

Stroud District Council

Annual Satisfaction Survey

Report

2023

- ❑ Approach to research
- ❑ Resident survey
- ❑ Business survey
- ❑ Business v residents
- ❑ Summary

Approach to Research - Residents

Residents

- ❑ 500 ten-minute telephone interviews with local residents
- ❑ All interviews were conducted with a representative sample of residents aged 18 and over who live in a household where Council Tax is paid to Stroud District Council.
- ❑ To ensure the views were obtained from individuals from all areas of the district, we targeted a proportionate number of interviews in each of the local areas, as follows:
 - Stroud Valleys
 - Stonehouse
 - Cam and Dursley
 - Gloucester Fringe
 - Berkeley
 - Severn Vale
 - Wotton-Under-Edge
 - Cotswold

Residents

- ❑ The sample was based on the quota controls, which reflect the demographic makeup of the Stroud District Council area, as follows:

Gender	
Male	49%
Female	51%
Total	100%

Age	
18 - 34	21%
35 – 54	37%
55 – 74	31%
75+	11%
Total	100%

- ❑ Other demographics such as ethnicity, disability, working status etc, would be expected to fall out naturally due to the random nature of the sampling. See comparison in profile section.
- ❑ National data from the Local Government Association (LGA) survey conducted in June 2023 has been used for benchmarking where questions allow. The LGA survey consisted of 1,000 adults from across the UK.

Business

- ❑ 200 telephone interviews conducted with a random sample of businesses from the Stroud District Council Area

- ❑ Quotas set on business size (employees):
 - 140 interviews with companies with 10 or less employees
 - 60 interviews with companies with over 10 employees

Things to Note

Statistical significance/Margin of error

- All survey results are subject to margins of error as they are based on a sample of the population. The margin of error on a sample of 500 is +/- 4.4%. Therefore, if 50% of respondents give an answer to a question, we can be sure that the true value lies somewhere between 45.6% and 54.4%. Therefore there has to be a difference of 8.8% for it to be classed as significant. Therefore some changes in percentages when compared to previous years, while they may have increased or a decreased may not actually have changed at all when margins of error are taken into consideration. Some will have been noted to provide context and to monitor and trends over time.

Sub-analysis

- Where differences in sub-groups are mentioned, particularly for smaller sample sizes, these are provided as an indication only and should be treated with caution. Any differences will be subject to margins of error, the smaller the sub-group sample, the higher the margin of error. While some differences are not considered to be significant they are still worth noting.



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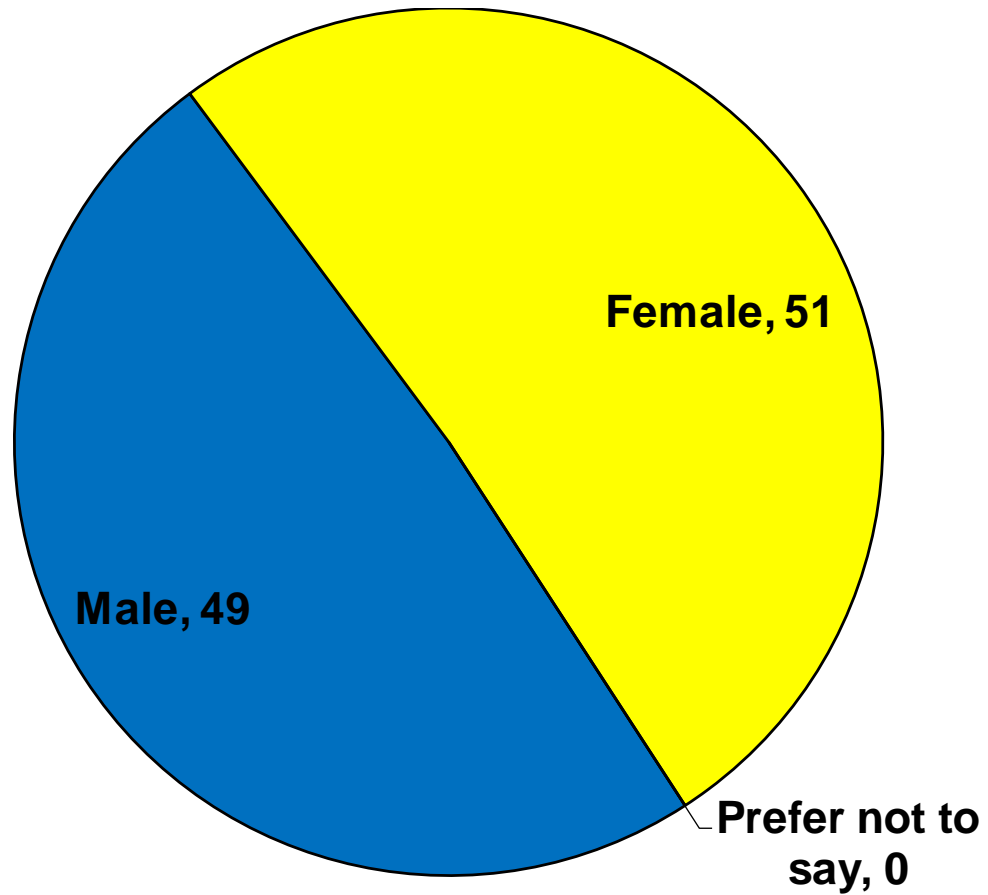
Resident Survey



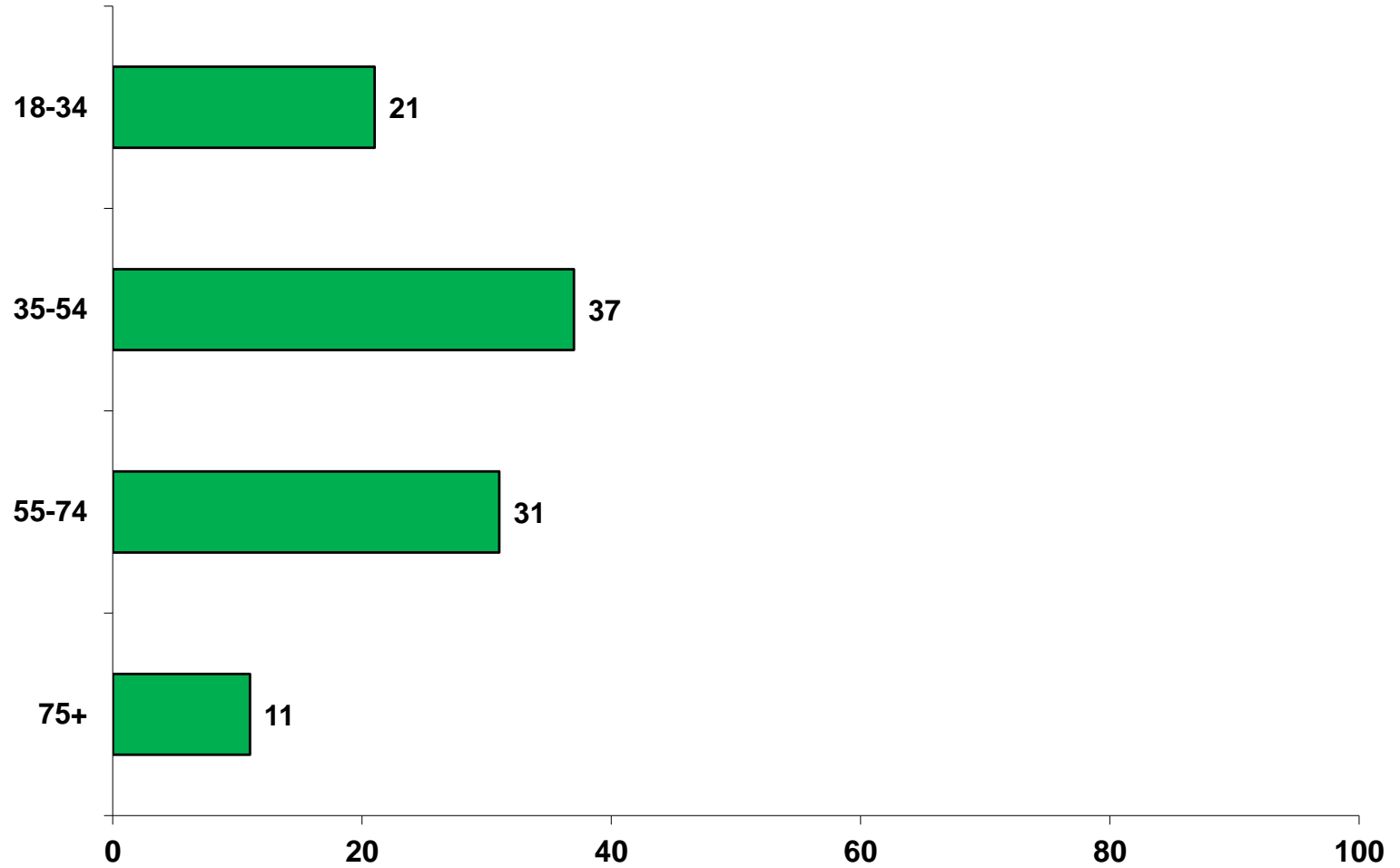
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Profile of respondents

Gender
% respondents

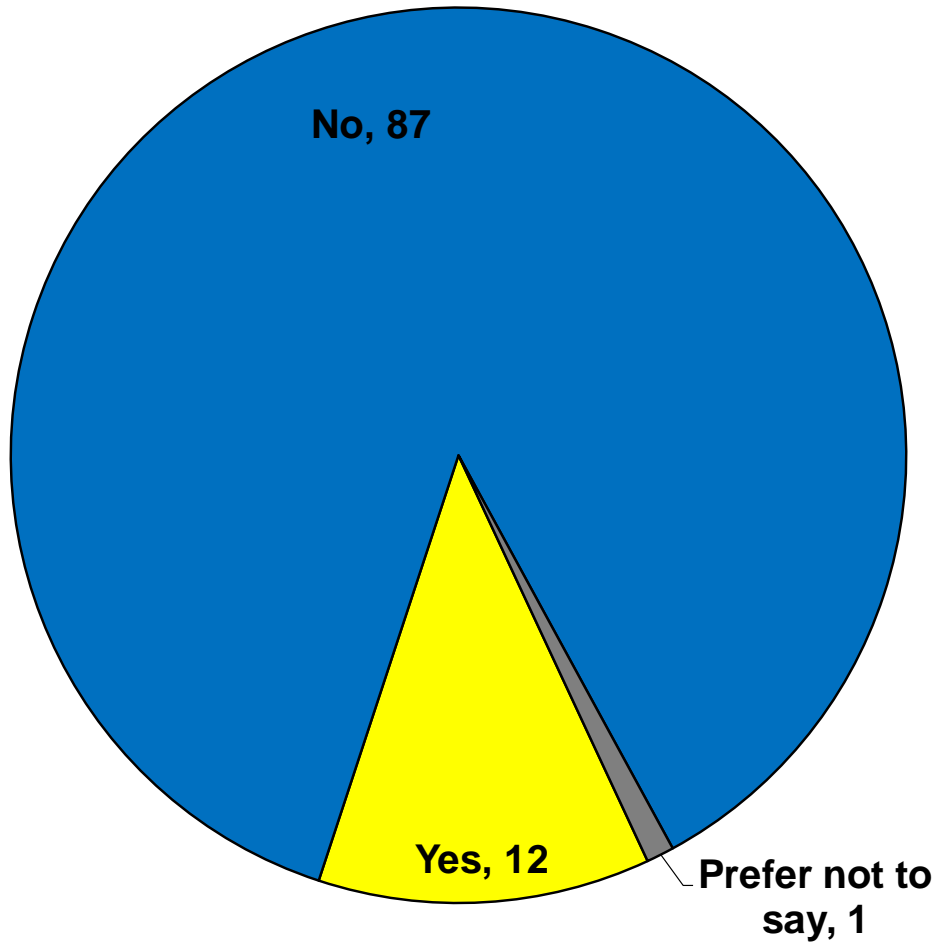


Age
% respondents



Disability

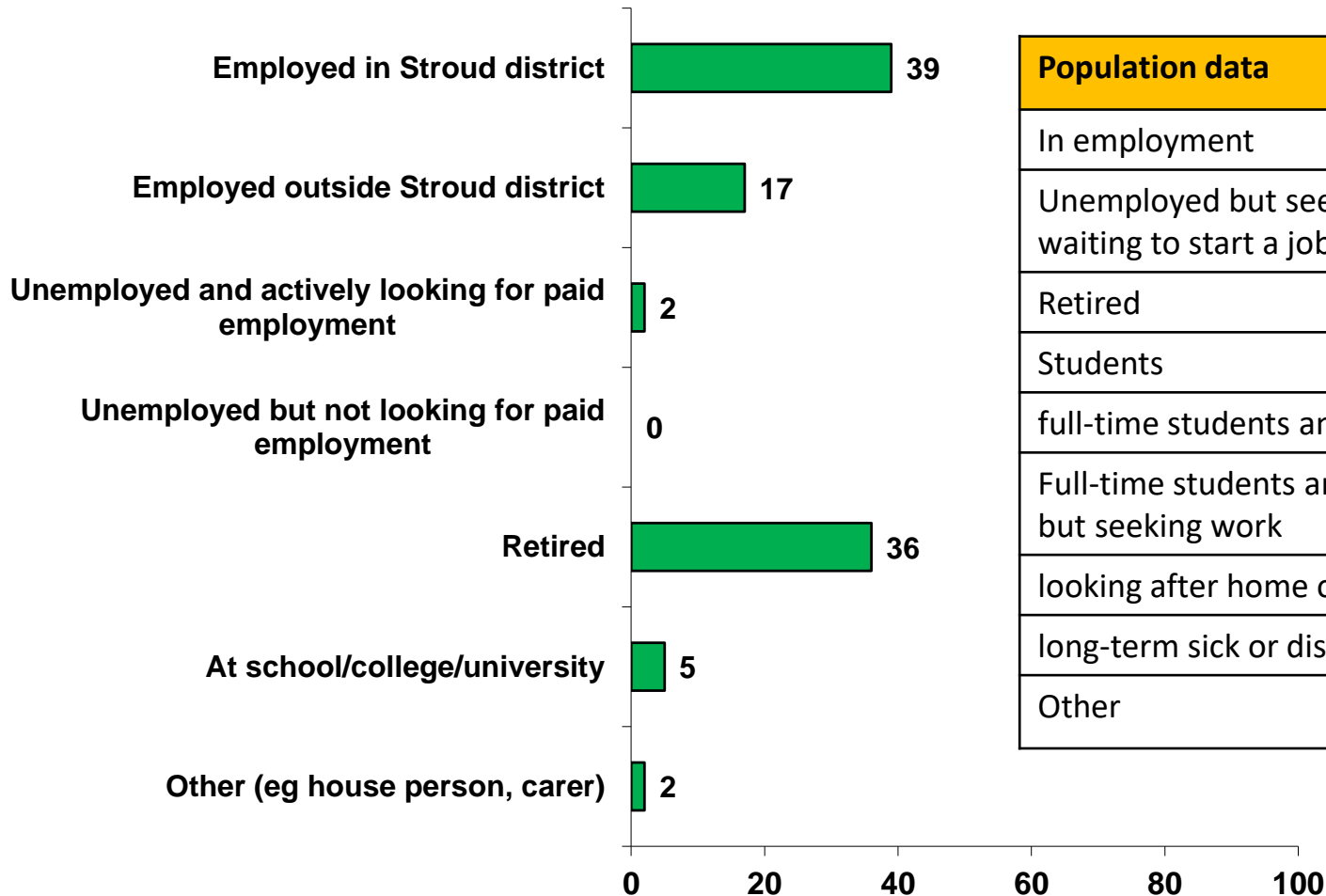
% respondents



Population data	%
Disabled under the equality act: day-to-day activities limited a lot	5.8
Disabled under the equality act: day-to-day activities limited a little	10.3
Not disabled under the equality act	83.9

Employment Status

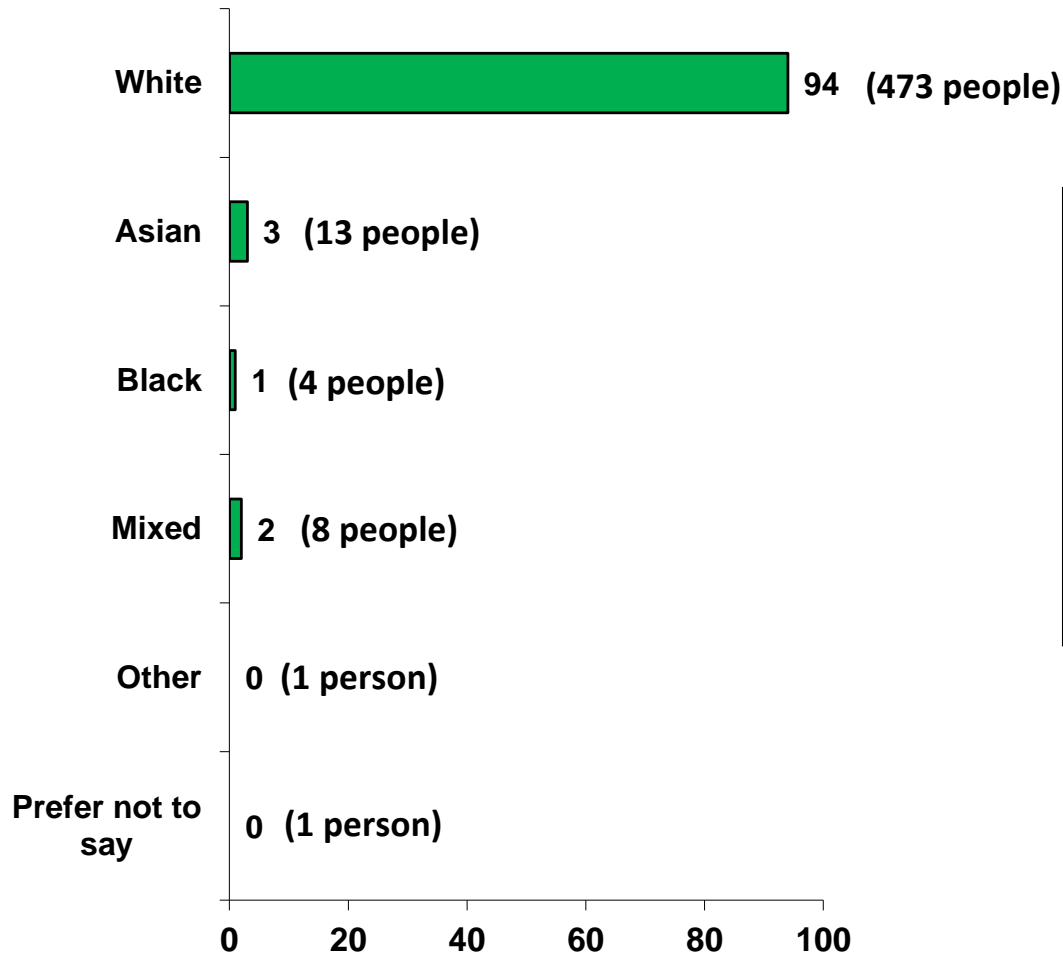
% respondents



Population data	%
In employment	58.6
Unemployed but seeking work or waiting to start a job already obtained	1.8
Retired	26.6
Students	3.3
full-time students and in employment	1.2
Full-time students and unemployed but seeking work	0.3
looking after home or family	3.2
long-term sick or disabled	2.9
Other	2.1

Ethnicity

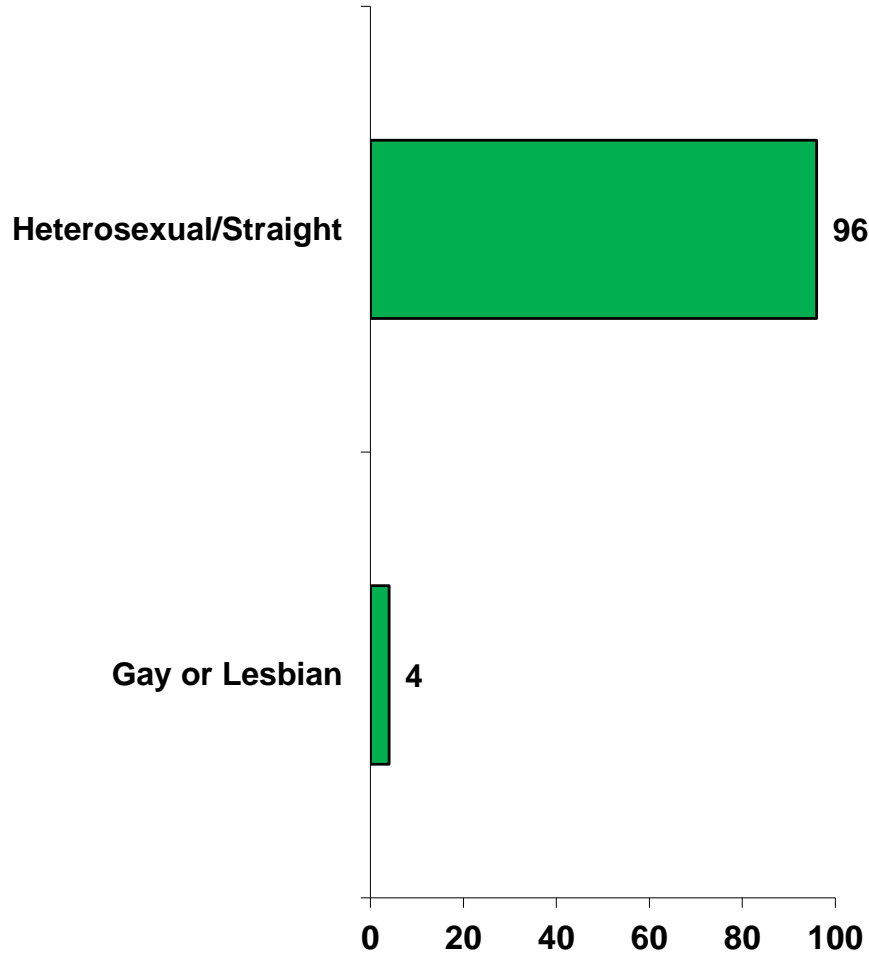
% respondents



Population data	%
White	96.4
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	1
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	0.4
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1.8
Other	0.4

Sexual Orientation

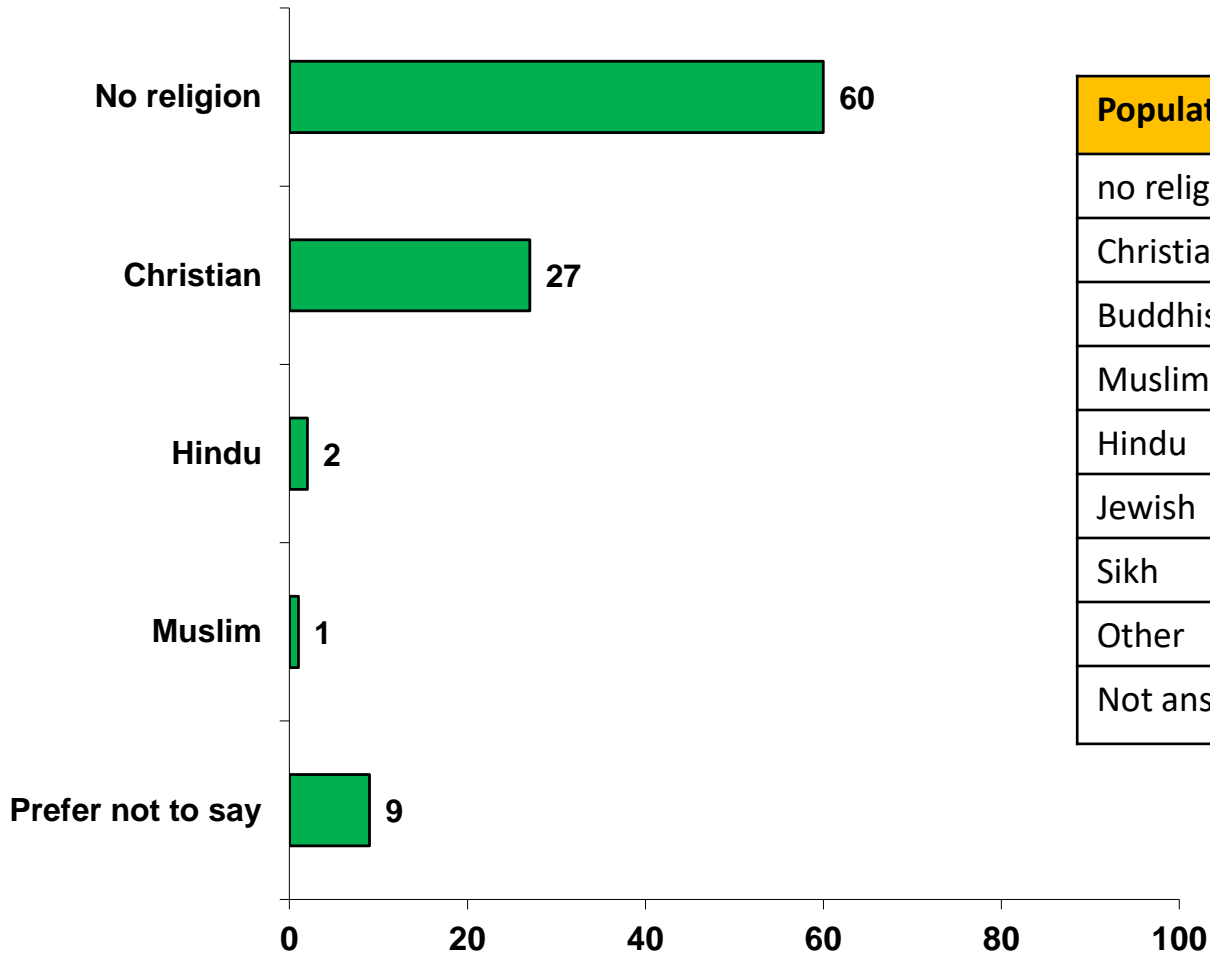
% respondents



Population data	%
Straight or heterosexual	90.3
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGB+)	2.7
Not answered	7

Religion

% respondents



Population data	%
no religion	44.1
Christian	47.5
Buddhist	0.4
Muslim	0.3
Hindu	0.2
Jewish	0.1
Sikh	0.1
Other	0.7
Not answered	6.5



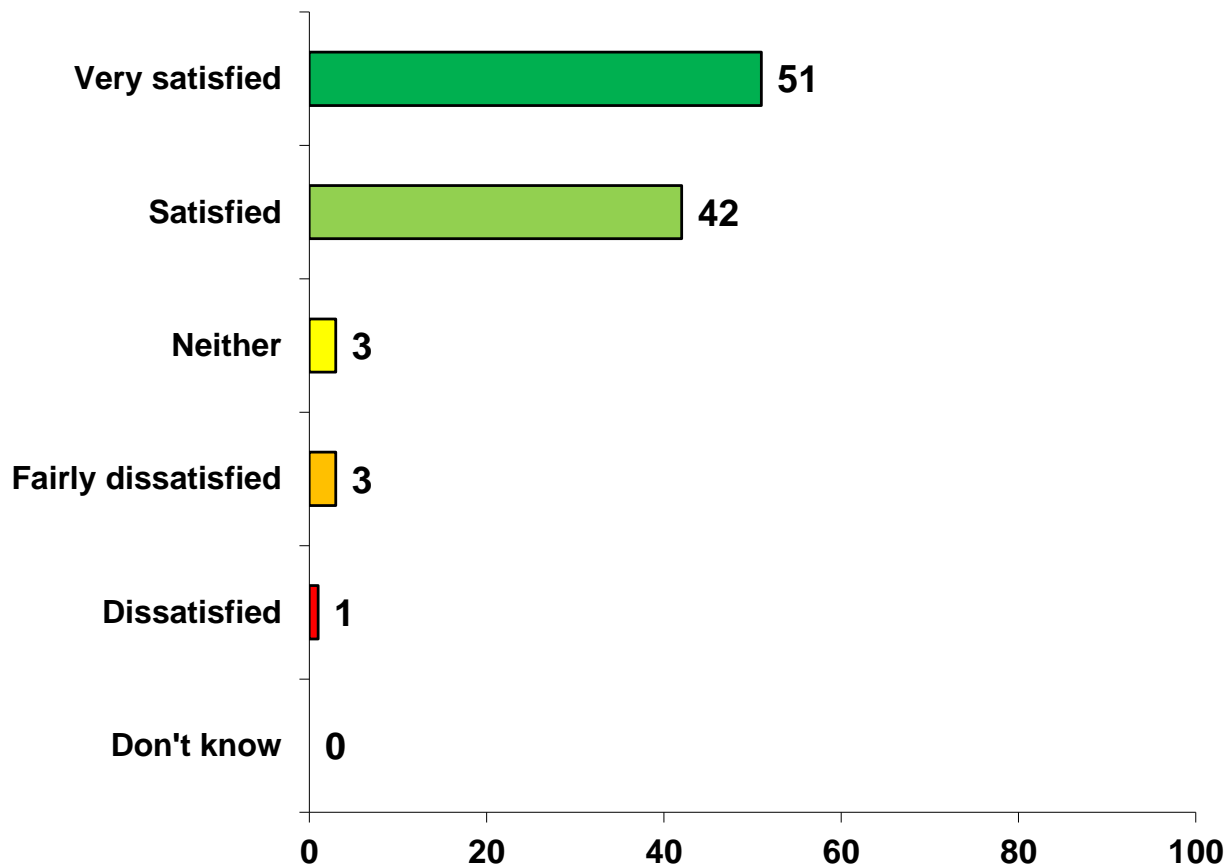
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Satisfaction and Priorities

Q1. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

% respondents

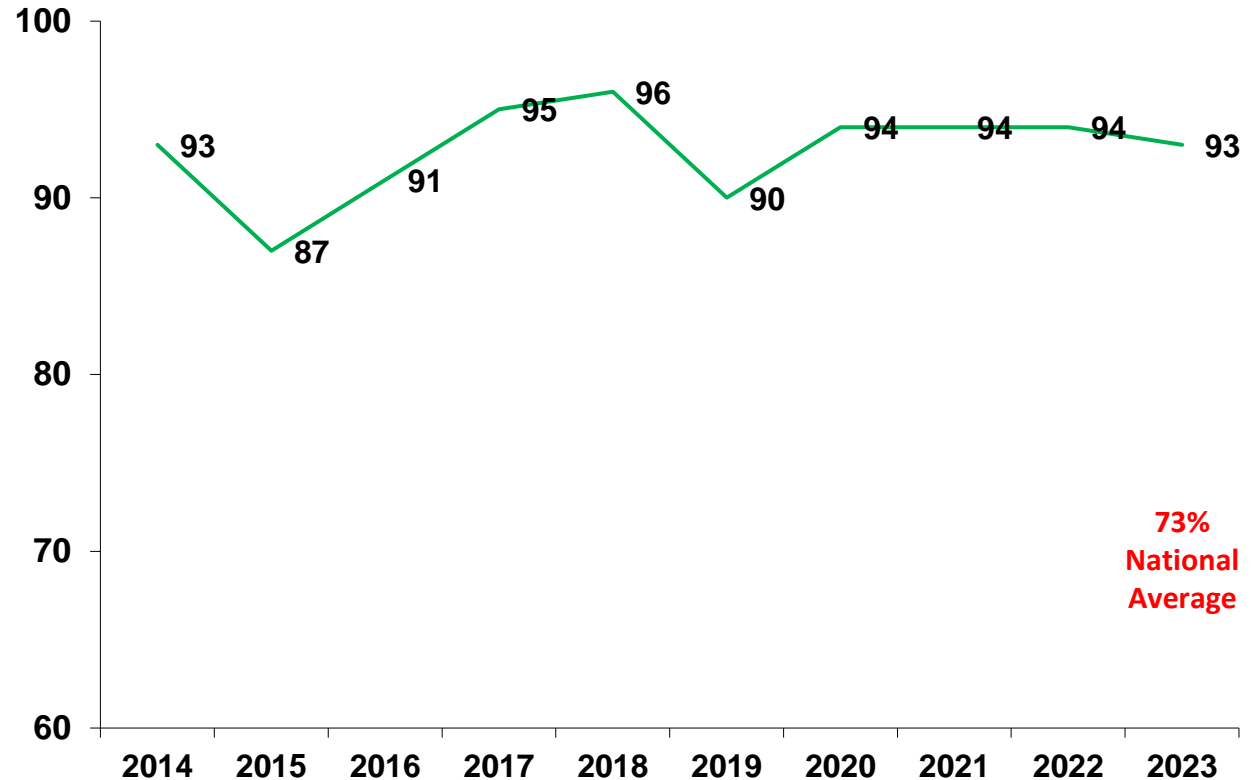
- Residents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with their area as a place to live.
- 93% of residents are either very satisfied or satisfied.
- Satisfaction was highest amongst females (96% compared to 90% of males).
- Satisfaction was lowest amongst those aged 18 – 34 (75% compared to 97% of 35 – 55s, 97% of 55 – 74s and 98% of 75+).



Q1. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? 10 year Trend

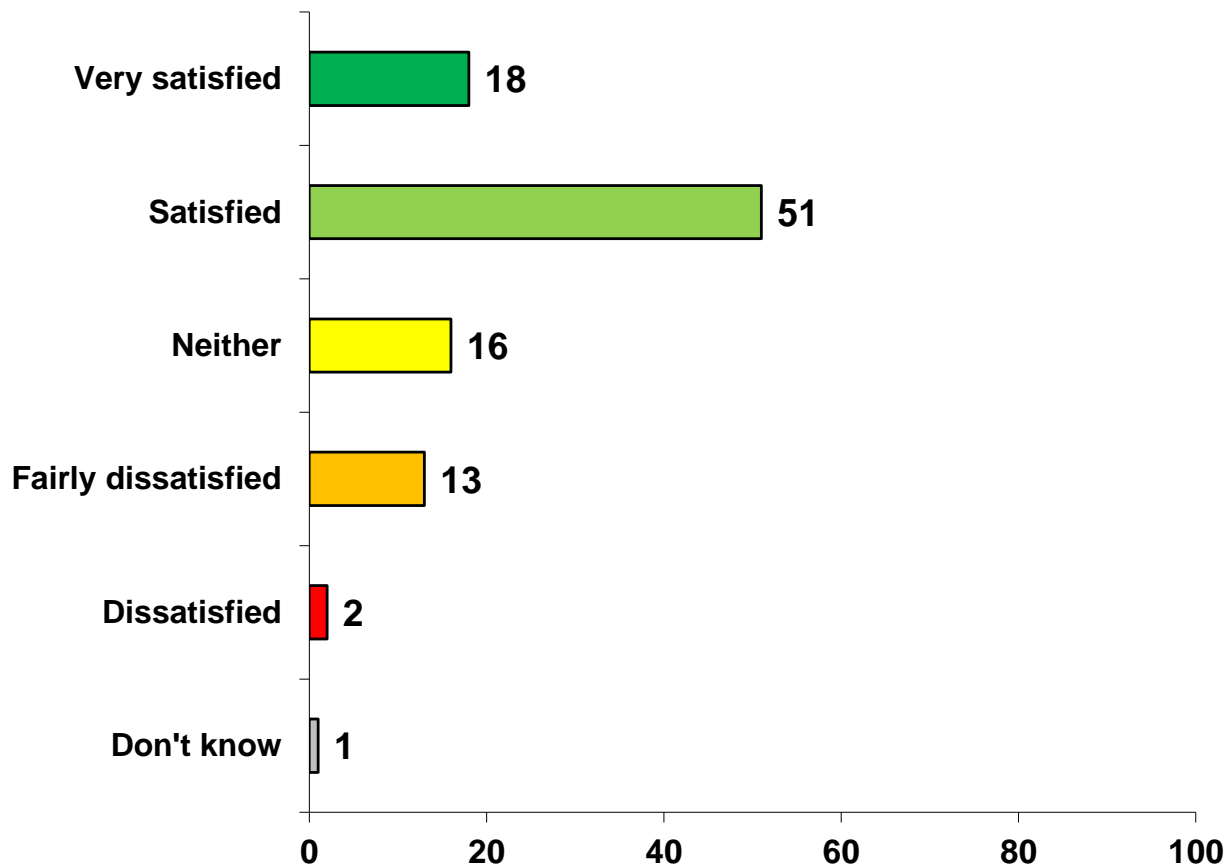
% respondents very satisfied/satisfied

- Satisfaction with area as a place to live has remained consistent over the last few years (93% in 2023 compared to 94% in 2022, 2021 and 2020).
- Nationally, 73% are very satisfied or satisfied with their area as a place to live.
- Residents' satisfaction with their area as a place to live is significantly higher in Stroud DC than the National average.



