

Searching for the impact of involvement

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- **Context – the claimed benefits and difficulties in identifying impact**
- **Is involvement/influence related to other positive outcomes?**
- **Does change show any impact from involvement...**
- **...particularly individual longitudinal (gross) change?**

Context

- Involvement, engagement, participation a major focus across number of policies
- Seen to meet number of objectives grouped into three
 - Improving the design and delivery of services/local areas
 - Increasing community cohesion/capital and individual capacity
 - Civil renewal and increased democratic legitimacy
- But evidence of impact fairly weak/anecdotal (see ippr, SQW, Involve)
 - Intangible/difficult to measure outcomes
 - Difficult to attribute/sort out cause/effect/intervening variables
- Tried to use range of surveys to bolster evidence
- Return for costs/effort of involvement approaches likely to become a focus at some point

- Used New Deal for Communities Household survey here
- Regeneration programme in 39 of most deprived areas in country, each given £50m to spend on renewal, including particular focus on community involvement
- Household survey involves c15,000 interviews, covering very broad range of issues in 2002 and 2004 (and 2006)
- Includes longitudinal element, following up as many individuals as possible
- Plus some early evidence from surveys in all local authorities in country
- Impact of two measures looked at throughout – feelings of influence and actual levels of involvement
- Clear difficulties with cause and effect...

**Is involvement/influence
related to positive
outcomes?**

Key drivers of satisfaction with area as a place to live

35% of variance explained by the model

Satisfaction with the area as a place to live

Good area to bring up children (30%)

Disturbance from crowds/ gangs of hooligans (-13%)

Feeling safe walking alone after dark (11%)

Litter and rubbish in the streets (-9%)

Problems with neighbours (-9%)

Believe activities of NDC have improved area (8%)

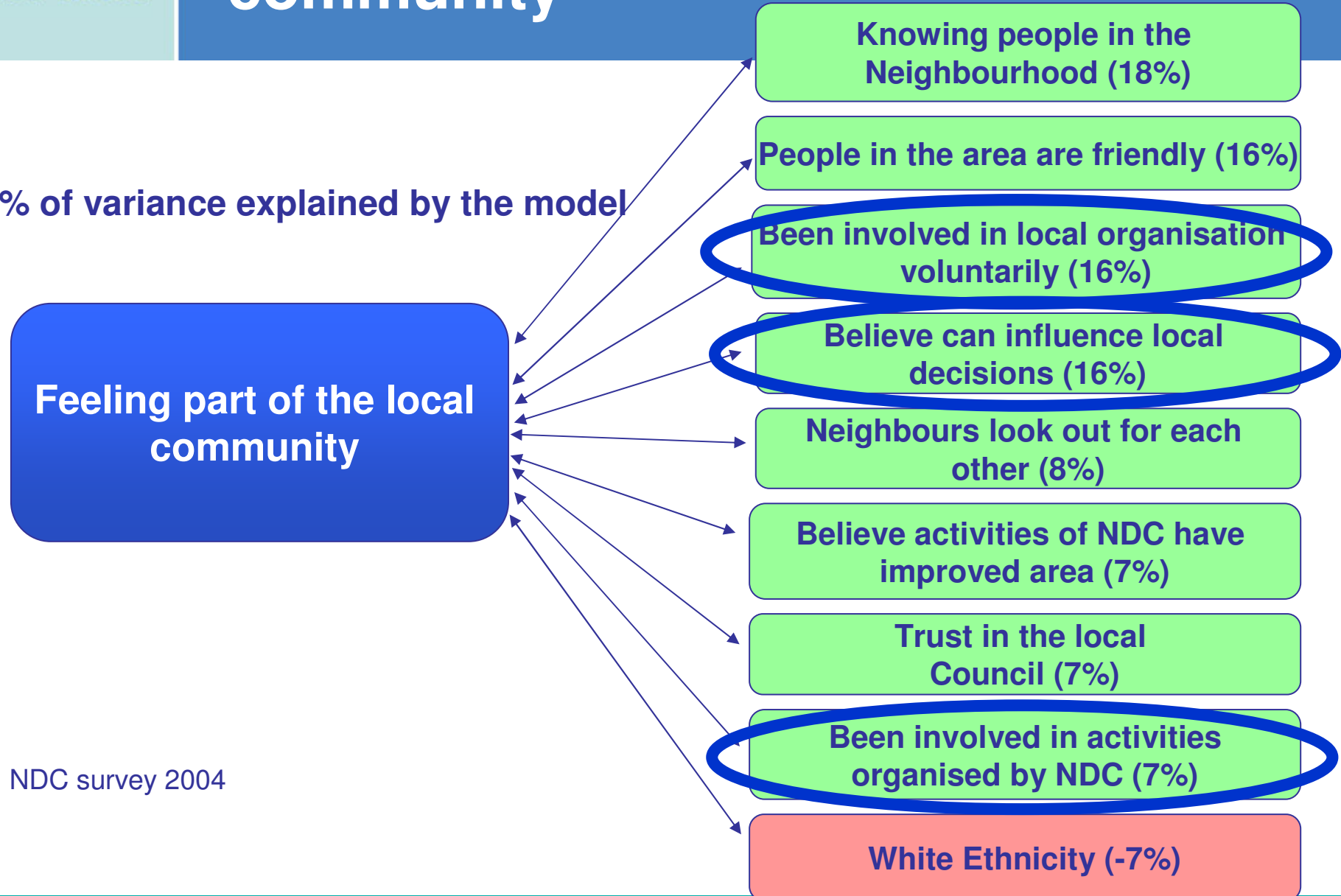
Satisfaction with service provided by police (8%)

Trust in the local Council (7%)

Believe can influence local decisions (4%)

