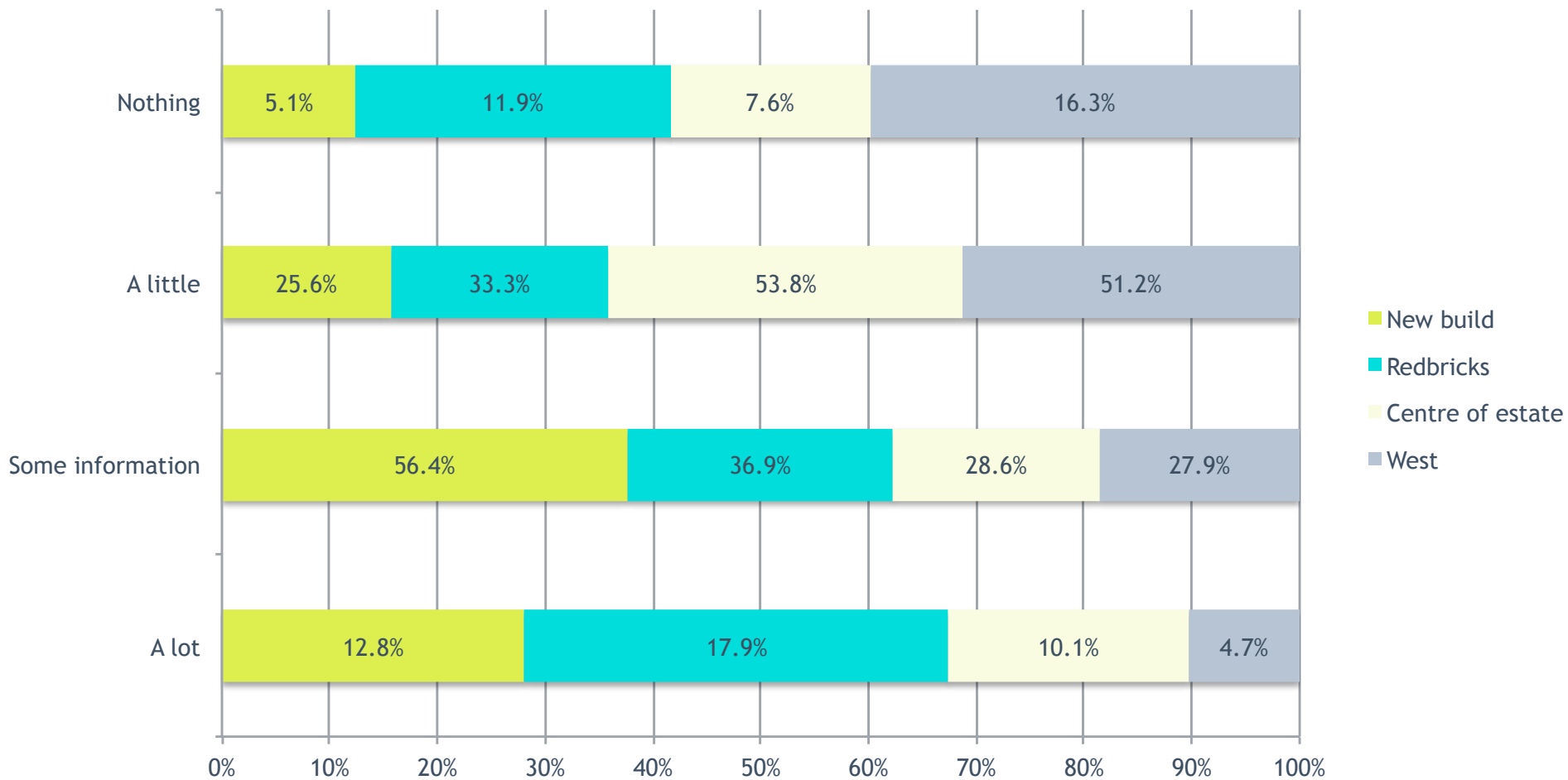
Overall, 86% respondents reported feeling “very” or “fairly safe” walking alone in South Acton during the day. 85% of people living in Acton Gardens Phase 1 said they felt “very safe” compared to 77% of people living in the centre of the estate, 74% of people living in the redbricks and 72% in the west of the estate.

