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Stevenage
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Residents Survey 2025

Stevenage Borough Council

January 2026

Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Background & Methodology.....	4
Local Area, Community & Safety.....	5
The Council	9
Local Government Reorganisation & Devolution.....	16
Ward Cluster Analysis	17
North Ward Cluster.....	18
Central Ward Cluster	20
South Ward Cluster	22
Appendix A	24
Appendix B	25
Appendix C	26

Executive Summary

Introduction

Stevenage Borough Council commissioned DJS Research to deliver its 2025 Residents' Survey through a mixed-method approach of telephone (CATI) and face-to-face (CAPI). In total, 1,103 interviews were conducted from May-June 2025. The findings of these interviews are summarised below and in the infographic found at Appendix A.

Local Area, Community And Safety

83% of residents are satisfied with their local area, maintaining the performance seen in 2021 (84%). Encouragingly, Stevenage outperforms the LGA average by 9% points. A similar pattern also emerges in terms of sense of belonging to the local area. Like in 2021, three-quarters of residents feel either a very or fairly strong sense of belonging (74%), and the LGA average is comfortably outperformed – this time by 15% points.

Nine in ten residents (91%) feel safe during the day; while this is in line with LGA average, it does represent a significant fall from the high seen in 2021 (97%). Meanwhile, six in ten (62%) feel safe after dark which is below both Stevenage's 2021 score (68%) and the LGA comparator (71%). Concerningly, three in ten women say that they feel unsafe at night (31%). The top three concerns among those who do not feel safe outside are gangs/groups of people hanging around (32%), drug dealing/use (30%) and youth crime/disruption (28%).

Finally, a strong majority of residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds can get along (76%). This does represent a decline compared to 2021 (85%), but this year's figure is higher than 2017 (68%).

The Council

Satisfaction with the council has increased significantly compared to 2021, rising from 62% to 68%. Again, the council comfortably outperforms the latest LGA score (56%).

Less positively, perceptions of value for money have declined by 9% points compared to 2021 (43% cf. 52%), although this is still above the LGA's average (36%). When asked to consider ways to generate efficiencies and extra income for the council, residents' most preferred option is to modernise services or sell more of the council's services.

There has also been an improvement in the percentage who feel informed about council services. In 2021, just under half (49%) felt very or fairly well informed, but this has increased to three in five (61%). This means that Stevenage is comfortably ahead of the LGA benchmark (47%).

Residents' top way of accessing information is accessing the council website, with nearly half of residents indicating that they do this (48%). Around two-thirds of residents do not have an online personal council account, and a quarter of this group say this is because they were unaware of it, rising to a third for those aged 45+. Targeted comms could promote the benefits of this and encourage greater take-up.

Local Government Reorganisation & Devolution

When asked to consider the ideal council size for maintaining the quality of services, a plurality residents opt for a smaller council (47%). This is around double the percentage who would prefer

a larger council (23%). Meanwhile, 26% do not feel like it would make a difference one way or the other.

In terms of devolution, residents are most eager to see progress in terms of affordable housing and planning (59%), followed by health and public safety (52%). Traffic and highways (44%) and skills and employment support (41%) also represent priorities for a substantial number of residents. Housing and planning is especially salient to those aged 18-44, with 67% selecting housing as a top priority for devolution.

Background & Methodology

Stevenage Borough Council commissioned DJS Research to deliver its 2025 Residents' Survey.

Following the most recent residents' survey, conducted by telephone in 2021, the 2025 Residents Survey was conducted using a mixed-method approach of telephone (CATI) and face-to-face (CAPI). This combined methodology aimed to improve survey response rates and representativeness through targeting CAPI interviews at groups that are difficult to reach via telephone (e.g. young people).

In total, 1,103 interviews were achieved across a fieldwork period of 5 weeks from 06 May to 16 June 2025, split as follows. A total of 623 interviews were conducted via CATI and 480 via CAPI. A full breakdown of the sample split by gender, age, ethnicity, disability, tenure, economic status and ward can be found at Appendix B.

Residents were asked a total of 18 questions covering a range of topics such as satisfaction with the local area, council, safety, perceptions of value for money and resident priorities. The complete question set can be found at Appendix C.

Sampling

A stratified random quota sampling approach was adopted for the CATI component of the research, whereby a random sample of households were purchased from a sample sourcing agency, ensuring a proportionate spread of contacts within each of the borough's wards. In addition to this, lifestyle contacts were used to target specific groups. A mix of landline and mobile numbers were used.

For the CAPI element, in-street interviewing was used. Shifts took place in a variety of locations both within and outside of the town centre.

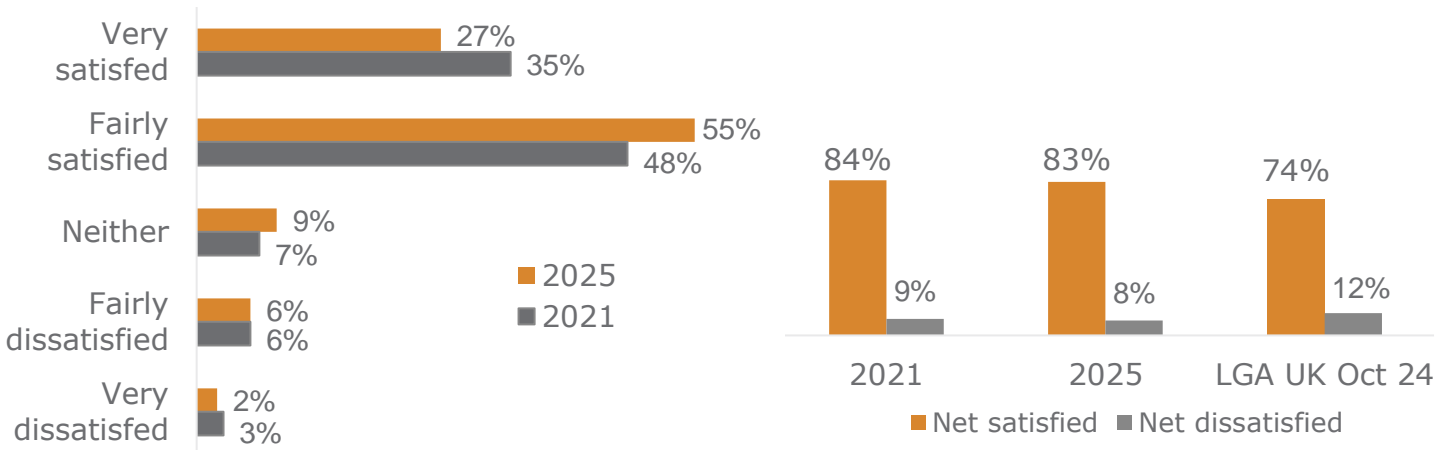
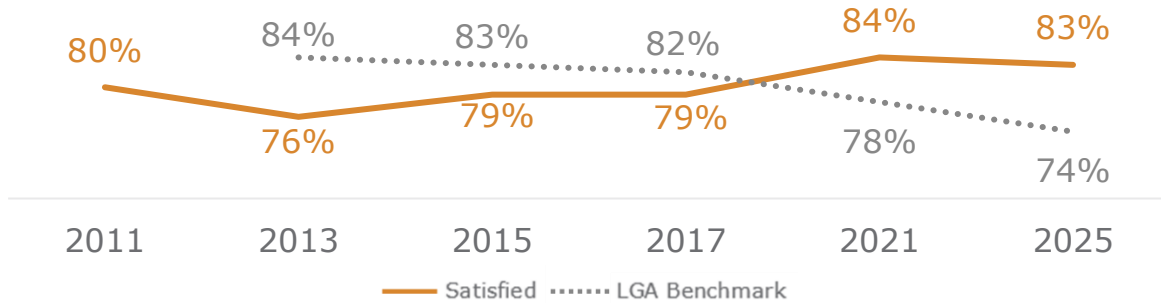
To give a representative sample of the borough, target quotas and weighting were used based on age, gender, ethnicity, economic status, disability and tenure. Weighting has been applied where necessary to ensure the final results are representative of the adult population of Stevenage

Statistical reliability

A sample size of 1,103 for the adult survey gives a sampling error of +/-2.9% based on a statistic of 50% at the 95% confidence interval. For example, this means that if we found a score of 50% within the survey, we can be 95% confident that this figure lies between 47.1% and 52.9% had we interviewed every resident in Stevenage.

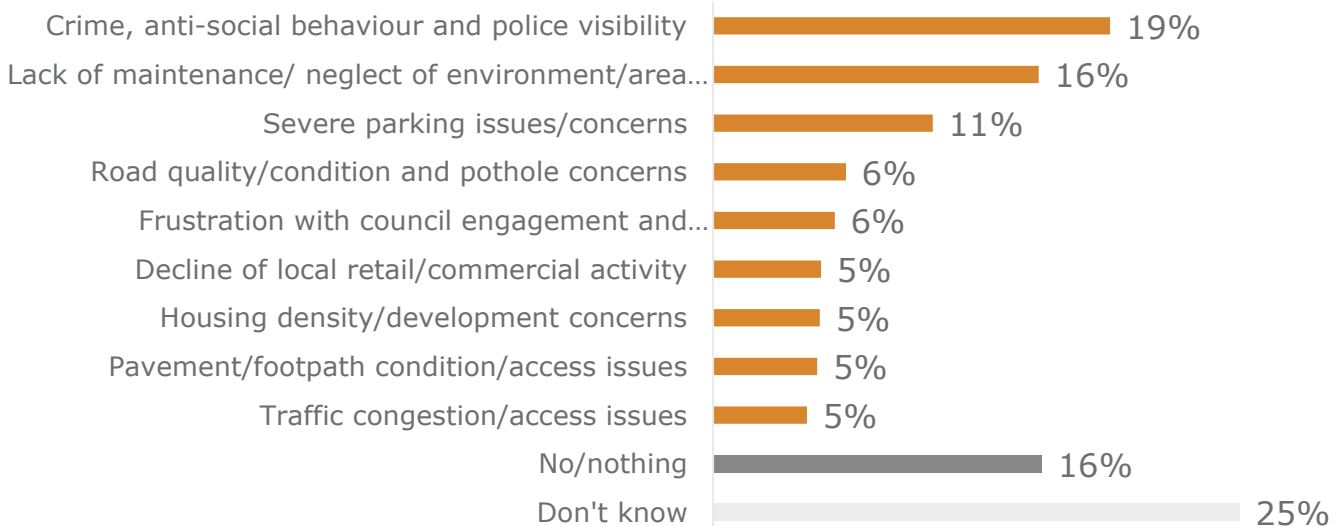
Local Area, Community & Safety

Satisfaction with Local Area



Overall satisfaction remains strong and is comfortably above the LGA average (+9% points). However, satisfaction has softened slightly, demonstrated by a reduction in those who are 'very' satisfied. Those in the least deprived IMD quintile report higher than average satisfaction (92%). The youngest age group (18-34s) are significantly less likely to be satisfied than average (79%). Those who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get along are nearly twice as likely to be satisfied compared to those who disagree (87% cf. 48%).