Key drivers of feeling part of the local community

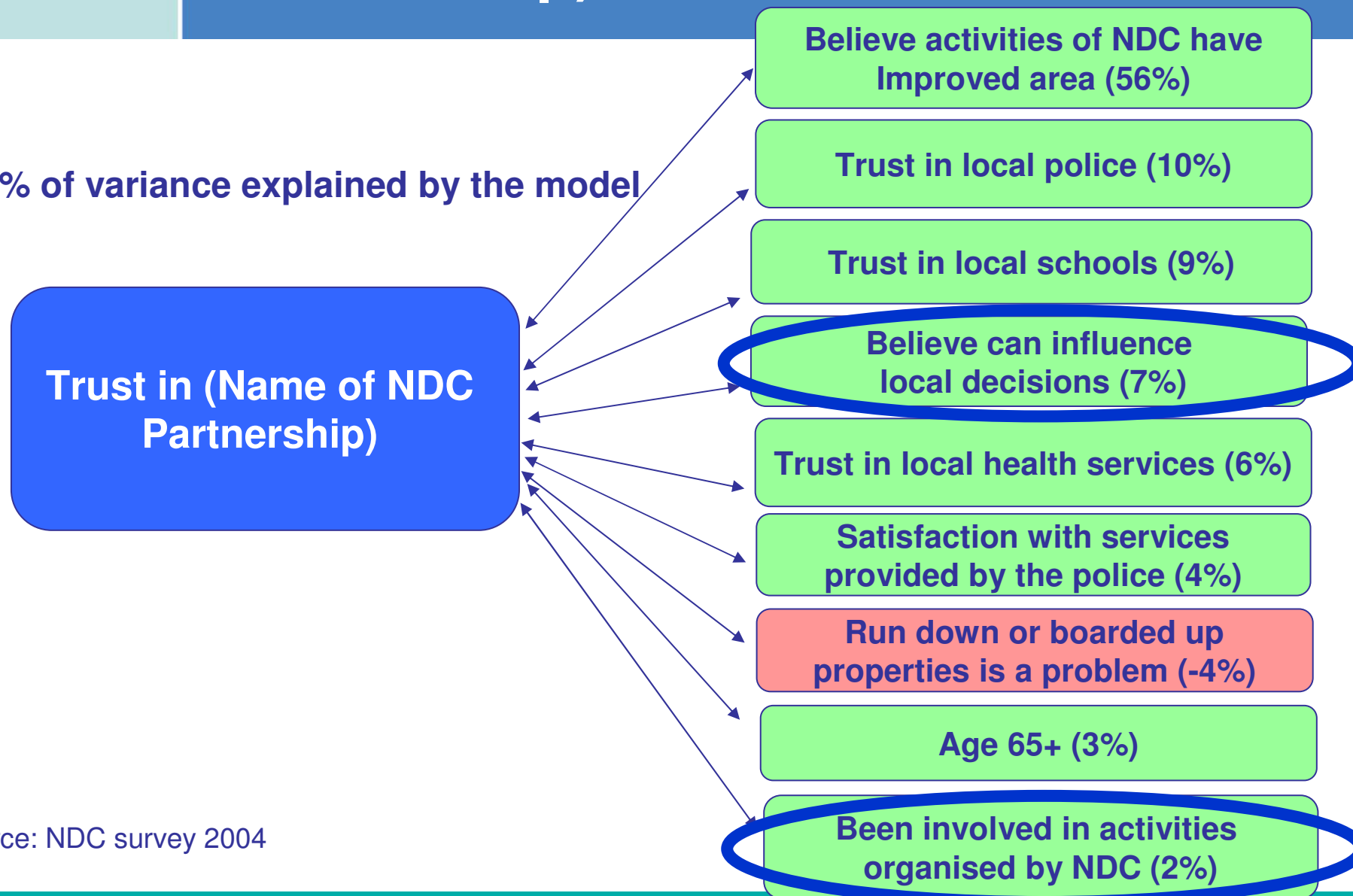
25% of variance explained by the model



Source: NDC survey 2004

Key drivers of trust in (name of NDC Partnership)

50% of variance explained by the model

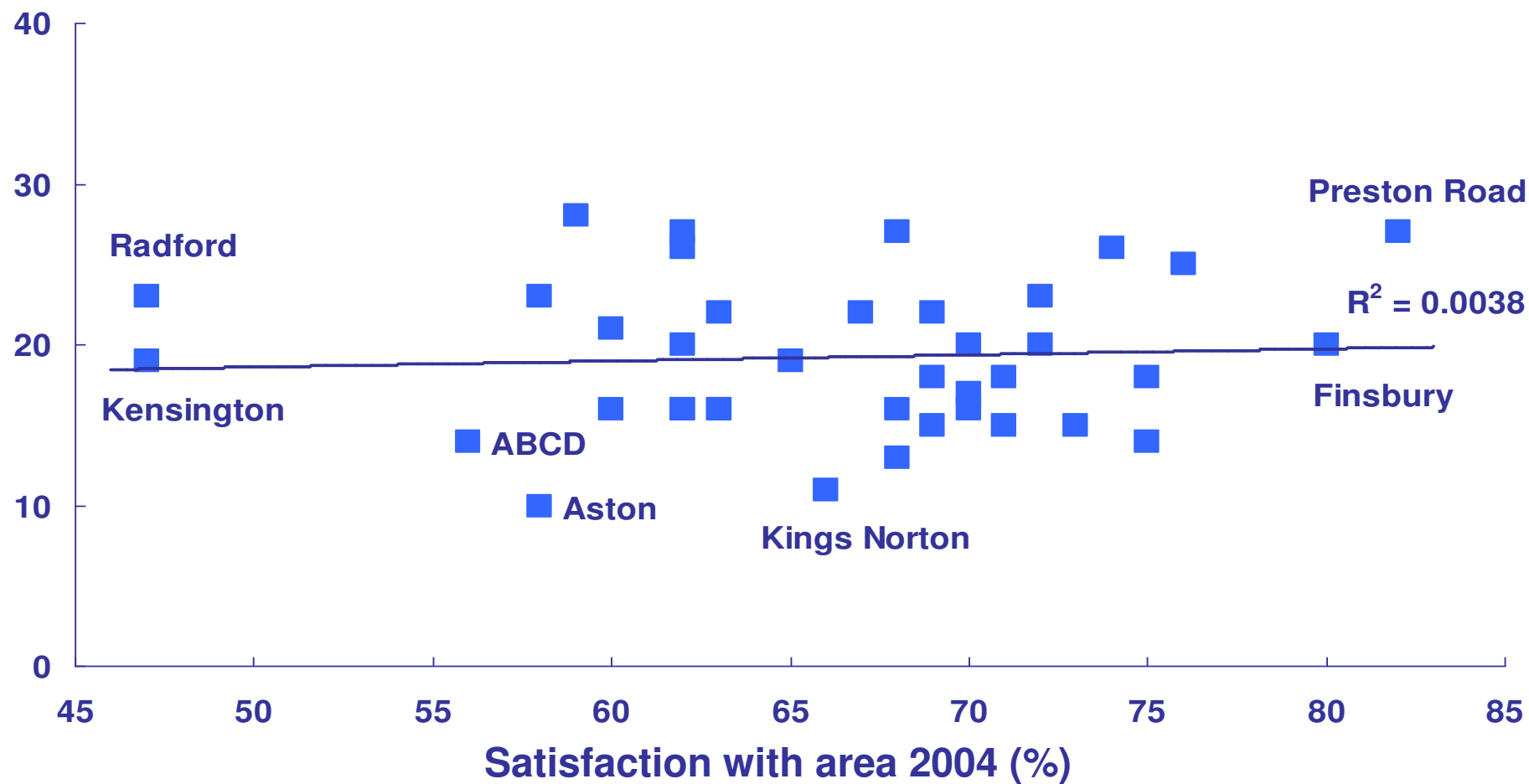


Source: NDC survey 2004

**But is there a
relationship at an area
level?**

Involvement vs satisfaction with area

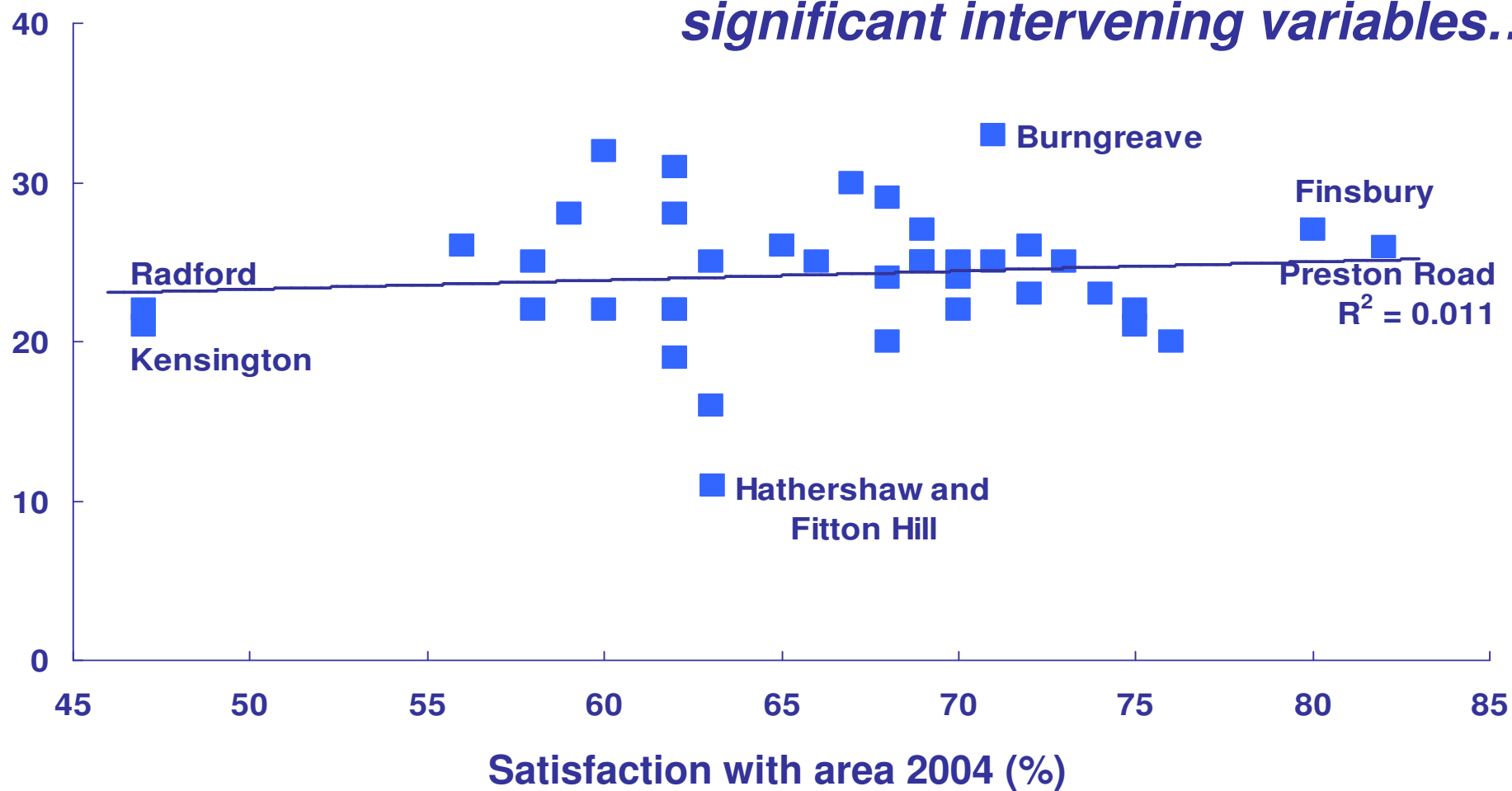
Levels of involvement 2004 (%)