## How safe do you feel walking alone in this area after dark?



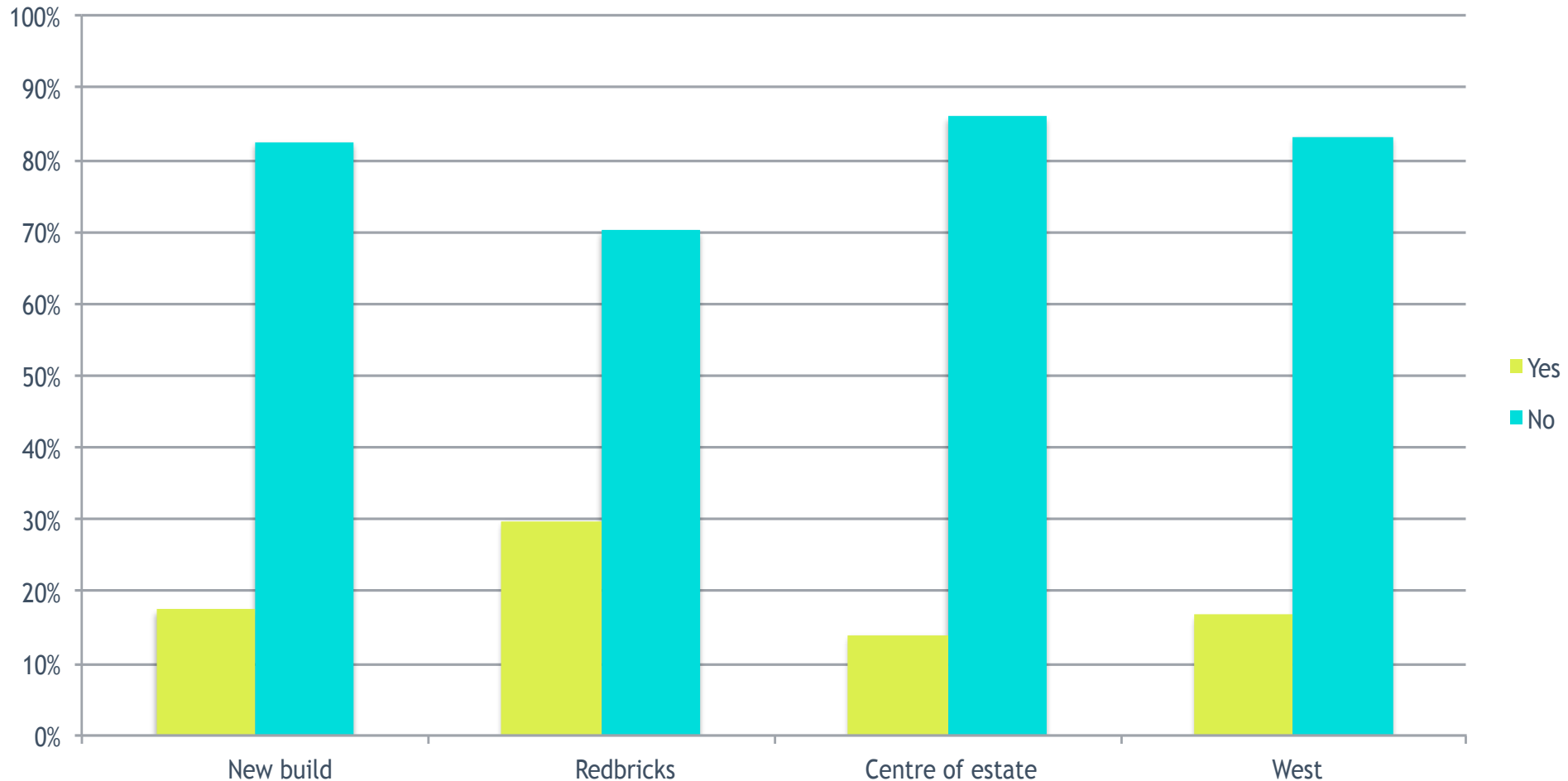
58% of people living in Acton Gardens Phase 1 said they felt “very safe” waling alone in the area after dark compared to 43% of people living in the redbricks, 39% in the centre of the estate and 34% in the west of the estate.