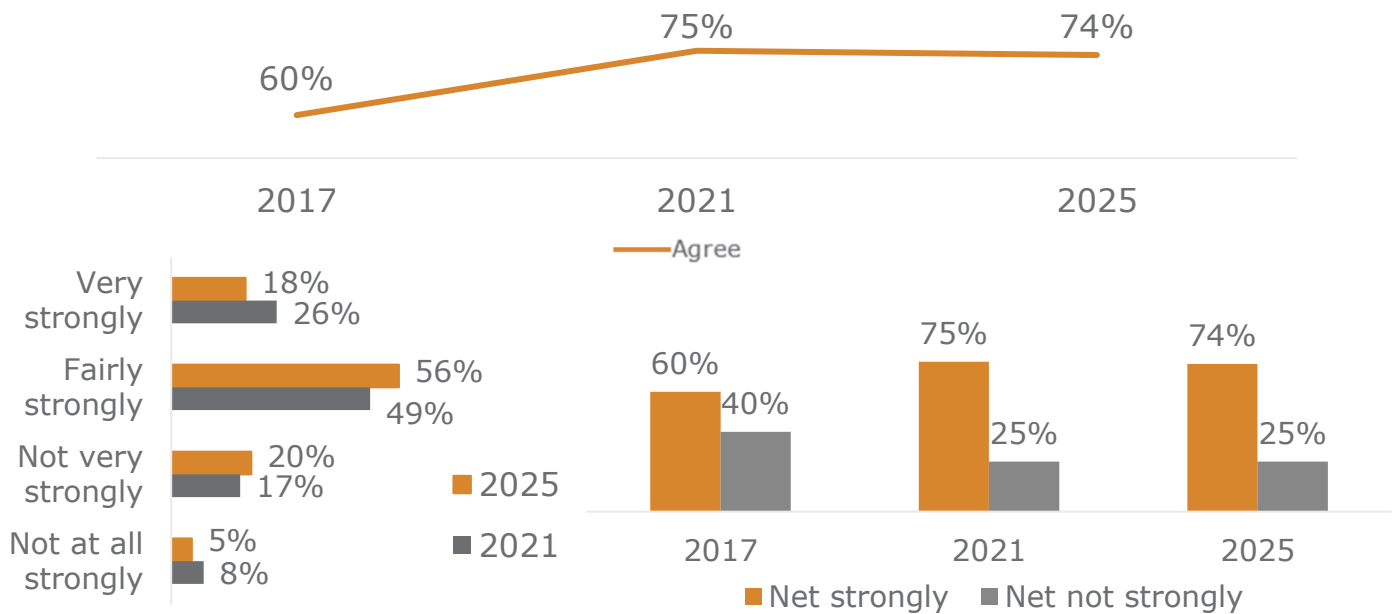
Issues or Aspects of Local Area



Residents spontaneously raised a range of issues regarding their lived experience of local life. Concerns regarding crime and anti-social behaviour are most prominent (19%), followed by a general feeling that the area is suffering from decline and neglect (16%). It should be noted, however, that 16% of residents had no issues to raise, while 25% “don’t know”.

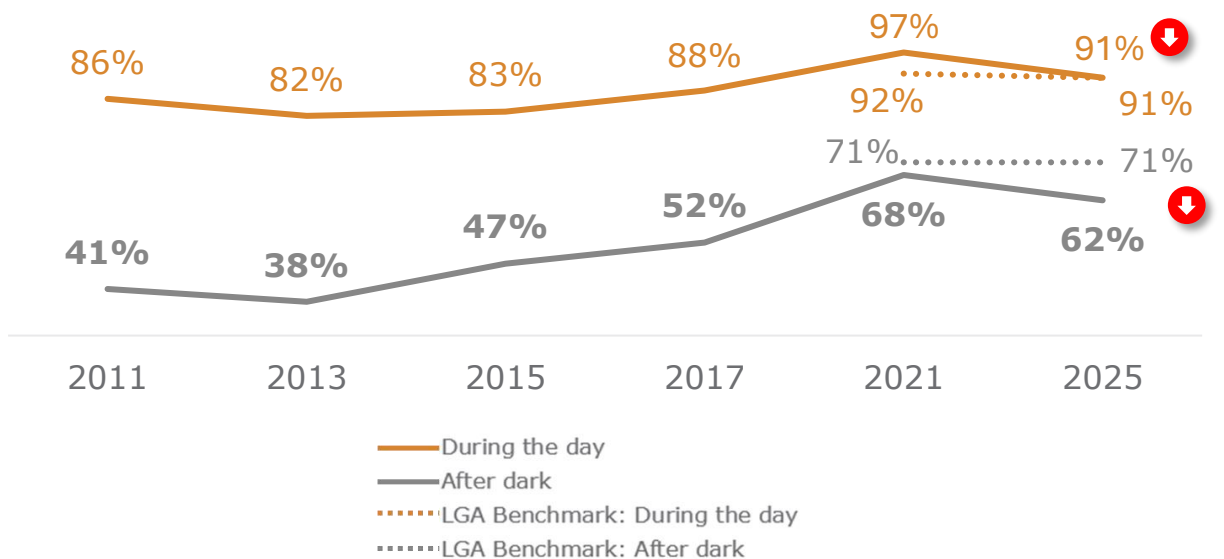
The youngest cohort (18-34) are more likely to say that they have no specific issues (22%), while the oldest (65+) are more likely to flag a range of issues, including area decline (24%), parking issues (18%), and footpath condition (11%).

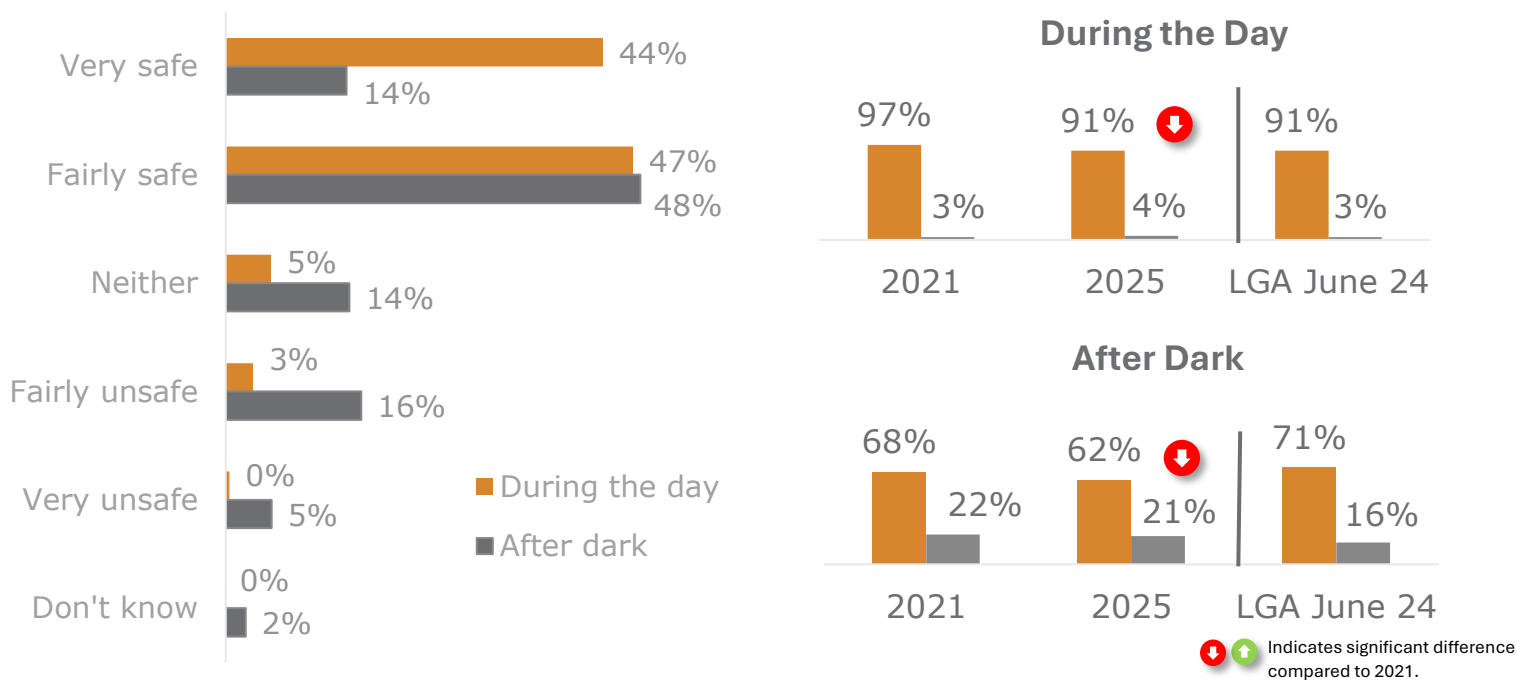
Sense of Belonging to Local Area



The results for sense of belonging to local area follow a similar pattern to local area satisfaction, with overall positive sentiment matching 2021 levels despite a softening in the granular results. Those aged 35-44 are more likely to feel a strong sense of belonging to the local area (82%). In contrast, those aged 45-54 are more likely to have answered not very/not at all strongly (31%). Those who feel unsafe after dark (55%) or during the day (36%) are less likely to feel a strong sense of belonging.

Feelings of Safety in Local Area



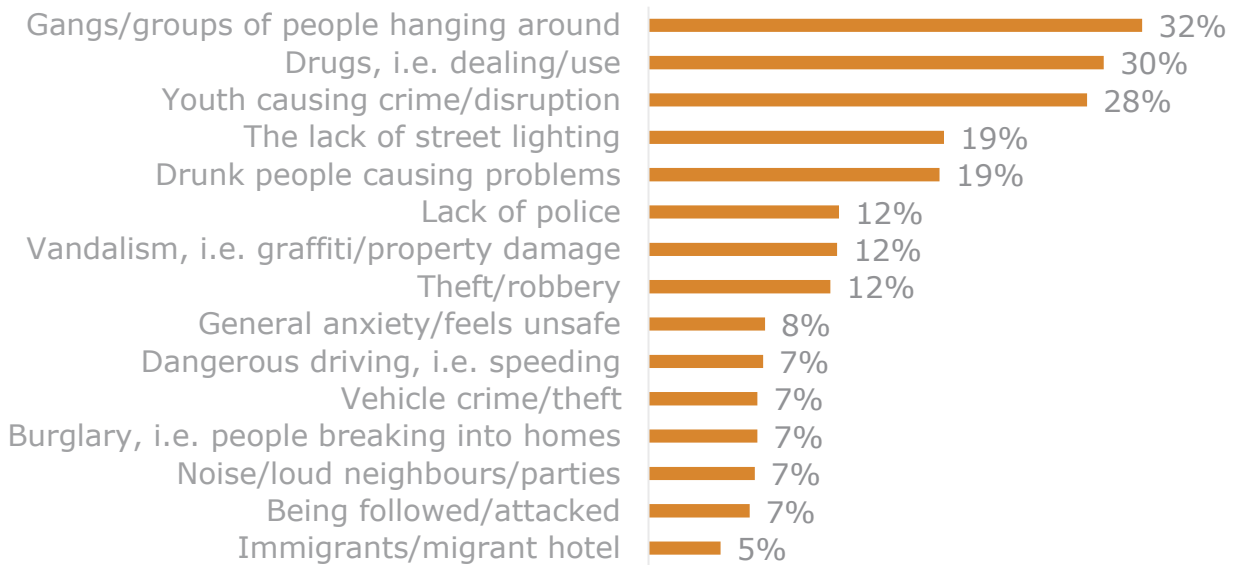


Nine in ten residents feel safe when outside in their local area during the day, dropping to six in ten for when it is dark. During the day figures are in line with the latest available LGA benchmarking, while the percentage who feel safe after dark is 9% points lower. It is, however, disappointing that feelings of safety during the day have declined by 6% points.

Females (31%) are three times more likely to feel unsafe after dark compared to males (10%), however during the day there is no statistically significant difference between the groups (males 3%; females 4% unsafe). Feelings of safety trend upwards from the most deprived to the least deprived areas.

While the findings from this question have not improved compared to the previous Residents Survey in 2021, it is important to view these results as part of the broader context. Firstly, it is important to note the context of the Covid-19 Pandemic and consequent lockdowns that may have impacted the findings during 2021 and what may have ultimately increased perceived feelings of safety amongst residents during this time, such as residents being asked to stay at home under Health Protection Regulations. Secondly, national polling on community safety in 2023 revealed a notable contrast between urban and rural areas, with residents in urban locations expressing greater concern about crime levels, particularly anti-social behaviour (ASB). This suggests that, like other urban towns, Stevenage residents may be more likely to report lower levels of perceived safety compared to those living in rural areas. As a result of both of these factors, it's important to recognise that the findings reflect the impact of specific time-based circumstances, such as the pandemic, and the limitations of national benchmarks, which may not fully account for the unique challenges faced by urban areas like Stevenage.