Influence vs satisfaction with area

Feelings of influence 2004 (%)

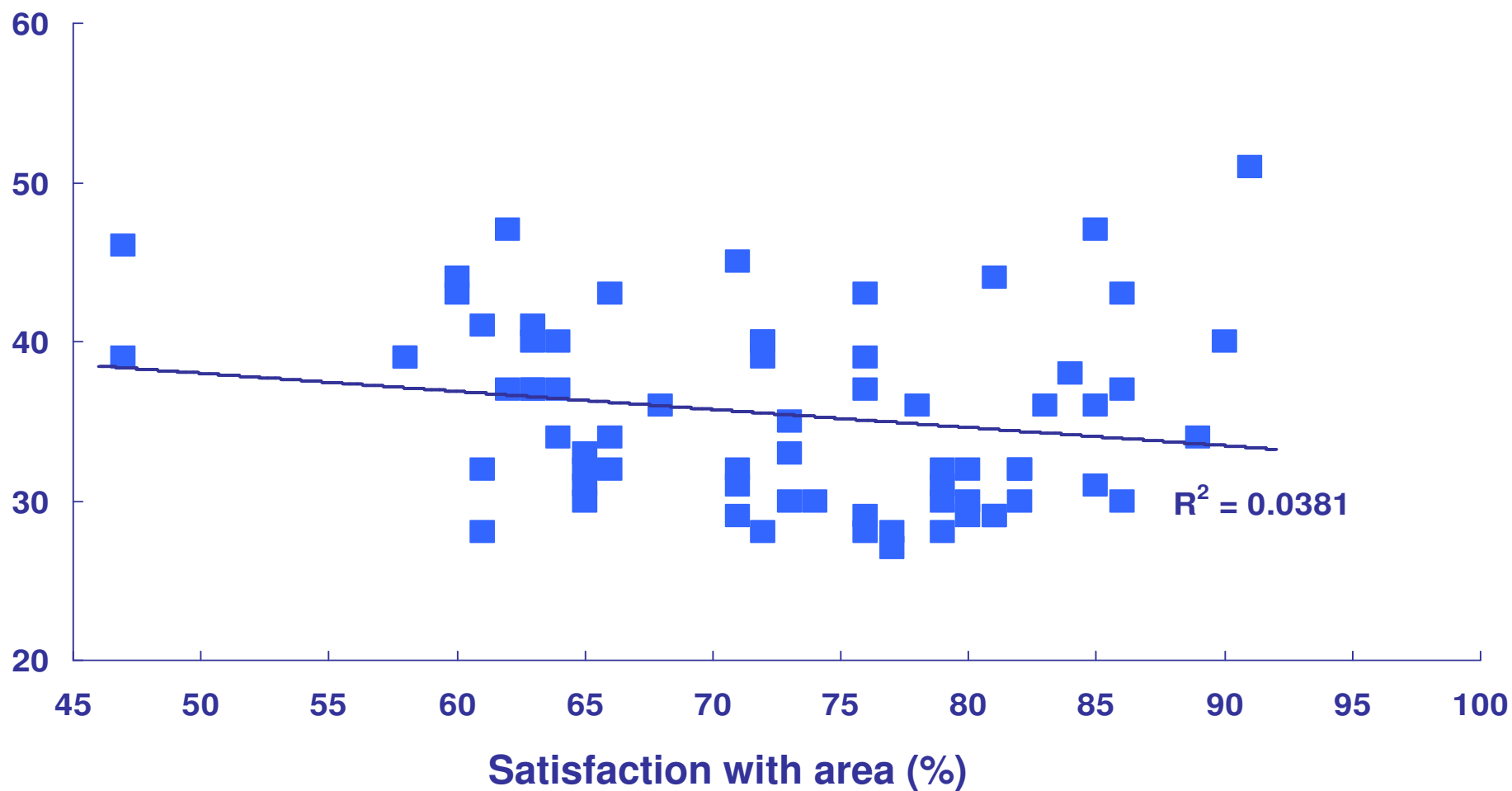
Partial correlations suggest no significant intervening variables...



**Early evidence from local
government surveys
suggest similar picture...**

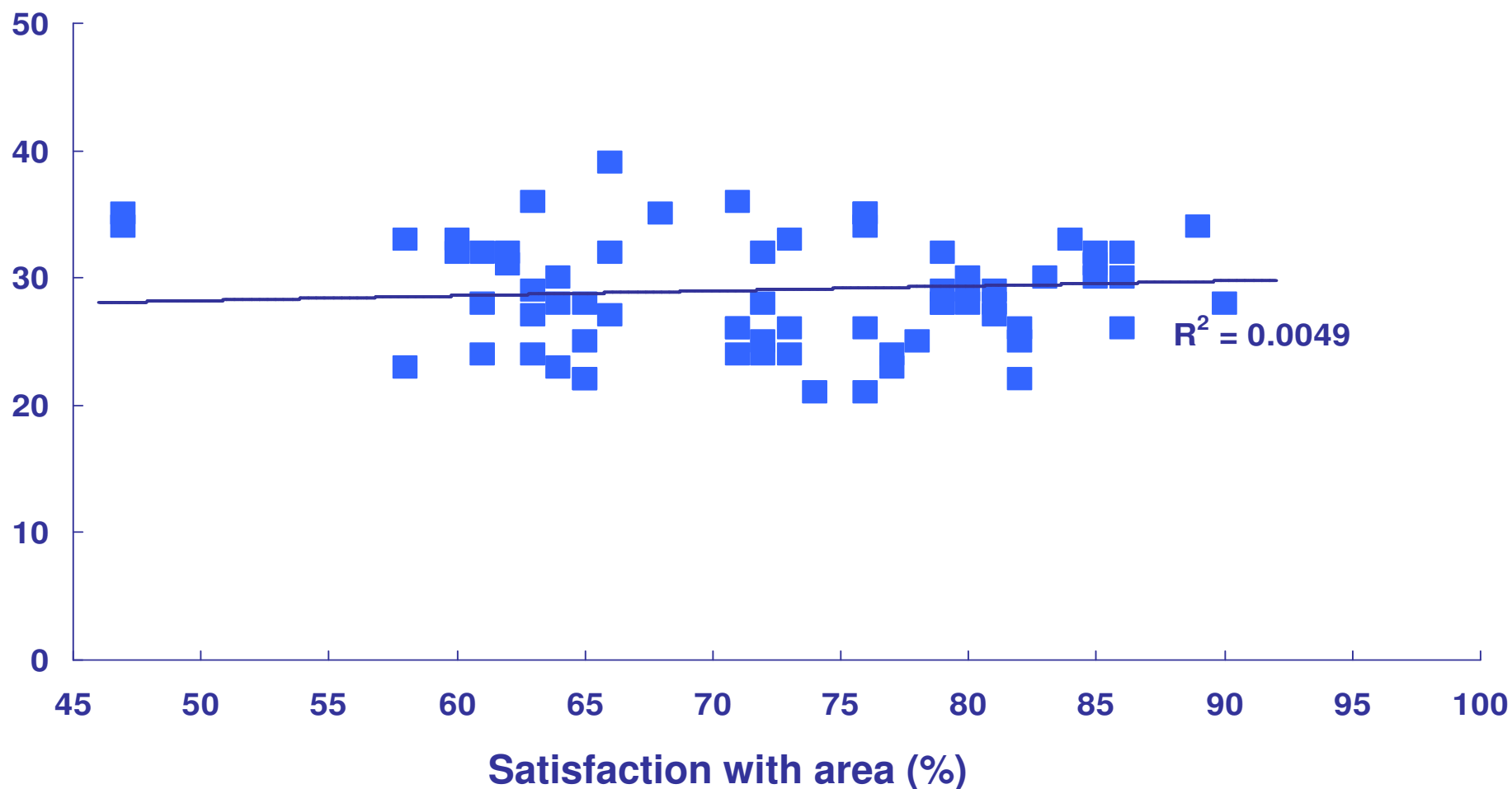
Influence vs satisfaction with area

Feelings of influence (%)