Q2. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Stroud District Council runs things?

% respondents



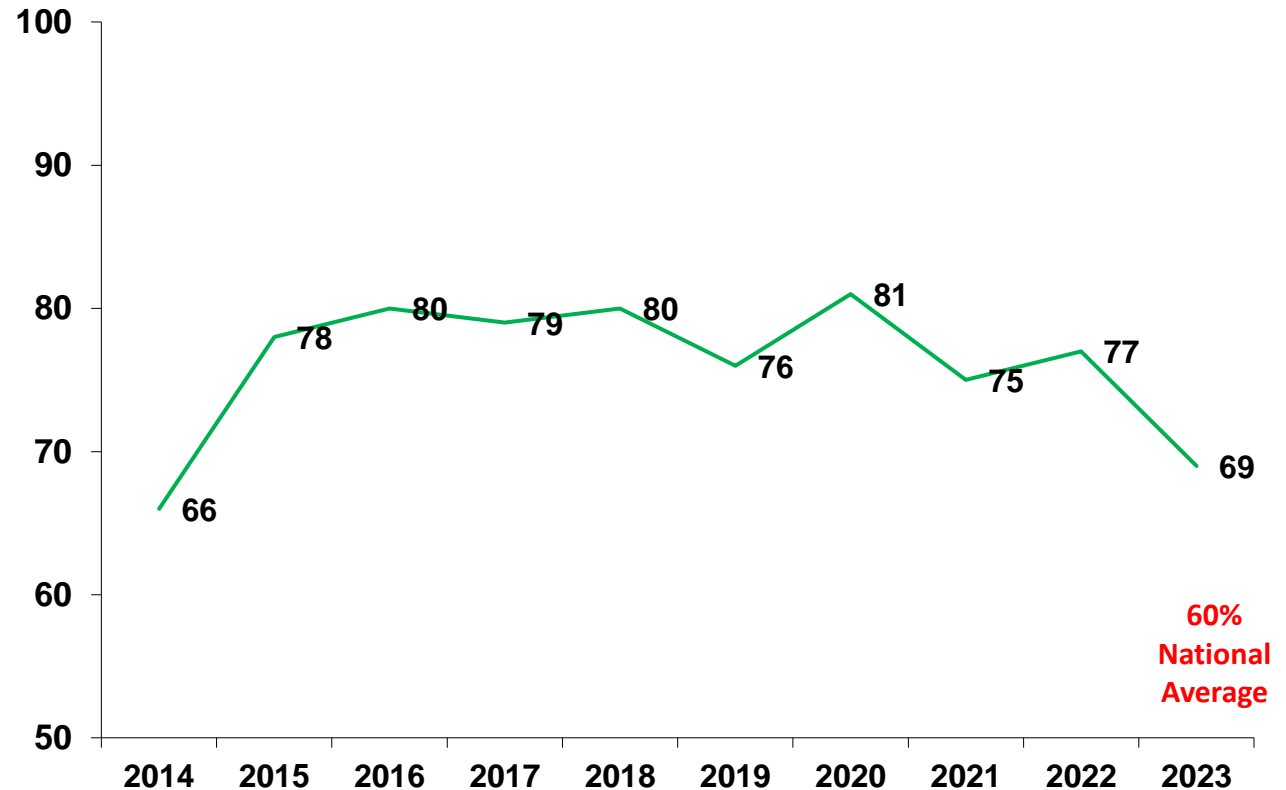
- Residents were asked how satisfied they are with the way Stroud DC runs things.
- 69% of residents are either very satisfied or satisfied.
- Satisfaction was lowest amongst those aged 18 – 34 (51%) and BAME residents* (58% compared to 69% of white residents).

* Caution small base size

Q2. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Stroud District Council runs things? 10 year Trend

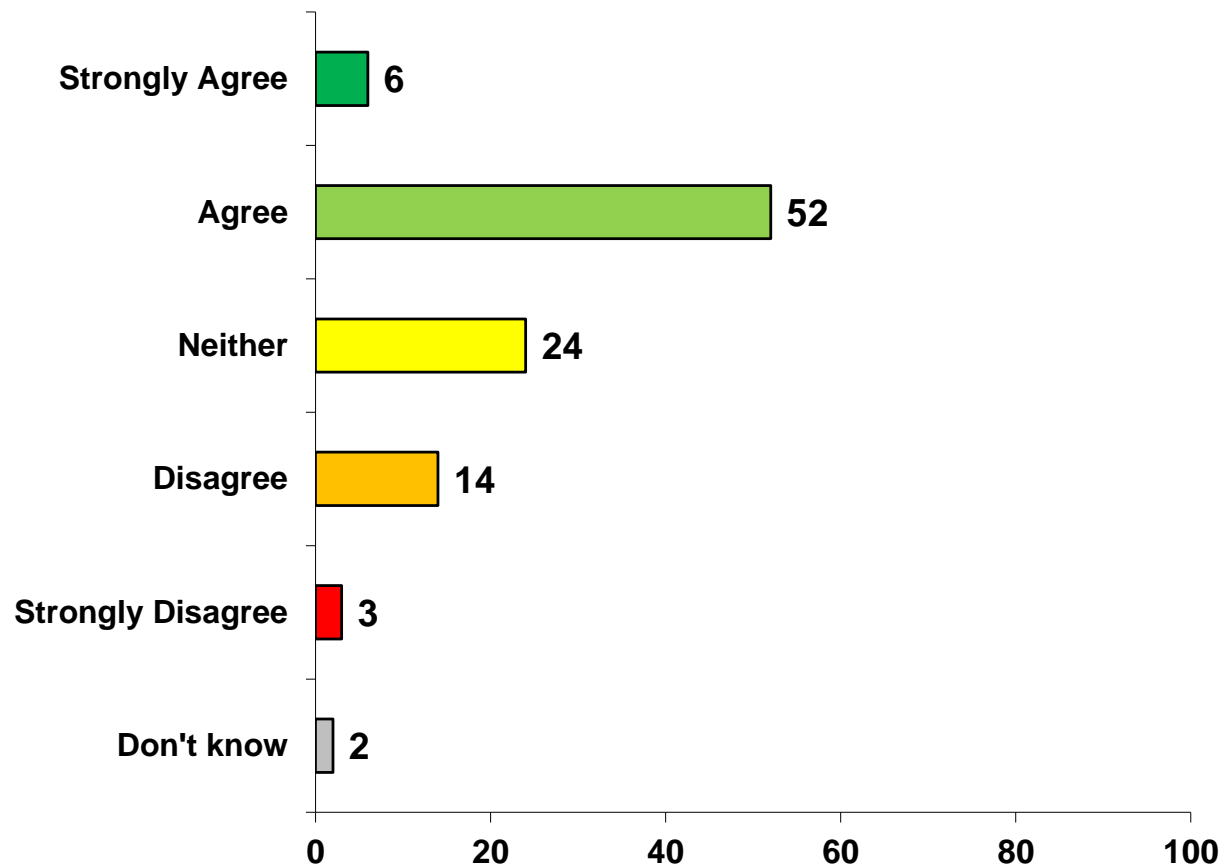
% respondents very satisfied/satisfied

- Satisfaction with the way Stroud DC runs things has decreased since 2022 from 77% to 69% and is at its' lowest since 2015.
- Nationally, 60% are very satisfied or satisfied with the way their local Council runs things.
- Residents' satisfaction with the way Stroud DC runs things is higher than the National average.



Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Stroud District Council provides value for money?

% respondents



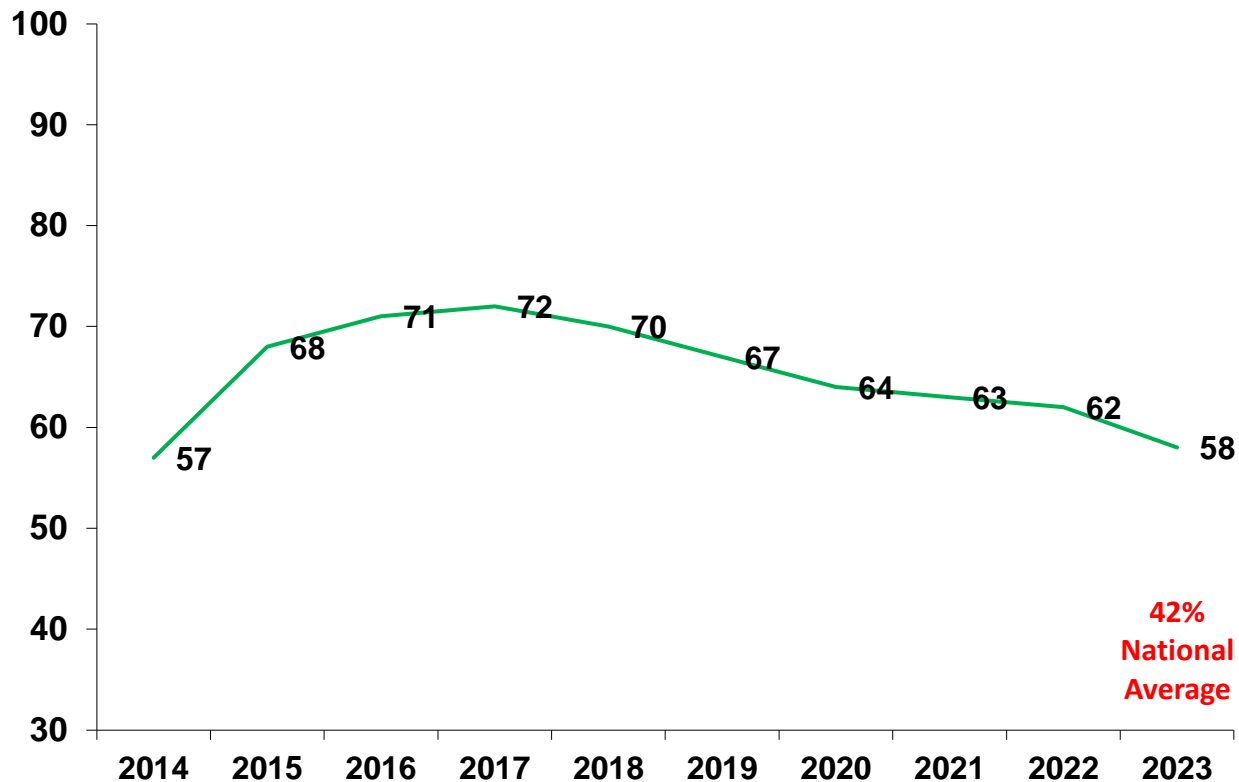
- Residents were asked to what extent they agree that Stroud DC provides value for money.
- 58% of residents either strongly agree or agree.
- Agreement was lowest amongst those aged 18 – 34 (31%) and BAME residents* (35% compared to 59% of white residents).

* Caution small base size

Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Stroud District Council provides value for money? 10 year Trend

% respondents strongly agree/agree

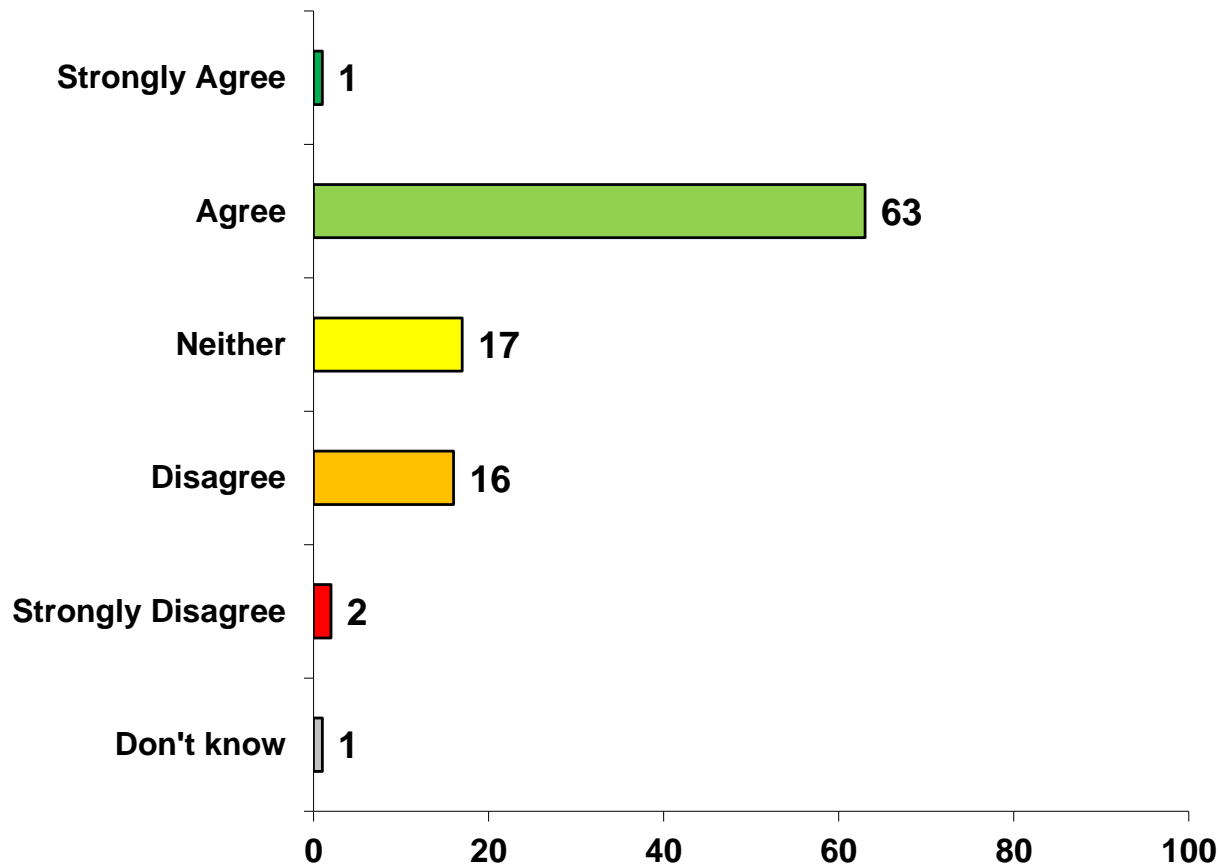
- Agreement that Stroud DC provides value for money has decreased since 2022 from 62% to 58%, continuing the downward trend since 2017.
- Nationally, 42% strongly agree or agree that their local Council provides value for money.
- Residents' agreement that Stroud DC provides value for money is significantly higher than the National average.



Q14. Overall during the past few years, the services provided by Stroud District Council have been maintained to a good standard

% respondents

- Residents were asked to what extent they agree that services have been maintained to a good standard.
- 64% of residents either strongly agree or agree.
- Agreement was lowest amongst those aged 18 – 34 (44%) and BAME residents* (31% compared to 66% of white residents).



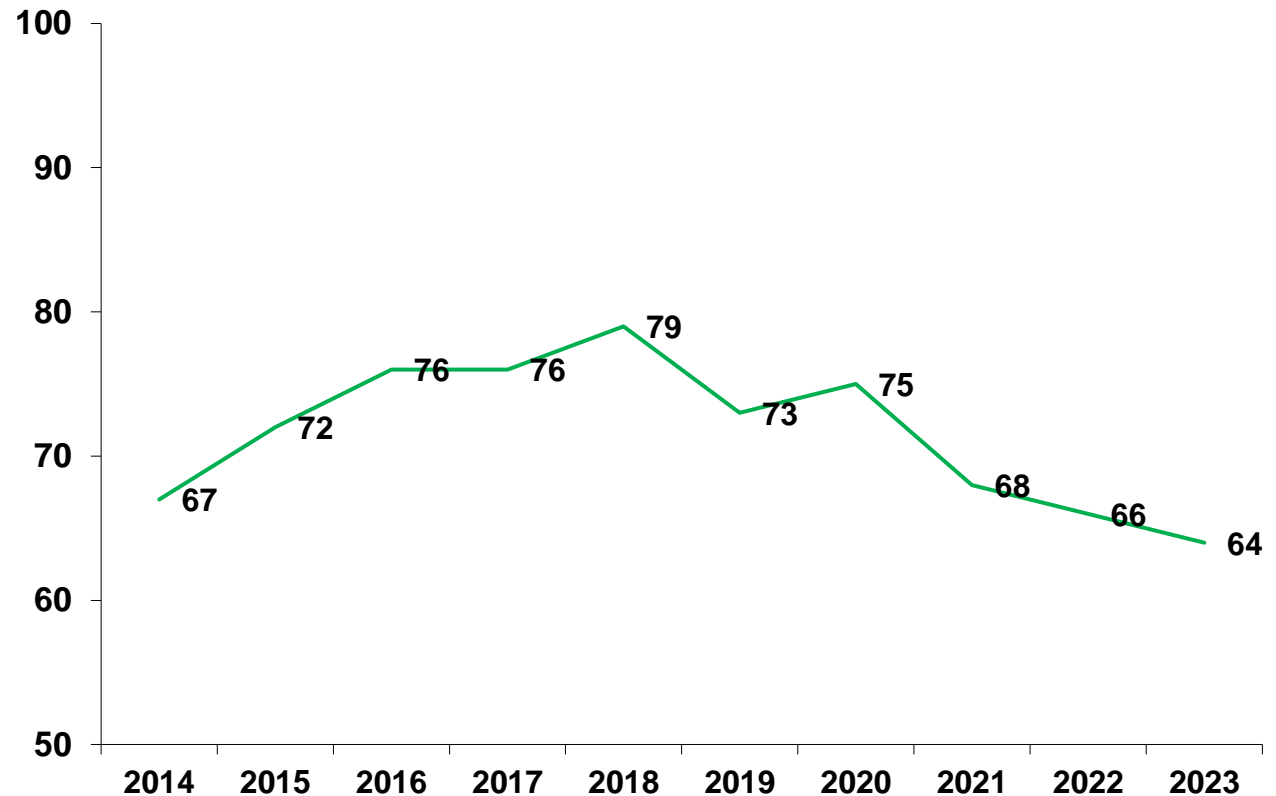
* Caution small base size

Q14. Overall during the past few years, the services provided by Stroud District Council have been maintained to a good standard

10 year Trend

% respondents strongly agree/agree

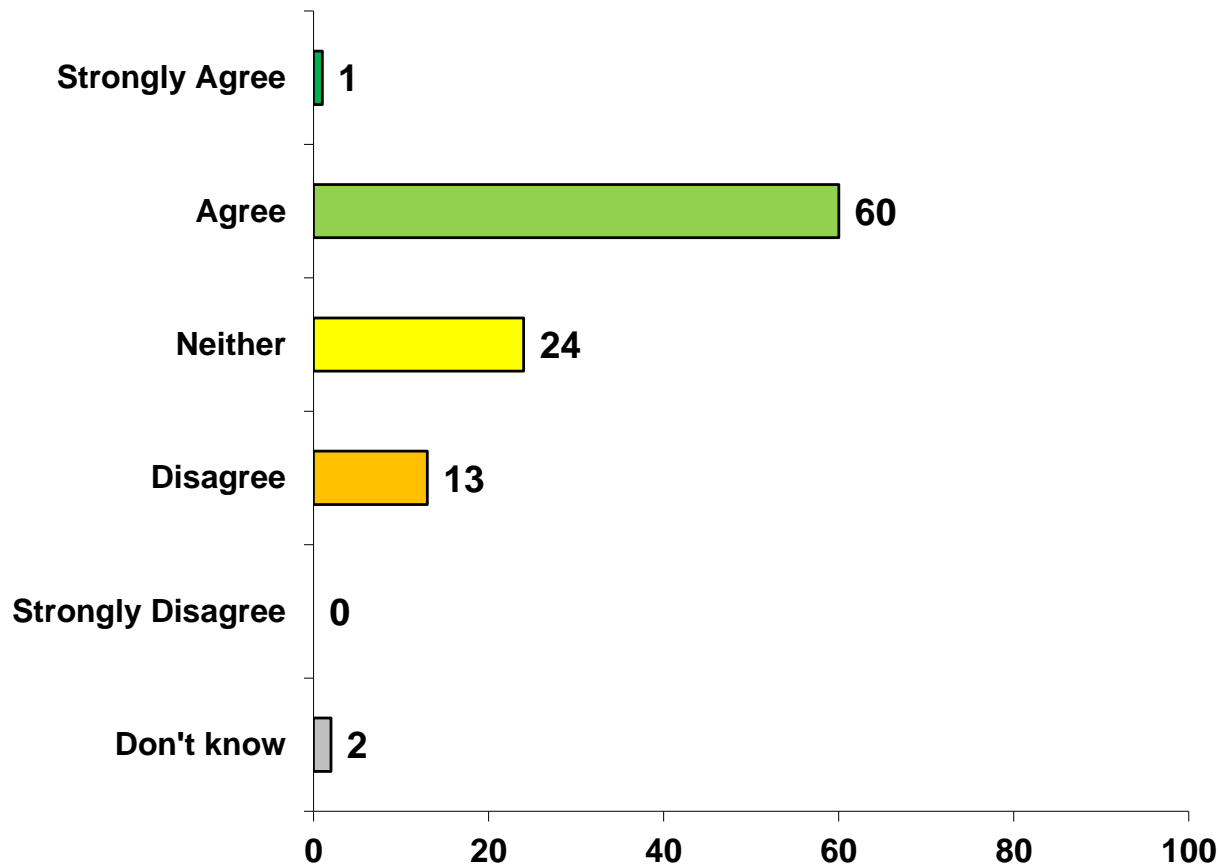
- Agreement that services provided by Stroud DC have been maintained to a good standard has decreased since 2022 from 66% to 64%, continuing the downward trend since 2020.



Q14. Overall, I am satisfied that Stroud District Council is working to improve the environment

% respondents

- Residents were asked to what extent they agree that Stroud DC is working to improve the environment.
- 61% of residents either strongly agree or agree.
- Agreement was highest amongst males (67% compared to 55% of females).
- Agreement was lowest amongst those aged 18 – 34 (36%) and BAME residents* (38% compared to 62% of white residents).



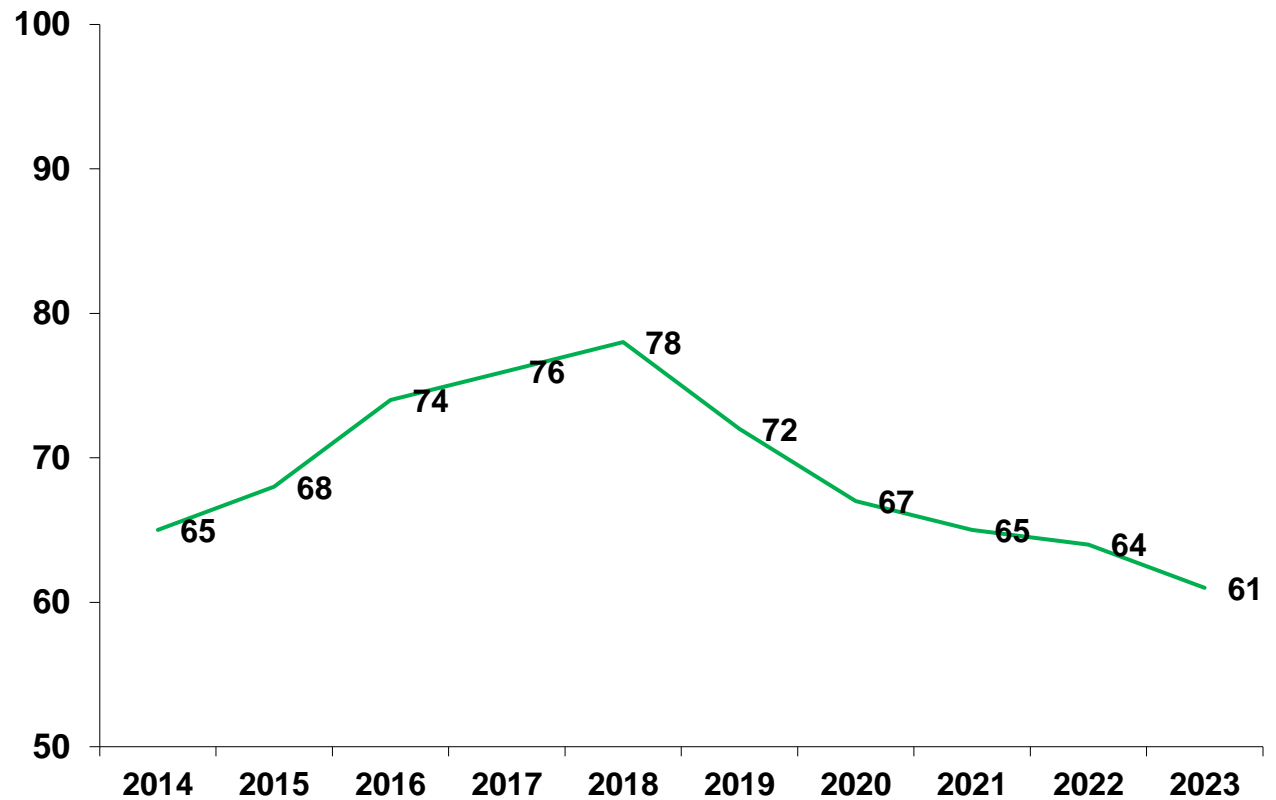
* Caution small base size

Q14. Overall, I am satisfied that Stroud District Council is working to improve the environment

10 year Trend

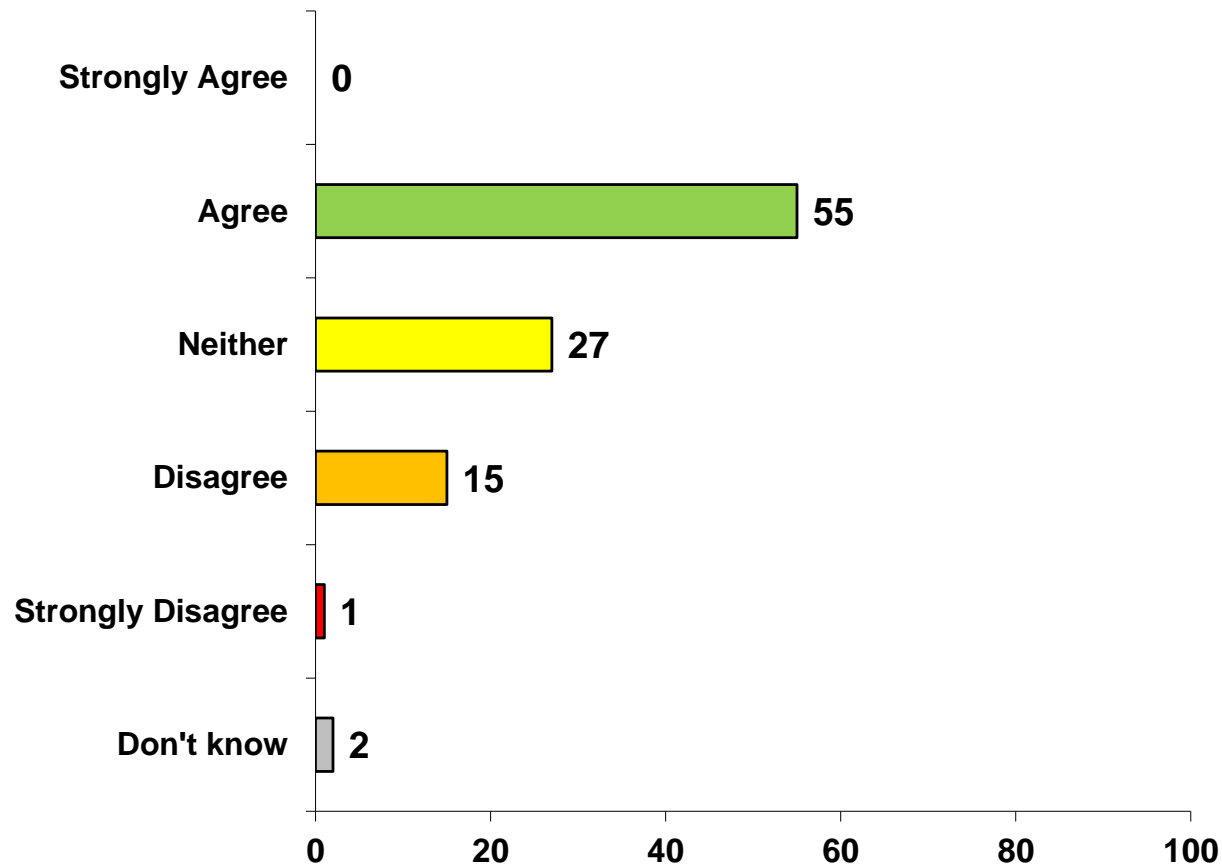
% respondents strongly agree/agree

- Agreement that Stroud DC is working to improve the environment has decreased since 2022 from 64% to 61%, continuing the downward trend since 2018.



Q14. I believe that Stroud District Council cares about the people and businesses that make up our communities

% respondents

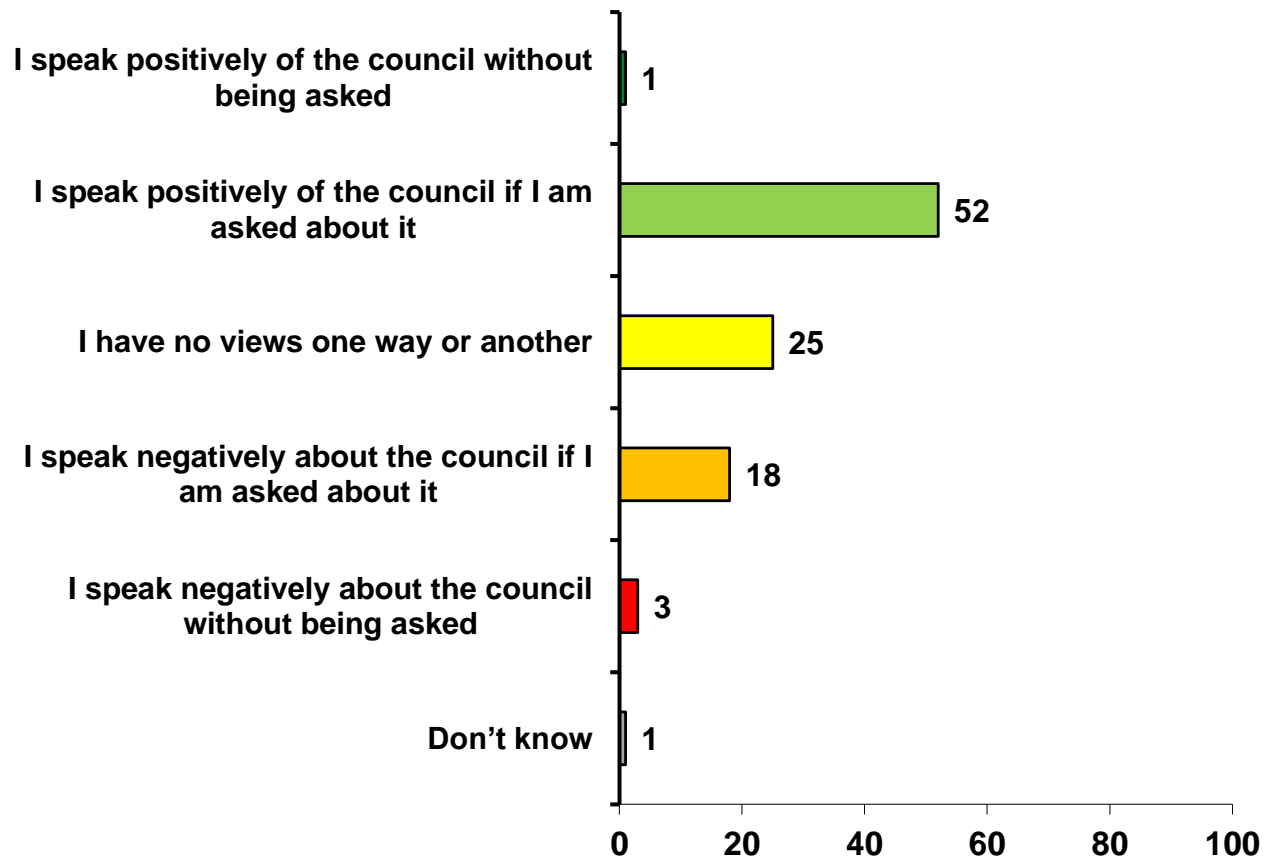


- Residents were asked to what extent they agreed that Stroud DC cares about the people and businesses that make up their communities.
- 55% of residents agree.
- Agreement was lowest amongst those aged 18 – 34 (32%), 75+* (42%) and BAME residents* (35% compared to 57% of white residents).
- Note this question was new in 2023 so no tracking data is available.

* Caution small base size

Q7. On balance, which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel about Stroud District Council?