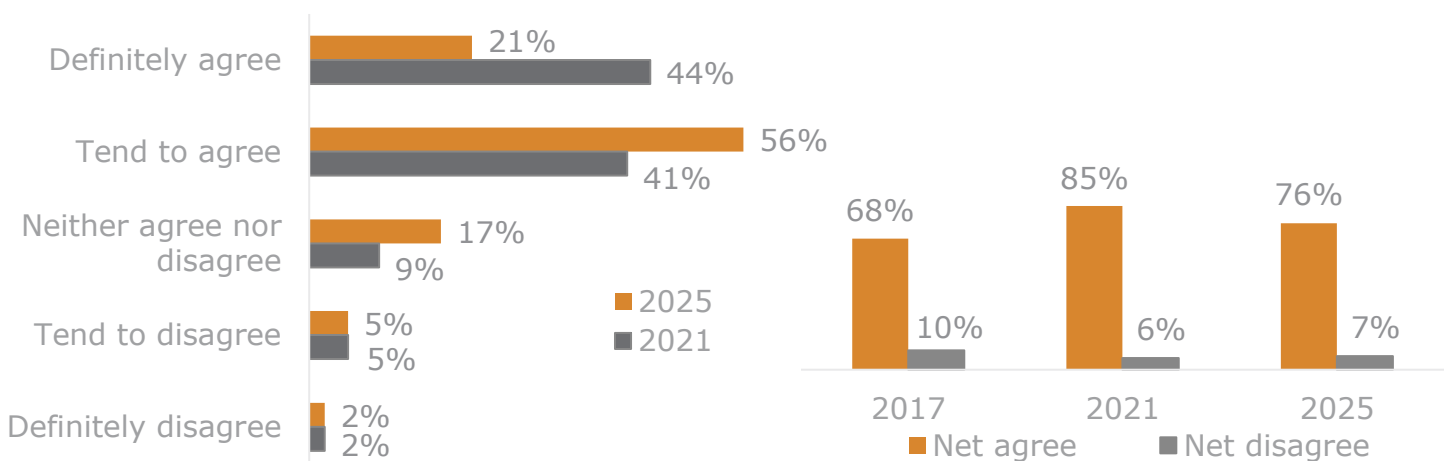
Greatest concerns about being outside



Those who felt unsafe were asked a follow-up question to establish their greatest concerns about being outside. A clear top three emerges among the concerns raised – gangs/groups (32%), drugs (30%) and youth crime/disruption (28%).

Those aged 18-44 list more concerns, and are far more likely than other age groups to express worries about drugs, youth crime, drunk people, vandalism and burglary. Those who are non-white are twice as likely as those who are white to mention a lack of street lighting (34% cf. 17%). Those with a disability are three times more likely to fear being followed/attacked (12% cf. 4%).

Community Cohesion in Local Area

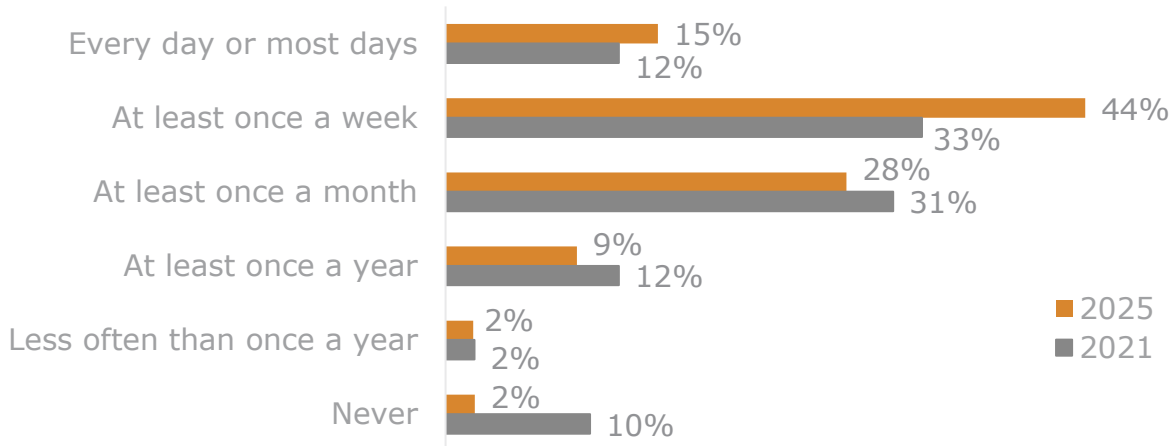


7% of all residents who were surveyed were unable to provide a valid answer to this question either because they felt there are too few people in their local area or due to ethnic homogeneity (as well as those who selected “don’t know”). Results for this question excluding these individuals are charted on this slide to allow for a like-for like comparison with 2021. On this basis, agreement has dropped since 2021 but is still comfortably above the 2017 result. Encouragingly, there has been no uptick in disagreement, while there has been a shift towards the neutral response.

Social renters are less likely to agree than owners (69% cf. 77%). 18-44-year-olds are slightly more likely than average to agree (79%) but the reverse is true for those aged 45-64 (72%). Those who

are dissatisfied with their local area are nearly nine times as likely to disagree compared to those who are satisfied (34% cf. 4%)

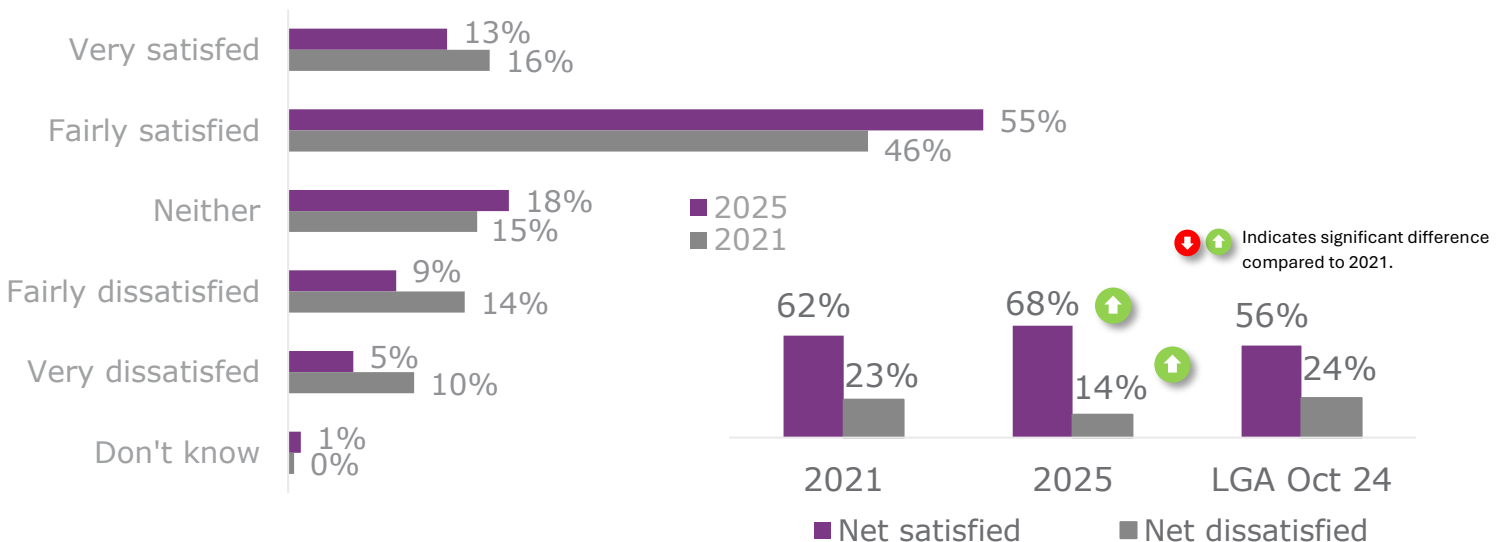
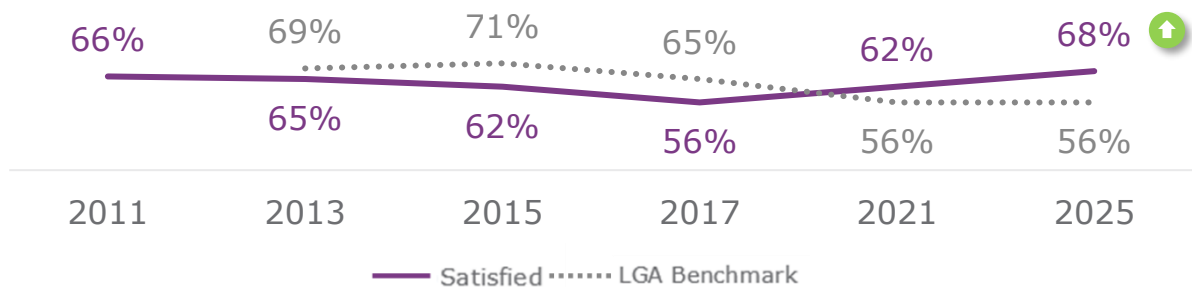
Stevenage Town Centre Frequency of Visits



There has been an uptick in the percentage of residents who visit the city centre regularly, particularly for the frequency “at least once a week”. Interestingly, the percentage who never visit the city centre has declined by 8% points this wave. Near a quarter of 18–44-year-olds visit the town centre every or most days (23%). This percentage is five times higher than 45-64-year-olds and twice as high as those aged 65+.

The Council

Overall Satisfaction with Stevenage Borough Council

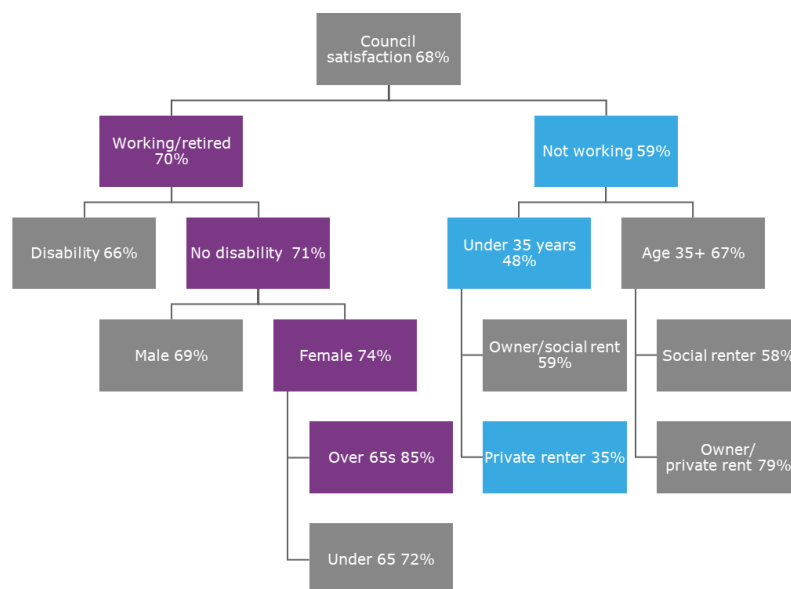


Satisfaction with Stevenage council has increased significantly by 6% points compared to 2021, driven by an increase in the percentage who are fairly satisfied. Moreover, satisfaction is 12% points higher than the LGA benchmark.

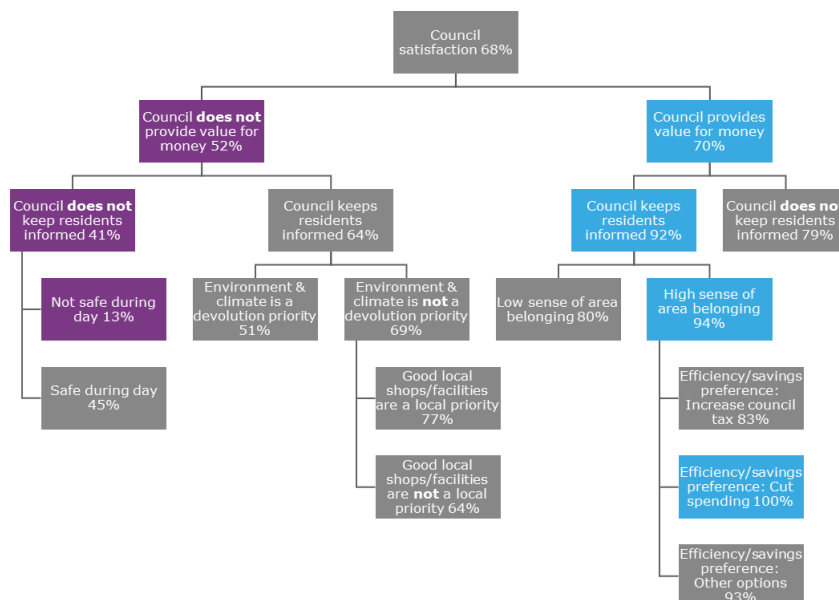
Those aged 18-34 are significantly less likely than average to be satisfied (63%), owing to a higher percentage who are neutral (24%). The economically inactive (18%), particularly those who are not retired (20%) are more likely to be dissatisfied than average.