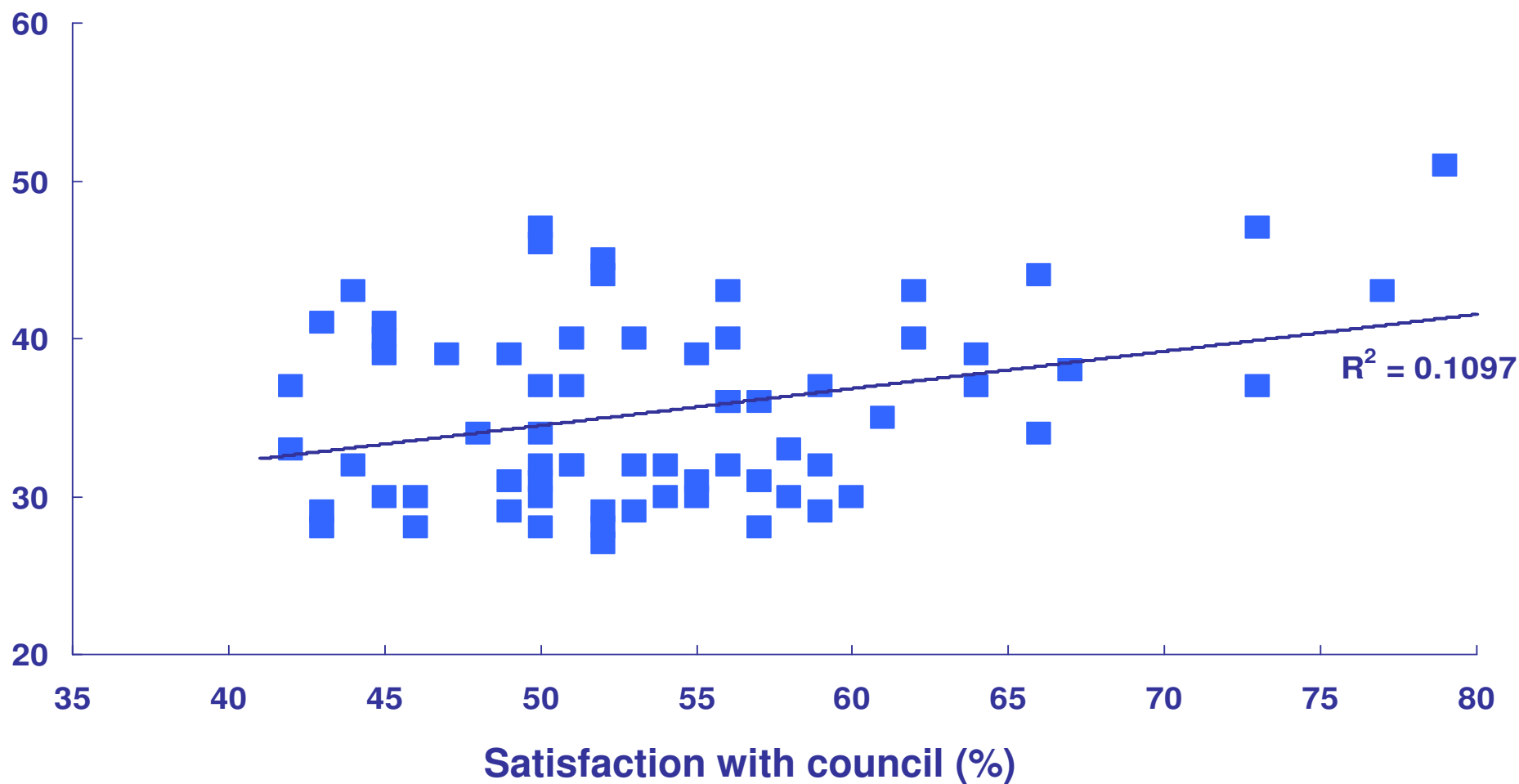
Opportunities for participation vs satisfaction with area

Satisfied with opportunities for participation (%)



Influence vs satisfaction with council

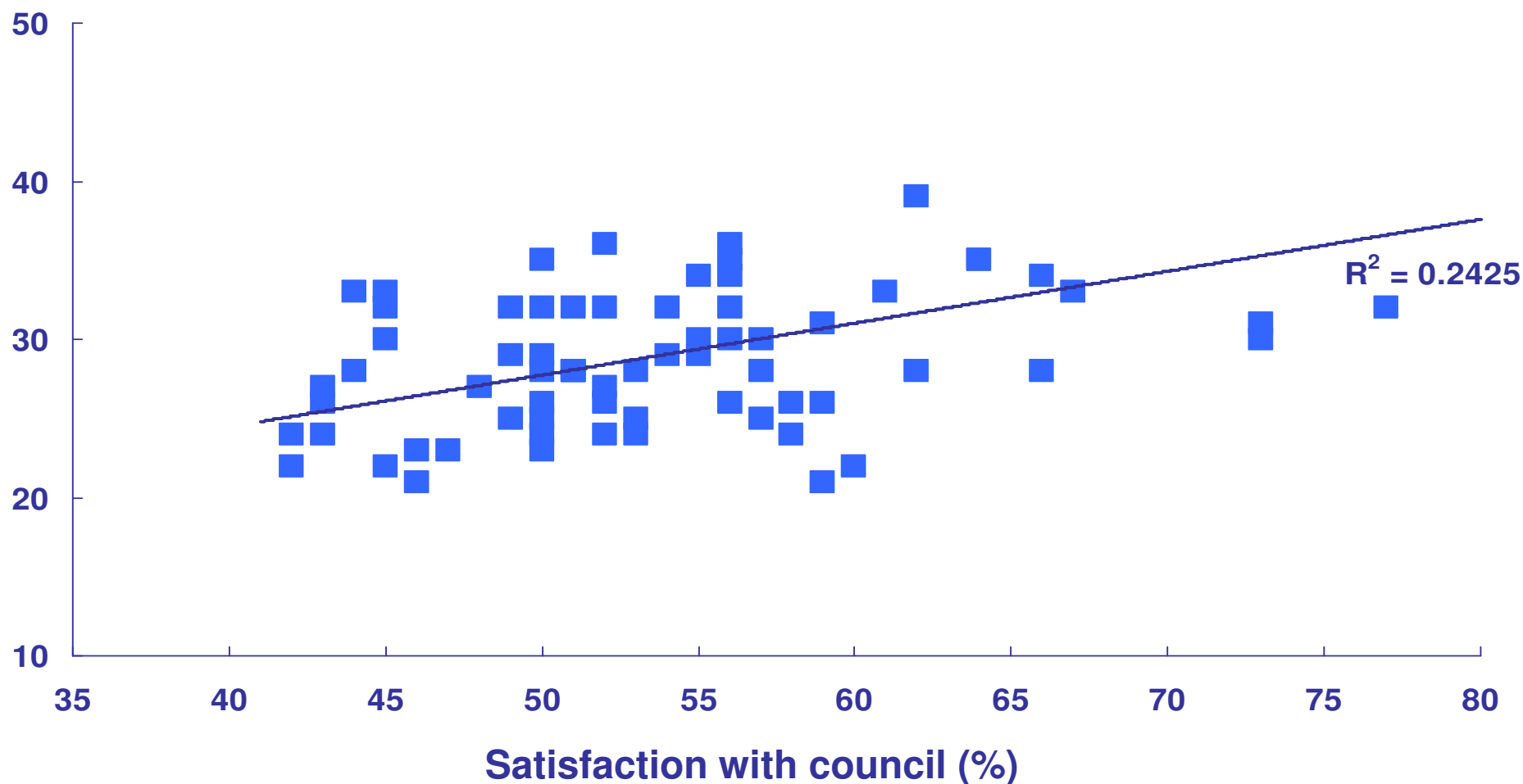
Feelings of influence (%)



...although...