# How much do you know about plans to regenerate the South Acton estate?



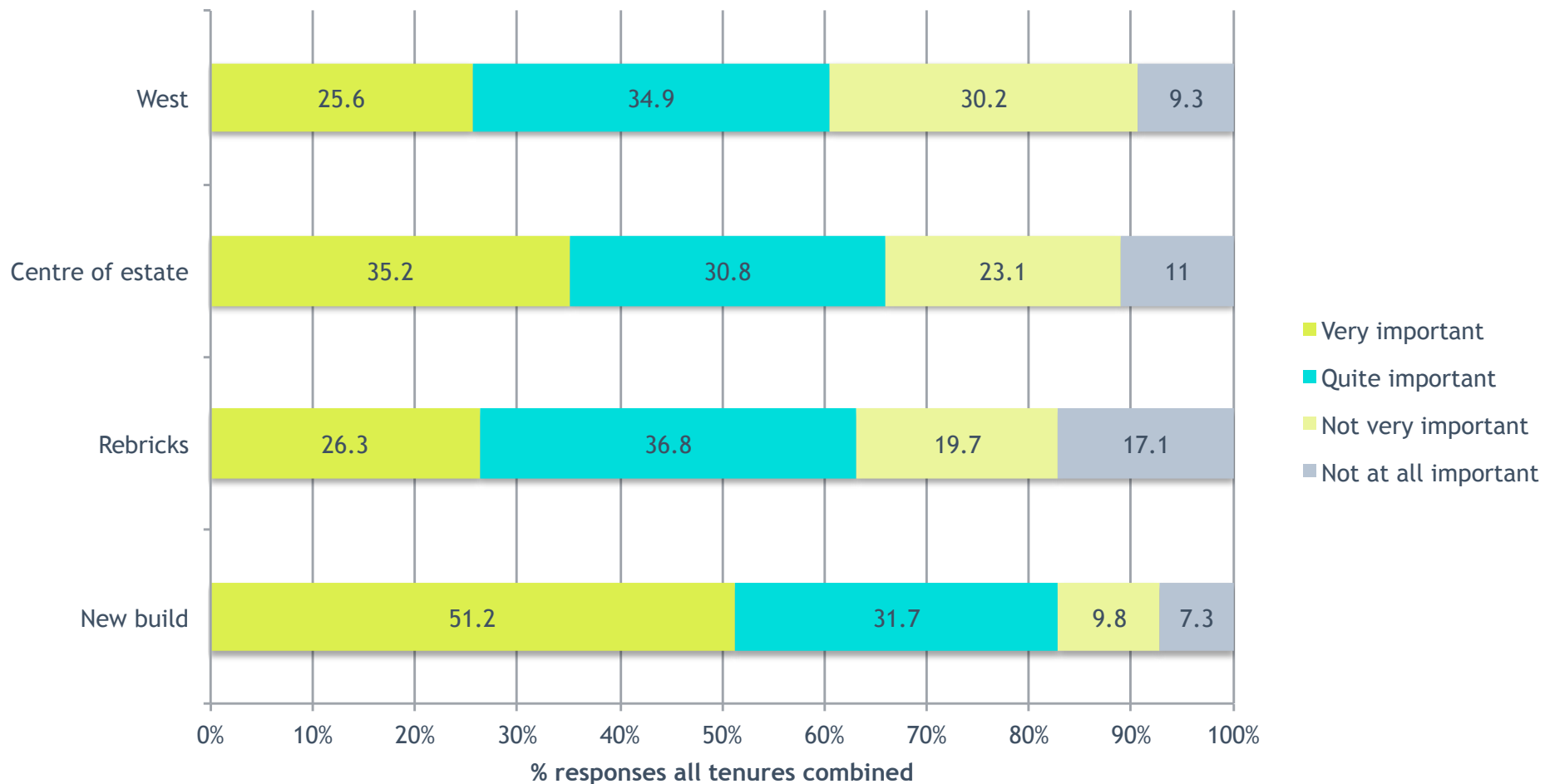
People living in the centre and west of South Acton estate know less about plans for regeneration than people living in Acton Gardens Phase 1 and the redbricks.