% respondents

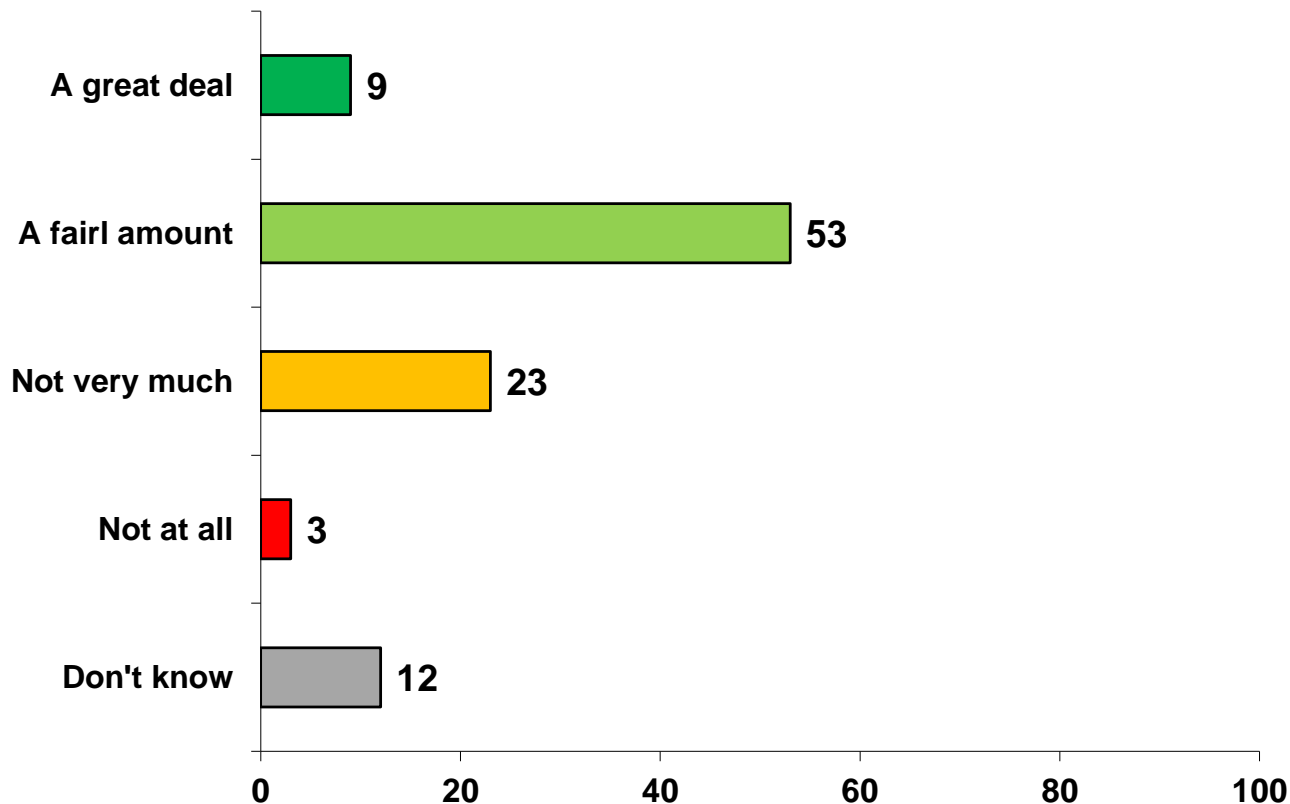


- Residents were presented with a list of statement and asked which one comes closest to how they feel about Stroud DC.
- 53% said that they speak positively about the Council – 1% without being asked, and 52% if asked about it.
- 21% said that they speak negatively (18% if asked, 3% without being asked).
- Those least likely to speak positively were those aged 18 – 34 (28%) and BAME residents* (27% compared to 55% of white residents).
- In 2022, a higher proportion (62%) said that they spoke positively (4% without being asked and 58% when asked).

* Caution small base size

Q10. How much do you trust Stroud District Council?

% respondents



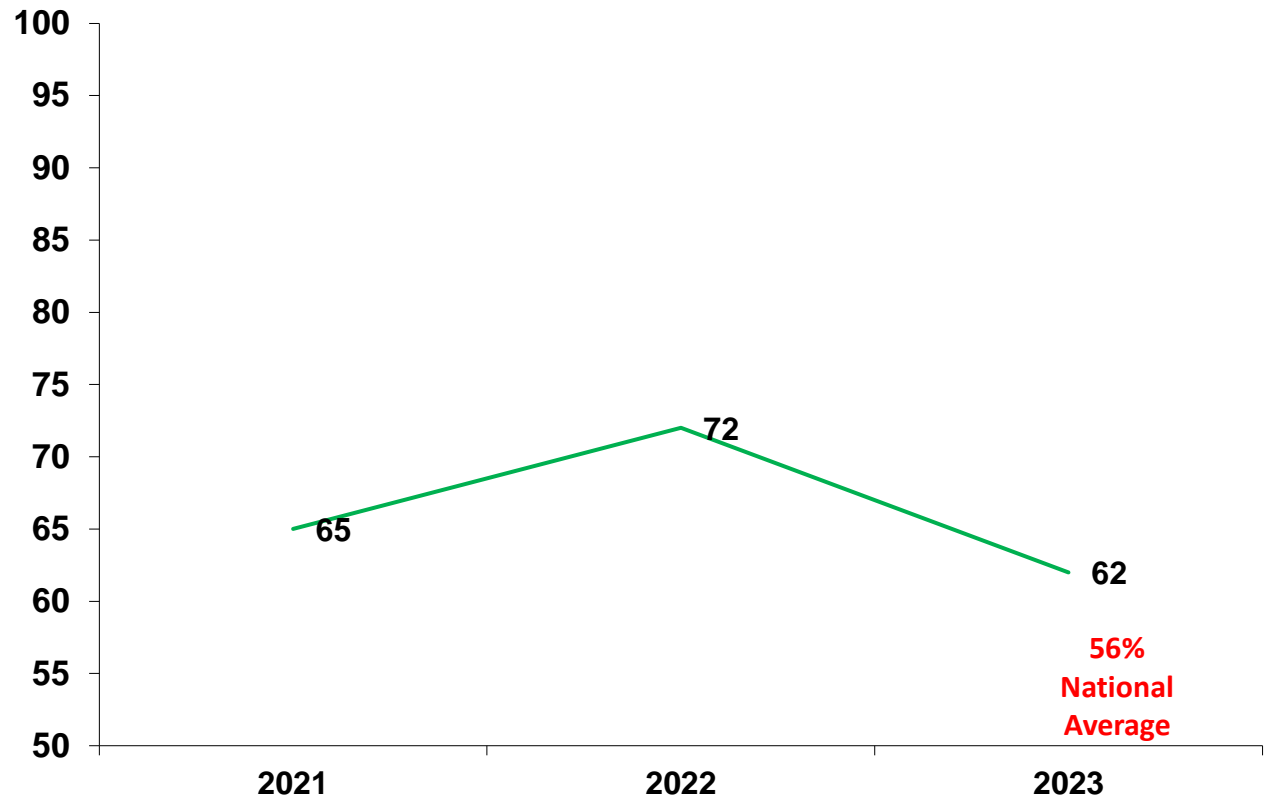
- Residents were asked how much they trust Stroud DC.
- 62% said that they trust the Council a great deal or a fair amount.
- Those least likely to trust the Council were those aged 18 – 34 (33%) and BAME residents* (42% compared to 63% of white residents).

• * Caution small base size

Q10. How much do you trust Stroud District Council? 3 Year Trend

% respondents a great deal / a fair amount

- The percentage trusting Stroud DC a great deal or a fair amount has fallen from 72% in 2022 to 62% in 2023.
- Nationally, 56% trust their local Council a great deal or a fair amount.
- The percentage of residents who trust Stroud DC is higher than the National average.



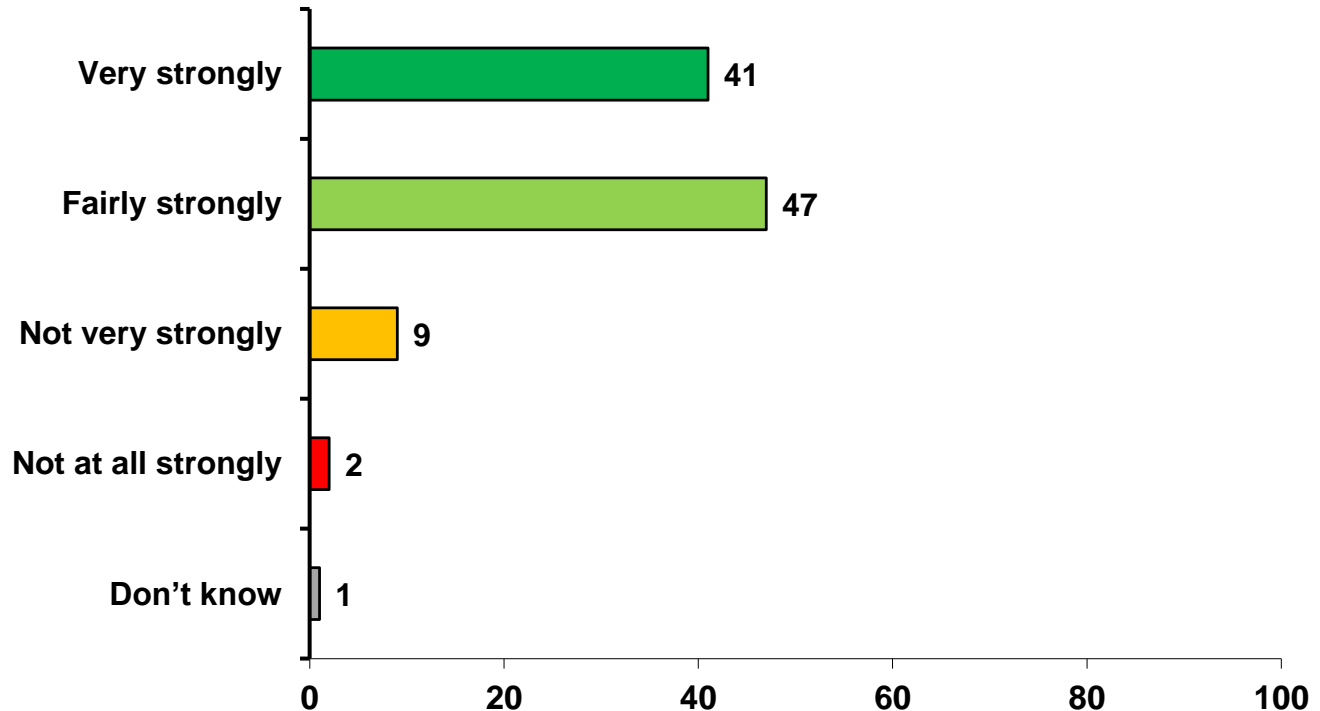


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Community Safety

Q8. How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?

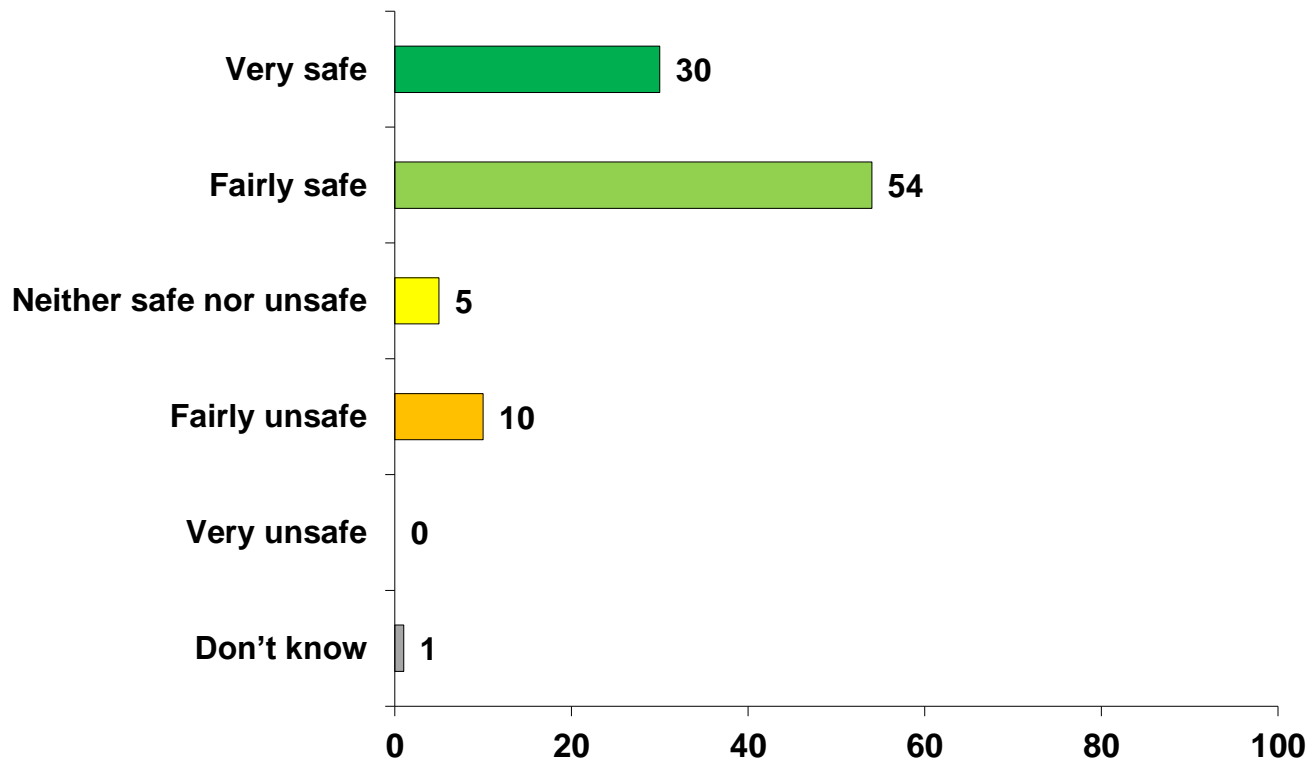
% respondents



- Residents were asked how strongly they feel they belong to their local area.
- 88% feel that they belong to their local area very strongly or fairly strongly.
- Those least likely to feel that they belong are those aged 18 – 34 (61% very strongly/fairly strongly).
- This was consistent with 2022 where 90% felt strongly that they belong.

Q9a. How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?

% respondents



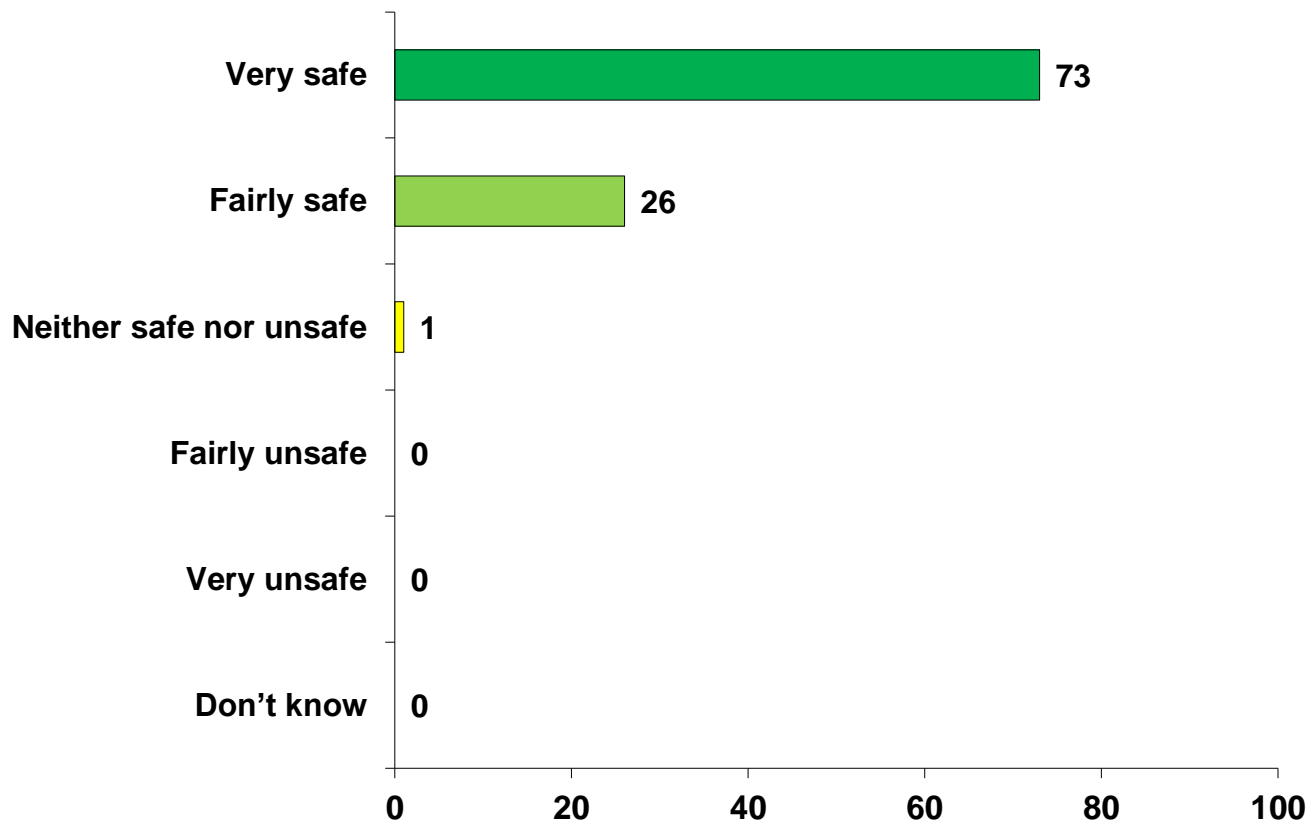
- Residents were asked how safe they feel outside in their local area after dark.
- 84% said that they felt either very safe or fairly safe, with the majority of these (54%) feeling fairly safe).
- In 2022, this percentage was 87%.
- Males were more likely to feel very safe after dark (39% compared to 20% of females), as were those aged 18 – 34 (51%).
- Those least likely to feel safe (very or fairly) after dark were those aged 75+* (56%) and those with a disability* (55%).
- Nationally, 71% felt very or fairly safe after dark, lower than the percentage in Stroud DC.

* Caution small base size

Base: (500)

Q9b. How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the daytime?

% respondents



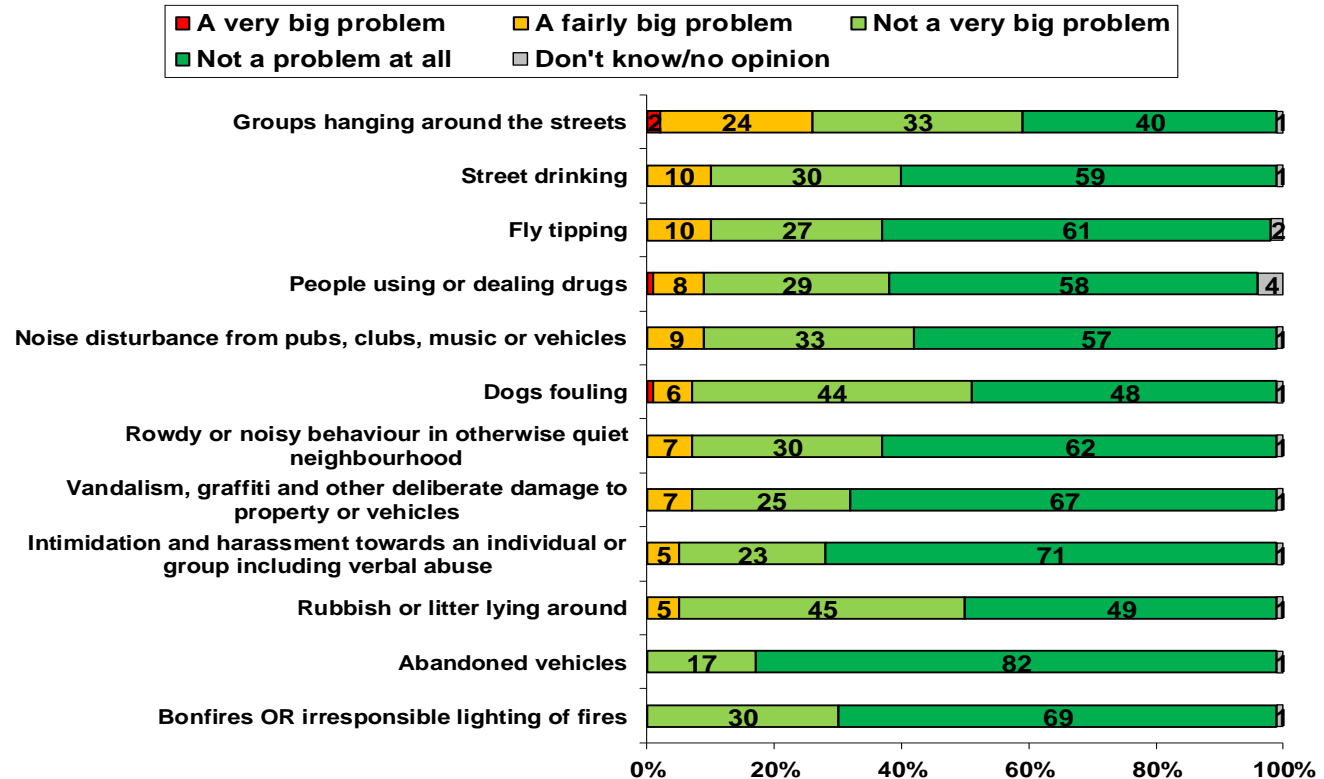
- Residents were asked how safe they feel outside in their local area during the daytime.
- 99% said that they felt either very safe or fairly safe, with the majority of these (73%) feeling very safe).
- This was consistent with 2022 where 99% also felt very or fairly safe.
- Males were more likely to feel very safe during the day (80% compared to 65% of females).
- Those least likely to feel very safe during the daytime were those aged 75+* (45%), BAME residents* (38%) and those with a disability* (43%).
- Nationally, 90% felt very or fairly safe during the daytime, lower than the percentage in Stroud DC.

* Caution small base size

Base: (500)

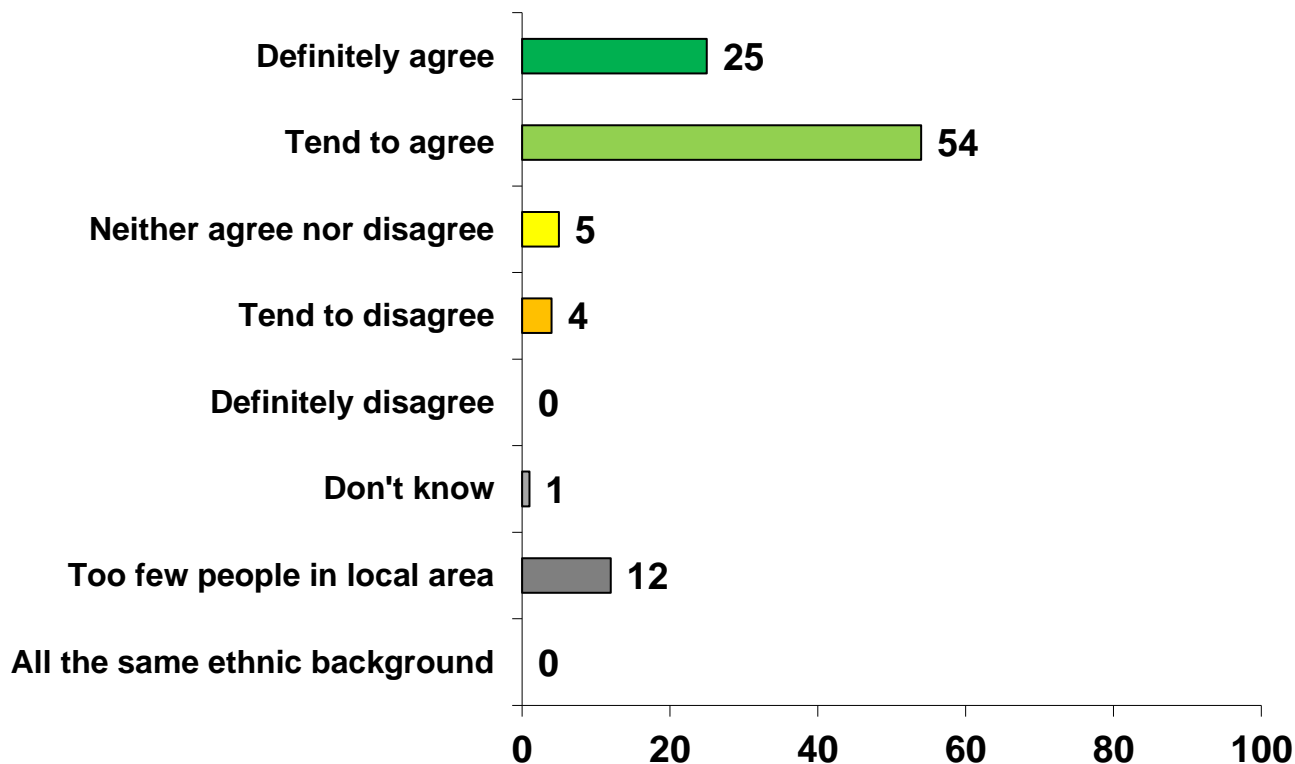
Q13. Stroud District Council are working on a new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and process which puts the victim at the heart of how we deal with each case. To help us understand your experience of anti-social behaviour, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are in your local area: % respondents

- Residents were given a list of potential issues and asked to what extent each one was a problem in their area.
- The biggest problem appeared to be *groups hanging around the street* (26% very big/fairly big problems). This was 19% in 2022.
- Others, but to a much lesser extent were:
 - street drinking* (10%)
 - fly tipping* (10%)
 - people using or dealing drugs* (9%)
 - noise disturbance from pubs, clubs, music or vehicles* (9%).



Q11. 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?

% respondents



- Residents were asked to what extent they agree that their local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together.
- 79% agreed (either definitely agree or tend to agree).
- Males were more likely to agree (84% definitely agree or tend to agree compared to 73% of females).
- BAME residents* were least likely to agree (54% compared to 80% of white residents).

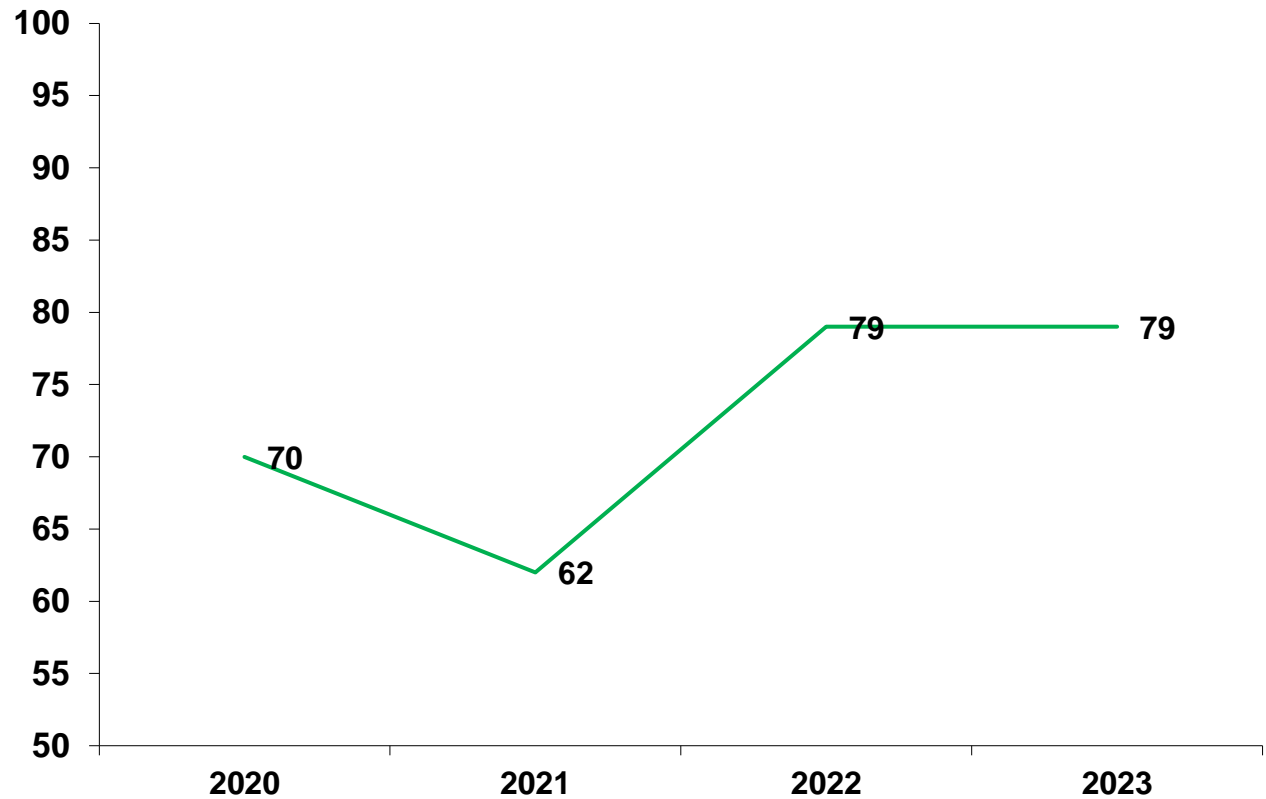
* Caution small base size



Q11. 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? 4 Year Trend

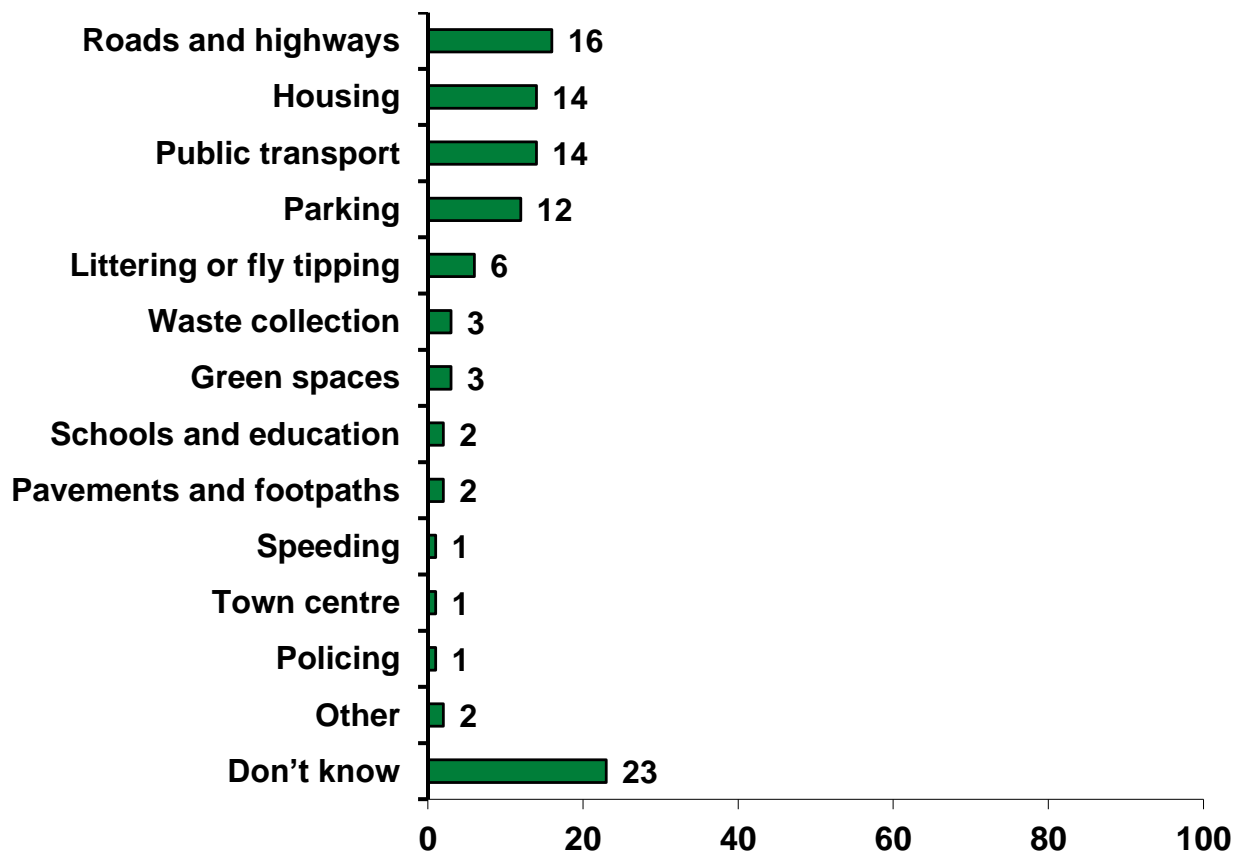
% respondents definitely agree/tend to agree

- The percentage agreeing that their local areas is place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together has remained consistent with last year, following a decrease in 2021.



Q12. What do you feel is the ONE thing that needs improving most in your local area ?

% respondents UNPROMPTED



Base: (500)

- When asked what is the one thing that needs improving most in the local area (unprompted) it was close between:
 - *roads and highways* (16%)
 - *housing* (14%)
 - *public transport* (14%)
 - *parking* (12%)
- Those aged 75+* were more likely to say *roads and highways* (31%) as were those with a disability* (27%), whilst those aged 18 – 34 were more likely to say *housing* (31%).

- * Caution small base size

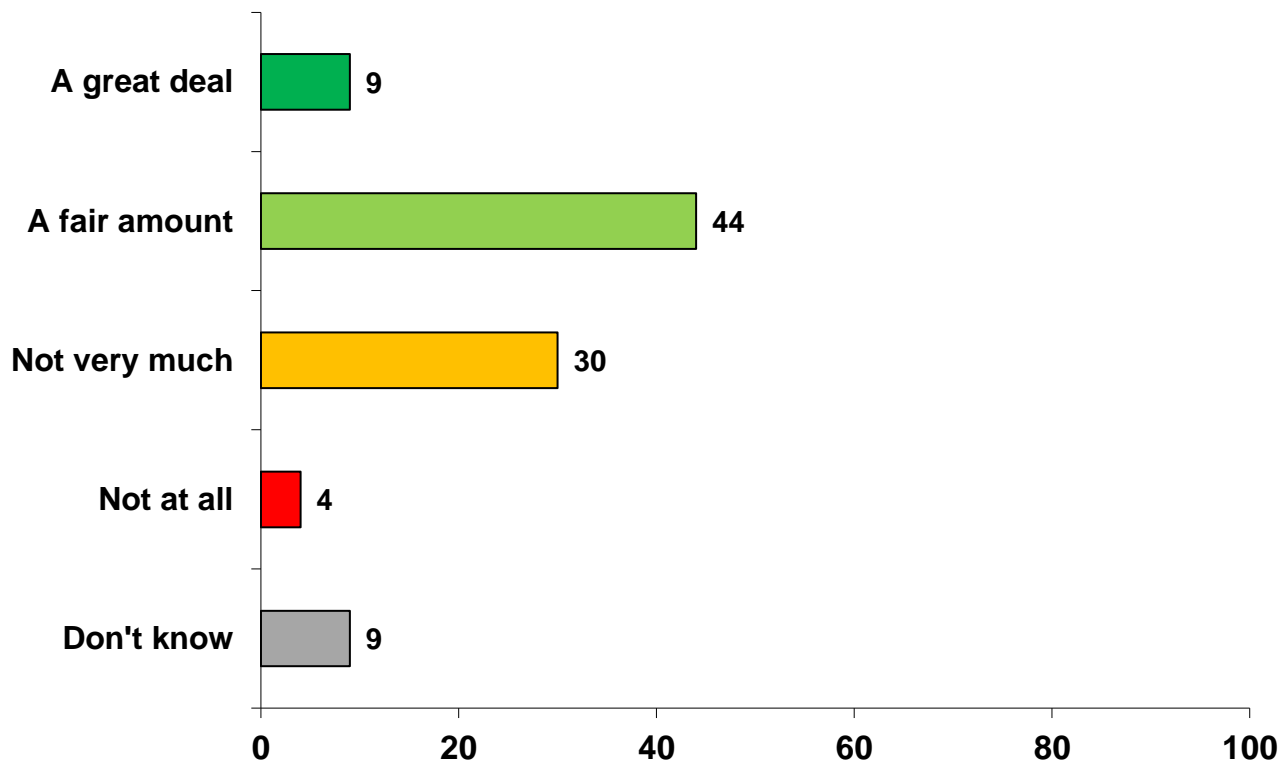


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Information from Stroud DC

Q4. To what extent do you think Stroud District Council acts on the concerns of local residents?