Opportunities for participation vs satisfaction with council

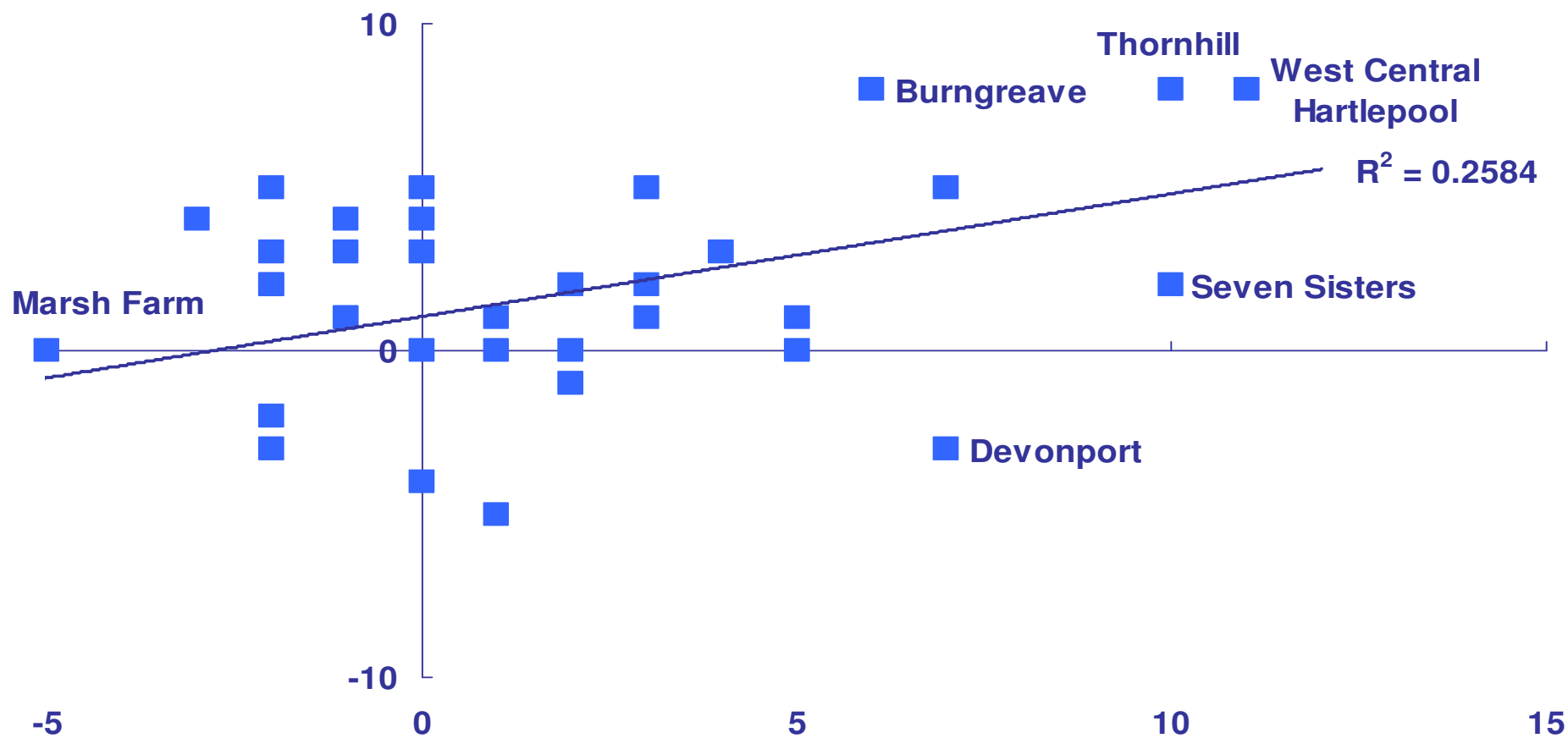
Satisfied with opportunities for participation (%)



**Does change show any
more impact – at an
aggregate, area level?**

Change in influence vs change in perceived quality of life 2002-2004

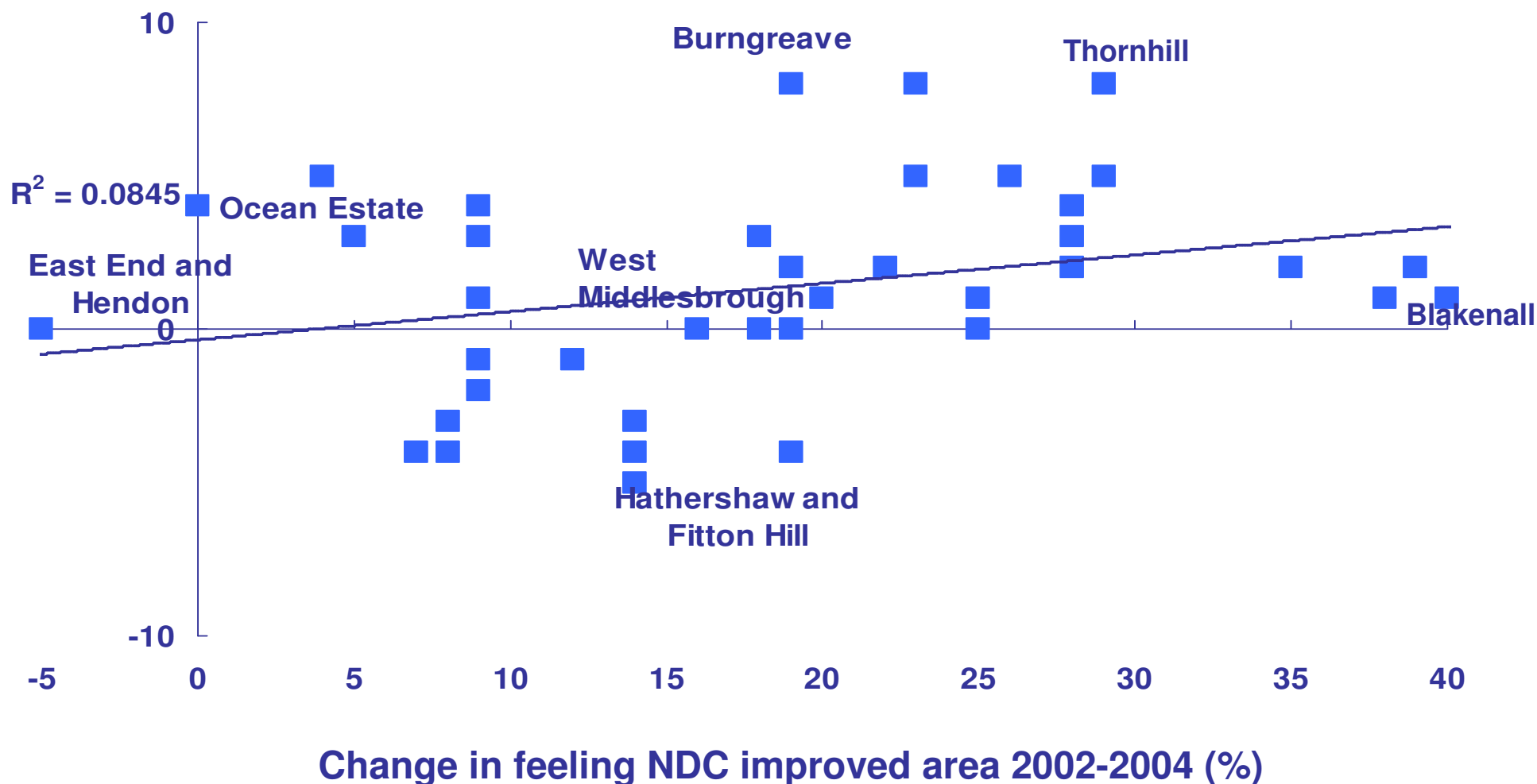
Change in influence 2002-2004 (%)



Change in perceived quality of life 2002-2004 (%)