Overall satisfaction with Stevenage Borough Council: CHAID analysis (demographics)

Chi-square automatic interaction detection (CHAID) analysis builds a predictive model, or tree, to help determine how variables best merge to explain the outcome in the given dependent variable. The analysis starts with 'all respondents', then identifies which factor when split by this factor sees the largest difference in the dependent variable. The tree filters only as far as it can until either a) the sample size becomes too small, or b) there are no longer any statistically significant differences by factors.



As can be seen in the tree above, the factor that has the biggest influence on ratings of council satisfaction is working status – with those who are working/retired having higher satisfaction than those who are not working. Taking this further, those who are working/retired, have no disability, are female and over 65 represent the ‘optimal pathway’ (i.e. the combination of demographics with the highest satisfaction). 85% of this cohort are satisfied. In contrast, those who are not working, are under 35 and privately rent have the lowest level of satisfaction (35% satisfied).

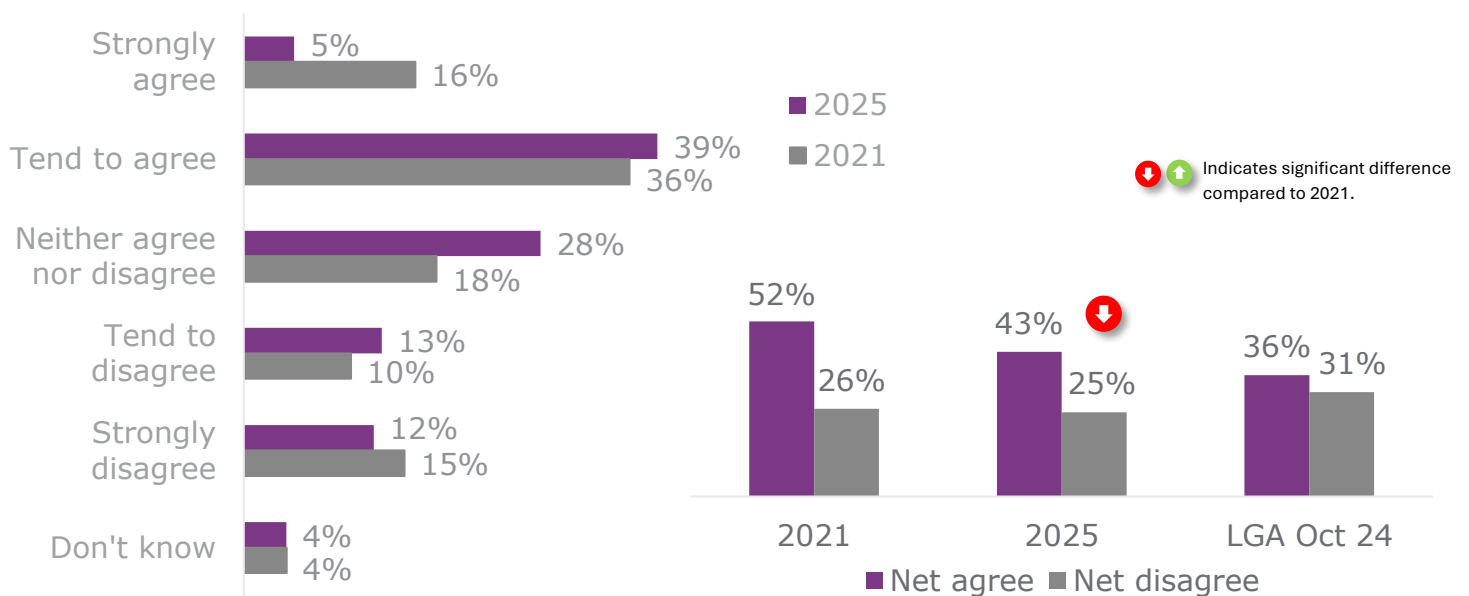
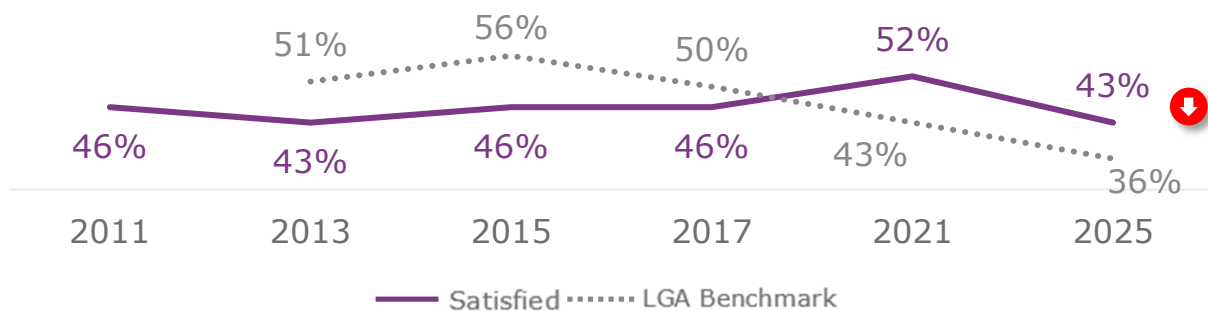


When looking at council satisfaction through an attitudinal lens, opinions on whether the council provides value for money are the key divider – 70% of those positive about this are satisfied with the council compared to 52% who are negative.

The ‘optimal path’ (i.e. those with the highest satisfaction) is those who believe the council provides value for money, feel the council keeps residents informed, have a high sense of area belonging and would prefer to cut spending (100% satisfied). In contrast, those who do not feel the council provides value for money, feel the council does not keep them informed and do not feel safe during the day are the least likely cohort to be satisfied (13%).

Perceptions of Value for Money

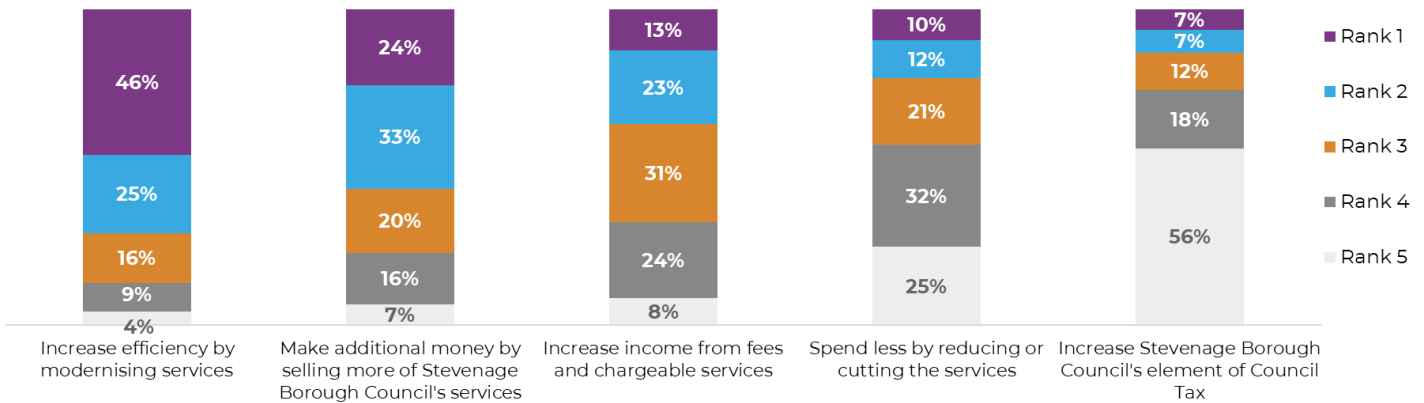
Agreement that the council provides value for money:



Only two in five agree that the council tax paid to Stevenage Borough council provides value for money (43%). This percentage is 9% points lower than the 2021 figure, although it should be noted that the percentage who disagree has not increased and instead this decline is driven by an increase in the neutral rating. Moreover, it should be highlighted that Stevenage’s performance remains comfortably better than the LGA benchmark (+7% points).

Females are 7% points less likely to agree than males that Stevenage Borough Council provides value for money (40% cf. 47%). Again, this is driven by higher neutral ratings among females. Those in the most deprived IMD quintile are more likely to feel they are getting value for money (59%).

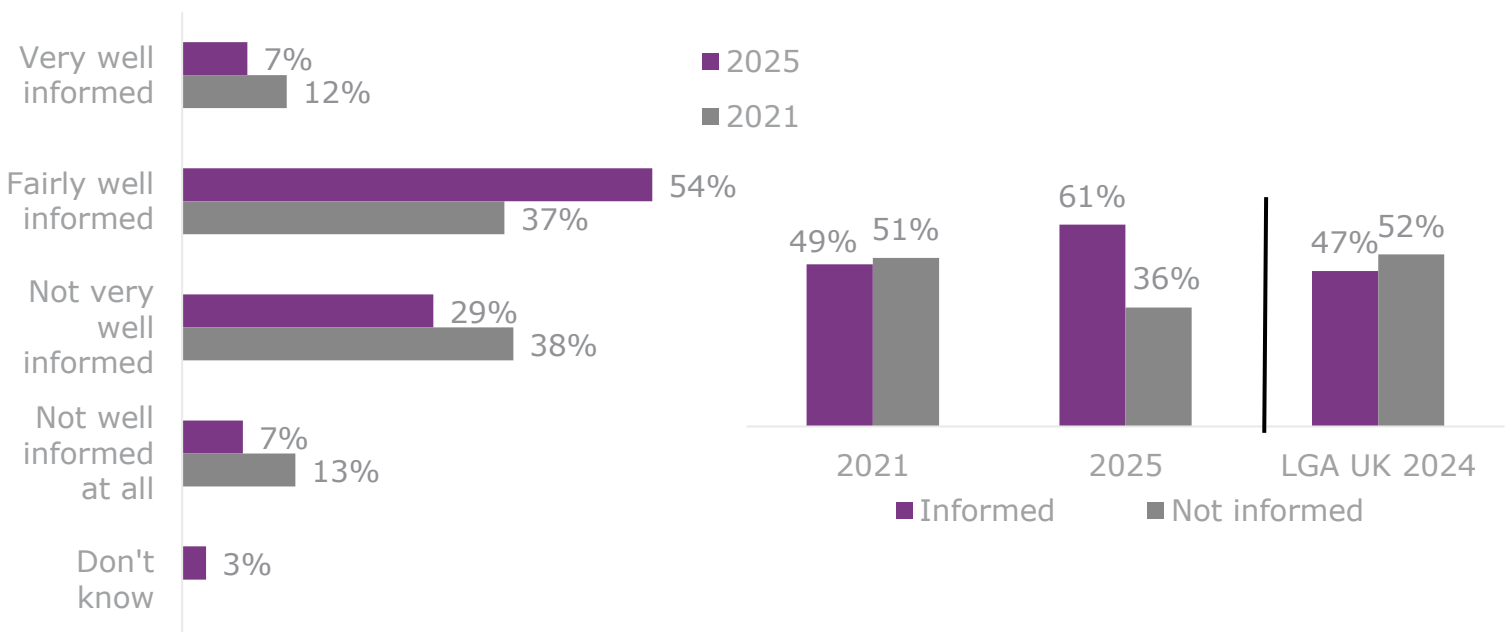
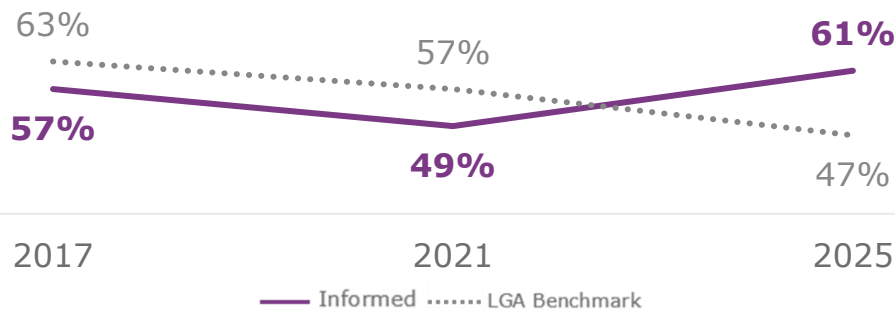
Preferred efficiencies and savings



Increasing efficiency by modernising services is by far the most popular of the options given for generating savings/efficiencies. Nearly half of those able to express preferences ranked this as number one (46%), and a quarter (25%) ranked it as their number two preference. Selling more of the council’s services is the second most popular, followed by increasing income from fees and chargeable services. The prospect of raising Stevenage’s element of council tax is unpopular, with more than half (56%) ranking this 5th.