% respondents

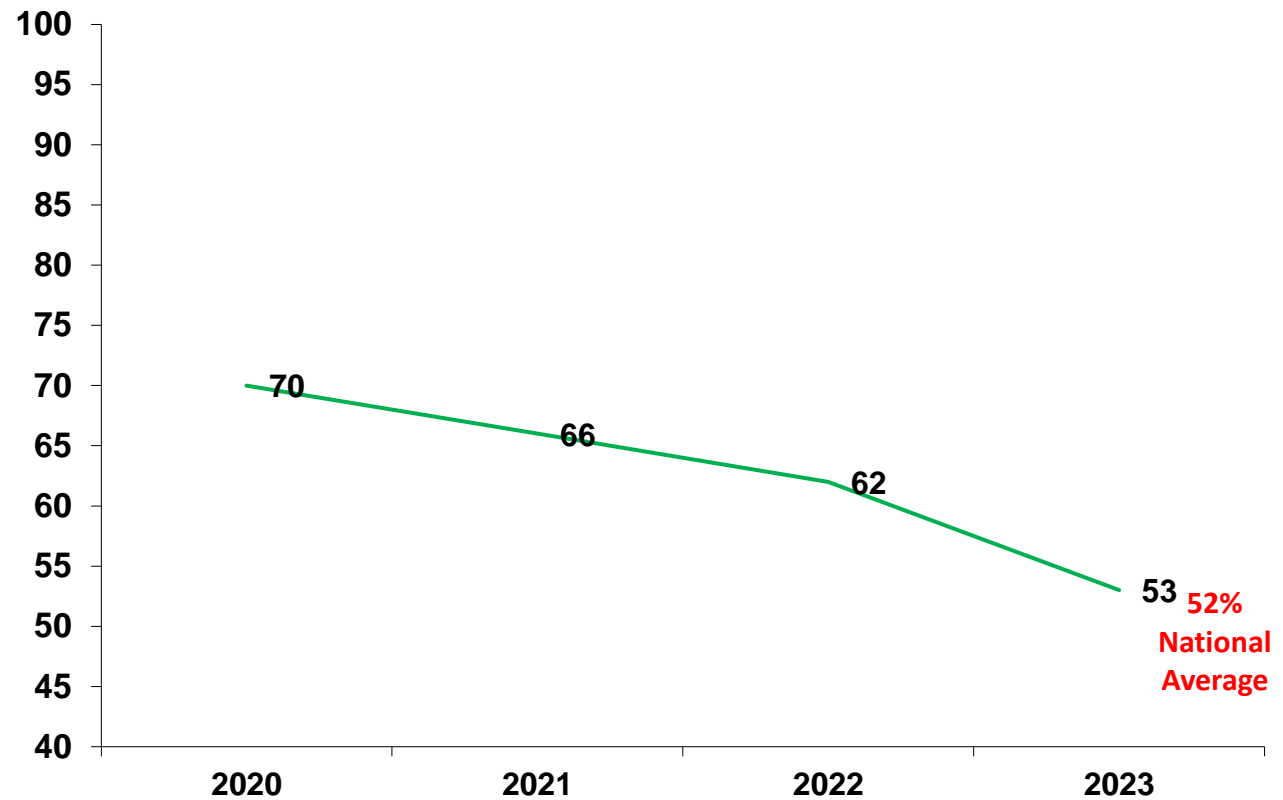


- Residents were asked to what extent they think Stroud DC acts on the concerns of local residents.
- 53% said that they did (either a great deal or a fair amount).
- Those least likely to say a great deal or a fair amount were those aged 18 – 34 (27%) and BAME residents* (38%).

• * Caution small base size

Q4. To what extent do you think Stroud District Council acts on the concerns of local residents? 4 Year Trend

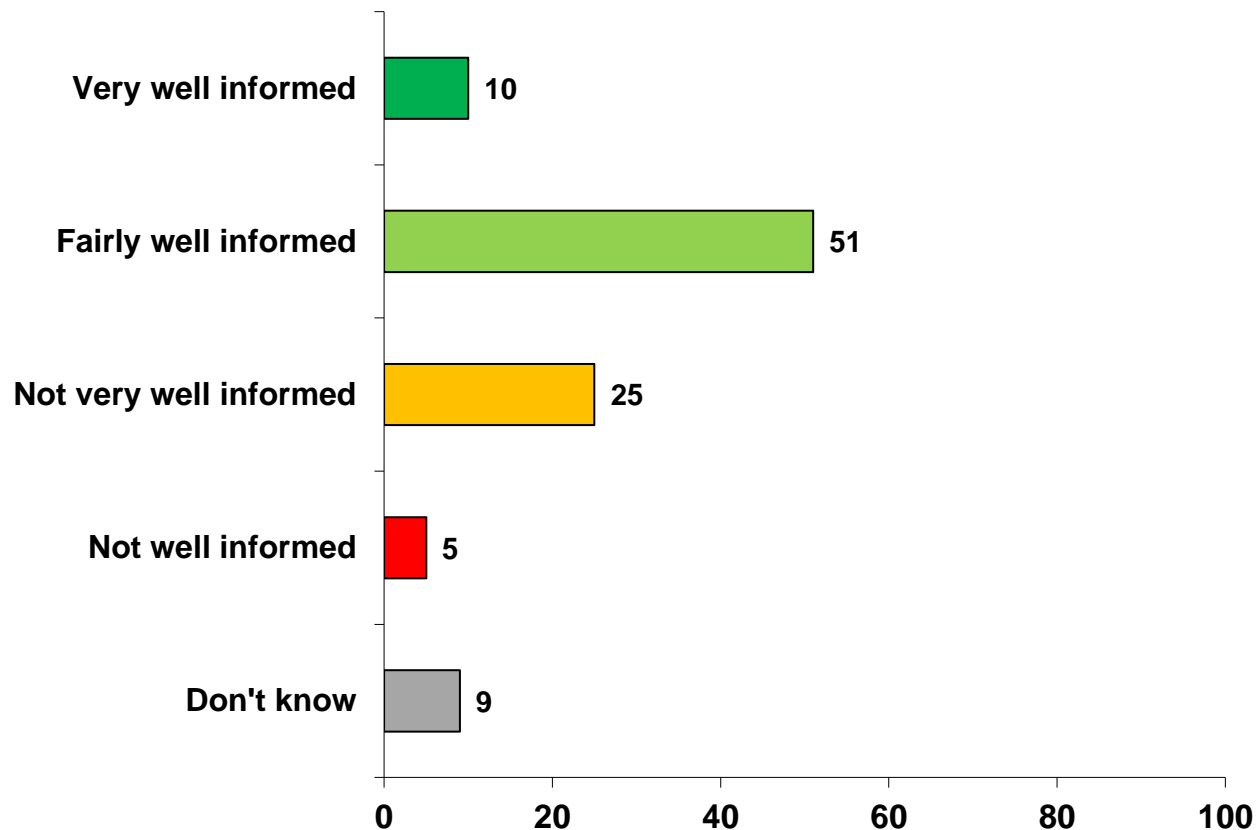
% respondents a great deal/a fair amount



- The percentage thinking that Stroud DC acts upon the concerns of local residents a great deal or a fair amount has fallen consistently from 2020, with 2023 seeing a significant decrease from 62% in 2022.
- Nationally, 52% felt that their local Council acts upon the concerns of residents.
- Following a decrease this year, Stroud DC is now consistent with the National average.

Q5. Overall, how well informed do you think Stroud District Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?

% respondents

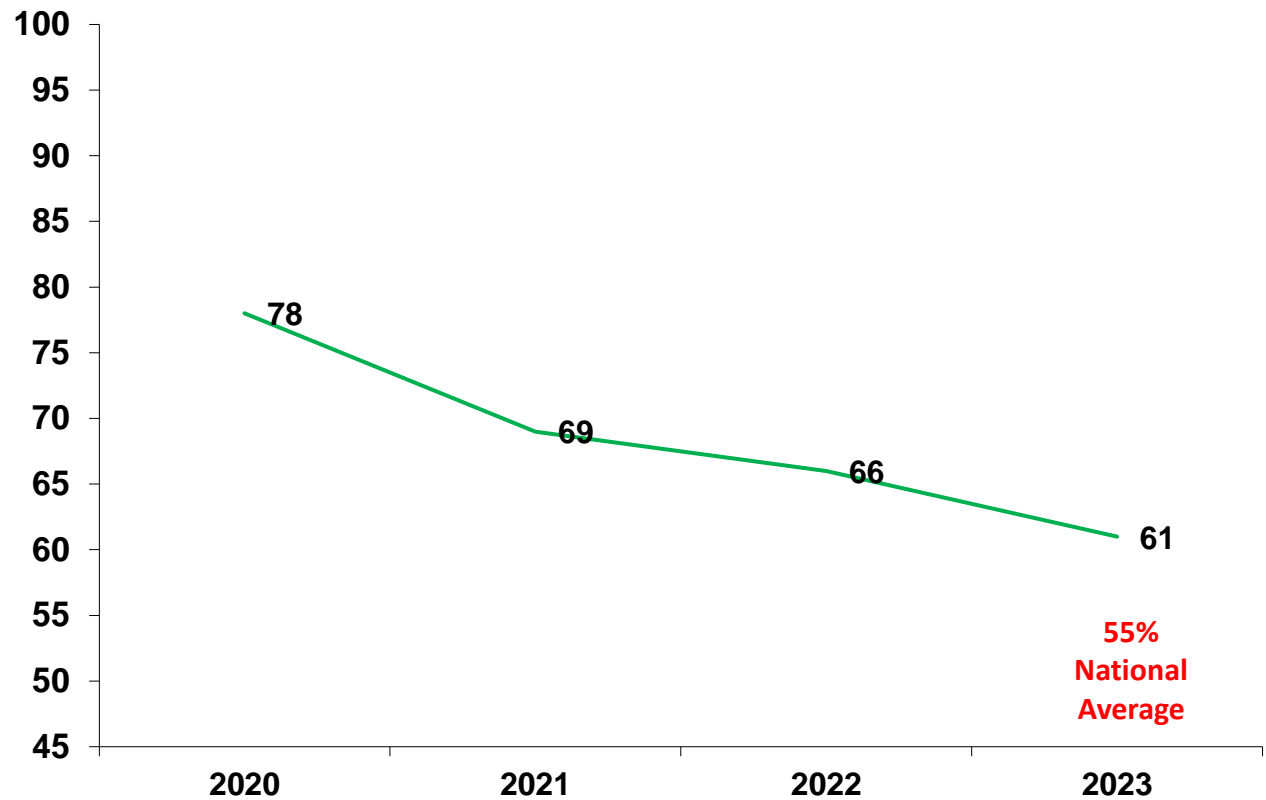


- Residents were asked well informed Stroud DC keeps them about the benefits and services it provides.
- 61% said that they feel either very well or fairly well informed.
- Males feel more informed than females (65% very well or fairly well compared to 56%).
- Those least likely to feel informed were those aged 18 – 34 (30% very well or fairly well) and BAME residents* (38%).

• * Caution small base size

Q5. Overall, how well informed do you think Stroud District Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides? 4 Year Trend

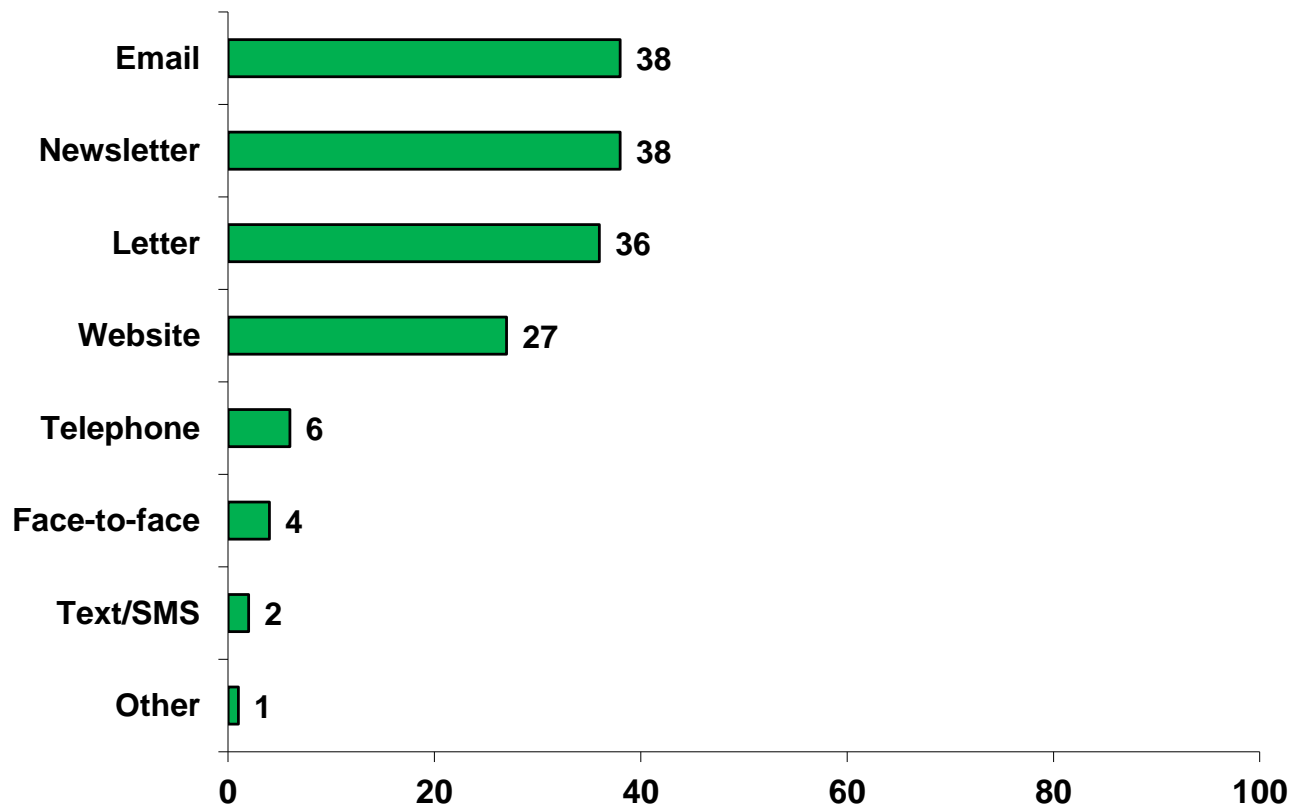
% respondents very well/fairly well informed



- The percentage agreeing that Stroud DC keeps residents very or fairly well informed about services and benefits it provides has fallen consistently from 2020, with 2023 seeing a decrease to 61% from 66% in 2022.
- Nationally, 55% felt that their local Council keeps them informed about services and benefits it provides.
- Despite the decrease, Stroud DC is still higher than the National average.

Q6. How would you like to receive communication from the Council?

% respondents



- Residents were asked how they would like to receive communication from the Council.
- The most popular responses were *email* (38%), *newsletter* (38%) and *letter* (36%).
- Those most likely to prefer email were those aged 35 – 54 (52%) and those who are working (46%).
- Those most likely to prefer a newsletter were those aged 56 – 74 (46%) and those with a disability (48%).
- Those most likely to prefer a letter were those aged 55 – 74 (47%) and aged 75+ (49%), those with a disability* (63%).

* Caution small base size



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Council Tax

Q16a. In your view what level of increase should the Council be considering for the 2024/25 year?

% respondents

- Residents were given a series of options in terms of their Council Tax for 2024/25.
- The majority (66%) chose to have *no increase in their Council Tax* despite this resulting in £318,000 less per year for the Council to deliver services.
- In 2022 70% opted for no increase.
- Those most likely to chose this option were those aged 16 – 35 (91%), BAME residents* (88%) and those who are working (75%).
- 20% said that they would *accept a 3% increase which would require no direct savings by the Council.*
- Those most likely to accept an increase of 3% were males (24%), 56 – 75 year olds (35%), those who were not working (25%).

* Caution small base size

No increase to Council Tax. This option would give the Council £318,000 less per year to deliver services

66

An increase of 1% to Council Tax. This option would give the Council £212,000 less per year to deliver services

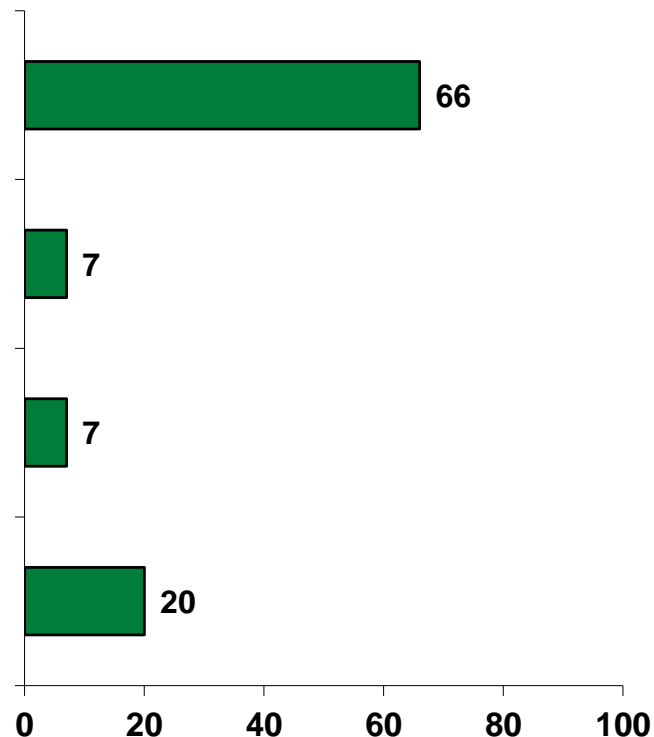
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An increase of 2% to Council Tax. This option would give the Council £106,000 less per year to deliver services

7

An increase of 3% to Council Tax This is in line with the agreed Medium Term Financial Plan and would require no direct savings

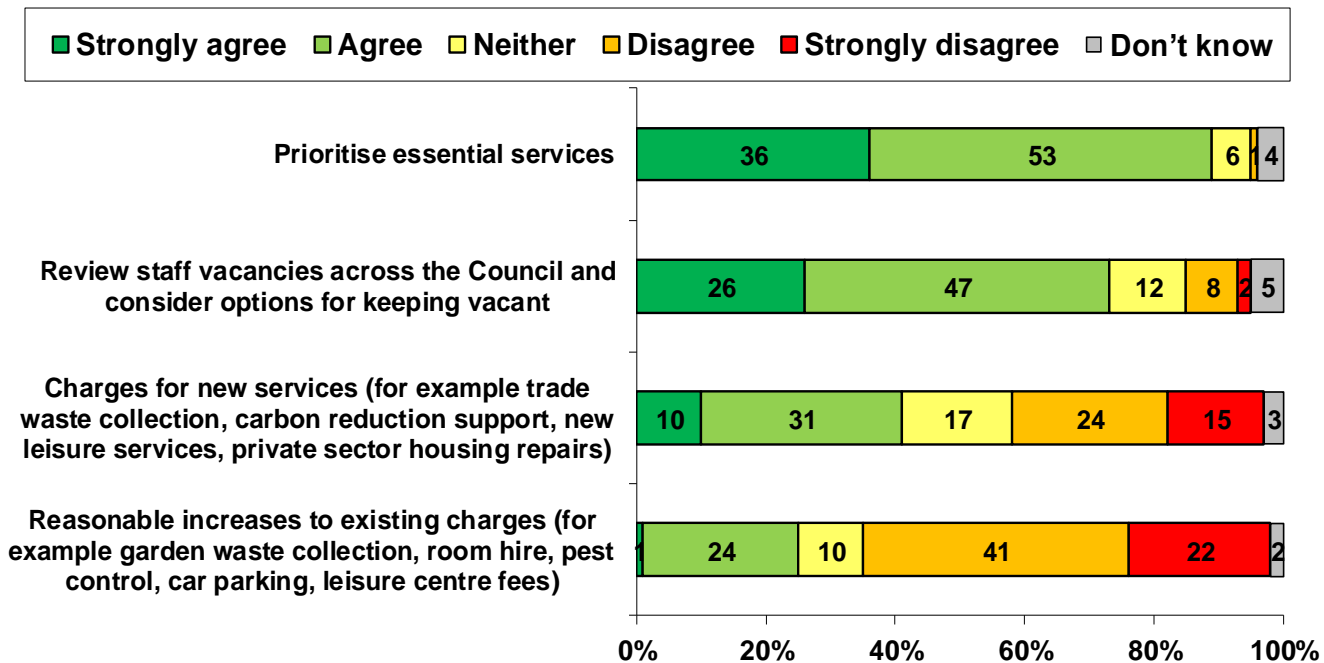
20



Base: (500)

Question 16b. Would you say that you agree or disagree with the following options for the Council to consider as part of its plans to meet the funding gap? % respondents

- Residents were given a series of options for the Council to consider as part of its' plan to meet the funding gap.
- 89% agreed that the Council *should prioritise existing services*.
- 73% agreed that the Council *should review staff vacancies across the Council and consider options for keeping vacant* (10% disagreed).
- 41% agreed that *the Council should consider charges for new services* (39% disagreed) (30% agreed in 2022).
- 25% agreed that *the Council should consider reasonable increases to existing charges* (63% disagreed) (17% agreed in 2022).
- When asked, 84% did not suggest any additional services that they would be prepared to pay for. Services suggested included parking (5%), waste (4%) and transport (2%).





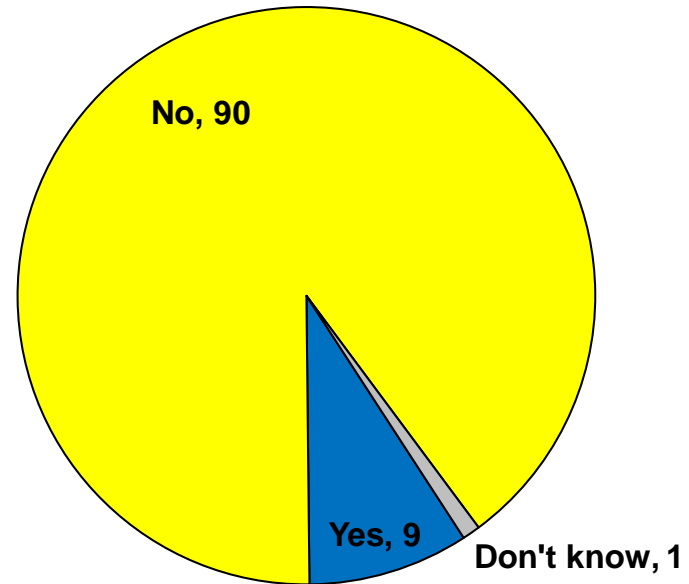
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Contact

Q19b. Have you contacted the Council recently?

% respondents

- Residents were asked if they had contacted the Council recently. 9% said that they had.
- Those aged 75+* (22%) and those with a disability* (17%) were most likely to have made contact.

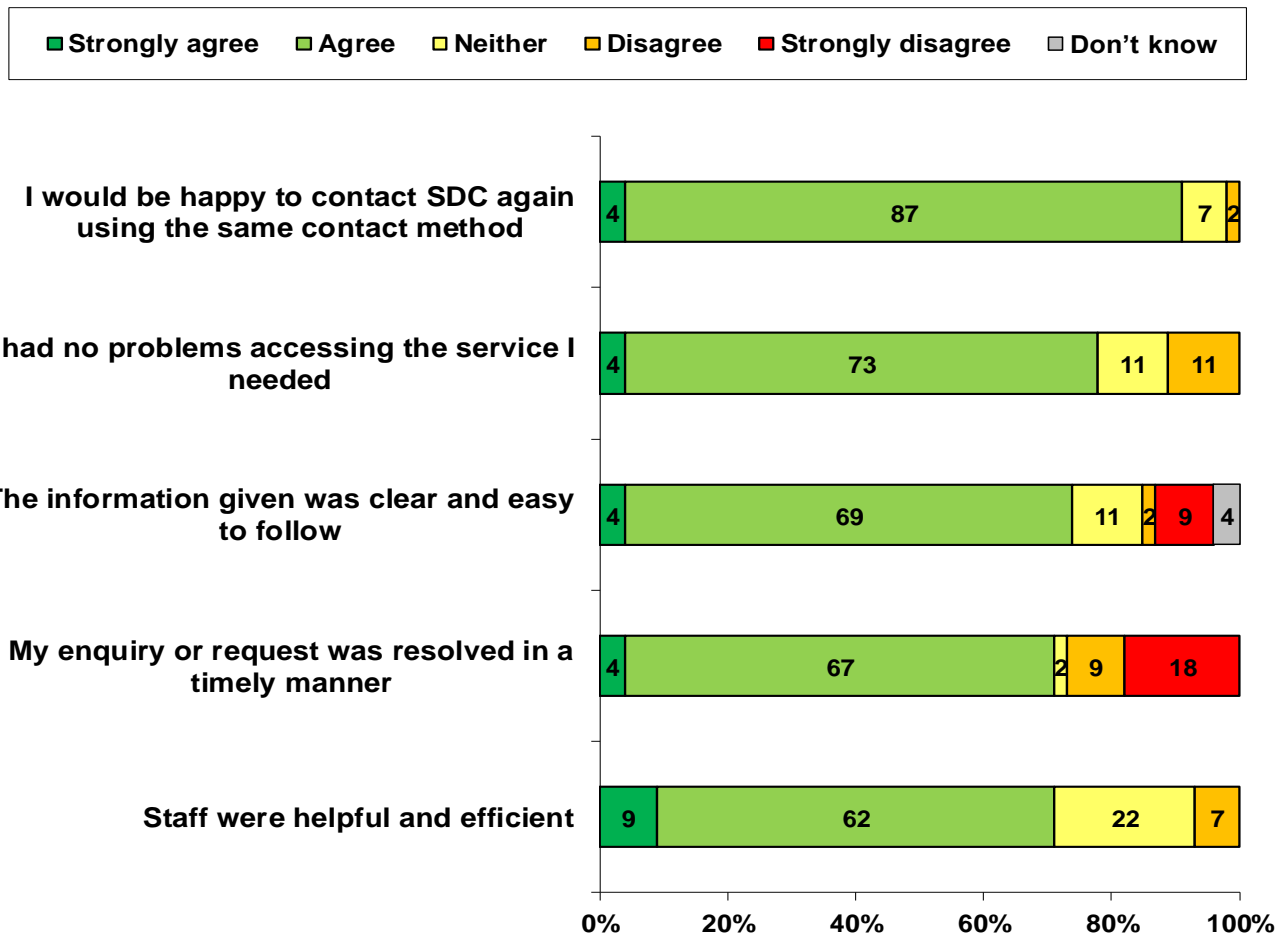


* Caution small base size

Base: (500)

Q19c. If yes, would you say you agree or disagree with the following statements?

% respondents



Base: (45)

- Residents were asked about their experience of contacting the Council.
- 91% agreed (strongly agree or agree) that they *would be happy to contact Stroud DC again using the same contact method*.
- 77% agreed that they *had no problems accessing the service they needed* (11% disagreed).
- 73% agreed that *the information given was clear and easy to follow* (11% disagreed).
- 71% agreed that *their enquiry or request was resolved in a timely manner* (27% disagreed).
- 71% agreed that *staff were helpful and friendly*.



Q19d. How do you think this could be improved?

% respondents

- Residents were asked about their experience of contacting the Council could be improved.
- 42% (19 people) said that they was nothing that could be improved and 29% (13 people) did not know.
- The main things mentioned were:
 - make easier to contact (11%)
 - quicker response (9%)
 - better staff knowledge (7%)

“repairs to Council tenants houses /should be easier for tenants to sort out over the phone or by email and not necessitate visiting Council offices”

“more information on the website as too what extension to ask for to get you to the right department”

“SDC should stop treating us like robots and telling us to go on the internet when we ask them advice. I asked where to get rid of surplus pillows and that was what they told me”

“a little slow to answer and to get to the correct department but otherwise very good”

“sent an website email asking for new black bin ,but never heard anything back”

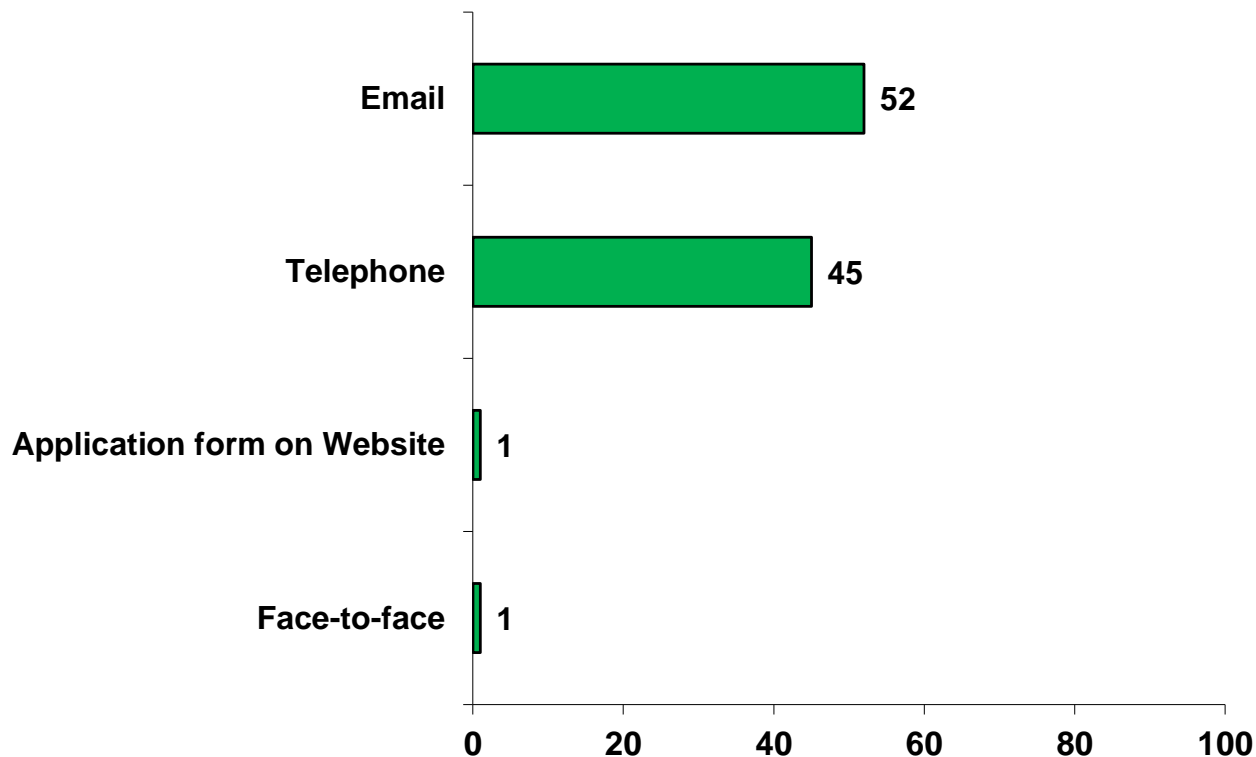
“staff member I spoke to yesterday needed more training, staff member today was very good”

“have someone on the other end of the phone call who knew what they were doing i was passed to department after department time and time again”

Base: (45, those who had contact with the Council)

Q19a. If you need to contact the Council to raise an enquiry or make a request, which contact channel would you prefer to use?

% respondents



Base: (500)

- Residents were asked what would be their preferred channel if they were to contact the Council.
- The most popular response were email (52%) and telephone (45%).
- In 2022 figures were email (52%), telephone (36%), website (12%).
- Those preferring email declined with age from 77% of 18-34s, 64% of 35-54s, 34% of 55-74s to 20% of over 75s.
- To the contrary, those preferring telephone increased with age from 20% of 18-34s, 35% of 35-54s, 62% of 55-74s to 80% of over 75s.

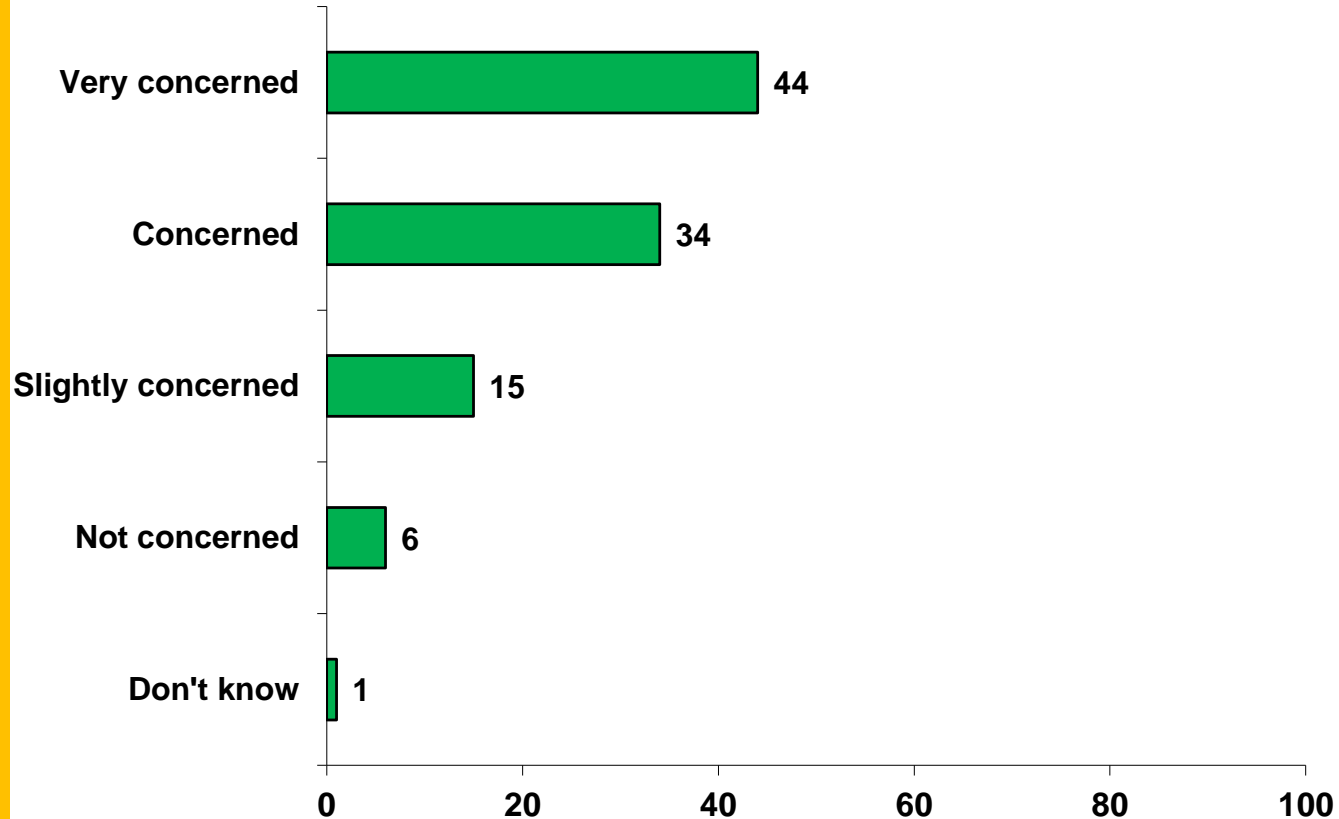


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Cost of Living

Q18a. How concerned are you about the impact of the cost of living for your household?