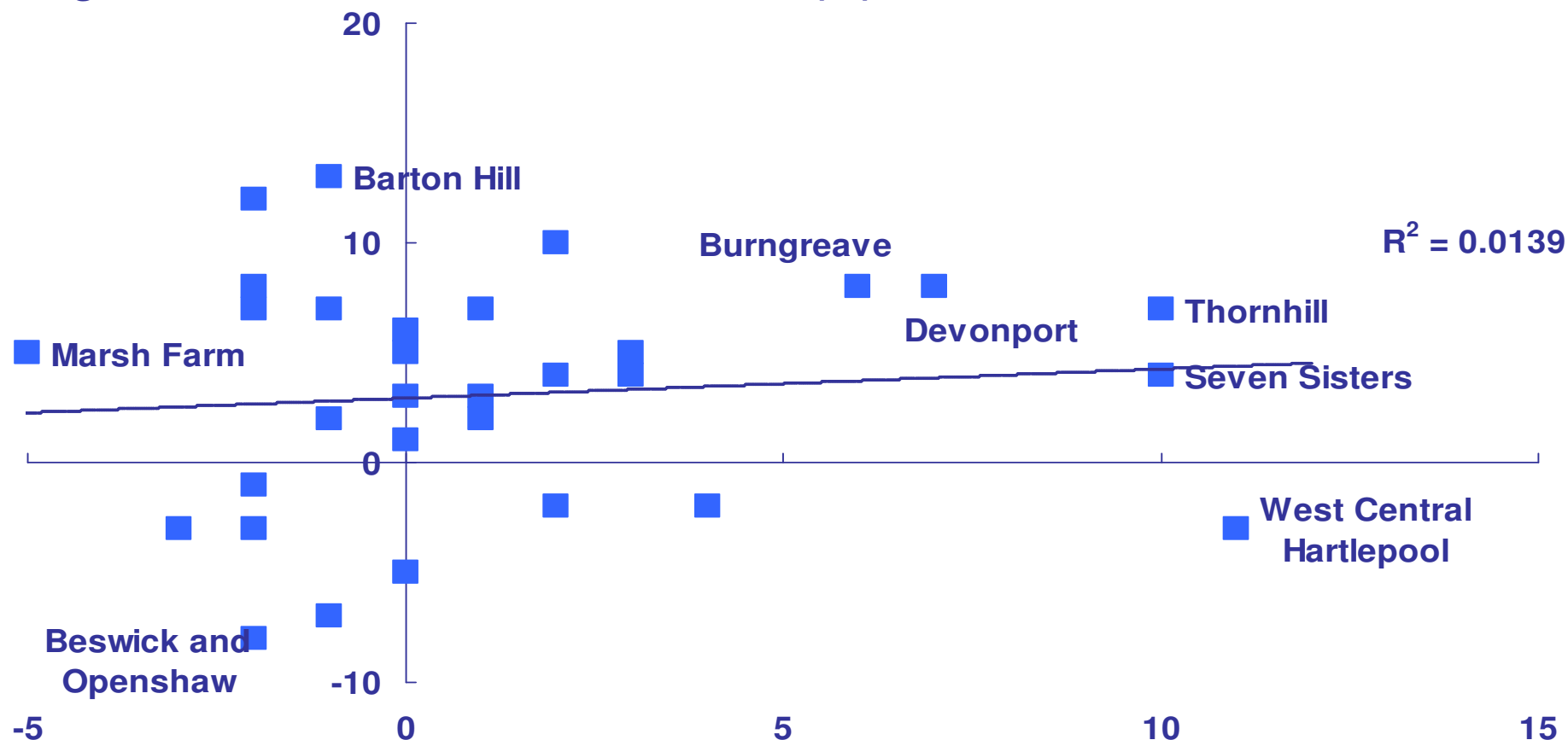
Change in influence vs change in feeling NDC improved area 2002-2004

Change in influence 2002-2004 (%)



Change in involvement vs change in perceived quality of life 2002-2004

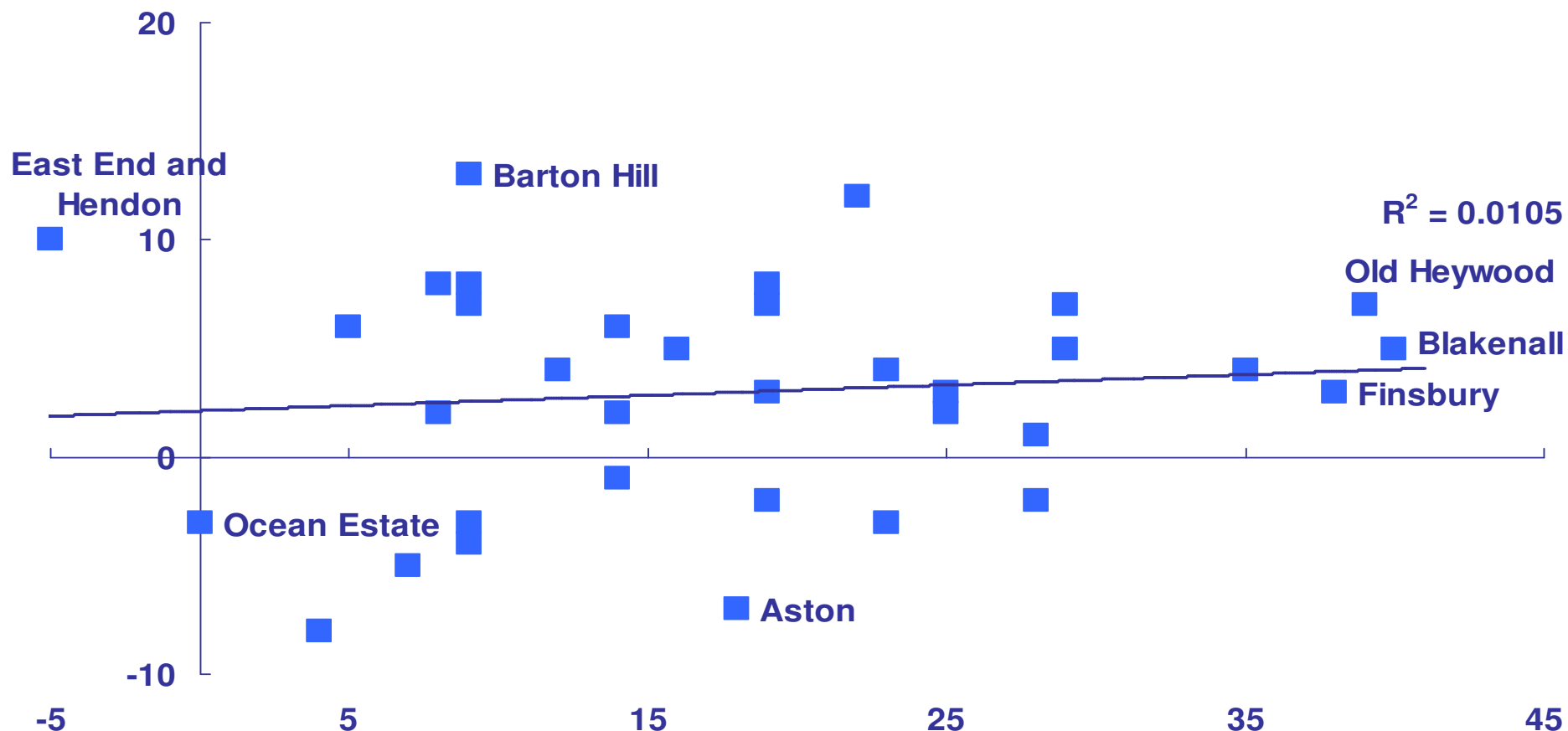
Change in levels of involvement 2002-2004 (%)



Change in perceived quality of life 2002-2004 (%)

Change in involvement vs change in feeling NDC improved area 2002-2004

Change in levels of involvement 2002-2004 (%)