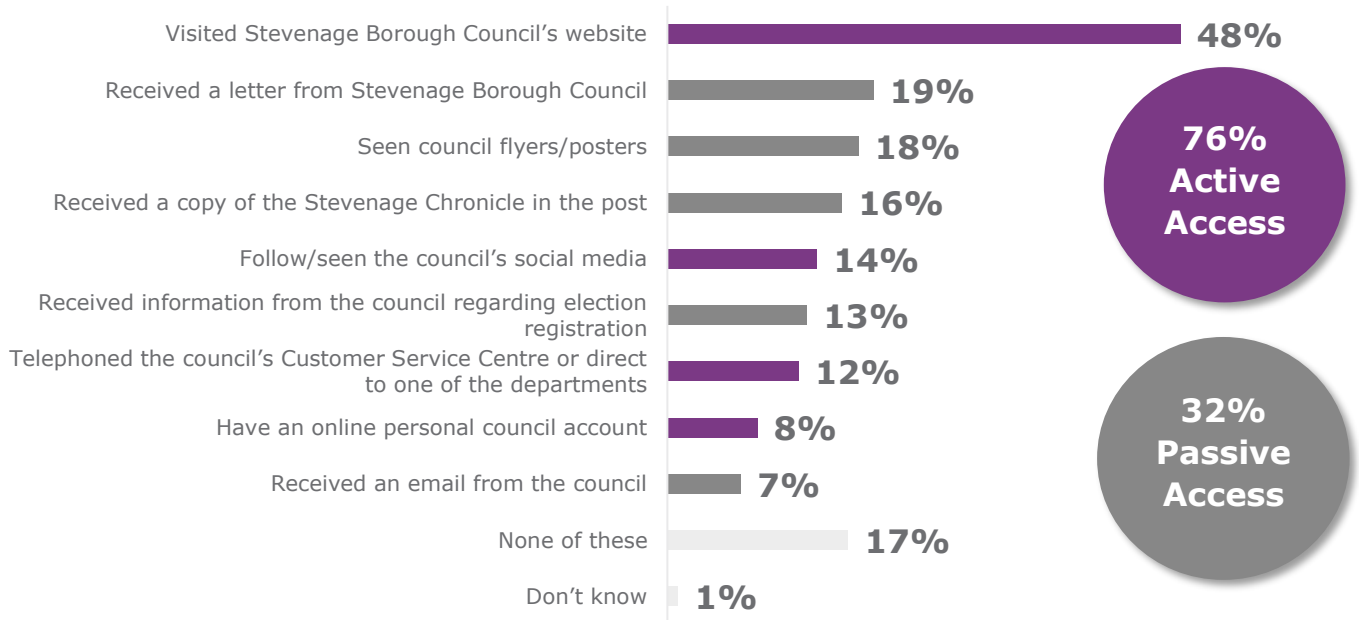
Perceptions of Stevenage Borough Council Services

Feel informed about council services:



Younger residents (18-44, 69%) are more likely to feel informed compared to middle aged (45-64, 55%) and older (65+, 55%) residents. Those who agree that the council provides value for money are more than twice as likely to feel informed about council services than those who disagree (81% cf. 35%).

Ways to access information about council services

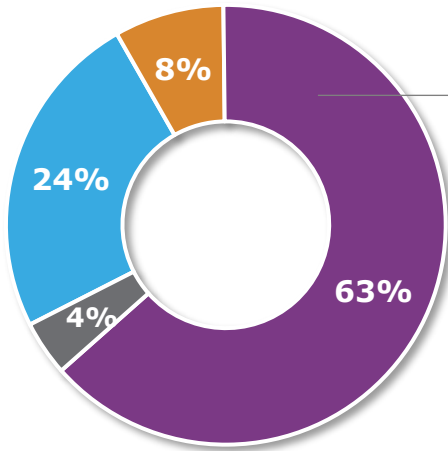


The top way, by far, to access information about council services is to visit the council's website (48%). The next most common is a letter (19%), followed by council flyers/posters (18%) or the Stevenage Chronicle (16%). Just behind these, 14% report following or seeing the council's posts on social media. 76% of residents report proactively accessing information (e.g. by visiting the website) while 32% report passively accessing information (e.g. by receiving a letter in the post).

Visiting the council website is the most common way of accessing information across all age groups. However, those who are aged 65+ are significantly more likely to say that they have not accessed any information (26%). Residents aged 45-64 are significantly more likely to access information via the Council's website, than residents aged 18-44 (59% and 42% respectively). Residents aged 18-44 are significantly more likely to access information through all other ways charted (apart from through an online account), than residents aged 45+.

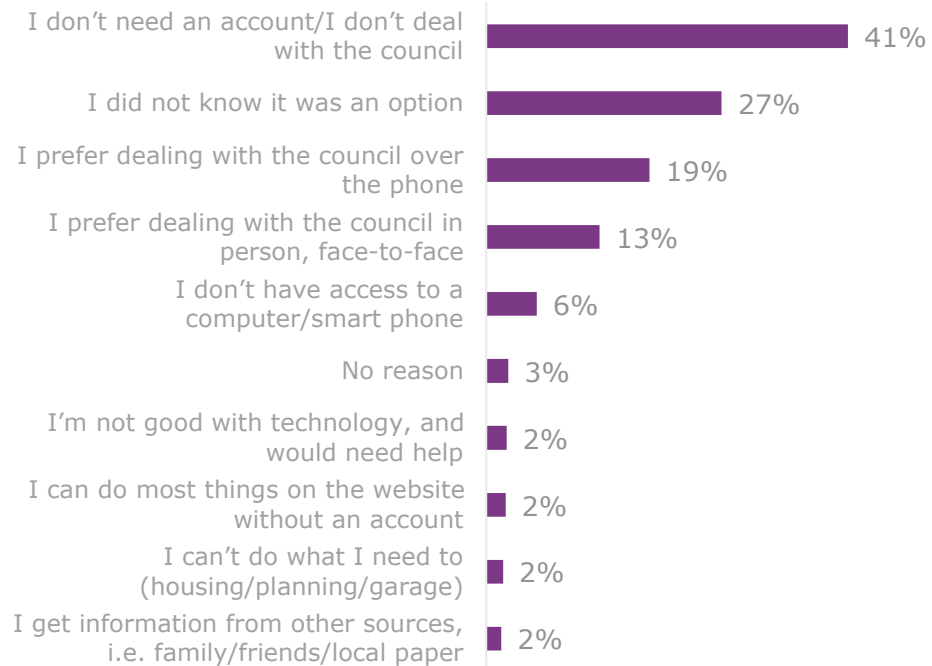
Online Personal Council Account Holders

Have Online Personal Council Account



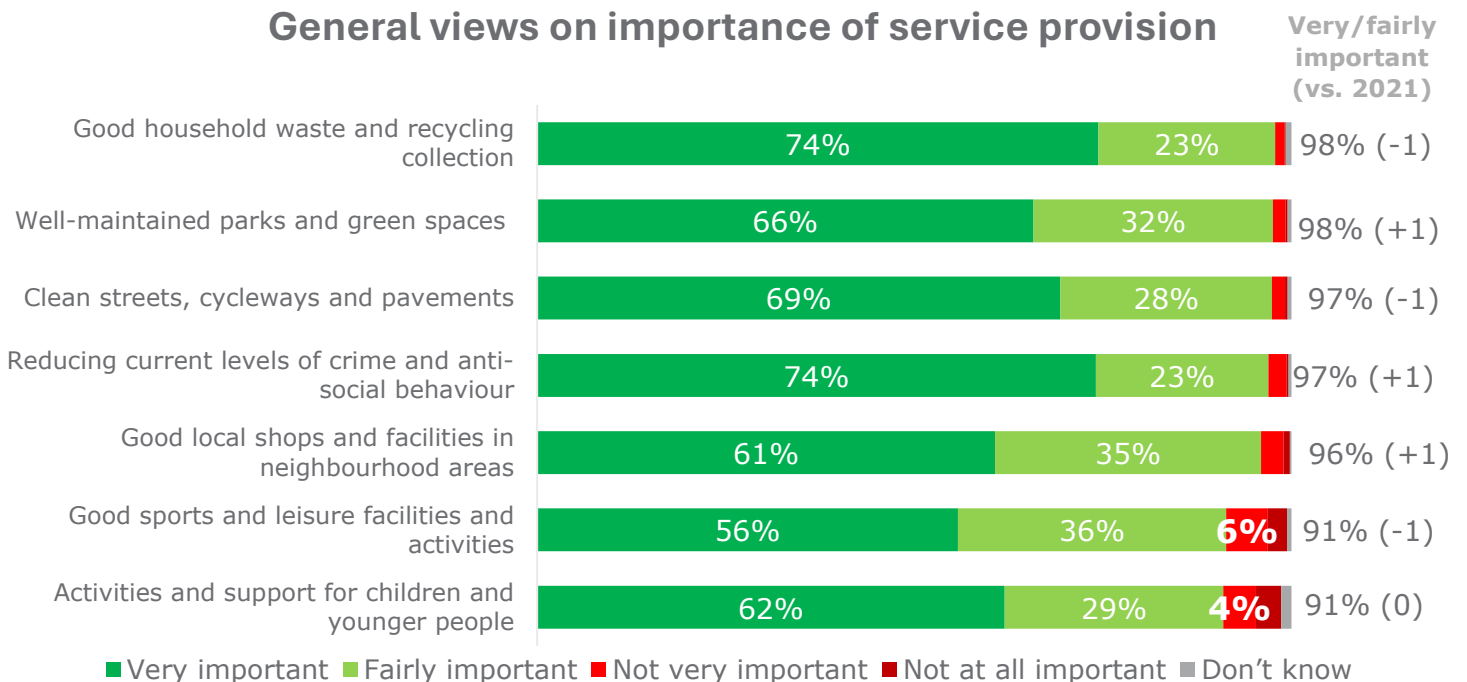
- Yes - use it
- Yes - but don't use it
- No
- Don't know

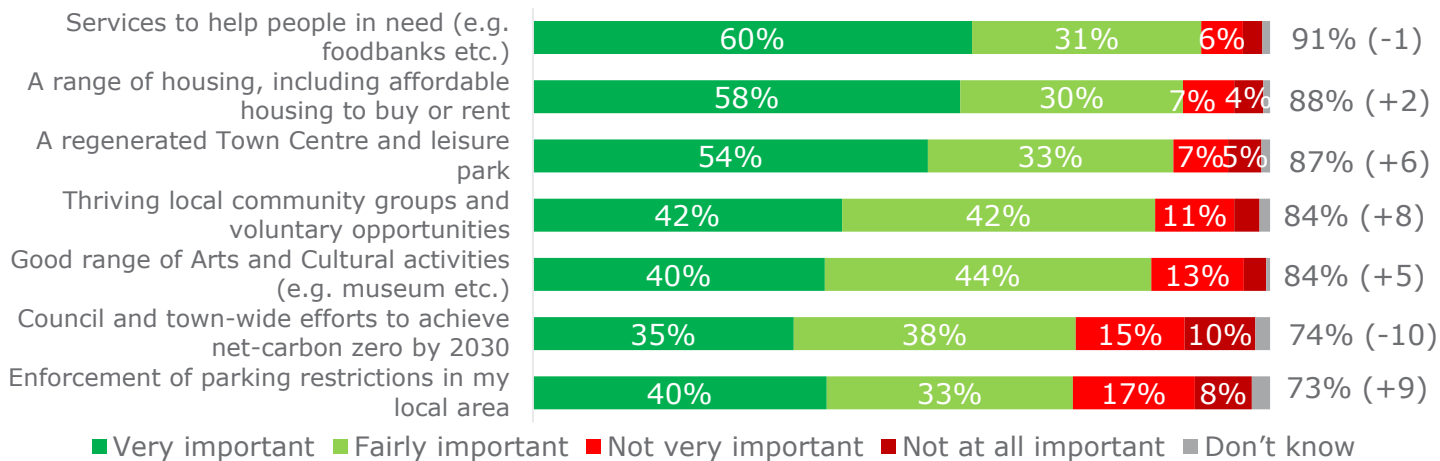
Reasons For Not Having Account



One in three residents report having an online personal account (32%), although only a quarter say that they use it (24%). Of the near two-thirds who don't have an account, the top reason given for this is a feeling that they do not need one (41%). Interestingly, a quarter of these residents say that they didn't know it was an option, indicating that the council may be able to improve take-up through targeted, effective comms. Around one-third of those aged 45-64 or 65+ who do not have an account say that they were not aware of this as an option.