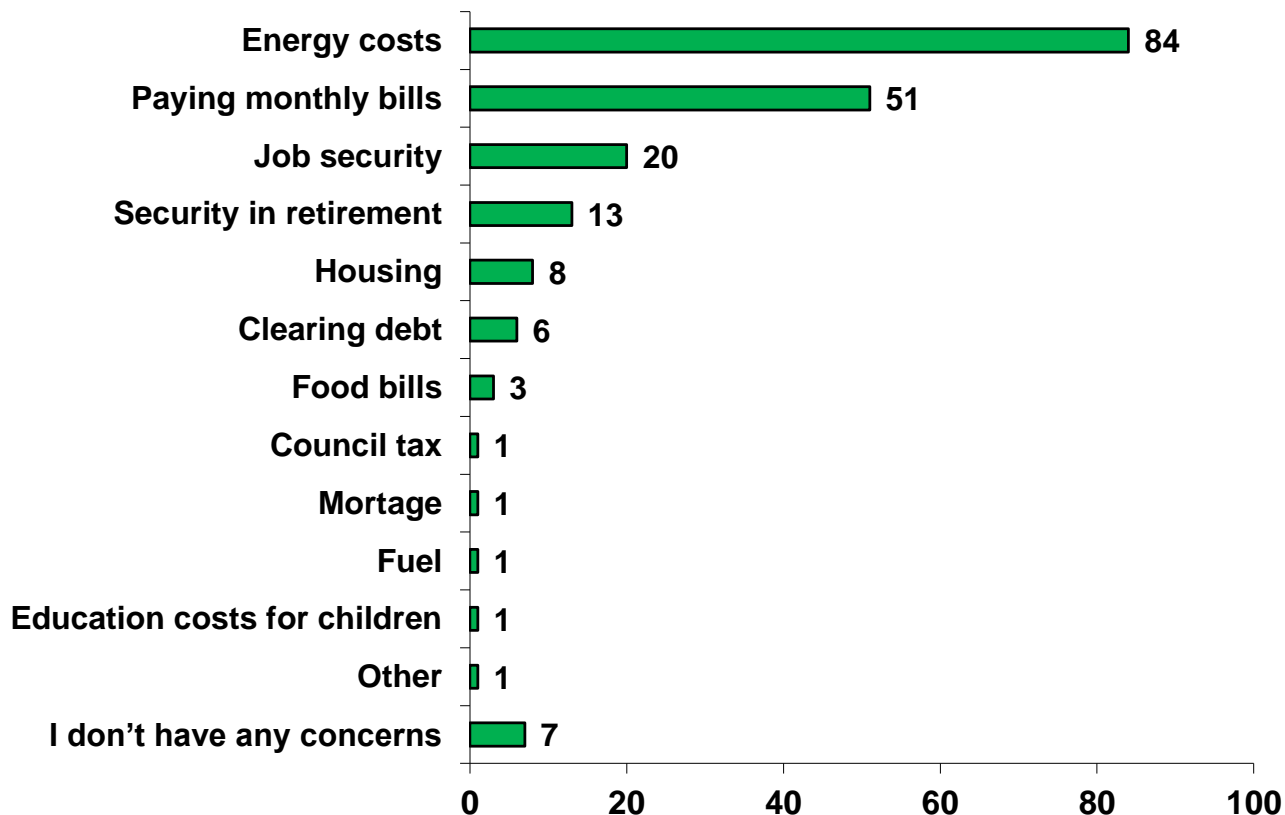
% respondents



- Residents were asked how concerned they are about the impact of the cost of living for their household.
- 93% are concerned to some extent (either very concerned, concerned or slightly concerned).
- This is similar to 2022 where 91% were concerned.
- Those most likely to be concerned (very/ concerned/ slightly) were those who are working (97% compared to 89% of those not working), those aged 35 -55 (98%) and BAME residents* (100%).
- Those most likely to be very concerned were females (49% compared to 39% of males) and 18 – 34s (68%).

Q18b. What are your main concerns regarding your future financial security?

% respondents



- Residents were asked what their main concerns were regarding their future financial security.
- Of most concern were *energy costs* (84%) and *paying monthly bills* (51%).
- Those most concerned about energy costs were females (89% compared to 78% of males) and those who are working (88% compared to 78% of those not working).
- Working residents were also more concerned about paying monthly bills (59% compared to 41% of those not working).
- Residents aged 18 – 34 were more concerned than others about paying monthly bills (78%), job security (41%) and housing (22%).



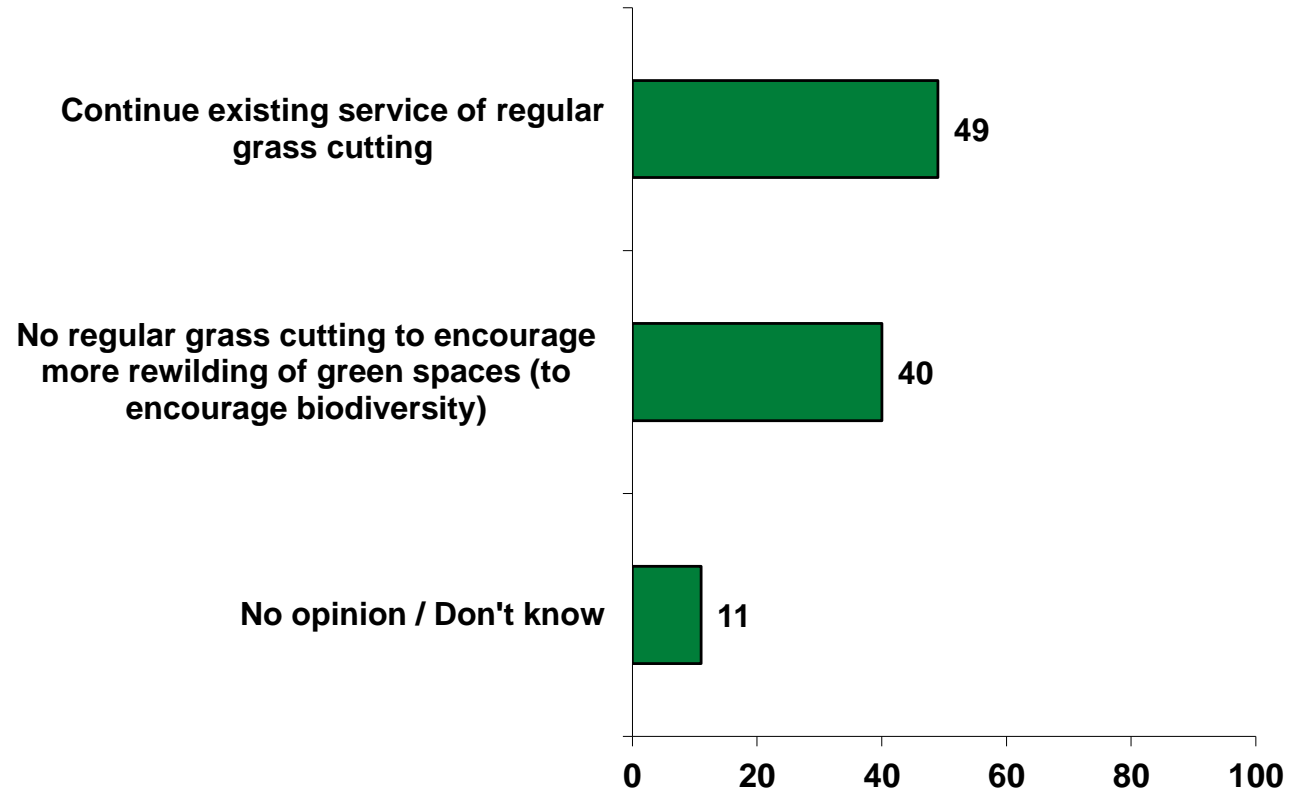
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Grass Cutting

Q15a. Question 15a. Which of the following options do you prefer?

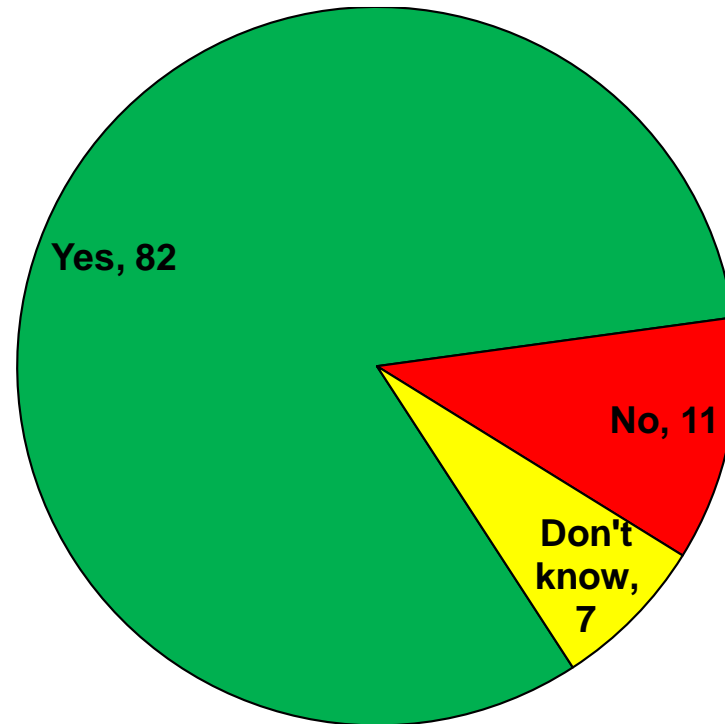
% respondents

- Residents were given two options in terms of grass cutting and ask which they preferred.
- 49% opted to *continue the existing service of regular grass cutting*, while 40% chose *no regular grass cutting to encourage more rewilding of green spaces*.
- Those most in favour of regular grass cutting were those aged 75+ * (64%) and those with a disability* (63%).
- Removing the don't know responses, 55% were in favour of *continuing the existing service of regular grass cutting*, while 45% chose *no regular grass cutting to encourage more rewilding of green spaces*.



Q15b. Would you support an initiative such as “No Mow May” where grass is not cut during the month of May to encourage wildflowers and reduce pesticide use?

% respondents



Base: (500)

- Residents were asked if they would support an initiative such as “No Mow May” where grass is not cut during the month of May to encourage wildflowers and reduce pesticide use.
- 82% said that they would support the initiative.
- Those most likely to say that they would support the initiative are those aged 35 – 54 (92%), BAME residents* (92%), those who are working (88%).
- 11% said that they would not support the initiative.
- Those aged 18 – 34 were most likely to say that they wouldn't support it (17%).

*Caution small base size



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Any other comments

Contact issues

“Can never get in touch with people if you contact Council”

“No reply to my email which was sent yesterday”

“Very polite and efficient”

“Very polite staff and helpful solved my problem very quickly”

“Having to prove that I am a single person household at 78 when I have terminal cancer is very bad as I have been single household for years”

“Things could be done quicker”

Service Issues

“Do not think that SDC should charge for removing white goods as this leads to fly tipping”

“Post box outside the scout hut in Minchinhampton has been removed would like it back as cannot walk very far”

“We are trying to keep the ticket office at Stonehouse railway station open”

“Would like more pubs left open not happy about SDC investing in Iceland a few years ago”

Town Centre Issues

“Would like town centre improved considerably”

“Wotton under edge is beautiful town and nothing is done to promote it”

“Stroud town centre organisations are making an extremely good effort”

“Town centre needs improving”

“Stroud town centre shops rates need lowering /rents lower and car parking lower /money spent to encourage small business to the area”

Parking

“Car parking bad for houses at lister road”

“Parking in minchinhampton centre is bad slows traffic”

“Stonehouse car park is free now and therefore train users use it leaving their cars all day and so nobody else can use it”

“Tilnor crescent has resident who parks his work transit in front of other residents' drives and is abusive as single lady 90 year I feel very vulnerable ALSO a sink hole in our road has needed sorting for 4 months”

Street Cleaning/Dog Fouling

“Dog mess by foxmoor school and victory park bad /broken glass in that area as well”

“Cam big problem with dog fouling bins not emptied enough”

“Would like dog poo bags at Worley near nailsworth and brambles need cutting on sides of lane to Worley hill”

Public Transport

“Access to good bus service would be appreciated for elderly people”

“Better public transport”

“Bus service needs improving for old people no longer driving”

“public transport”

Roads and Pavements

“Alleyway at GL5 3QZ very overgrown and dog poo”

“Pot holes are bad on my disability scooter and dog mess whitefields ,Dursley”

“Stop building houses in Cam with no infrastructure, schools and gp surgery to cope. Roads need improving it’s bad for new houses”

Housing

“Council promised insulation to our Council house but it still has not been done several years later”

“Council tenants could do with keeping their gardens up together more”

“Damp in the bedroom Council bungalow and they said they would fit new windows in several years ago”

“Handling of planning is bad /confusing /e.g. housing needed for young families and man who bought old cottage was refused planning to make it into 2 houses”

“Planning in Wotton area SDC ignores Wotton town Council they build expensive houses and none for young families”

Speeding

“I wish the Council could do something about speeding vehicles in the area”

Things to do

“Need activities for older people in Cashes green area of Stroud”

“Not enough being done for young people to be able to live and stay in the area”

Council Tax

“Would like a reduction in the rates”

Efficiency/Cost of Living

“As residents we are paying all we can maybe streamline Council jobs to recover money”

“Be careful every penny counts for residents”

“Cut costs as and where, to reduce bills would be a help”

“Don't waste money they need to use it wisely to reduce the burden on local people”

“People don't have the money to pay for anything extra or rises in Council tax”

“People just need more money in their pockets”

“Try and cut cost to the tax payer as much as you can we need less waste to save money”

Other

“We do not want refugees moving into the Pier hotel in Sharpness like they have in Berkeley road hotel”



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Business Survey

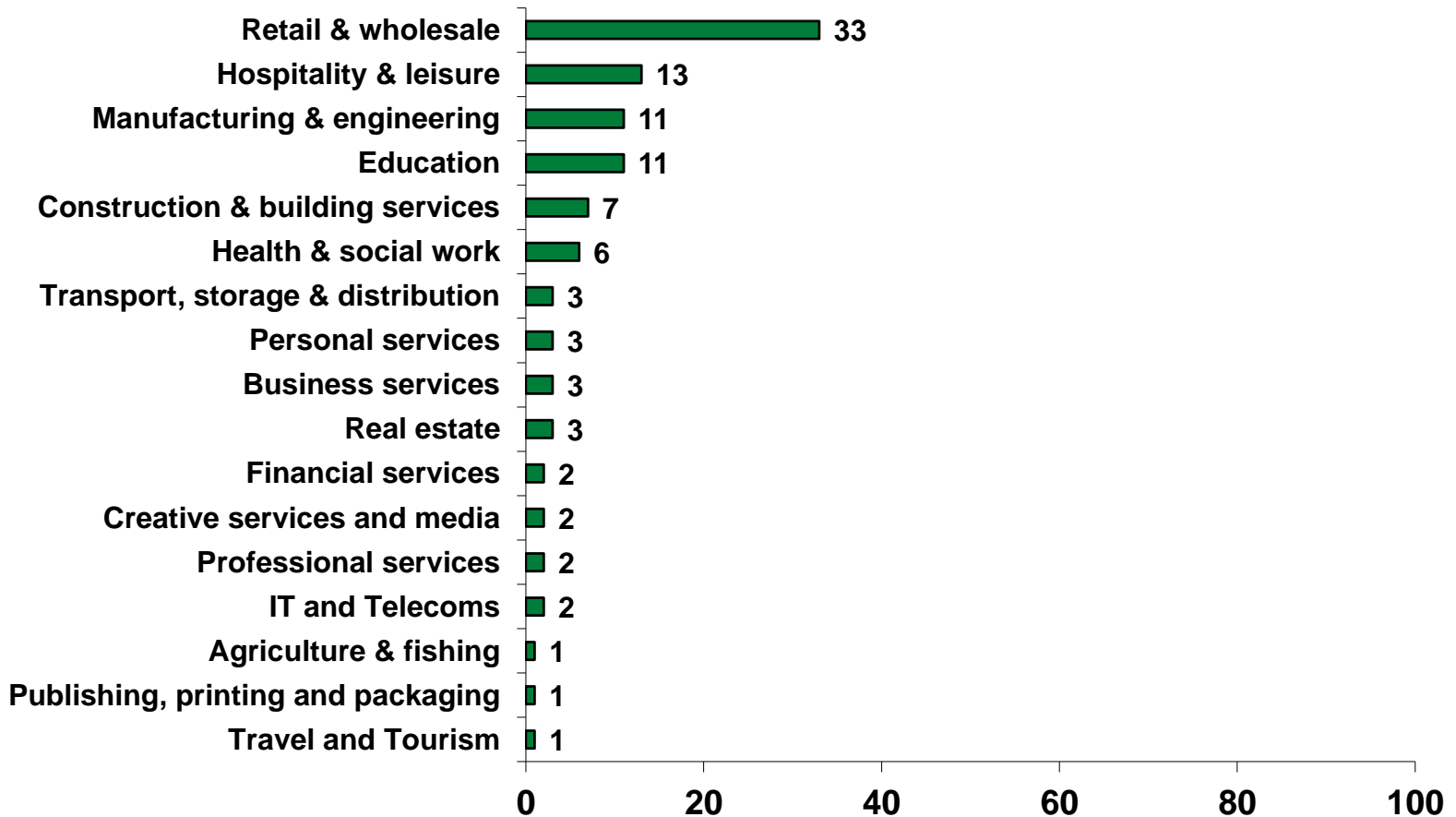


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Profile of businesses

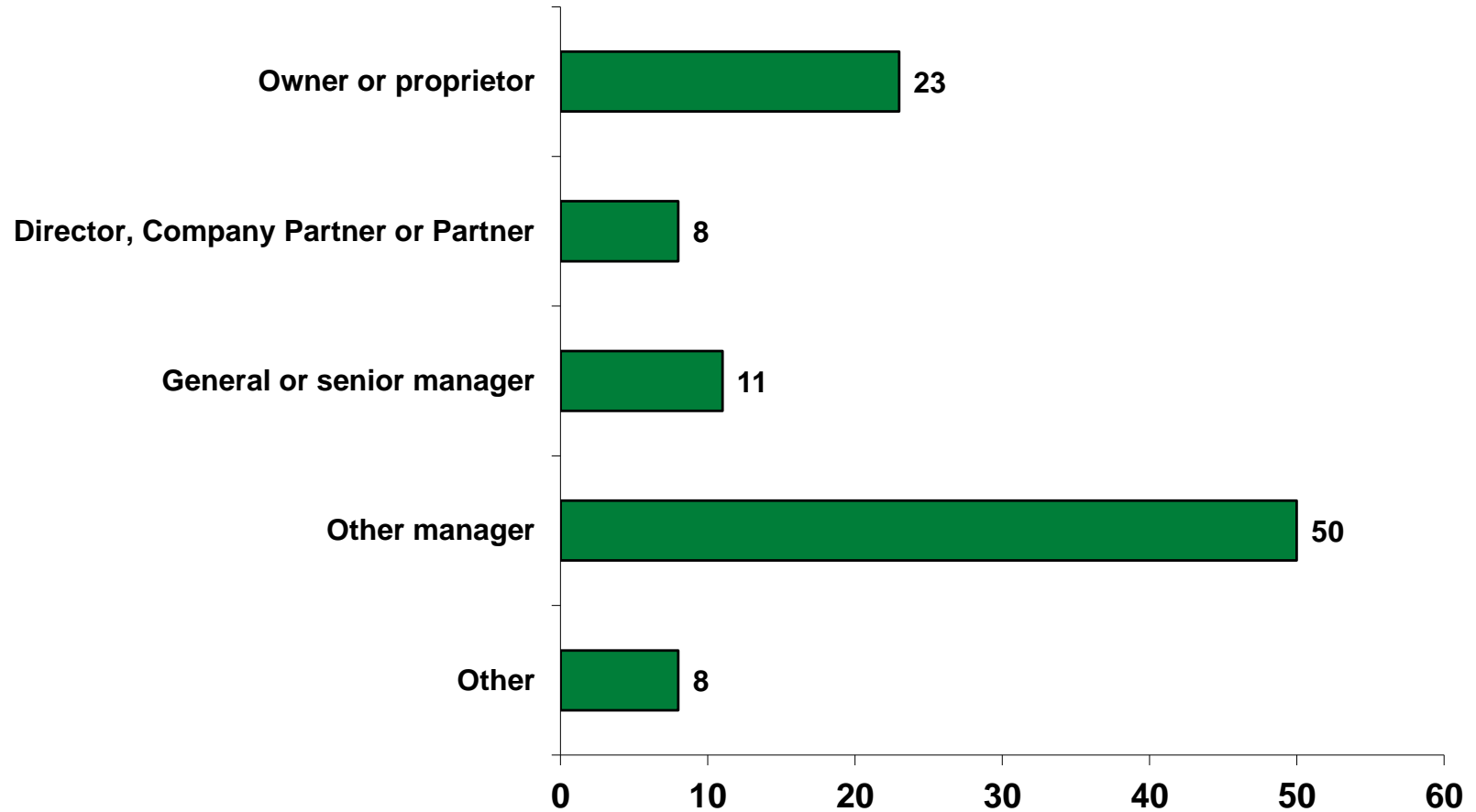
Industry

% respondents



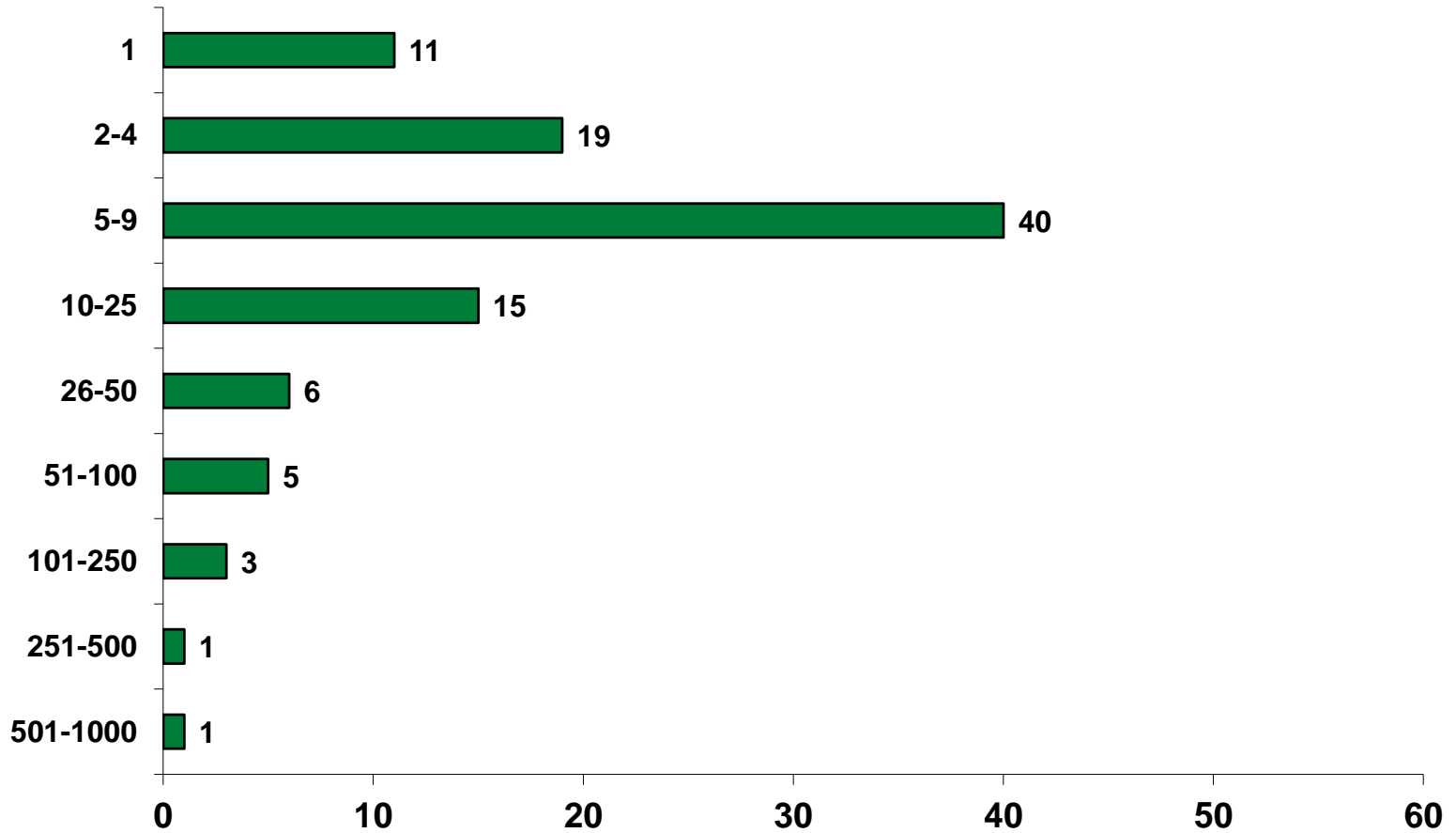
Position of respondent

% respondents



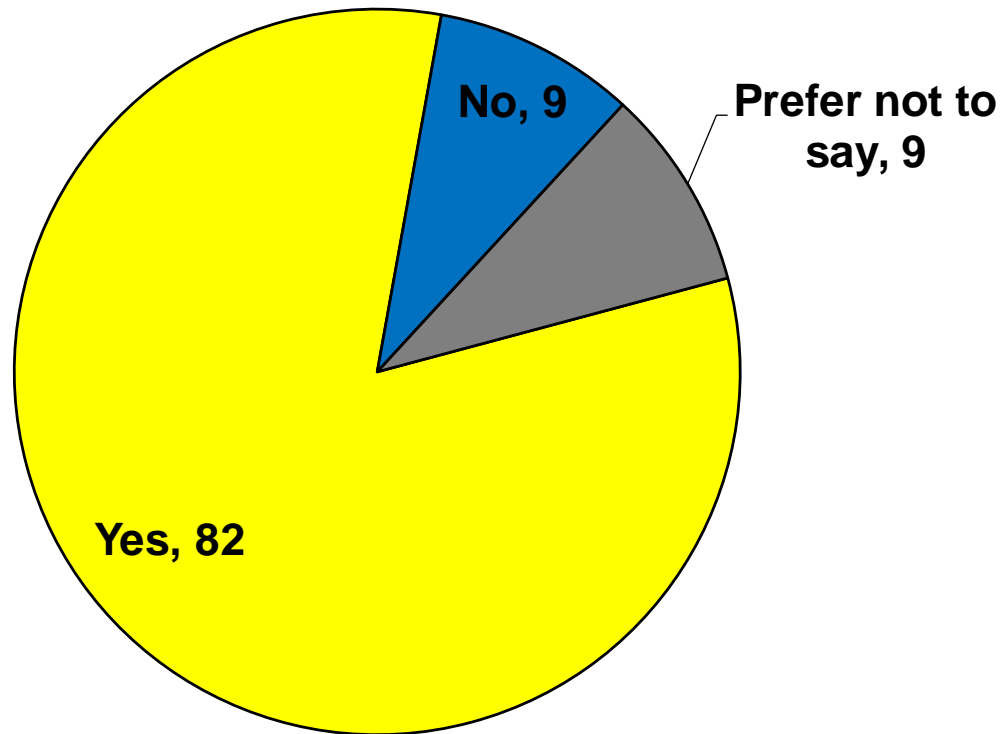
Business size

% respondents



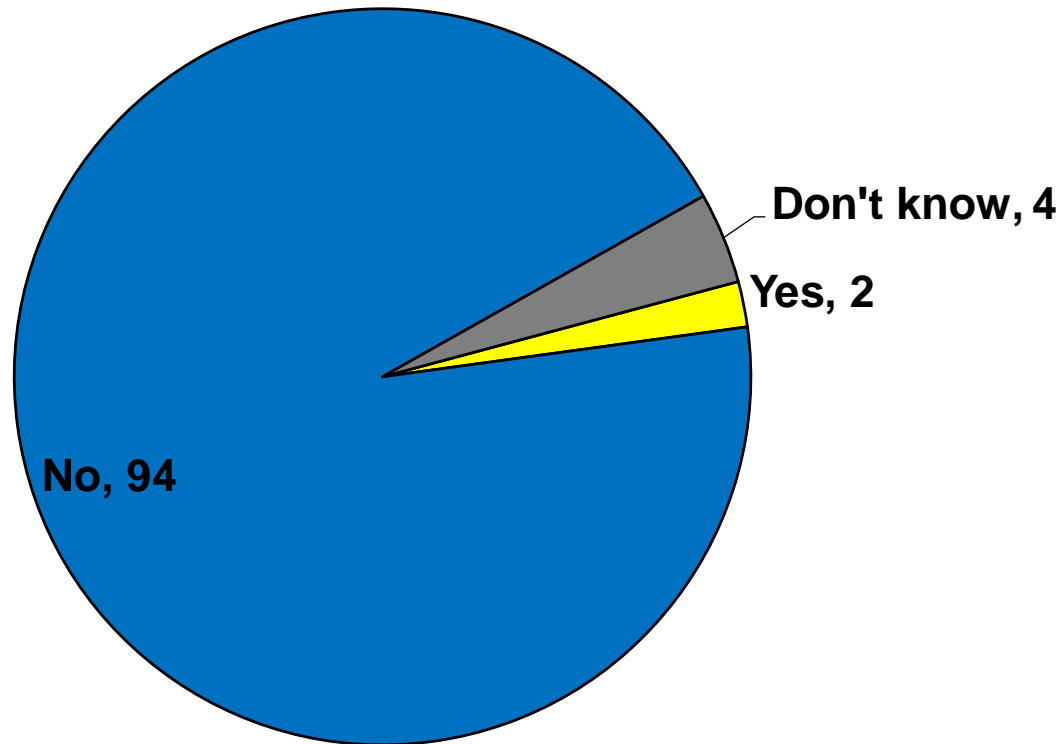
Q4a. If you employ staff, do you pay the real living wage (£10.90 per hour) as a minimum?

% respondents



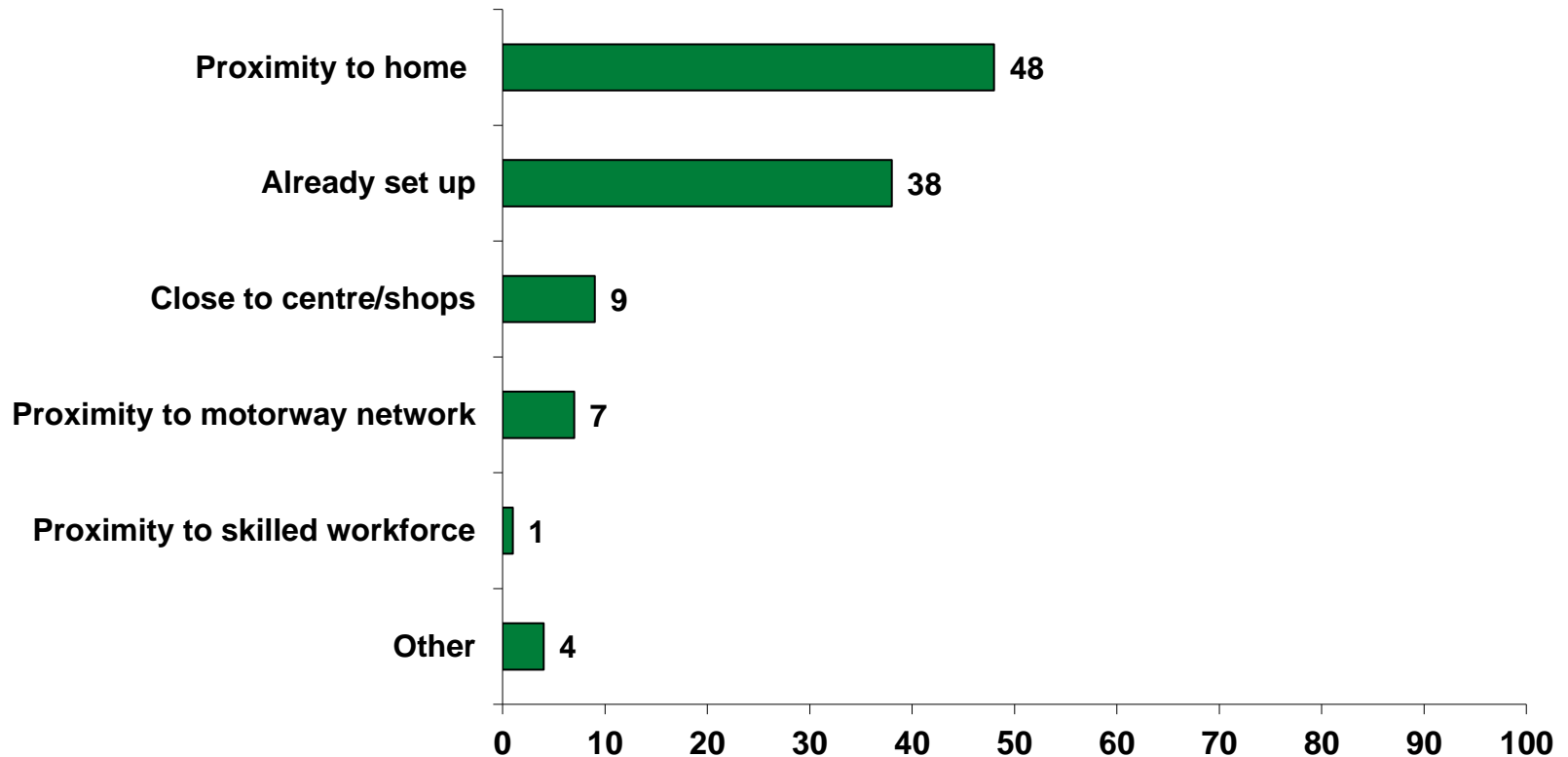
Q4b. If yes, have you registered on the real living wage website (<https://www.livingwage.org.uk/>)? Q4b. If yes, have you registered on the real living wage website (<https://www.livingwage.org.uk/>)?

% respondents



Q5b. Why did you set your business up in this area ?