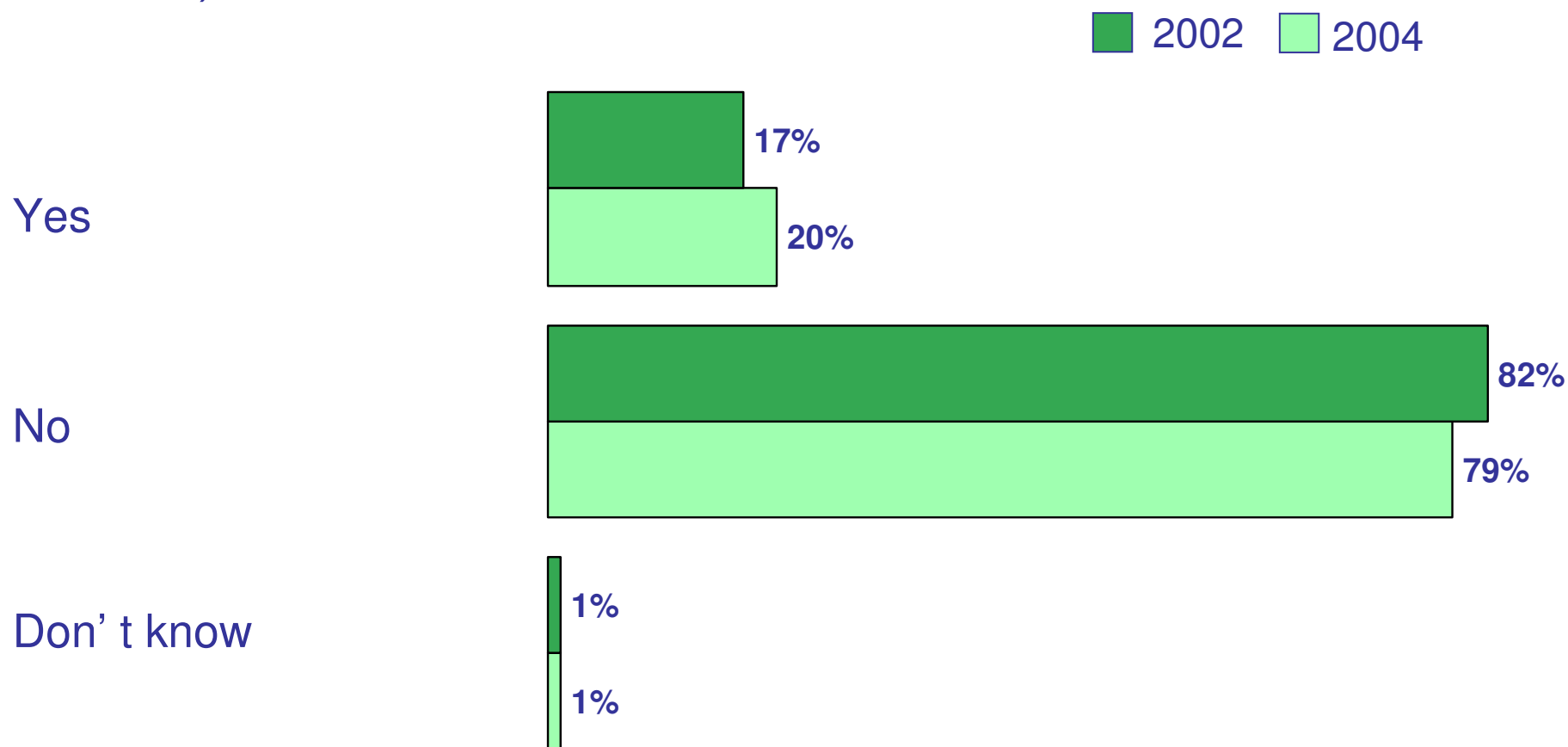


Change in feeling NDC improved area 2002-2004 (%)

**But individual level
change shows greater
impact of increasing/
decreasing influence?**

Comparisons of aggregate levels of involvement, 2002-2004

Q Have you been involved in any activities organised by (local NDC)?



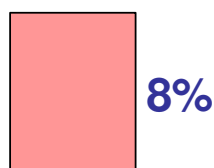
Changes in levels of involvement among individuals, 2002-2004

Q Have you been involved in any activities organised by (local NDC)?