# Have you attended any meetings or events about the regeneration project in the past 12 months?



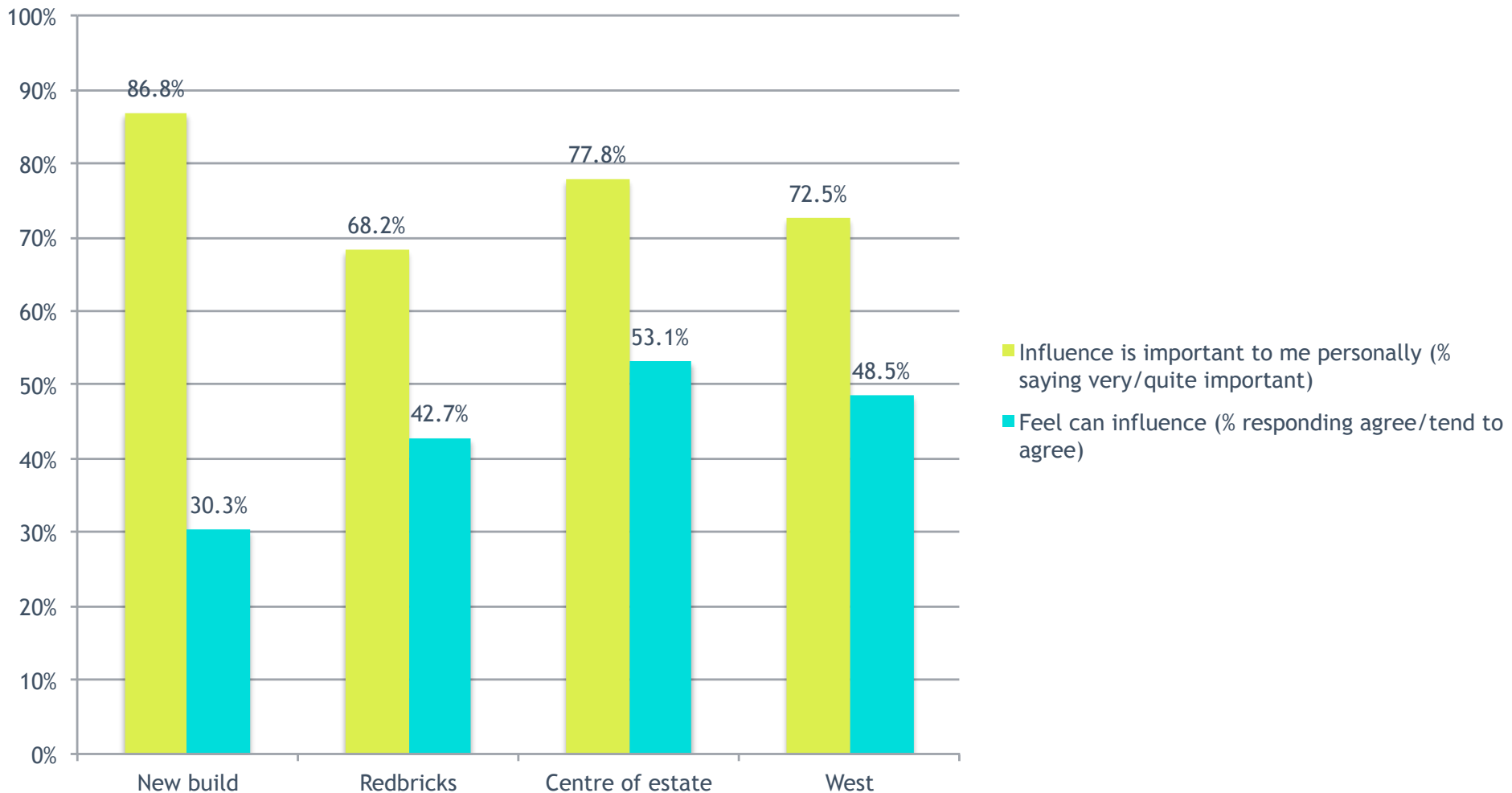
Most people had received & read the quarterly newsletter about regeneration (between 78% & 94%). Attendance at community meetings varies from 14% to 30% of respondents.

# How important is it for you to personally feel you can influence decisions about the regeneration?



Across the whole estate, 65% of people said it was “very” or “quite important” to them personally to feel they can influence decisions about the regeneration.

# Influencing local decision-making: Is it important? Do you feel you have influence?



Opinions vary across the estate about how important it is to people to be able to influence decisions. People living in Acton Gardens Phase 1 are more likely to feel that influence matters (almost 87%) compared to just over 68% in the redbricks.

# In-depth conversations with local organisations



# Who we spoke to

- SASAC,
- Anti-Tribalism Movement
- Bollo Road Youth Centre
- a local Councillor
- Safer Neighbourhoods team
- CANforum
- a long-standing active resident
- members of the sheltered housing
- South Acton Children's Centre
- A long-standing local shop keeper





# Feelings about the area

*“The estate was a hard place to live.”*

*“Before, it affected everyone.”*

People told us:

- Area was previously a difficult place to live but is now improving.
- Reputational time-lag with people outside the area taking longer to recognise the change.
- There is a close-knit community on the estate and people want to stay.
- South Acton has an extremely diverse population. The relationship between people of different backgrounds is more one of tolerance and respect than integration.
- They feel safe & problems with gangs and drugs are being well-managed.



# Feelings about the regeneration

*“It seems to be progressing alright...they’re doing what they say they’re going to do.”*

## People told us:

- Many residents support the plans and are happy with how the regeneration is going.
- They feel new housing will improve the area and make life a lot easier for many families.
- They like the look of the new homes.
- Currently there is a lot of overcrowding and there are concerns that new housing will not be able to accommodate enough larger families and is being targeted at more affluent newcomers.
- There are concerns about how the new community hub may institutionalise small. Low-key organisations which will affect the progress they have made over the years.
- Different architecture will not change deep-seated social problems. Some feel that the new development is not “for them”.





[saffron.woodcraft@social-life.co](mailto:saffron.woodcraft@social-life.co)  
[t.j.dixon@reading.ac.uk](mailto:t.j.dixon@reading.ac.uk)



**University of  
Reading**