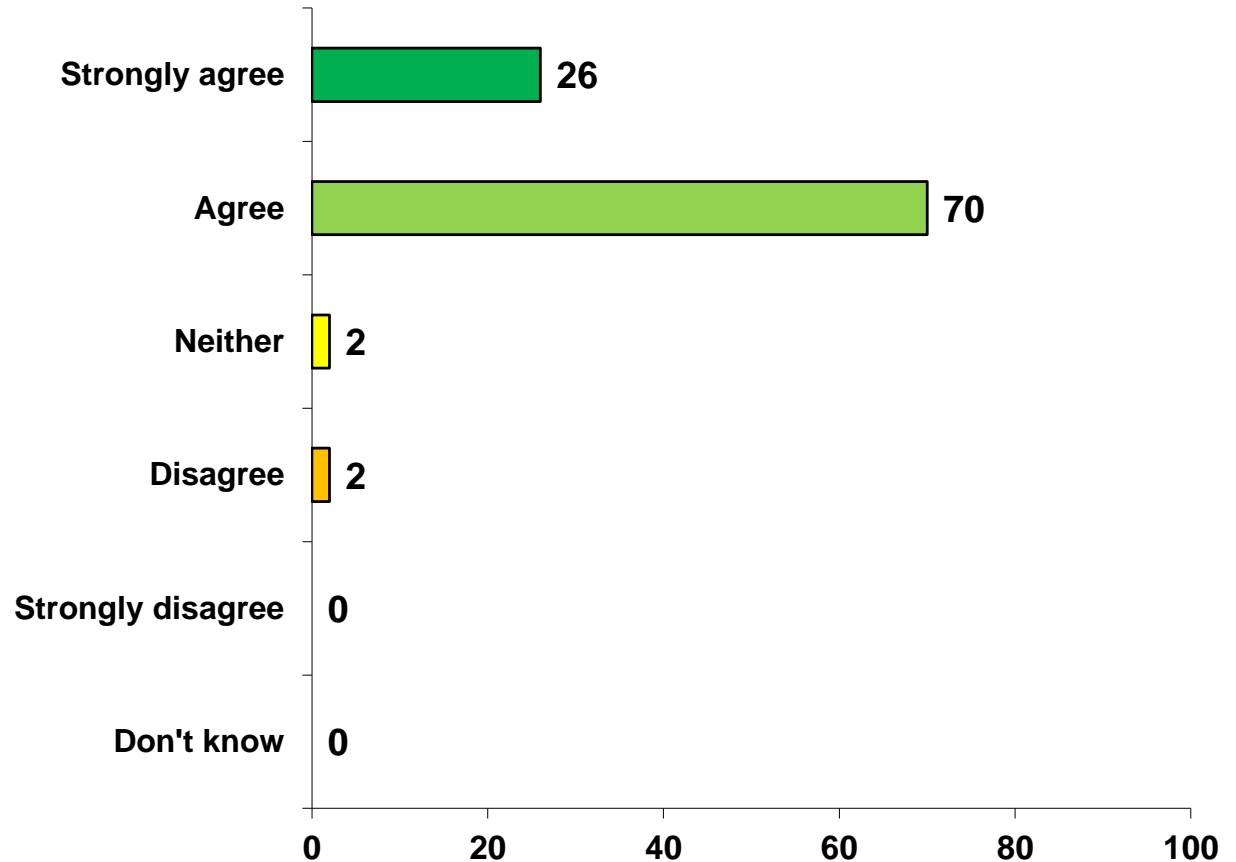
% respondents



Q19. Overall, I am satisfied with my local area as a place to do business

% respondents

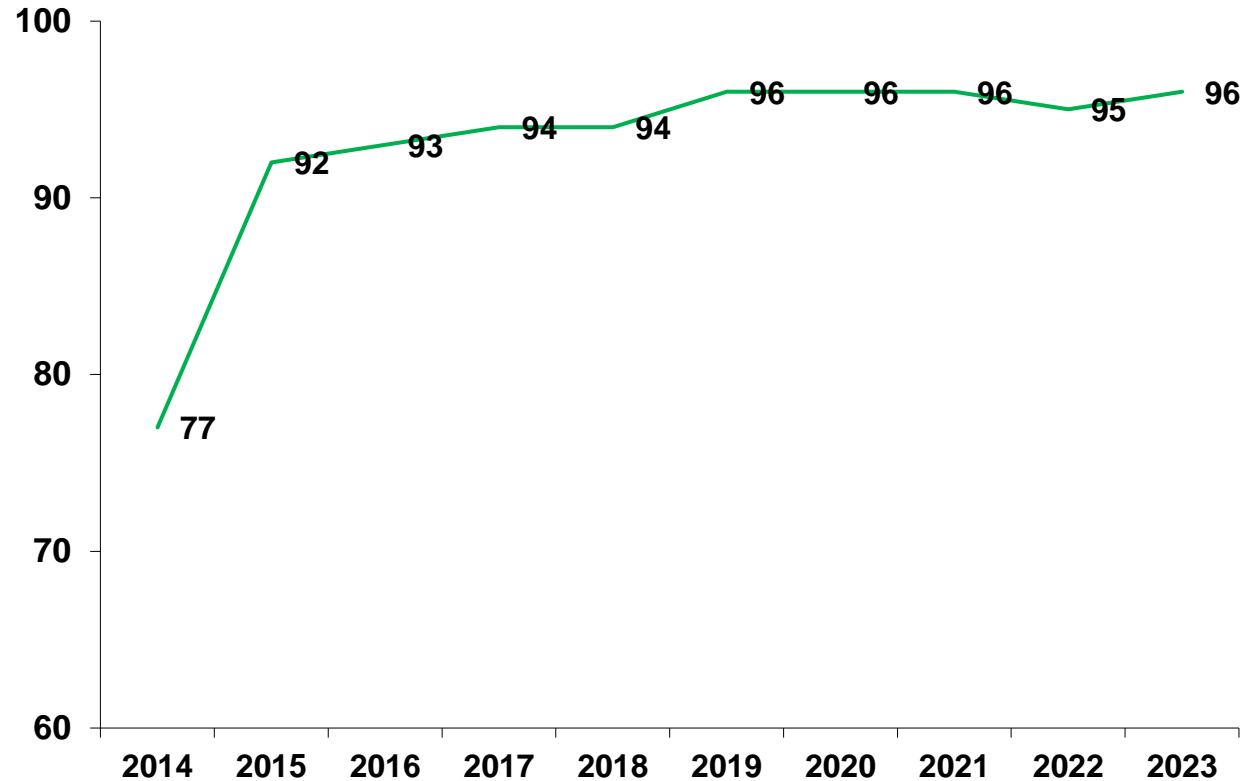
- Businesses were asked to what extent they agreed that they are satisfied with their local area as a place to do business.
- 96% agreed that they are satisfied (either strongly agree or agree).



Q19. Overall, I am satisfied with my local area as a place to do business - 10 year Trend

% respondents strongly agree/agree

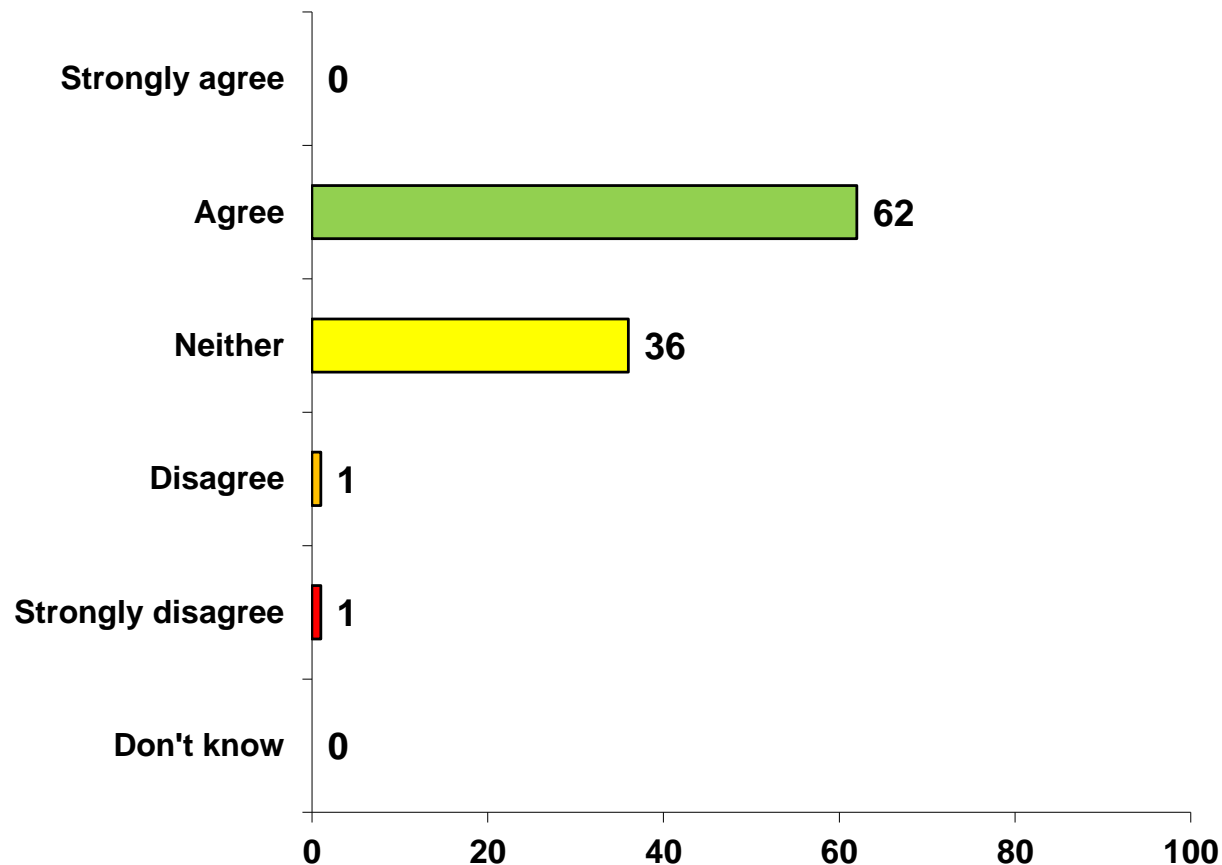
- Satisfaction with area as a place to do business has remained consistent over the last few years.



Q19. Overall, I am satisfied with the way Stroud District Council runs things

% respondents

- Businesses were asked to what extent they agree that they are satisfied with the way Stroud DC runs things.
- 62% of businesses agree (either strongly agree or agree)
- Smaller businesses (those with 1 – 9 employees) were most likely to agree (64% compared to 57% of larger businesses*)

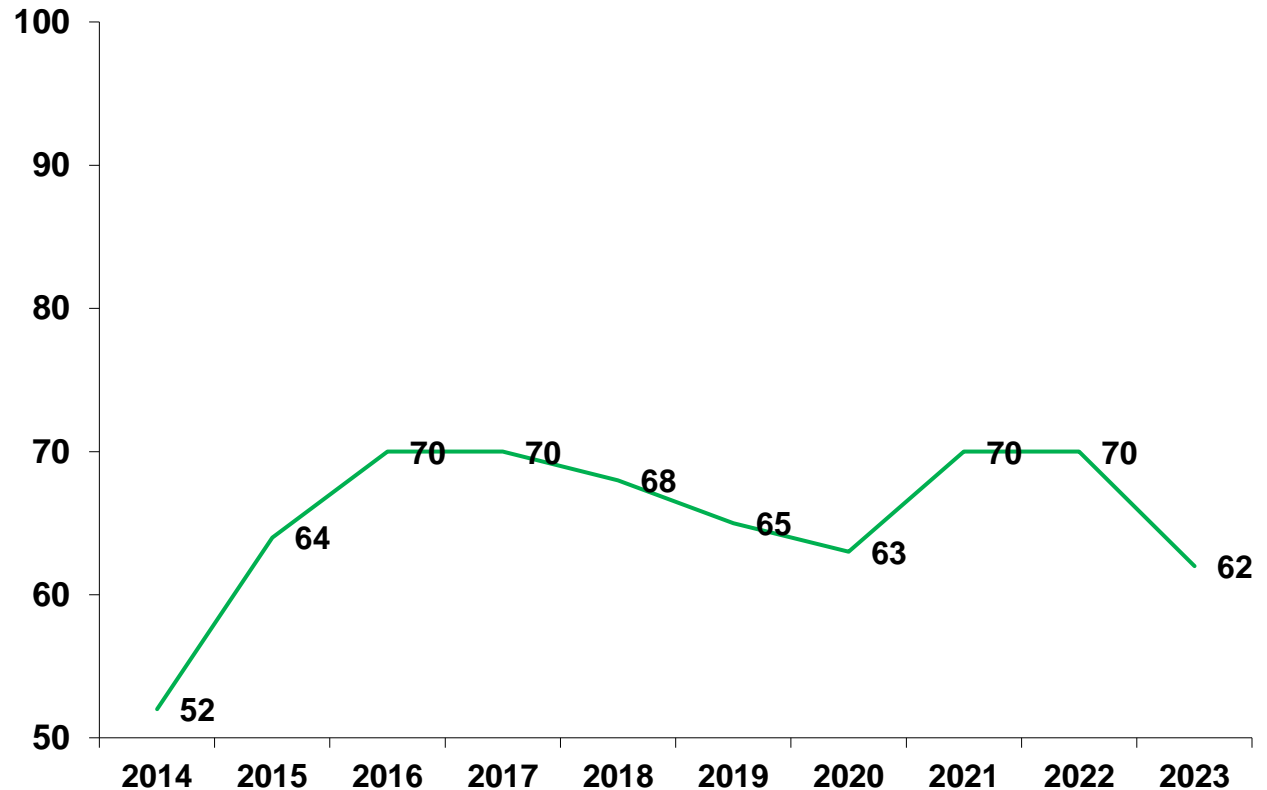


* Caution small base size

Q19. Overall, I am satisfied with the way Stroud District Council runs things - 10 year Trend

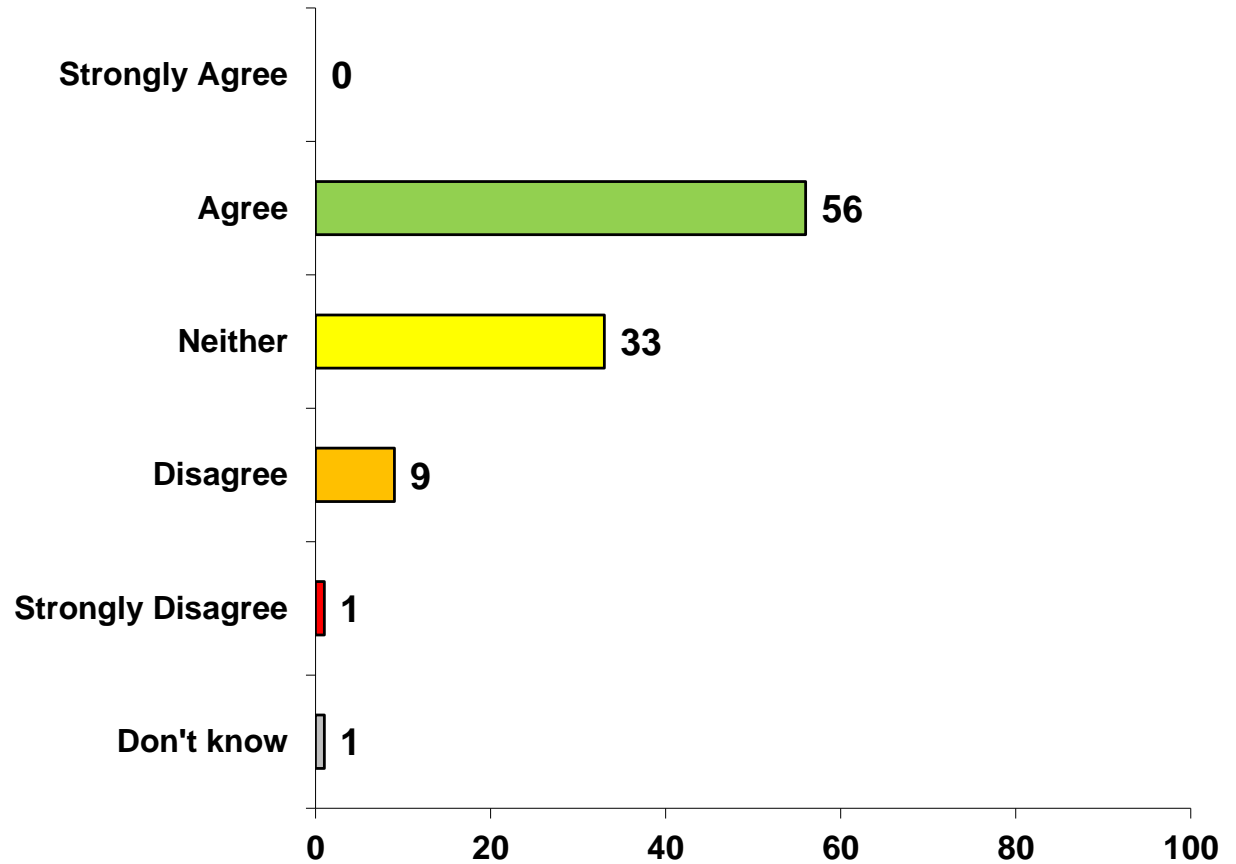
% respondents strongly agree/agree

- Satisfaction with the way Stroud DC runs things has decreased since 2022 from 70% to 62% and is at its' lowest since 2015.



Q19. I agree that Stroud District Council provides value for money

% respondents

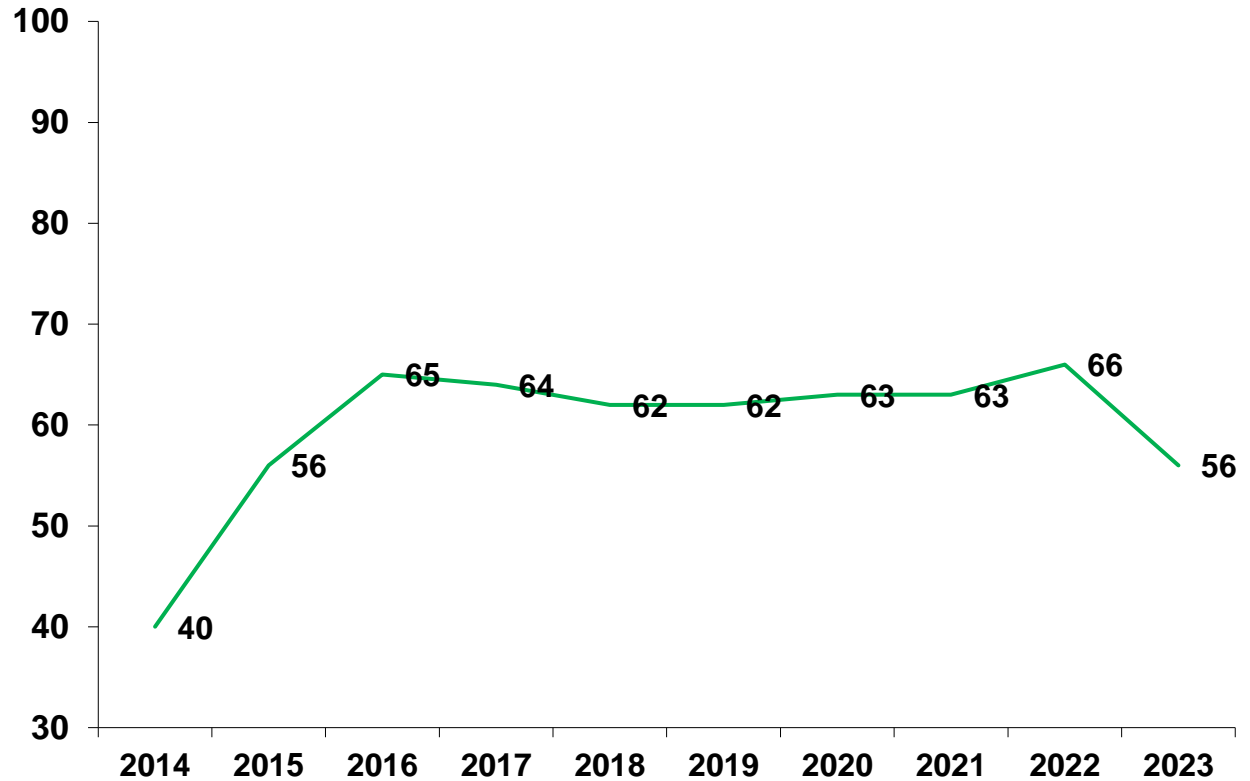


- Businesses were asked to what extent they agree that Stroud DC provides value for money.
- 56% of businesses agree.
- Smaller businesses (those with 1 – 9 employees) were most likely to agree (60% compared to 47% of larger businesses*)

Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Stroud District Council provides value for money? 10 year Trend

% respondents strongly agree/agree

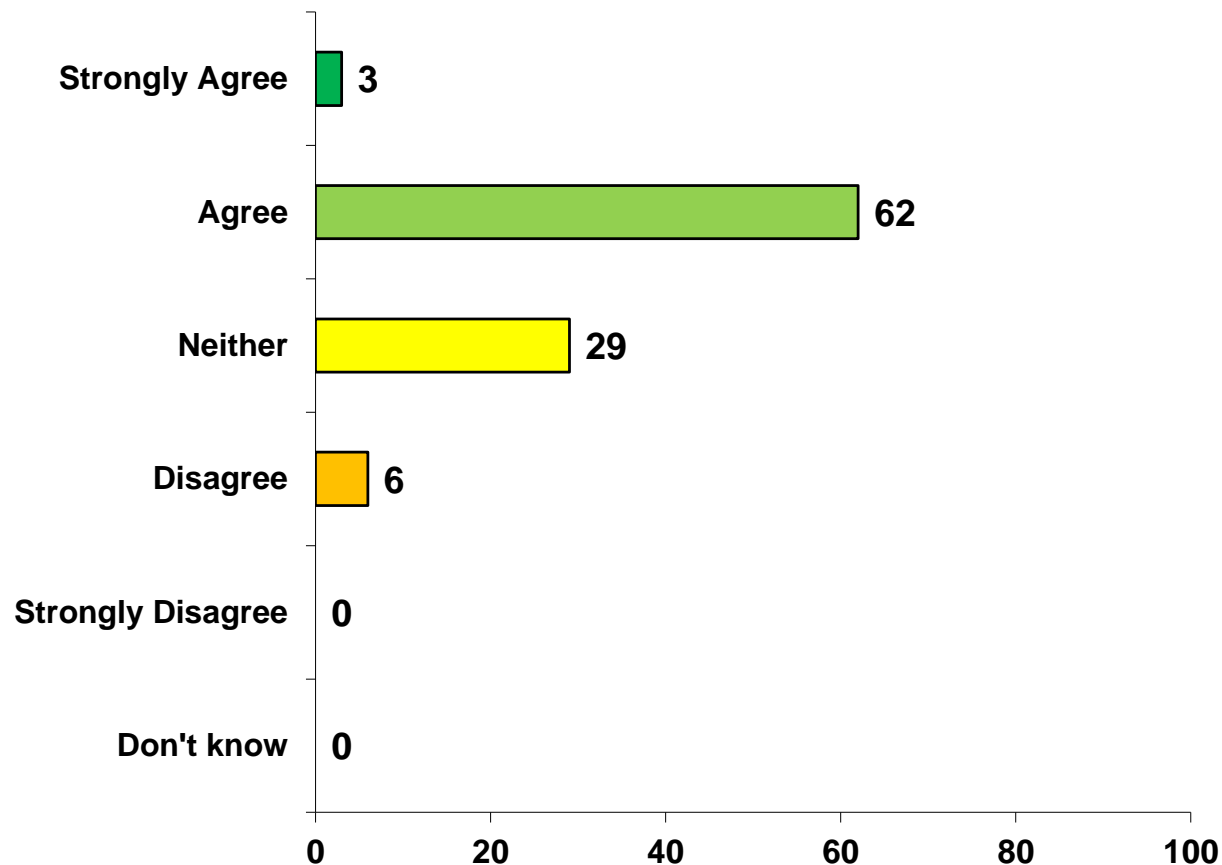
- Agreement that Stroud DC provides value for money has decreased since 2022 from 66% to 56%, and is now at its' lowest since 2015.



Q19. Overall, the services provided by Stroud District Council have been maintained to a good standard

% respondents

- Businesses were asked to what extent they agree that services provided by Stroud DC have been maintained to a good standard.
- 65% of businesses agree.
- Smaller businesses (those with 1 – 9 employees) were most likely to agree (67% compared to 61% of larger businesses*)



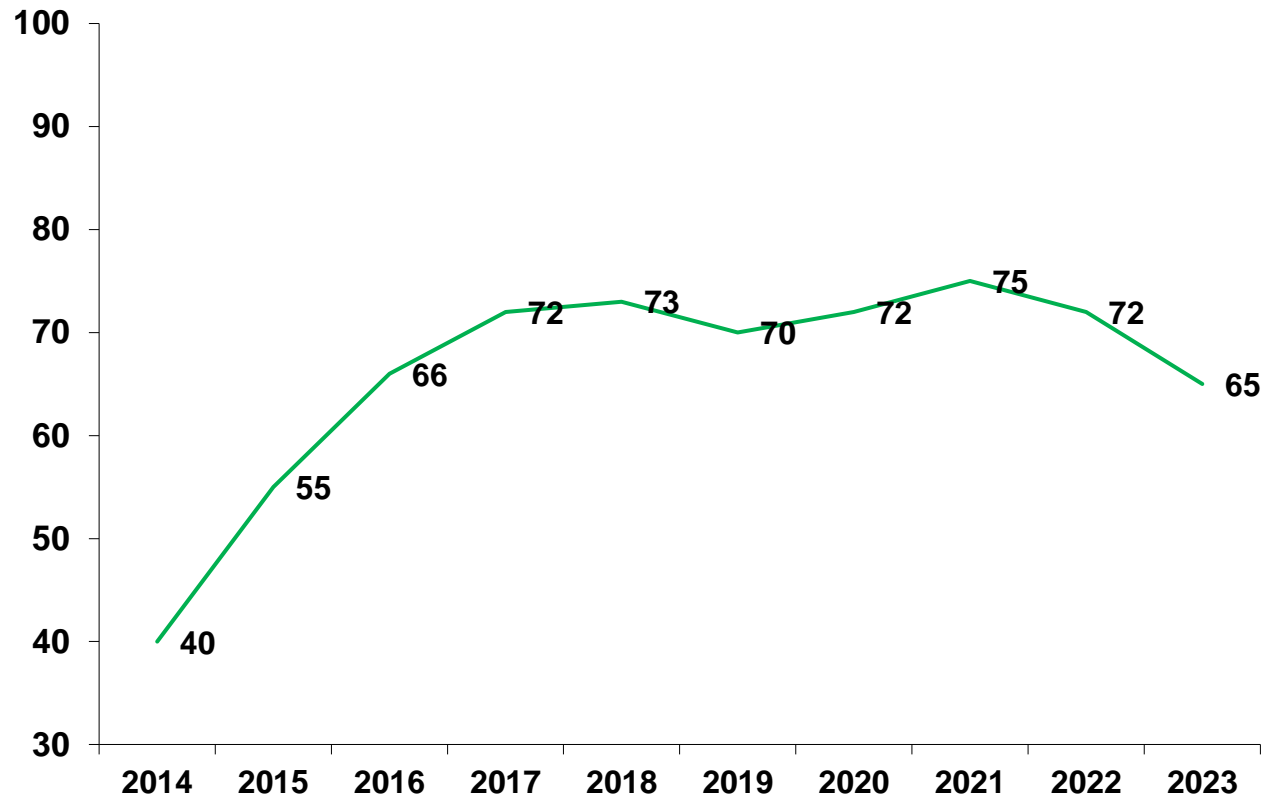
* Caution small base size

Q19. Overall, the services provided by Stroud District Council have been maintained to a good standard

10 year Trend

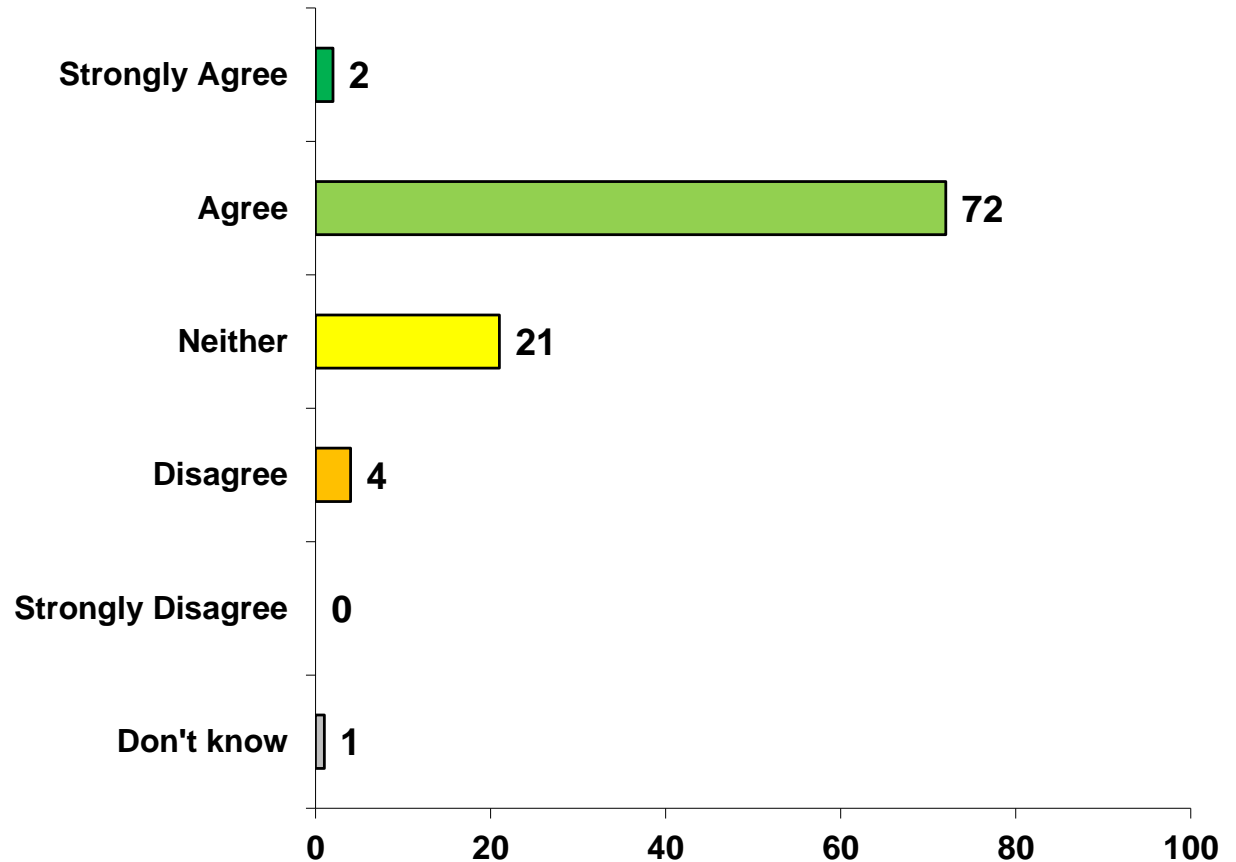
% respondents strongly agree/agree

- Agreement that services provided by Stroud DC have maintained to a good standard has decreased since 2022 from 72% to 65%, continuing the downward trend since 2021.



Q19. Overall, I am satisfied that Stroud District Council is working to improve the environment

% respondents



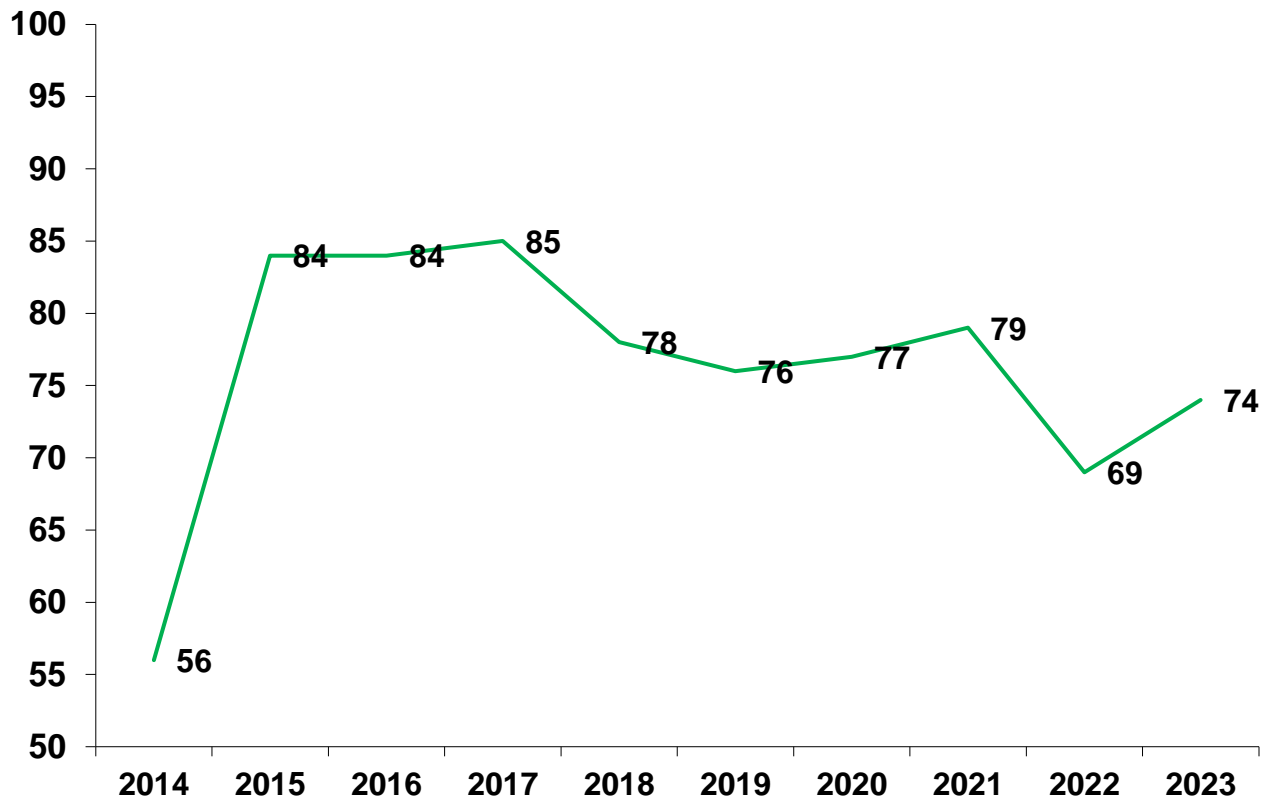
- Businesses were asked to what extent they agree that Stroud DC is working to improve the environment.
- 74% of businesses either strongly agree or agree.
- Larger businesses (those with 10 or more employees) were most likely to agree (79% compared to 72% of smaller businesses*)

Q19. Overall, I am satisfied that Stroud District Council is working to improve the environment

10 year Trend

% respondents strongly agree/agree

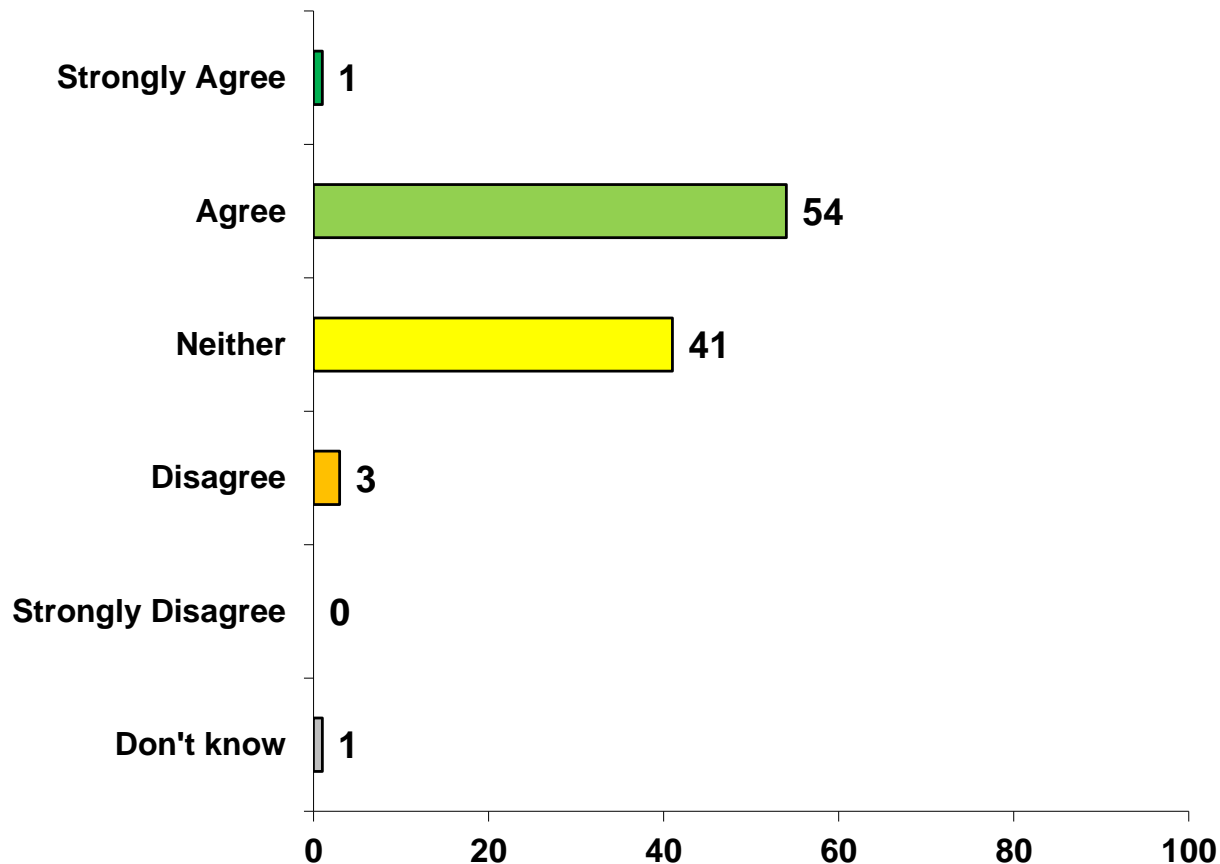
- Agreement that Stroud DC is working to improve the environment has increased since 2022 from 69% to 74%.