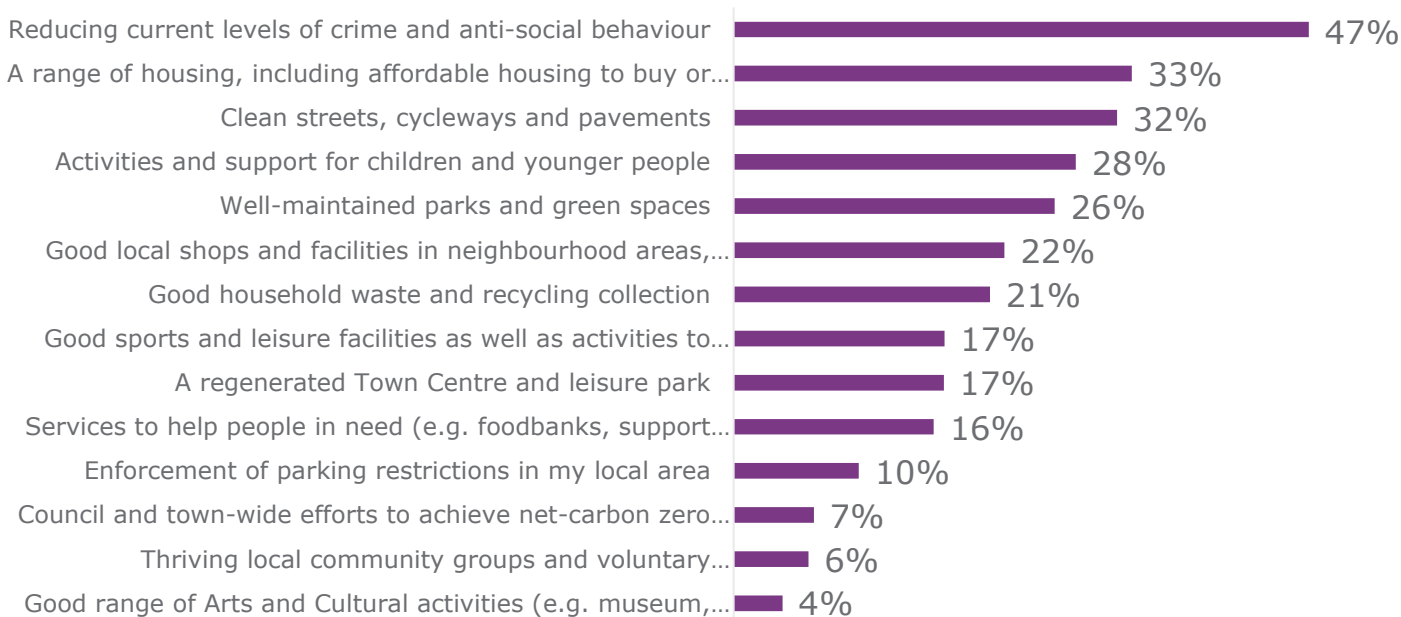
General views on importance of service provision





In terms of service provision, views are largely consistent with last year, although there are a few notable deviations for services that are considered less important. Specifically, there have been significant upticks in the importance ratings for the enforcement of parking restrictions, arts & cultural activities, local community/voluntary groups, and town centre/leisure park regeneration. In contrast, the percentage who think efforts to reach net-zero is important has declined by 10% points, although it should be noted that three-quarters of residents do still deem this to be very or fairly important.

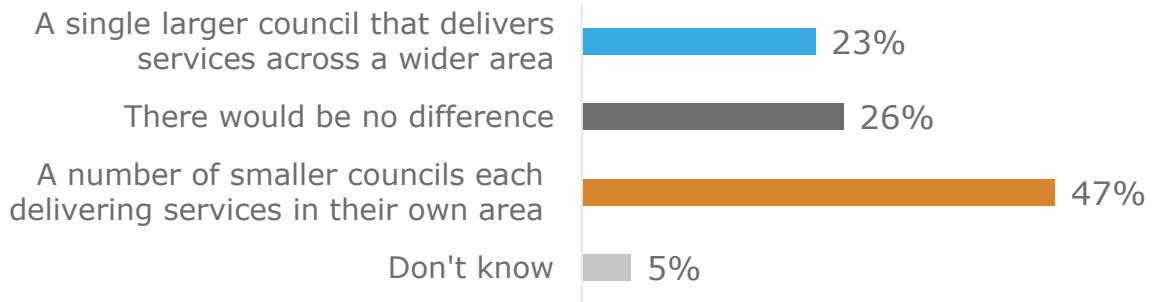
Top 3 Priorities for Residents



Following on from this, residents were asked to select their top three priority services from the same list. Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour emerges as a clear priority, (47%), and this is unsurprising given it was the top theme mentioned when residents were asked about specific issues affecting their local area. The next most selected priorities are housing (33%) and clean streets (32%). The council should look to prioritise these areas in order to help improve satisfaction going forward.

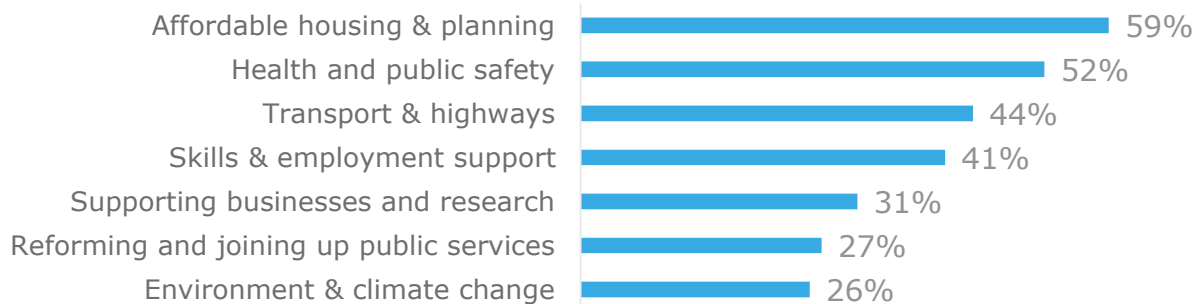
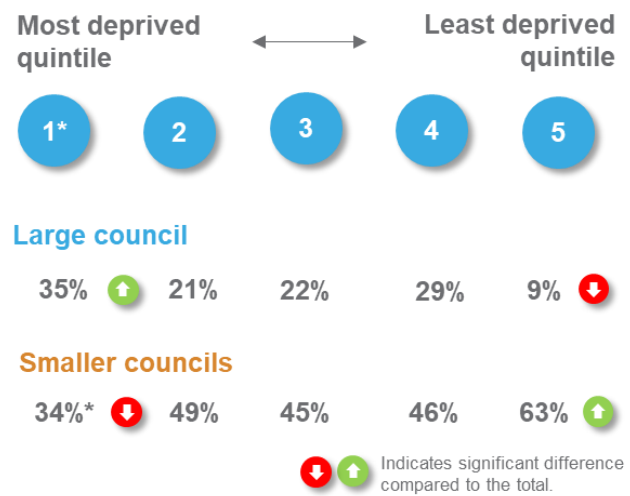
Local Government Reorganisation & Devolution

Ideal LGR Council Size



Nearly half of residents feel that a number of smaller councils would be the more effective in terms of maintaining the quality of service delivery; just a quarter favoured a single larger council (23%), and a similar proportion felt that council size would make no difference (26%).

Homeowners are more likely than renters to favour smaller councils (55% cf. 36%), while renters are more inclined to feel that it would not make a difference (33% cf. 21%). Views are fairly consistent across the middle quintiles within the Indices of Multiple Deprivation but vary between the lowest and highest quintiles, as shown on the right:



Residents would most like to prioritise affordable housing & planning (59%), followed by health & public safety (52%) and transport & highways (44%). Skills and employment support narrowly misses out on the top three (41%).

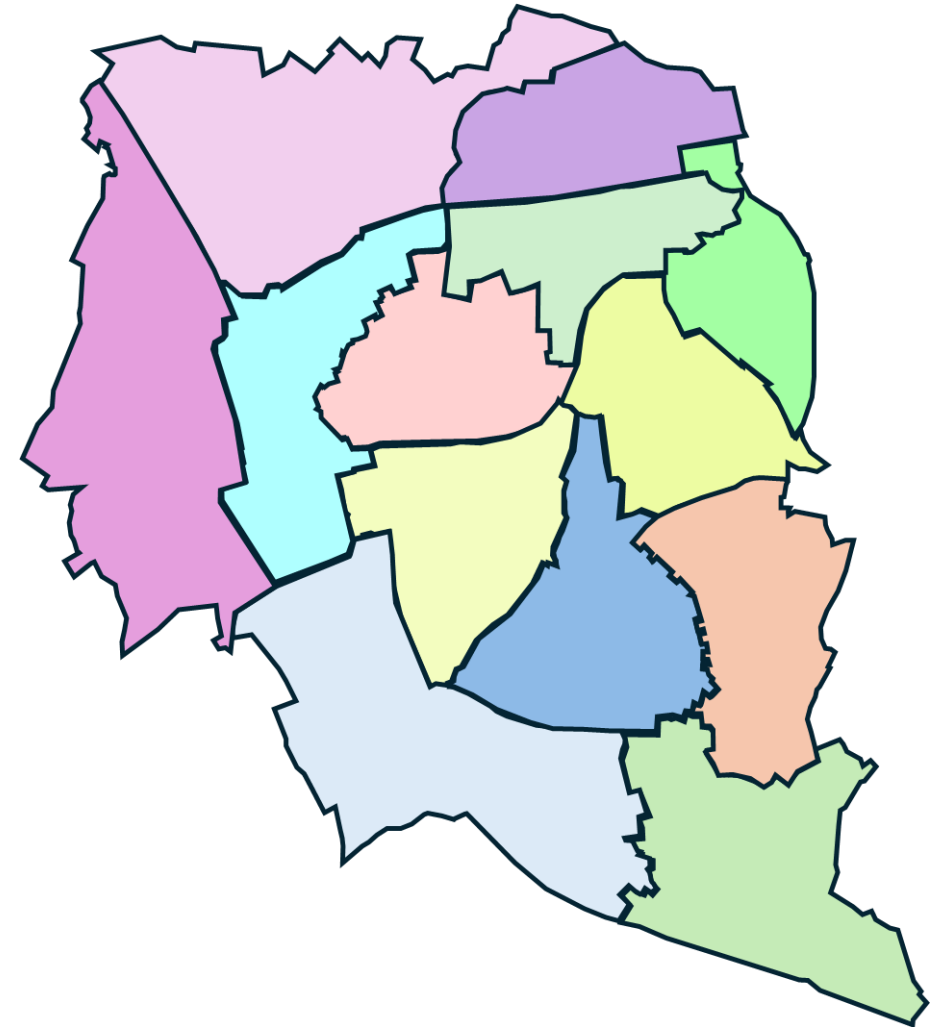
Affordable housing and planning is, again, more of a priority for those aged 18-44 (67%). Meanwhile, the two older age groups (45-64, 65+) are more likely to be concerned with health & public safety (59%; 64%) and transport & highways (49%; 63%). Females are more likely than males to prioritise affordable housing and planning (62% cf. 56%) and skills & employment support (44% cf. 38%), while males are more likely to prioritise supporting businesses and research (35% cf. 27%) and reforming public services (31% cf. 24%).