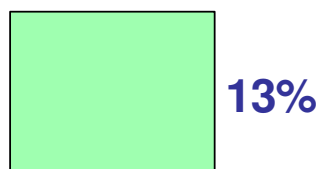
Never been involved



Was involved in 2002,
but not in 2004



Was not involved in
2002, but was in 2004



Have always been
involved



Change in contentment with local area by involvement, 2002 - 2004

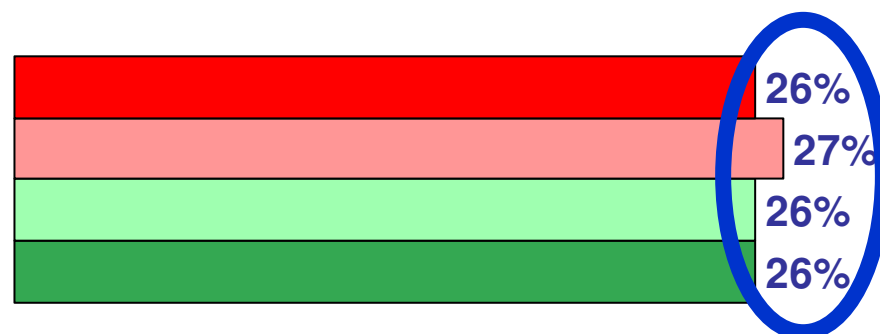
■ Never been involved

■ Was involved in 2002, but not in 2004

■ Was not involved in 2002, but was in 2004

■ Always been involved

Quality of life improved



Satisfaction with area increased

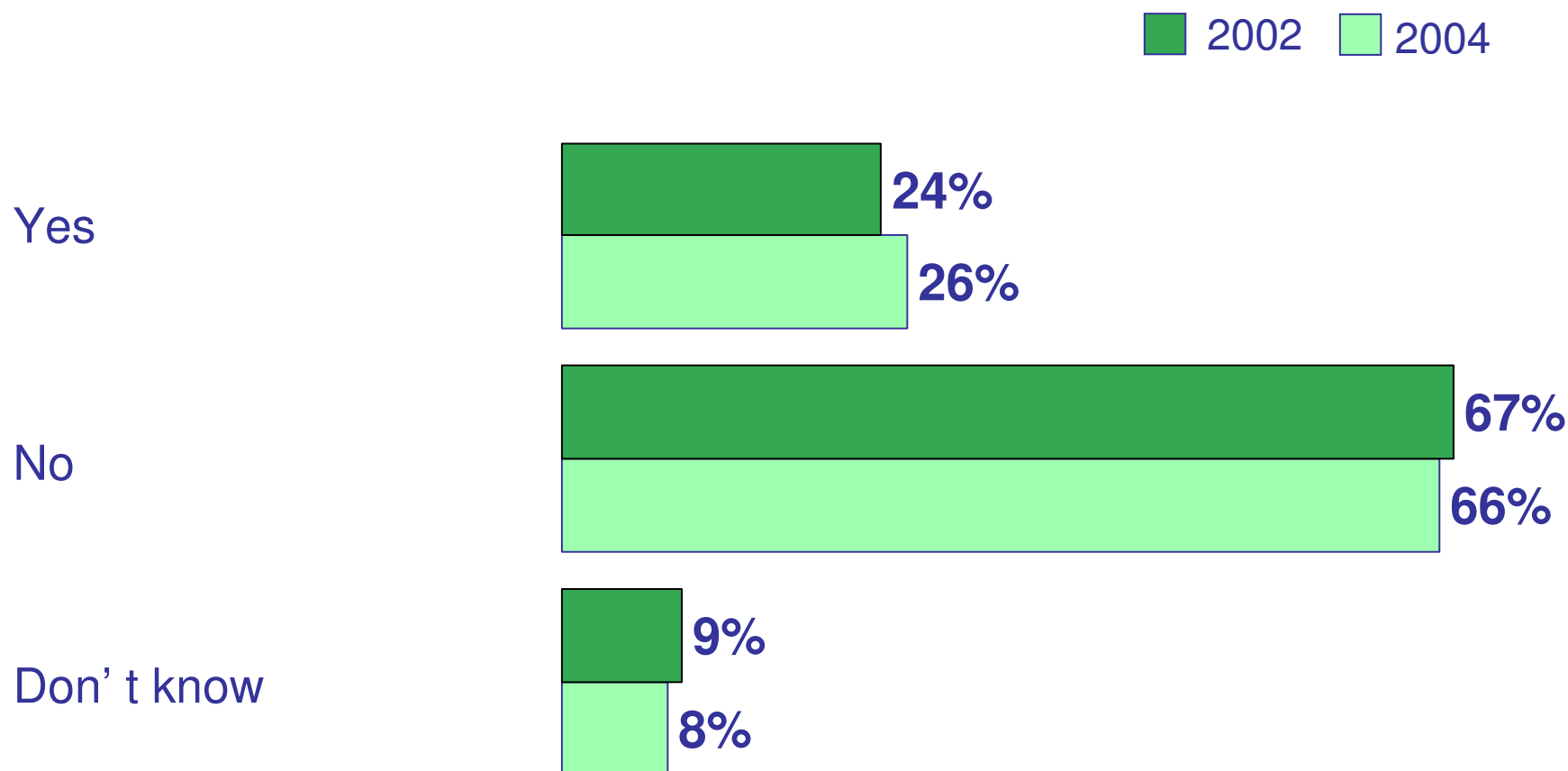


NDC improved area



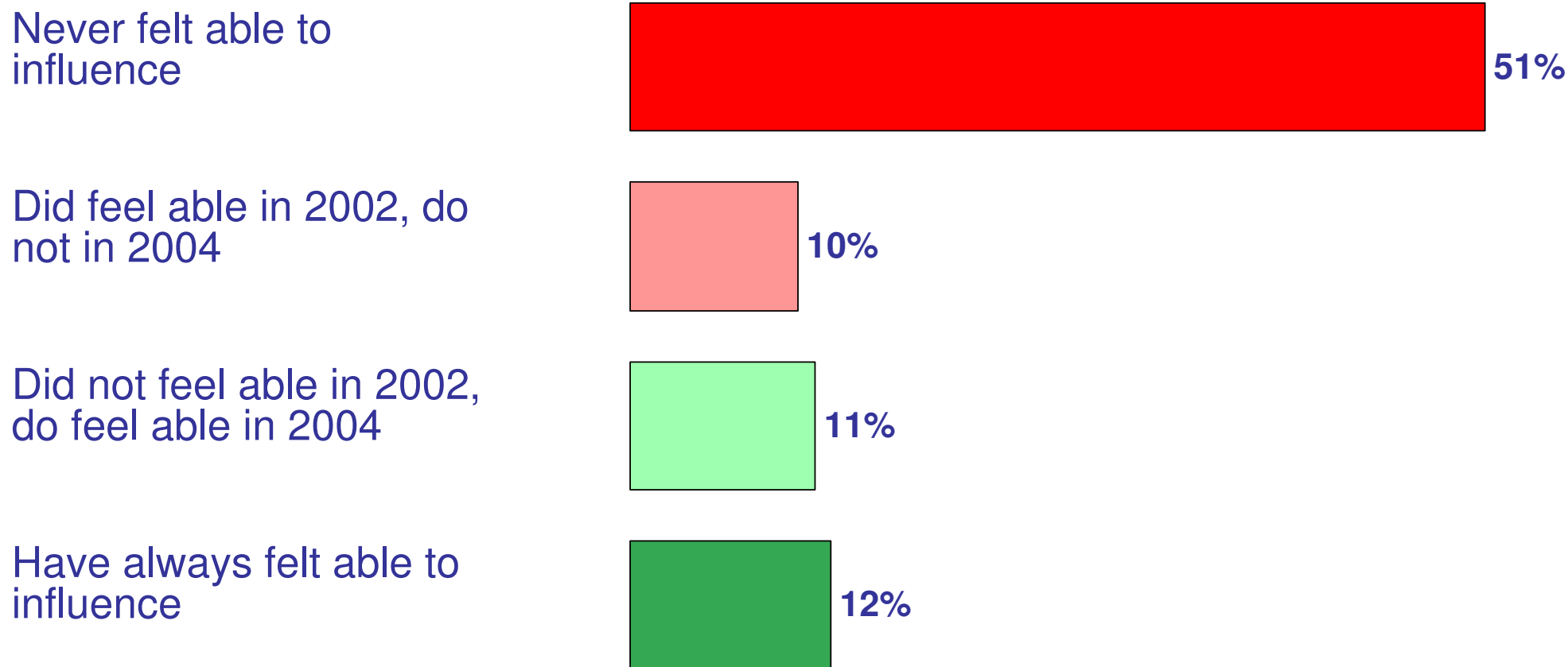
Comparisons of aggregate feelings of influence, 2002-2004

Q Do you feel you can influence decisions that affect your area?



Changes in feeling of influence among individuals, 2002-2004

Q Do you feel you can influence decisions that affect your area?



Change in contentment with local area by influence, 2002 - 2004

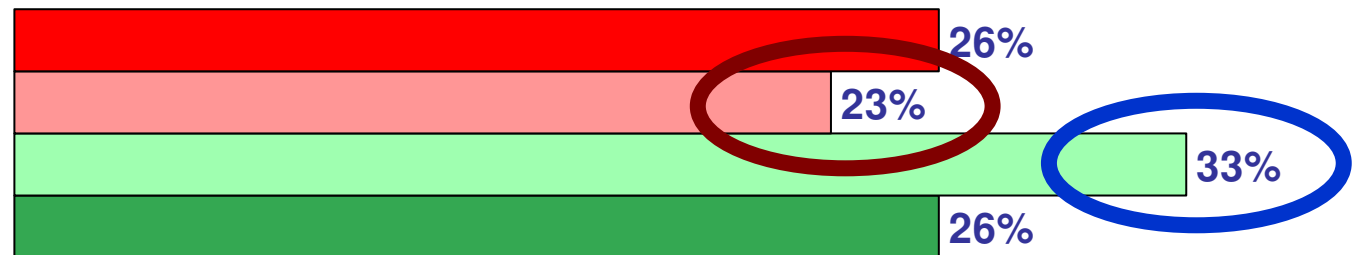
■ Never felt able to influence

■ Did feel able in 2002, do not in 2004

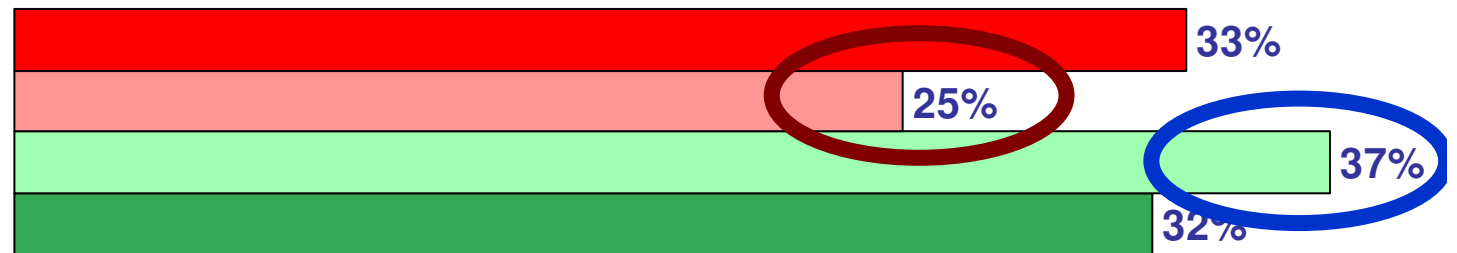
■ Did not feel able in 2002, do feel able in 2004

■ Always felt able to influence

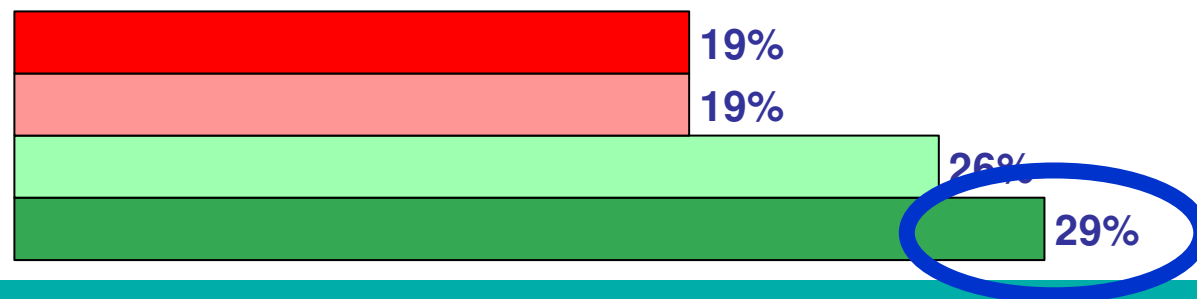
Quality of life improved



Satisfaction with area increased



NDC improved area



Initial conclusions and questions

- **Mixed evidence – feelings of influence more important than actual levels of involvement?**
- **But overall disappointing? Much more important things in determining the key outcomes – expecting too much? And 2006 data showing less relationship...**
- **NOT a neutral impact, but different positive and negative relationships balancing each other?**
- **Lapsed involved/influencers tend to be most negative – one of the risks of promoting involvement?**
- **But needs more work – firm evidence very difficult**
 - Unpicking cause and effect v difficult even with longitudinal data
 - Measures of involvement used fairly weak, feelings of influence not well defined
 - Experimental design varying levels of involvement, with pre/post measures?

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