Q19. I believe that Stroud District Council cares about the people and businesses that make up our communities

% respondents

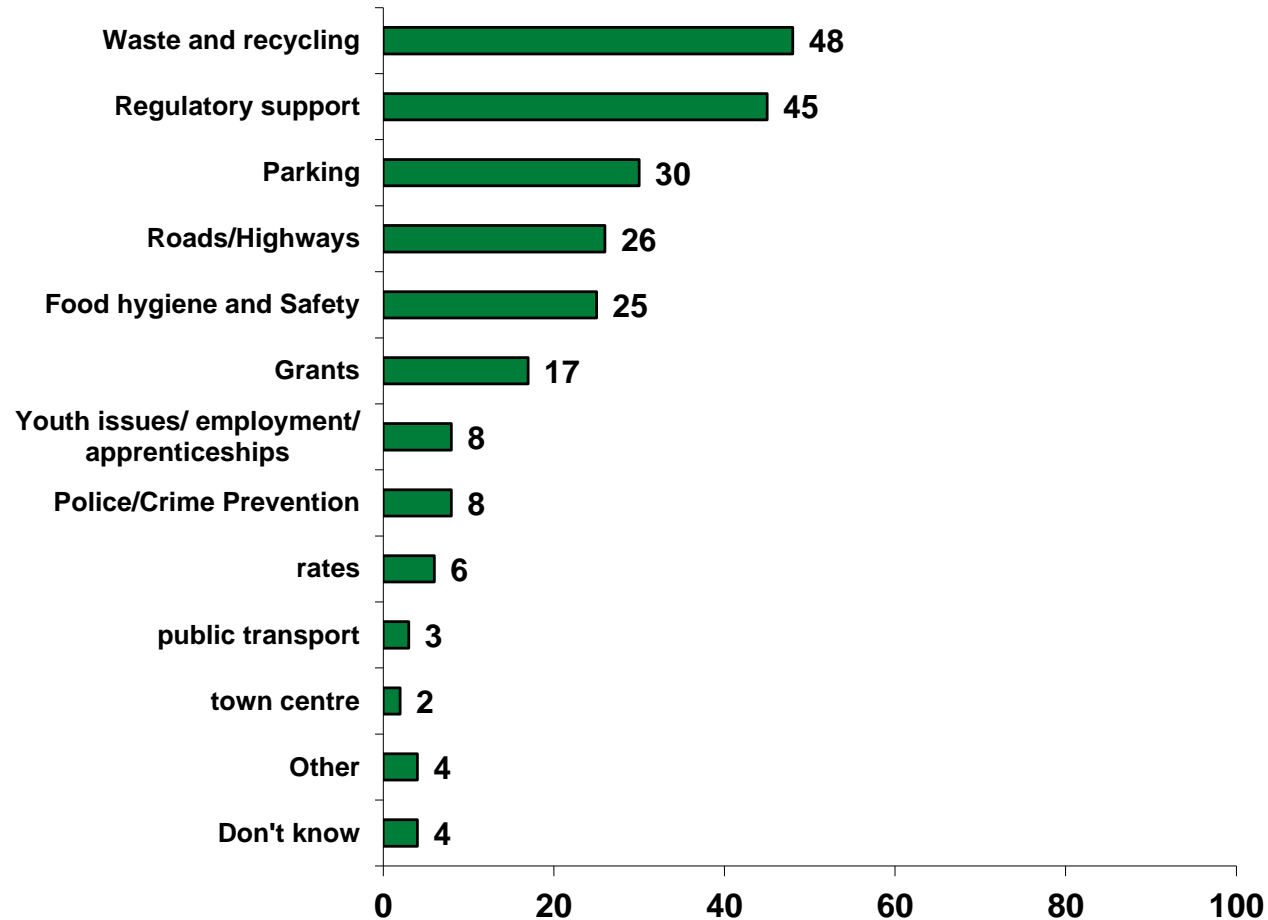
- Businesses were asked to what extent they agreed that Stroud DC cares about the people and businesses that make up their communities.
- 55% of businesses agree.
- Larger businesses (those with 10 or more employees) were most likely to agree (59% compared to 54% of smaller businesses*)



* Caution small base size

Q15. Which services provided by SDC do you think are the most important to your business sector /community and should be a focus for SDC: % respondents

- Businesses were asked (unprompted) what services provided by SDC do you think are most important to your business sector/ community that should be a focus for SDC.
- *Waste and recycling* was the most popular response (48%), followed closely by *regulatory support* (45%).
- Other popular responses were *parking* (30%), *roads/highways* (26%) and *food hygiene and safety* (25%).
- Larger businesses* were more likely to say *waste and recycling* (63%), *regulatory support* (53%), *food hygiene and safety* (47%) and *youth issues/ employment/ apprenticeships* (23%).





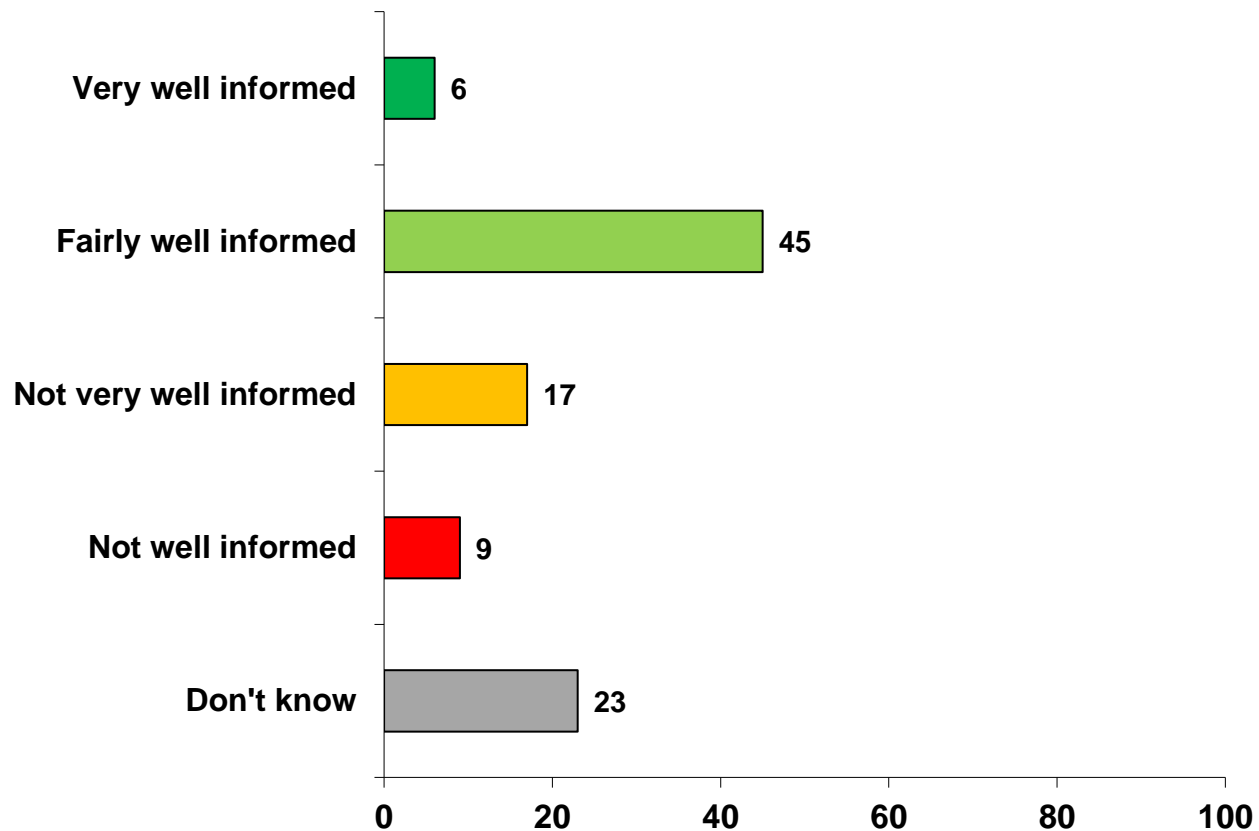
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Information from Stroud DC

Q5. Overall, how well informed do you think Stroud District Council keeps businesses about the services and benefits it provides?

% respondents

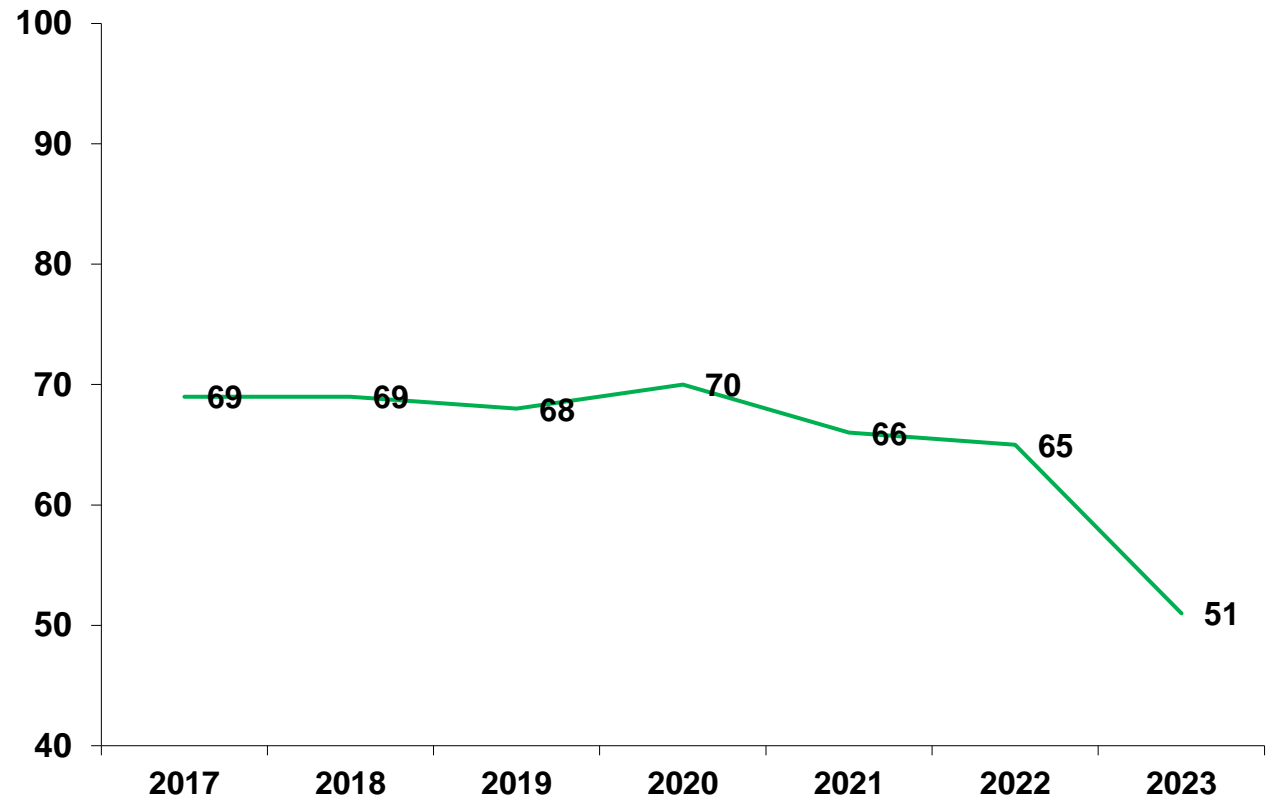
- Businesses were asked well informed Stroud DC keeps them about the benefits and services it provides.
- 51% said that they feel either very well or fairly well informed.
- Larger businesses (those with 10 or more employees) felt most informed (55% compared to 49% of smaller businesses*)



* Caution small base size

Q5. Overall, how well informed do you think Stroud District Council keeps businesses about the services and benefits it provides? 4 Year Trend

% respondents very well/fairly well informed



Base: (200)

- The percentage agreeing that Stroud DC keeps businesses very or fairly well informed about services and benefits it provides has fallen consistently from 2020, with 2023 seeing a decrease to 51% from 65% in 2022.
- It is worth noting that there was a much higher percentage of “don’t know” responses in 2023 than in previous years.

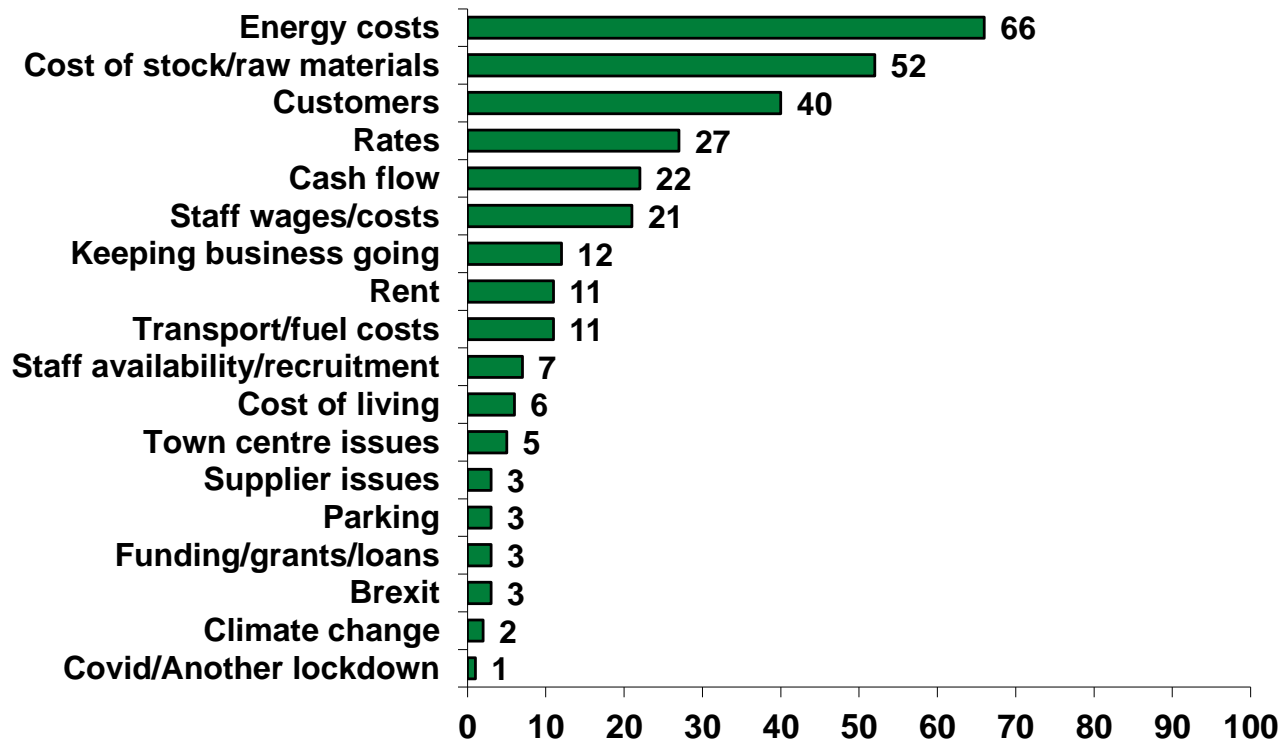


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Business Support Services

Q18. What are the 3 most significant issues currently for your business?

% respondents Yes

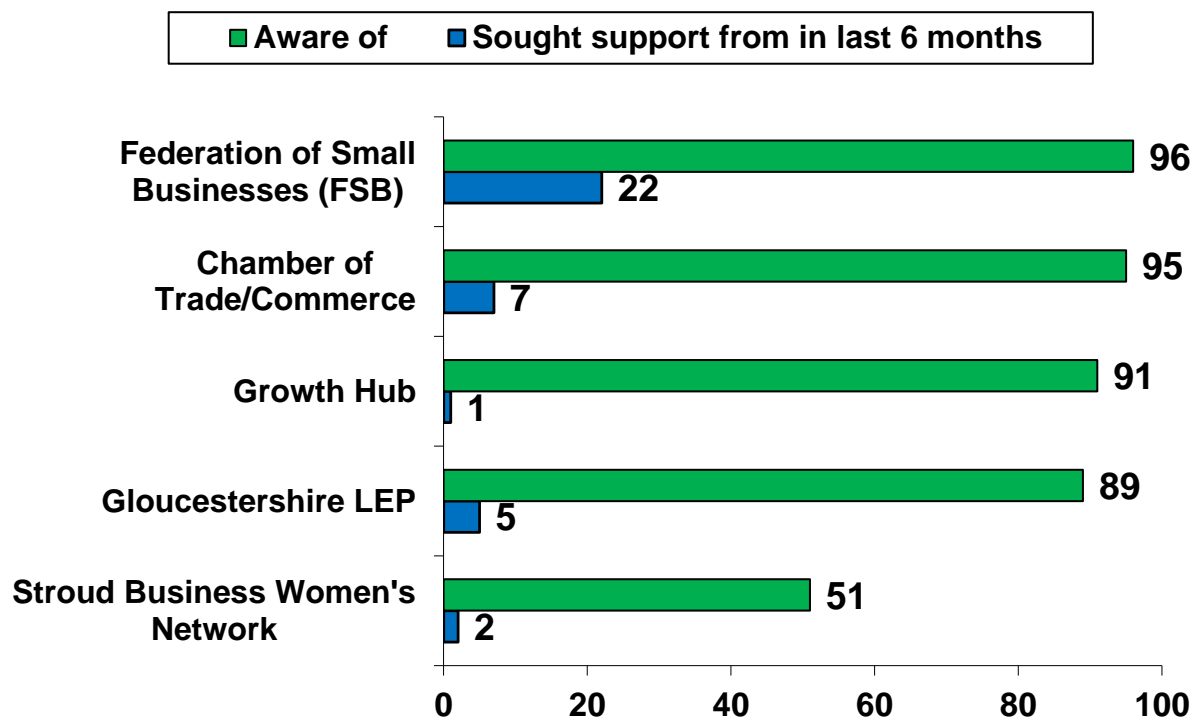


- When asked what the 3 most significant issues were for their business currently the main response was *energy costs* (66%).
- This was followed by:
 - *cost of stock/raw materials* (52%)
 - *customers* (40%)
- Larger businesses* were more likely to mention *energy costs* (72%), *staff wages and costs* (32%), *staff availability and recruitment* (20%).
- Smaller businesses were more likely to mention *rates* (30%), *keeping business going* (14%) and *rent* (12%).

* Caution small base size

Question 17a. Are you a) aware of the following organisations; b) have you sought advice or support from them in the last six months?

% respondents Yes

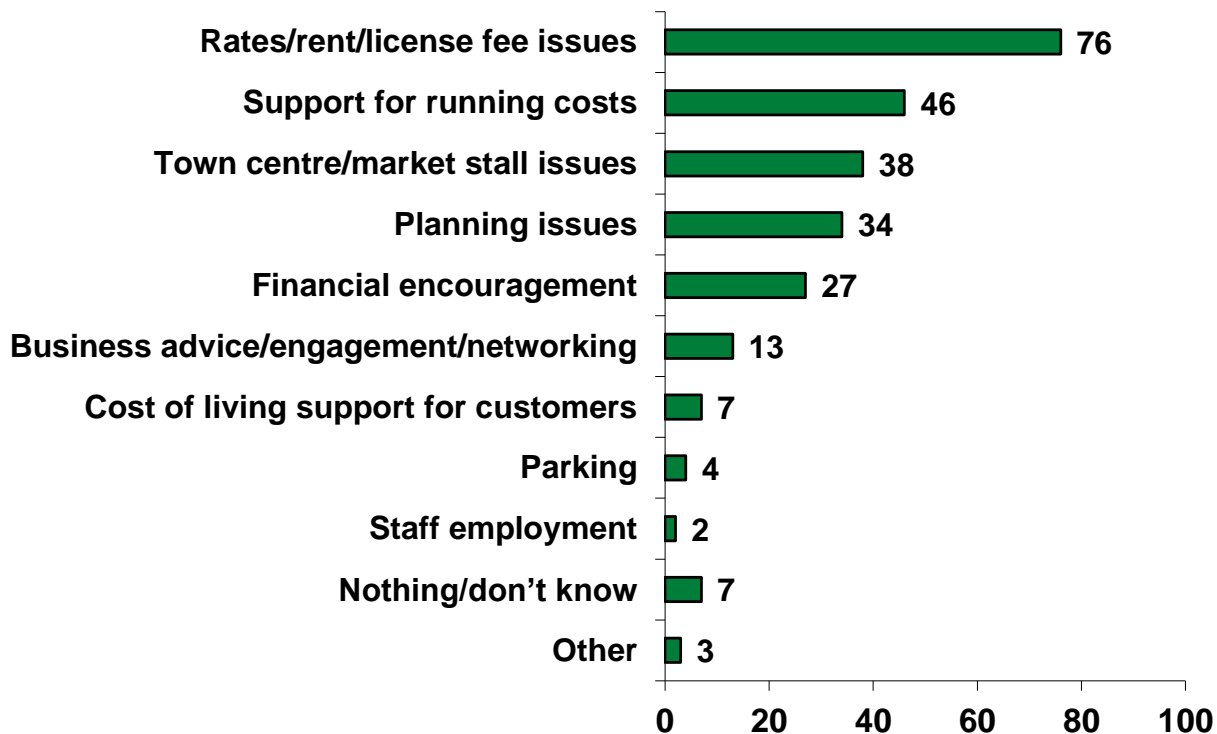


- Businesses were prompted with a list of support services and asked which they were aware of.
- 96% are aware of *Federation of Small Businesses*.
- The majority are aware of the *Chamber of Trade/Commerce* (95%), *Growth Hub* (91%) and *Gloucester LEP* (89%).
- Awareness was less for *Stroud Business Women's Network* at 51%.
- Awareness of all organisations is higher than in 2022.
- Few businesses had sought advice from these organisations, the highest was 22% from *FSB*.
- 7% had sought advice from the *Chamber of Trade/Commerce*, 1% from *Growth Hub*, 5% from *Gloucester LEP* and 2% from *Stroud Business Women's network*.

Q14. What do you feel the District Council can do to help facilitate growth and increase employment?

% respondents Yes

- Businesses were asked what they felt the Council can do to help facilitate growth and increase employment.
- The most popular mentioned were *rates/rent/licence fee issues* (76%) followed by *support for running costs* (46%).
- There was little different in the suggestions made between small and larger businesses, with the exception that larger businesses were slightly more likely to suggest support for running costs (52% compared to 44% of smaller businesses).

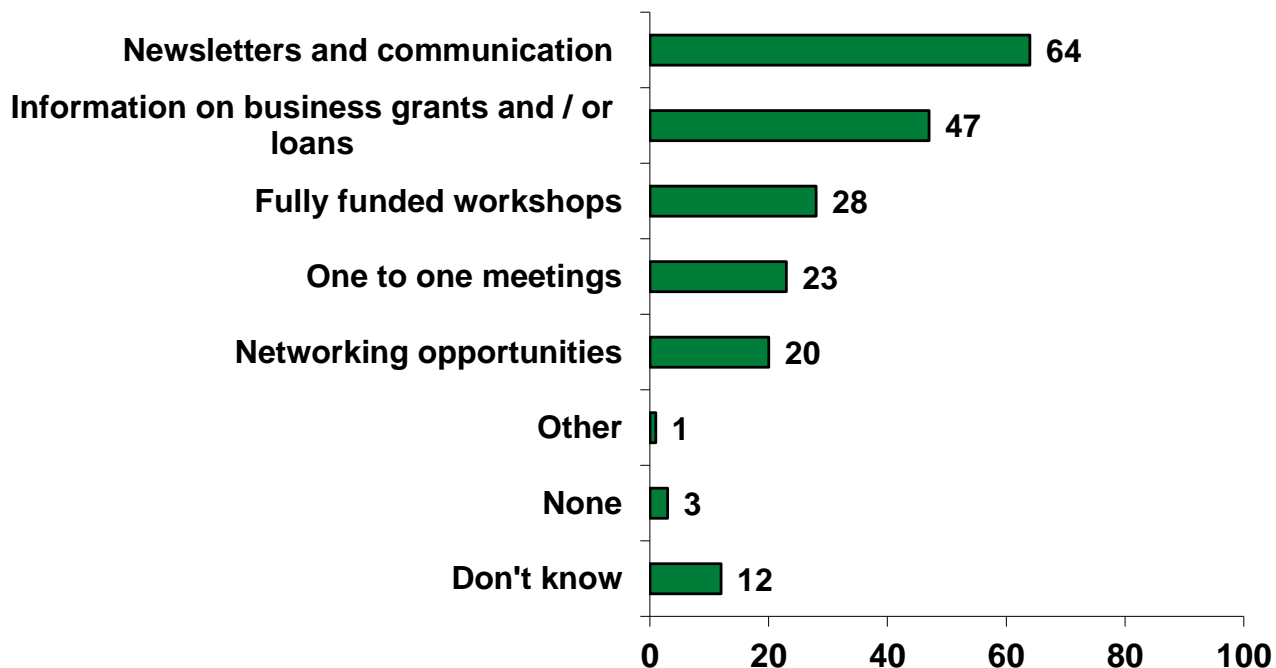


- Caution small base size

Base: (200)

Q15b. What business support services do you feel should be provided by SDC and partners that would have supported your business when you were starting out, or as you look to grow your business?
% respondents Yes

- Businesses were asked what business support service they felt should be provided that would have supported their business when starting out or looking for grow.
- The most popular suggestions were *newsletters and communication* (64%), followed by *information on business grants and / or loans* (47%).
- These were followed by *fully funded workshops* (28%), *one to one meetings* (23%) and *networking opportunities* (20%).
- Larger businesses were more interested in *workshops* than smaller businesses (40% compared to 23%).





Q16. What more do you think SDC should be doing to support businesses?

% respondents

- Businesses were asked what more do they think Stroud DC should be doing to support businesses.
- 62% did not know and 19% said that there was nothing that they could do. The main things mentioned were:
 - better business support/ make easier to get help (5%)
 - lower rates (4%)
 - encourage more businesses to the area (3%)
 - financial help/funding (2%)

“make it more attractive for companies to come to the area help them to grow and encourage others”

“encourage businesses to come to the area do what they have to, to make the area grow”

“make things as easy as possible for us we already have enough to worry about”

“any financial help would be welcome”

“just make it easier for businesses to get the help they can get, we shouldn't have to push for help, offer it”

“lower rates / rent to get more businesses into the area as quickly as they can”

“more communication with business talk to them invite them to come together for a discussion”

“free staff parking would be good and bus services should be better”



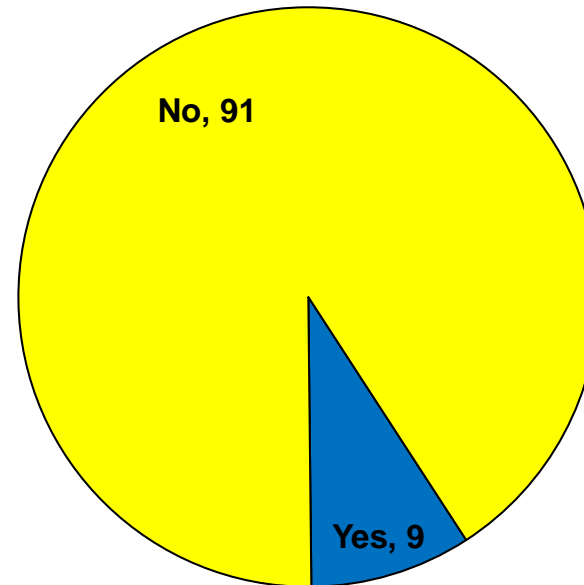
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Contact

Q11a. Have you contacted the Council recently? Q11b. If yes, what was the method that you used?

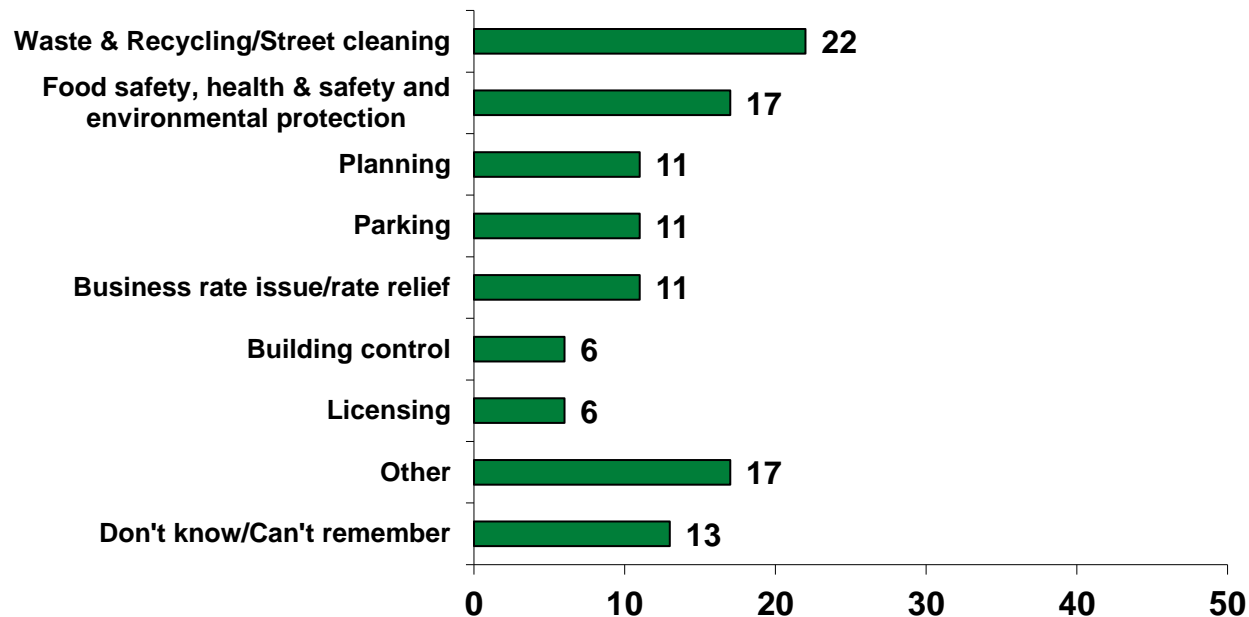
% respondents

- Businesses were asked if they had contacted the Council recently. 9% said that they had.
- Contact was either made by email (78%) or telephone(78%) (respondents were allowed to select more than one option)



Q11c. If yes, what was the matter concerning?

% respondents



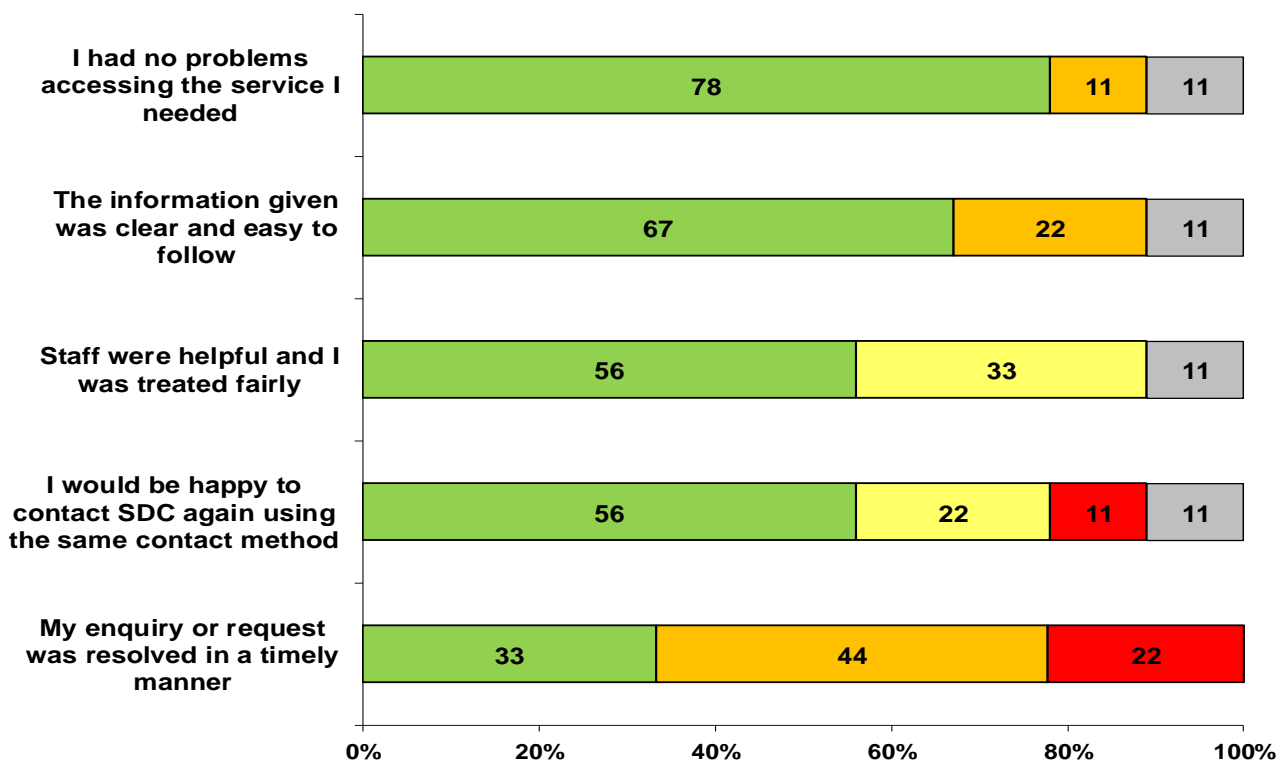
Base: (18, those who had contact with the Council)

- Those who had contacted the Council were asked what the matter was concerning.
- There were a range of reasons given for contacting the Council including
 - *waste & recycling/street cleaning* (22%)
 - *food safety, health and safety and environmental protection* (17%)
 - *planning* (11%)
 - *parking* (11%)
 - *business rate issue/rate relief* (11%).

Q11d. Would you say you agree or disagree with the following statements?

% respondents

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Don't know



Base: (18, those who had contact with the Council)

- Businesses were asked about their experience of contacting the Council.
- 78% agreed that they *had no problems accessing the service they needed*.
- 67% agreed that *the information given was clear and easy to follow*.
- 71% agreed that *staff were helpful and I was treated fairly*.
- 56% agreed that they *would be happy to contact Stroud DC again using the same contact method*.
- 33% agreed that *their enquiry or request was resolved in a timely manner* and 66% disagreed (either disagree or strongly disagree).