Ward Cluster Analysis

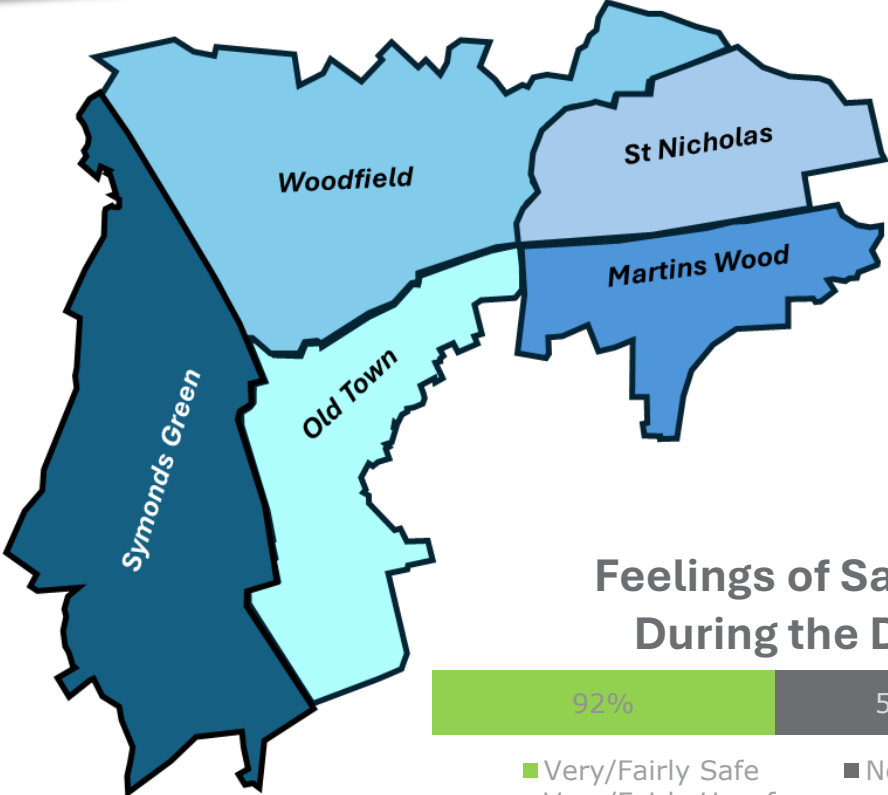
As part of the 2025 Residents Survey, Stevenage wards have been combined into three distinct clusters for the purposes of reporting, these are as follows:

- North: St Nicholas, Martins Wood, Woodfield, Old Town, Symonds Green
- Central: Chells, Manor, Bedwell, Almond Hill
- South: Shephall, Bandley Hill & Poplars, Longmeadow, Roebuck

A dedicated ward cluster profile has been created for each of these on the next few pages. These profiles offer more detailed insights into how Stevenage residents responded when they specifically considered their local ward area, and how these views differ across the town as a whole. However, whilst these specific statistics provide invaluable insights, it should be noted that due to the finite statistical reliability outlined in the background and methodology section of this report, the further the statistic is drilled down and analysed, the less robust it is.



North Ward Cluster



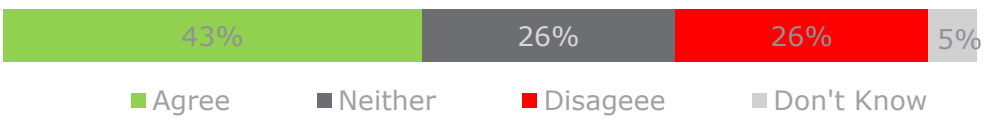
Satisfaction with Local Area



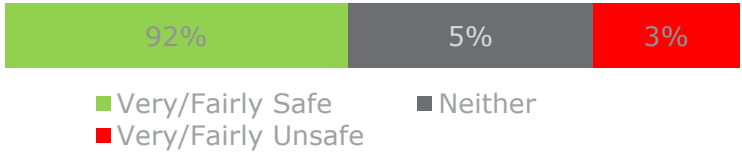
Satisfaction with the Council



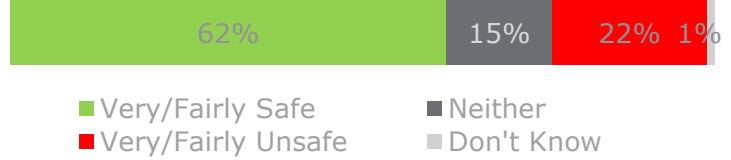
Perception of Value for Money



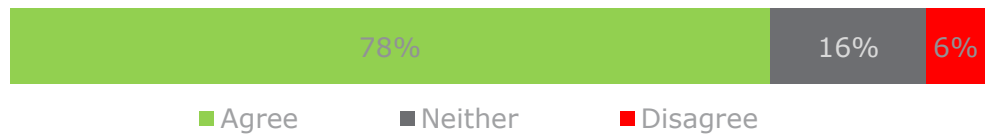
Feelings of Safety: During the Day



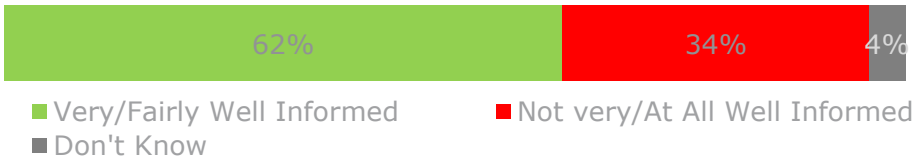
Feelings of Safety: After Dark



Perception of Community Cohesion



Informed about Council Services



North Ward Cluster Breakdown

Ward	Satisfaction with Local Area	Feelings of Safety		Perceptions of Community Cohesion	Satisfaction with the Council	Perceptions of Value for Money	Informed about Council Services
		During the Day	After Dark				
Martins Wood	79%	96%	59%	77%	70%	33%	52%
Old Town	82%	90%	71%	68%	79%	55%	74%
St Nicholas	88%	91%	56%	87%	68%	48%	64%
Symonds Green	79%	89%	66%	75%	58%	37%	58%
Woodfield	78%	90%	58%	80%	68%	46%	66%

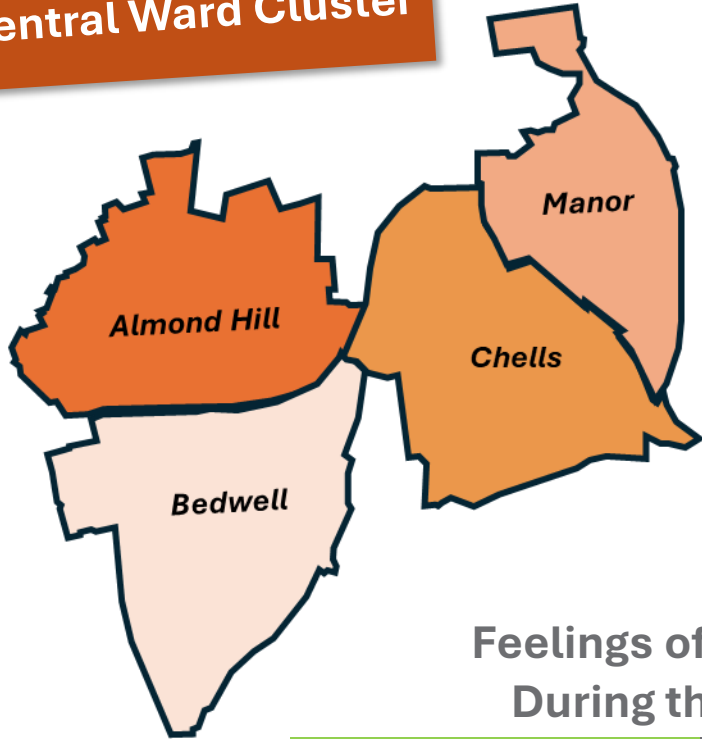
Top Five Perceived Issues in North Ward Cluster

Crime, anti-social behaviour and police visibility	19%
Lack of maintenance/ neglect of environment/area is in decline	17%
Severe parking issues/concerns	10%
Road quality/condition and pothole concerns	7%
Frustration with council engagement and responsiveness	6%

Greatest Concerns Outside in North Ward Cluster

Gangs/groups of people hanging around	29%
Drugs, i.e. dealing/use	26%
Youth causing crime/disruption	28%
The lack of street lighting	17%
Drunk people causing problems	20%

Central Ward Cluster



Satisfaction with Local Area



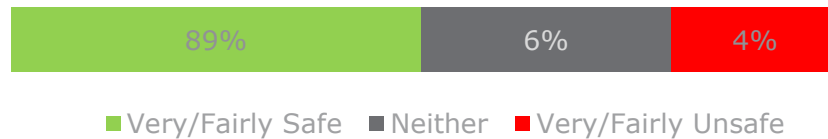
Satisfaction with the Council



Perception of Value for Money



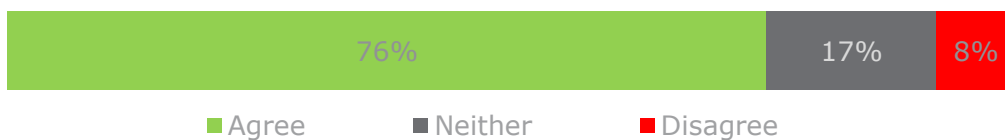
Feelings of Safety: During the Day



Feelings of Safety: After Dark



Perception of Community Cohesion



Informed about Council Services



Central Ward Cluster Breakdown

Ward	Satisfaction with Local Area	Feelings of Safety		Perceptions of Community Cohesion	Satisfaction with the Council	Perceptions of Value for Money	Informed about Council Services
		During the Day	After Dark				
Almond Hill	83%	88%	58%	75%	69%	48%	62%
Bedwell	78%	83%	50%	76%	72%	52%	65%
Chells	83%	94%	59%	75%	60%	34%	60%
Manor	82%	93%	74%	77%	76%	39%	67%

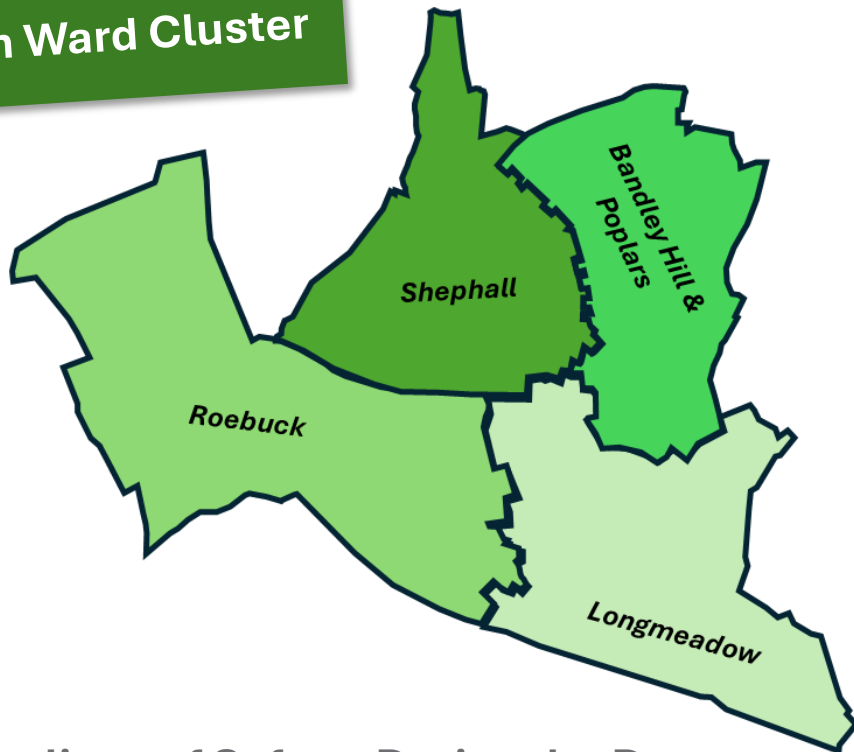
Top Five Perceived Issues in Central Ward Cluster

Crime, anti-social behaviour and police visibility	21%
Lack of maintenance/ neglect of environment/area is in decline	15%
Severe parking issues/concerns	18%
Frustration with council engagement and responsiveness	6%
Road quality/condition and pothole concerns	6%

Greatest Concerns Outside in Central Ward Cluster

Gangs/groups of people hanging around	39%
Drugs, i.e. dealing/use	40%
Youth causing crime/disruption	29%
The lack of street lighting	21%
Drunk people causing problems	13%

South Ward Cluster



Satisfaction with Local Area



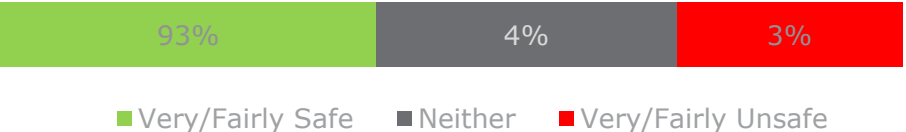
Satisfaction with the Council



Perception of Value for Money



Feelings of Safety: During the Day



Feelings of Safety: After Dark



Perception of Community Cohesion



Informed about Council Provided Services



Central Ward Cluster Breakdown

Ward	Satisfaction with Local Area	Feelings of Safety		Perceptions of Community Cohesion	Satisfaction with the Council	Perceptions of Value for Money	Informed about Council Services
		During the Day	After Dark				
Bandle Hill & Poplars	87%	94%	61%	80%	75%	45%	66%
Longmeadow	93%	97%	70%	71%	62%	44%	53%
Shephall	85%	94%	66%	76%	65%	43%	60%
Roebuck	81%	87%	64%	75%	60%	41%	51%

Top Five Perceived Issues in South Ward Cluster

Crime, anti-social behaviour and police visibility	17%
Lack of maintenance/ neglect of environment/area is in decline	16%
Severe parking issues/concerns	14%
Decline of local retail/commercial activity	8%
Road quality/condition and pothole concerns	6%

Greatest Concerns Outside in South Ward Cluster

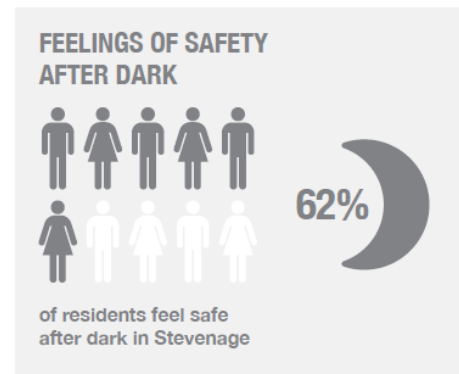
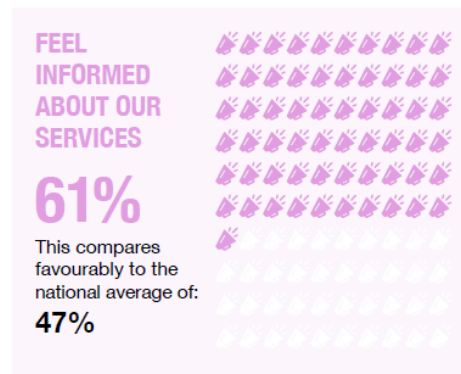
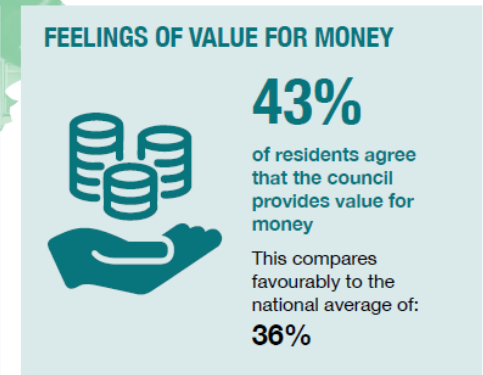
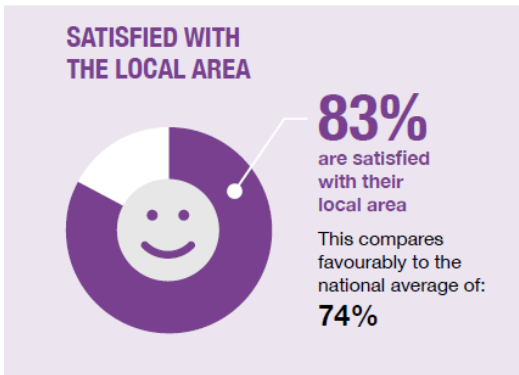
Gangs/groups of people hanging around	26%
Drugs, i.e. dealing/use	20%
Youth causing crime/disruption	27%
The lack of street lighting	19%
Drunk people causing problems	24%

Appendix A

2025 Residents Survey Infographic

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL RESIDENTS SURVEY 2025

The latest survey shows that most residents are satisfied with their local area and the council's performance. Encouragingly, Stevenage outperforms national benchmarks for the majority of resident satisfaction measures, demonstrating that Stevenage is a great place to live. The findings from this survey will help guide the council's planning for the future.

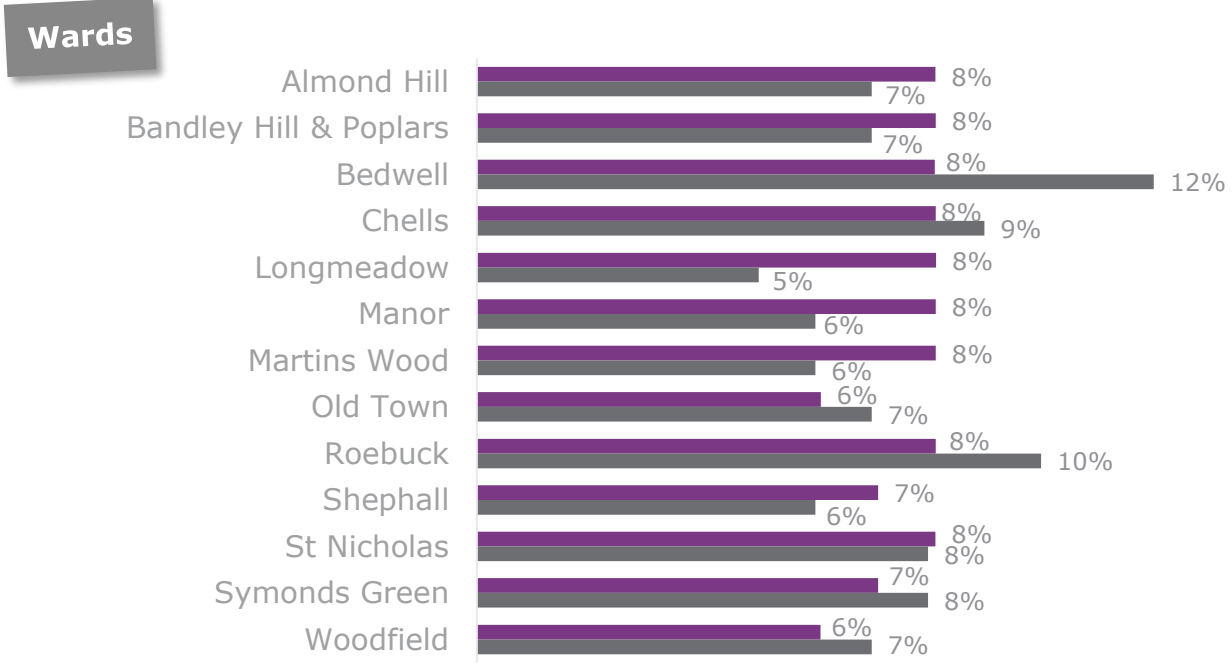
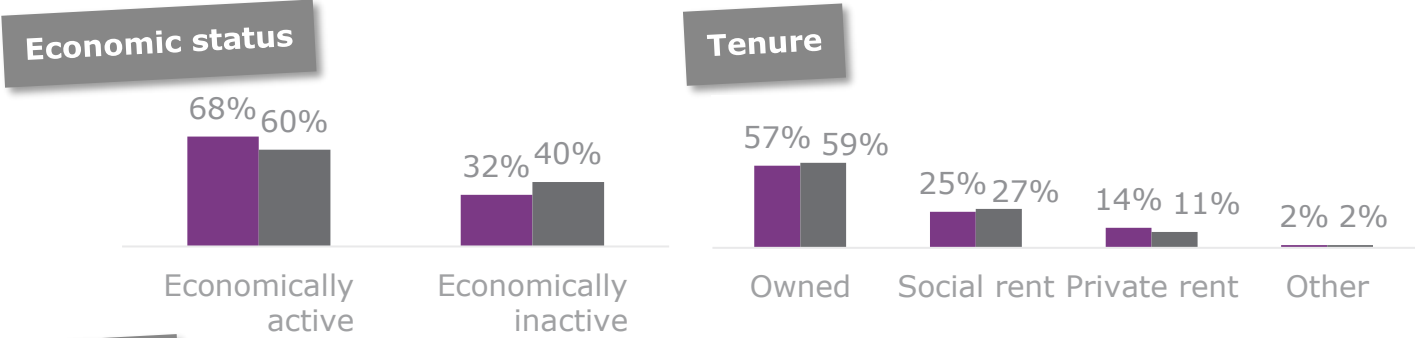
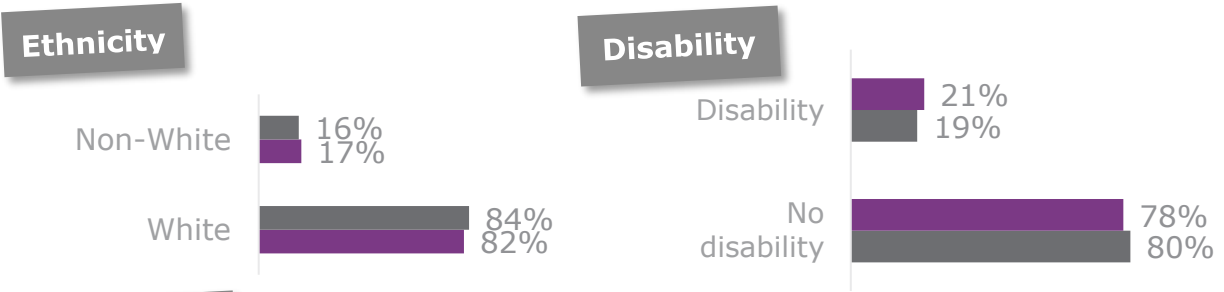
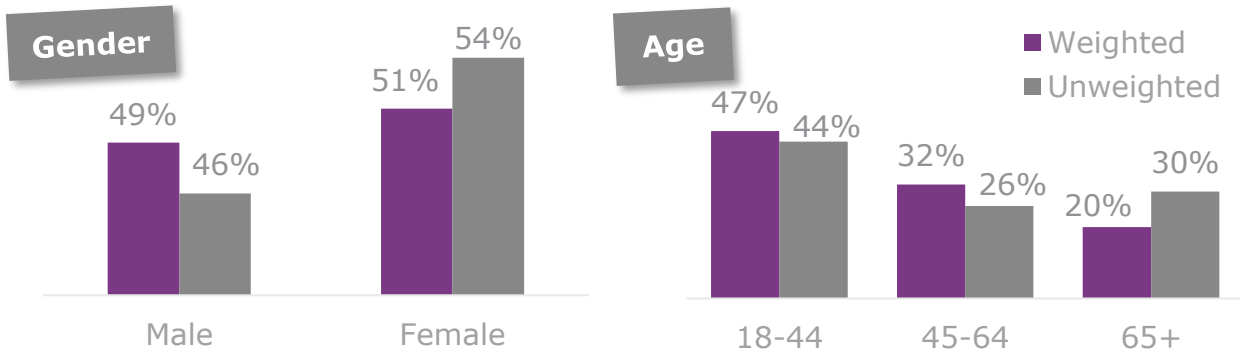


Based on a survey of 1,103 residents conducted May-June 2025 using telephone and face-to-face interviewing. The national average refers to the latest (October 2024) results of the LGA's residents' satisfaction survey. Research and design by djsresearch.co.uk.

Appendix B

Respondent Profile

Please note figures may not sum to 100% due to refusals (not charted) or rounding. Results have been weighted to the latest available population statistics.



Appendix C

2025 Resident Survey Question set

No.	Question
1	Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?
2	Are there any specific issues or aspects of your local area you would like to inform us about?
3	How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?
4	How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day?
5	What concerns you the most about being outside in your local area?
6	How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?
7	To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together?
8	To help the council understand residents' priorities in terms of the services it provides, can you please tell us which of the following areas you consider to be of importance to you?
9	Now using the same list, I would like you to tell me, of the service areas you consider to be important, can you please tell me your top three priority areas?
10	How often do you visit Stevenage Town Centre?
11	Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Stevenage Borough Council runs things?
12	Overall, how well informed do you think Stevenage Borough Council keeps residents about the services it provides?
13	During the past 12 months, how have you accessed information about the council and its services?
14	Do you have an online personal council account? If not, could you please tell us why?
15	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council Tax paid to Stevenage Borough Council provides value for money?
16	The council continues to consider efficiencies and make savings where possible, please tell us your preference of where they should do this for each of the following options by ordering them 1 to 5, when 1 is most preferred and 5 is least preferred?
17	Stevenage Borough Council currently provides local services such as waste collection, leisure, planning, and housing. In your view, which of the following approaches would be more effective for maintaining the quality of these services?
18	The government is proposing to delegate further powers to local government. This is often referred to as devolution. What would be your top three priorities to improve your area through Devolution?