Q11e. How do you think this could be improved?% respondents

- Businesses were asked about their experience of contacting the Council could be improved.
- 44% (8 people) said that they was nothing that could be improved.
- The main things mentioned were:
 - make easier to contact (22%)
 - more staff training (11%)
 - quicker response (22%)

“query on rates was not answered and I was told to email , this email was only acknowledged and there has been no resolution to the matter”

“had no issues”

“needs the staff to be trained better to deal with these queries”

“would like a reply to our query about using this car park during the week for our staff”

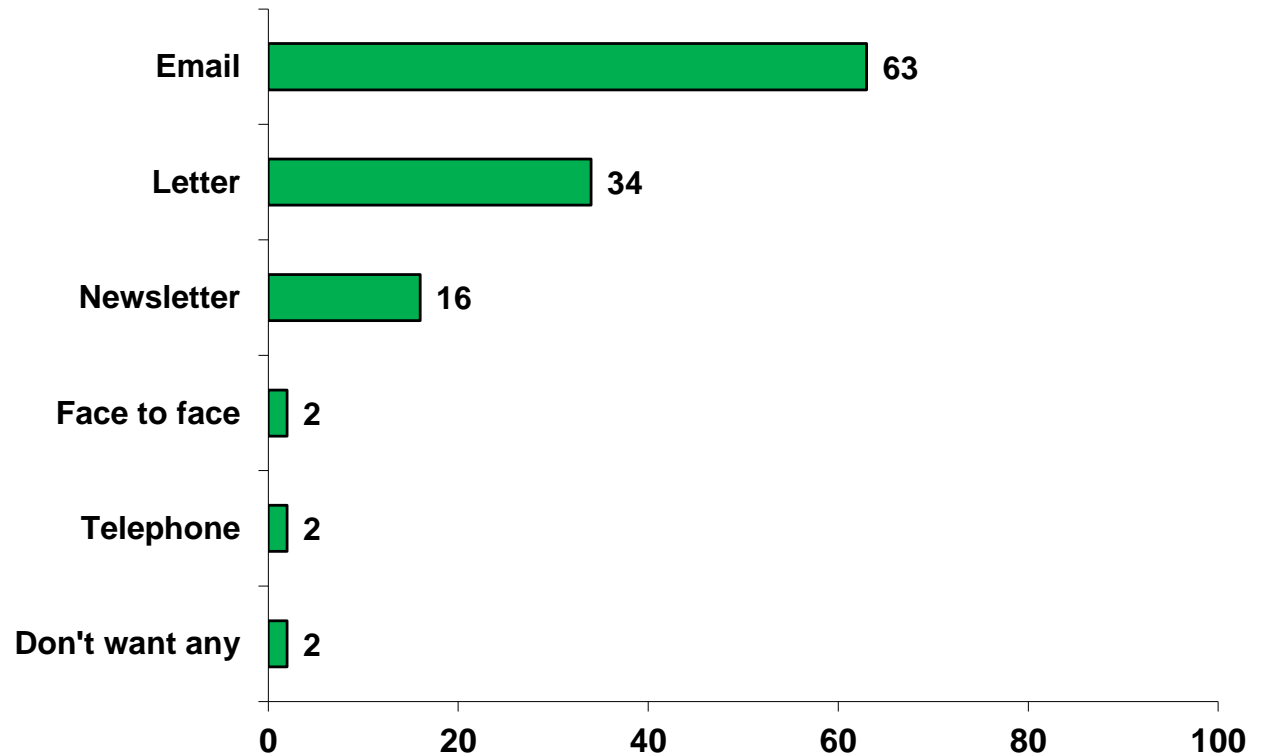
“very good as usual”

“direct lines to each department”

Q11f. How would you like to receive communication from the Council?

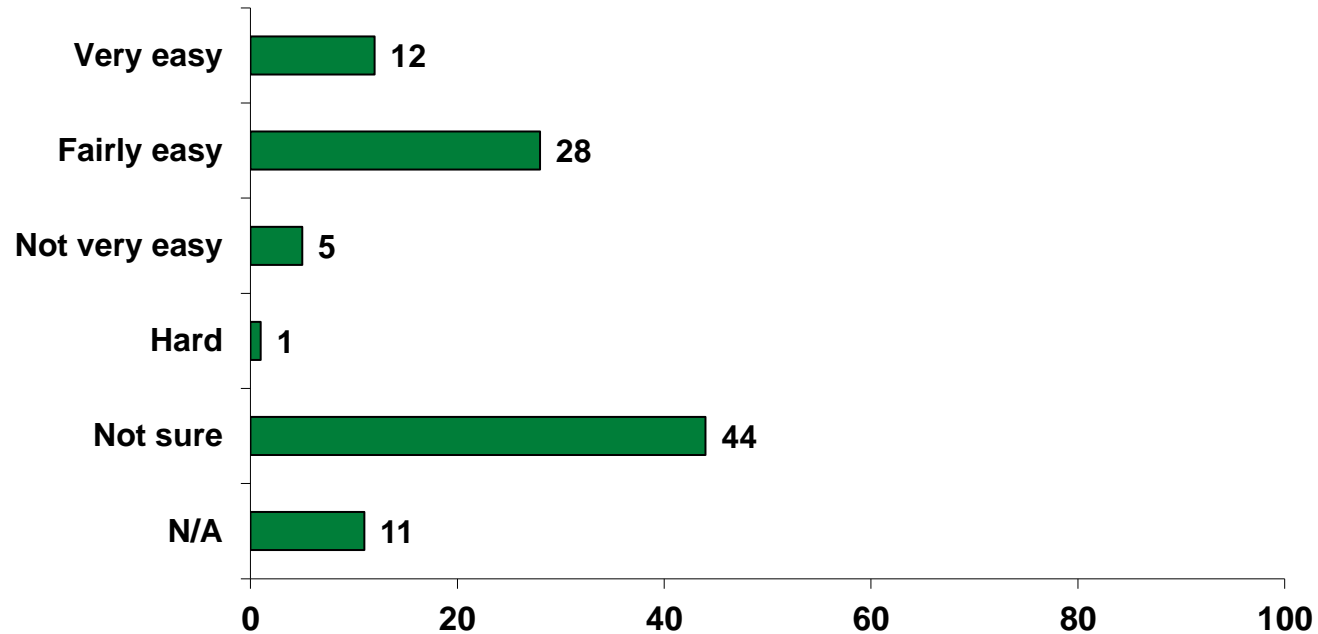
% respondents

- Businesses were asked how they would like to receive communication from the Council.
- The most popular response were *email* (63%).
- This was followed by *letter* (34%) and *newsletter* (16%).



Q12. How easy to use is the Council's website for accessing information about services and support on offer to businesses

% respondents



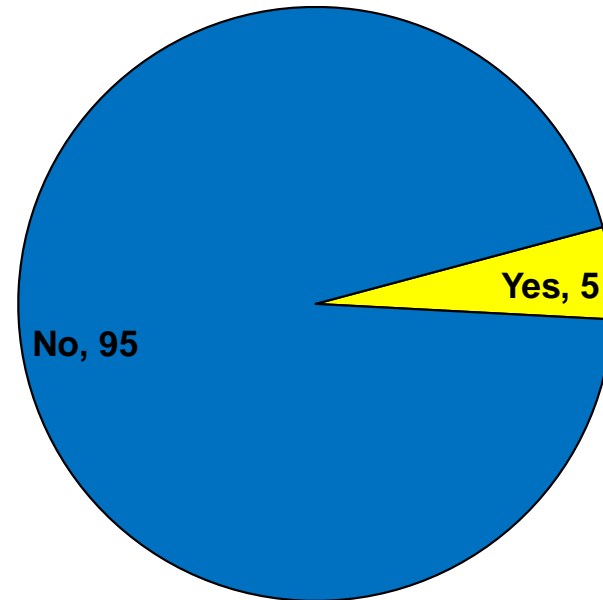
- Businesses were asked how easy to use the Council's website is for accessing information about service and support on offer to businesses.
- Most business responded 'not sure' or 'N/A' (55% - 37% of larger businesses* and 62% of small businesses)
- Those who found it very or fairly easy accounted for 87% of those who had an opinion.

Q13. Stroud District Council has recently launched a promotional website to promote the district as a business and investment destination, The Natural Place. Have you seen the website?

Strouddistrict.co.uk

% respondents

- Businesses were asked if they had seen the Council's website, The Natural Place.
- Only 5% of businesses had seen it.
- 7% of larger businesses* had seen it and 4% of smaller businesses.



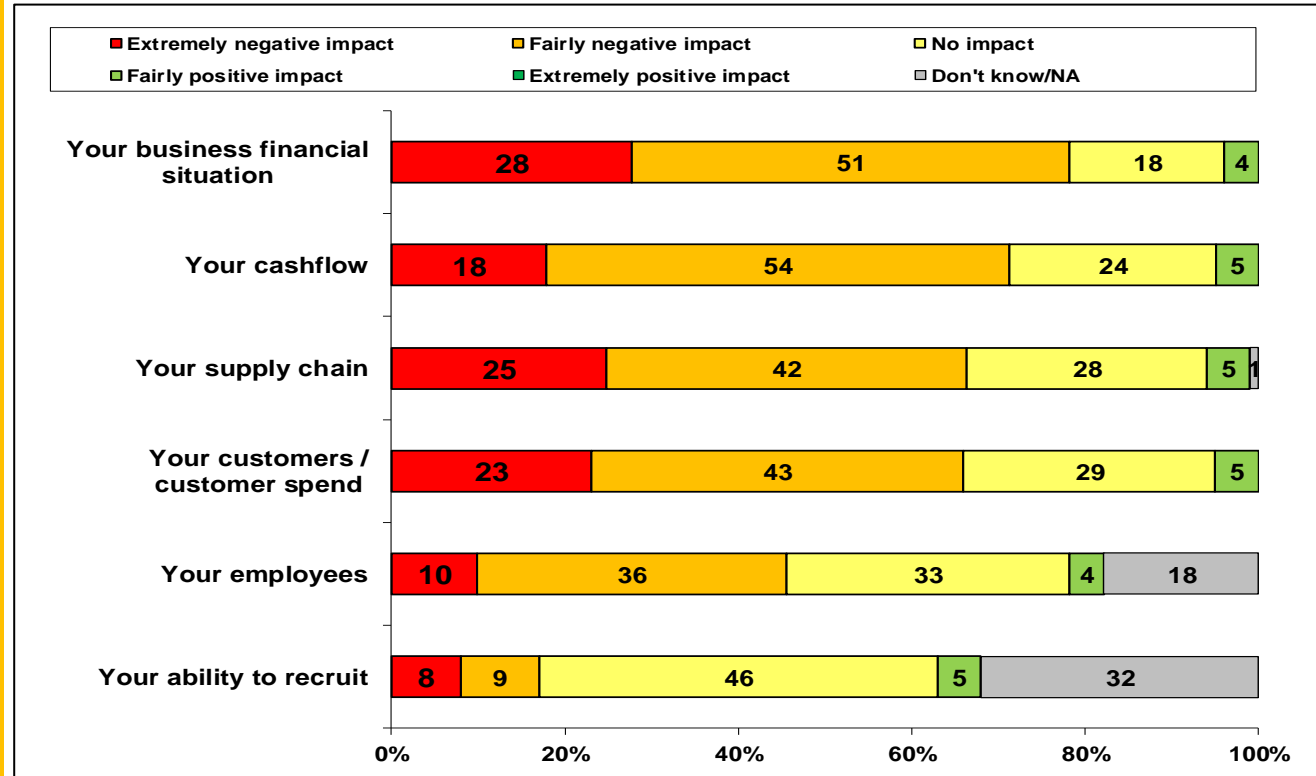


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Cost of Living

Q7. Has the impact of the cost of living had a positive or negative impact on the following? % respondents

- Businesses were asked whether the cost of living has had a positive or negative impact on various aspects of their business.
- The biggest negative impact was on their *financial situation* (79% extremely or fairly negative impact) and *cashflow* (72%). This was followed by *supply chain* (67%), *your customers/ customer spend* (66%) and *employees* (56%).
- Just 17% said that the cost of living had a negative impact on their *ability to recruit*.
- Larger businesses were more likely to say that the cost of living had an impact on their *financial situation* (85% compared to 76% of smaller businesses), their *employees* (60% compared to 39%) and their *ability to recruit* (33% compared to 10%).





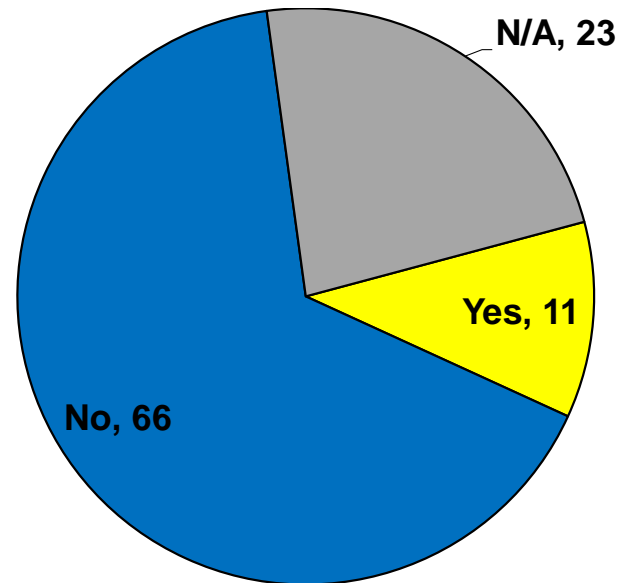
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Recruitment



Q8a. Are you struggling to recruit employees? % respondents

- Businesses were asked if they were struggling to recruit employees.
- 11% of businesses said that they were.
- This was much higher amongst larger businesses* (27% compared to 4% of smaller businesses).
- Those who were struggling to recruit were asked if this was for skilled or unskilled staff or both.
- 55% were struggling to recruit skilled staff, 18% unskilled and 27% both.





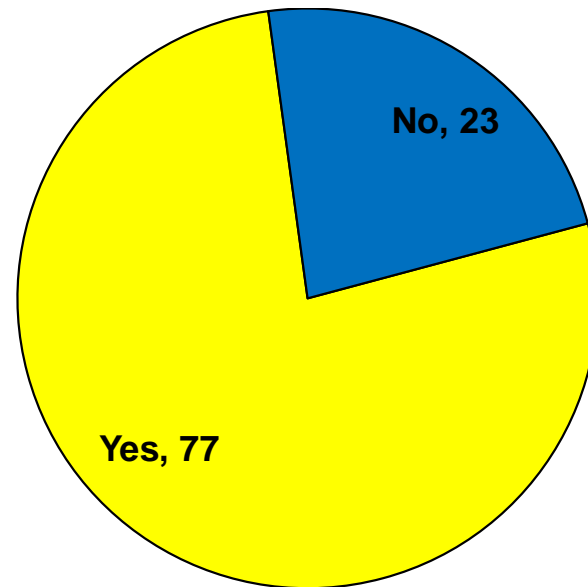
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Environment

Q9a. Are you considering the environmental impact of your business?

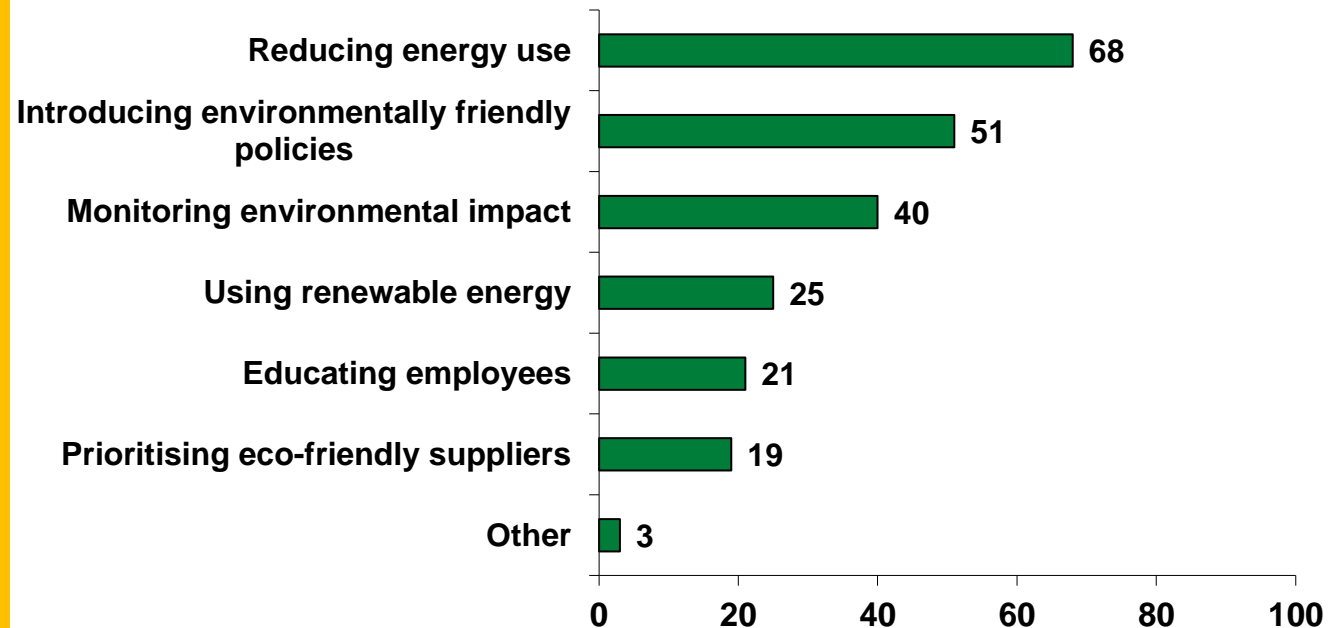
% respondents

- Businesses were asked if they were considering the environmental aspect of their business.
- 77% said that they were.
- This was much higher amongst larger businesses* (95% compared to 69% of smaller businesses).



Q9b. If yes, what steps are you taking?

% respondents



- Those who said they were considering the environmental impact of their business were asked what steps they were taking.
- The most popular was *reducing energy use* (68%).
- Other steps taken included:
 - *introducing environmentally friendly policies* (51%)
 - *monitoring environmental impact* (40%)
 - *using renewable energy* (25%)
 - *educating employees* (21%)
 - *prioritising eco-friendly suppliers* (19%).



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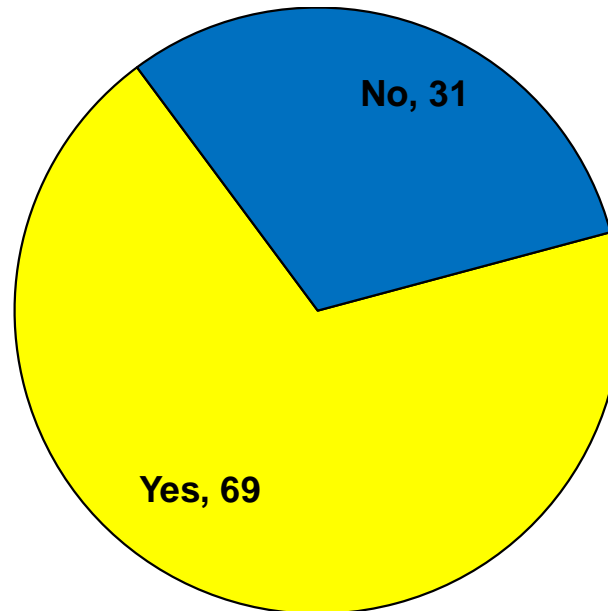
Digital and Online Visibility



Q6a. Does your business have an online presence?

% respondents

- Businesses were asked if they had an online presence.
- 69% said that they did (78% in 2022).
- This was much higher amongst larger businesses* (100% compared to 56% of smaller businesses).



* Caution small base size

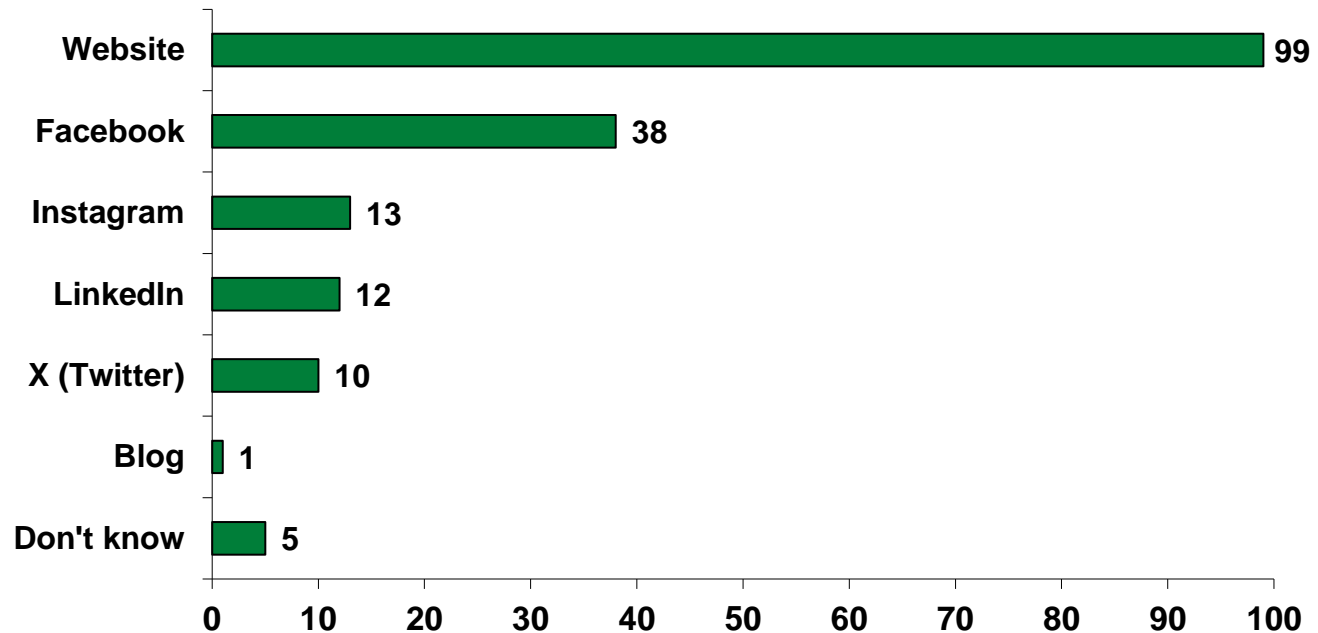
Base: (200)



Q6b. If yes, what kind of online presence is this ?

% respondents

- Those with an online presence were asked what kind of presence they had.
- The most popular was *website* (99%).
- Others included:
 - *Facebook* (38%)
 - *Instagram* (13%)
 - *LinkedIn* (12%)
 - *X (Twitter)* (10%)





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Any other comments

Funding

“funding needed”

“need clearer advice for parents on costs to them of childcare/as county do not cover all cost/ encourage more students into childcare”

Service Improvements

“library services could do with improving”

“policing and crime needs improving”

Town Centre Issues

“need more shops in Stroud centre that sell reasonable priced clothes/lot of empty ones/need to help tourism with sustainable transport for them”

“need to raise pride in the town /need to make the properties look better in town centre”

“town centre parking charges need to be lower to encourage people to go shopping there”

Business Rates

“need to know what our Council and business rates are used on”

Roads and Pavements

“pavements overgrown particularly A46 to nailsworth /alleyway called gunbarrell completely overgrown /potholes very bad”

“roads and pavements are overgrown/ area has got shabby compared to what it used to be”

Housing

“SDC should provide more shared ownership housing”

Environment

“SDC should step back from the green agenda as it is making higher Council tax /families poorer and no significant gain to making the world greener”

“The Natural place video needs to be better publicized”



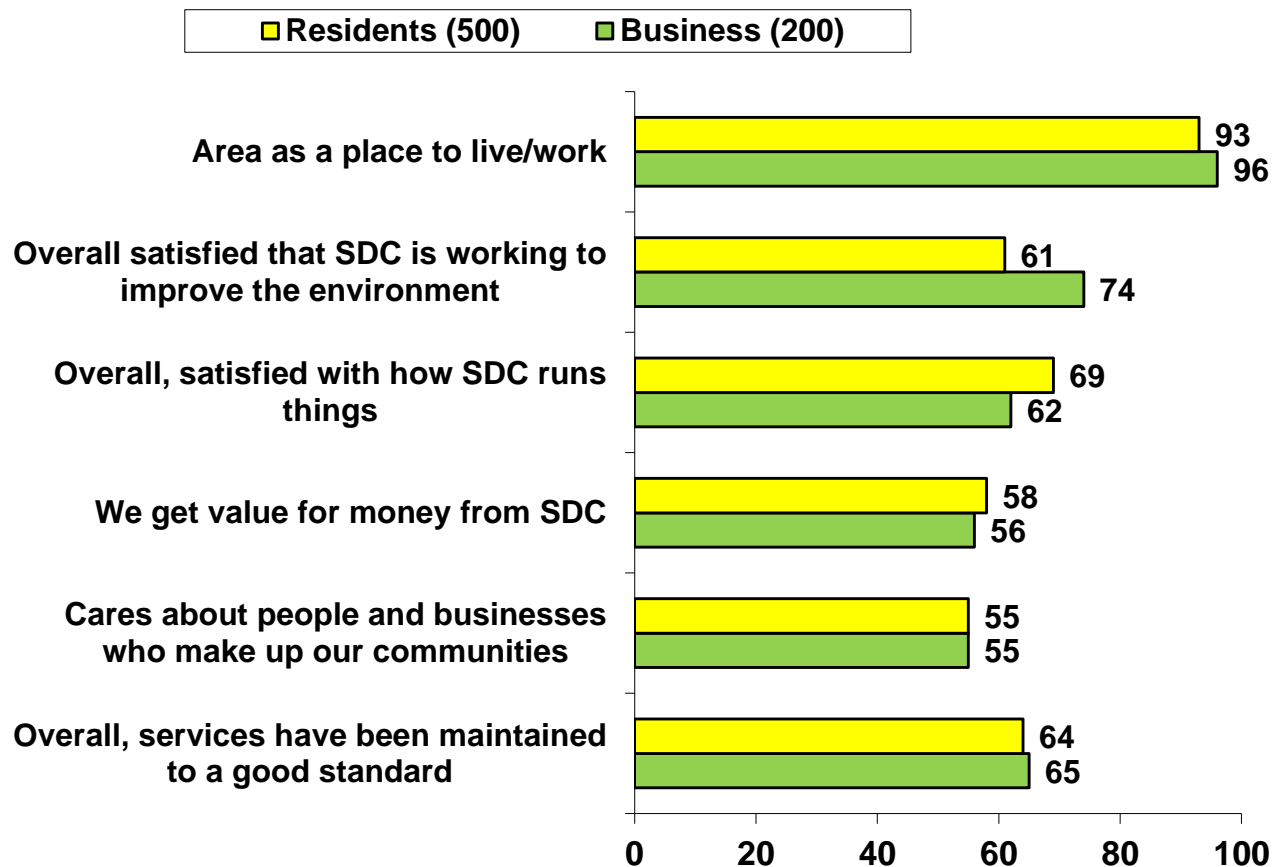
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Residents V Businesses

Q6a. Does your business have an online presence?

% respondents

- When comparing the results of residents and businesses for the key indicators, there was consistency for most of the statements.
- Residents were more likely to be satisfied with the how Stroud DC runs things (69% compared to 62% of businesses)
- Business were more likely to be satisfied that Stroud DC are working to improve the environment (74% compared to 61% of residents).





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Summary

Satisfaction and Priorities

- 93% of residents are either very satisfied or satisfied with their area as a place to live.
- This has remained consistent over the last few years (93% in 2023 compared to 94% in 2022, 2021 and 2020) and is significantly higher in Stroud DC than the National average of 73%.
- 69% of residents are either very satisfied or satisfied with the way Stroud DC runs things.
- This has decreased since 2022 from 77% to 69% and is at its' lowest since 2015, but is still higher than the National average at 60%.
- 58% of residents either strongly agree or agree that Stroud DC provides for money.
- This has decreased since 2022 from 62% to 58%, continuing the downward trend since 2017 but is significantly higher than the National average at 42%.
- 64% of residents either strongly agree or agree that services have been maintained to a good standard.
- This has decreased since 2022 from 66% to 64%, continuing the downward trend since 2020.
- 61% of residents either strongly agree or agree that Stroud DC is working to improve the environment.
- This has decreased since 2022 from 64% to 61%, continuing the downward trend since 2018.
- 55% of residents agree that Stroud DC cares about the people and businesses that make up their communities.
- 53% said that they speak positively about the Council – 1% without being asked, and 52% if asked about it and 21% said that they speak negatively (18% if asked, 3% without being asked).
- 62% said that they trust the Council a great deal or a fair amount.
- This has fallen from 72% in 2022 to 62% in 2023, but is higher than the National average of 56%.

Summary – Residents Survey (Cont.)

Community Safety

- 88% feel that they belong to their local area very strongly or fairly strongly.
- This was consistent with 2022 where 90% felt strongly that they belong.
- 84% said that they felt either very safe or fairly safe, with the majority of these (54%) feeling fairly safe) – 87% in 2022.
- Nationally, 71% felt very or fairly safe after dark, lower than the percentage in Stroud DC.
- 99% said that they felt either very safe or fairly safe, with the majority of these (73%) feeling very safe) – 99% in 2022.
- Nationally, 90% felt very or fairly safe during the daytime, lower than the percentage in Stroud DC.
- The biggest problem in the area appeared to be *groups hanging around the street* (26% very big/fairly big problems). This was 19% in 2022.
- Others, but to a much lesser extent were *street drinking* (10%), *fly tipping* (10%), *people using or dealing drugs* (9%), *noise disturbance from pubs, clubs, music or vehicles* (9%).
- 79% agreed (either definitely agree or tend to agree) that their local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together. (79% in 2022)
- When asked what is the one things that need improving most in the local area it was close between *roads and highways* (16%), *housing* (14%), *public transport* (14%) and *parking* (12%)

Summary – Residents Survey (Cont.)

Information from Stroud DC

- 53% said that they think Stroud DC acts upon the concerns of local residents (either a great deal or a fair amount).
- This has fallen consistently from 2020, with 2023 seeing a significant decrease from 62% in 2022, and is now consistent with the National average of 52%.
- 61% said that they are kept either very well or fairly well informed about the benefits and services Stroud DC provides.
- This has fallen consistently from 2020, with 2023 seeing a decrease to 61% from 66% in 2022, but this is still higher than the National average of 55%.
- In terms of receiving communication from the Council the most popular responses were *email* (38%), *newsletter* (38%) and *letter* (36%).

Council Tax

- From a series of options, the majority (66%) chose to have *no increase in their Council Tax* despite this resulting in £318,000 less per year for the Council to deliver services.
- 20% said that they would *accept a 3% increase which would require no direct savings by the Council*.
- From a series of options given for the Council to consider as part of its' plan to meet the funding gap:
 - 89% agreed that the Council *should prioritise existing services*.
 - 73% agreed that the Council should *review staff vacancies across the Council and consider options for keeping vacant* (10% disagreed).
 - 41% agreed that *the Council should consider charges for new services* (39% disagreed) (30% agreed in 2022).
 - 25% agreed that *the Council should consider reasonable increases to existing charges* (63% disagreed) (17% agreed in 2022).
- When asked, 84% did not suggest any additional services that they would be prepared to pay for. Services suggested included parking (5%), waste (4%) and transport (2%).

Summary – Residents Survey (Cont.)

Contact

- 9% had contacted the Council recently.
- 91% agreed (strongly agree or agree) that they *would be happy to contact Stroud DC again using the same contact method*.
- 77% agreed that they *had no problems accessing the service they needed* (11% disagreed).
- 73% agreed that *the information given was clear and easy to follow* (11% disagreed).
- 71% agreed that *their enquiry or request for resolved in a timely manner* (27% disagreed).
- 71% agreed that *staff were helpful and friendly*
- 42% (19 people) said that there was nothing that could be improved and 29% (13 people) did not know. The main things mentioned were *make easier to contact* (11%), *quicker response* (9%) and *better staff knowledge* (7%)
- The most popular channels to make contact with the Council were email (52%) and telephone (45%).

Cost of Living

- 93% are concerned to some extent (either very concerned, concerned or slightly concerned) about the impact of the cost of living on their household.
- Of most concern were *energy costs* (84%) and *paying monthly bills* (51%).

Grass Cutting

- When given both options, 49% opted to *continue the existing service of regular grass cutting*, while 40% chose *no regular grass cutting to encourage more rewilding of green spaces*.
- 82% said that they would support the 'No Mow May' initiative.

Satisfaction and Priorities

- 96% agreed that they are satisfied (either strongly agree or agree) with their local area as a place to do business.
- This has remained consistent over the last few years.
- 62% of businesses agree (either strongly agree or agree) that they are satisfied with the way Stroud DC runs things.
- This has decreased since 2022 from 70% to 62% and is at its' lowest since 2015.
- 56% of businesses agree that Stroud DC provides value for money.
- Agreement that Stroud DC provides value for money has decreased since 2022 from 66% to 56% and is now at its' lowest since 2015.
- 65% of businesses agree that services provided by Stroud DC have been maintained to a good standard.
- Agreement that services provided by Stroud DC have been maintained to a good standard has decreased since 2022 from 72% to 65%, continuing the downward trend since 2021.
- 74% of businesses either strongly agree or agree that Stroud DC is working to improve the environment.
- This has increased since 2022 from 66% to 74%.
- 55% of businesses agree that Stroud DC cares about the people and businesses that make up their communities.
- *Waste and recycling* (48%), followed by *regulatory support* (45) were the services considered most important to their business sector and should be a focus for SDC.

Summary – Business Survey (Cont.)

Information from Stroud DC

- 51% said that they are kept either very well or fairly well informed about the benefits and services Stroud DC provides.
- This has fallen consistently from 2020, with 2023 seeing a decrease to 51% from 65% in 2022 (much higher percentage of don't know responses in 2023).

Business Support Services

- The 3 most significant issues for businesses currently were *energy costs* (66%), *cost of stock/raw materials* (52%) and *customers* (40%).
- The majority are aware of the *Federation of Small Businesses* (96%), *Chamber of Trade/Commerce* (95%), *Growth Hub* (91%) and *Gloucester LEP* (89%). Awareness was less for *Stroud Business Women's Network* at 51%.
- Awareness of all organisations is higher than in 2022.
- *Rates/rent/licence fee issues* (76%) followed by *support for running costs* (46%) were what businesses felt the Council can do to help facilitate growth and increase employment.
- *Newsletters and communication* (64%), followed by *information on business grants and / or loans* (47%) were the business support service businesses felt should be provided that would have supported their business when starting out or looking for grow.

Summary – Business Survey (Cont.)

Contact

- 9% had contacted the Council recently, either by email (78%) or telephone(78%) (respondents were allowed to select more than one option)
- There were a range of reasons given for contacting the Council including *waste & recycling/street cleaning* (22%), *food safety, health and safety and environmental protection* (17%), *planning* (11%), *parking* (11%) and *business rate issue/rate relief* (11%).
- 78% agreed that they *had no problems accessing the service they needed.*
- 67% agreed that *the information given was clear and easy to follow.*
- 71% agreed that *staff were helpful and I was treated fairly.*
- 56% agreed that they *would be happy to contact Stroud DC again using the same contact method.*
- 33% agreed that *their enquiry or request was resolved in a timely manner and* 66% disagreed (either disagree or strongly disagree).
- The most popular method of receiving communication from the Council was *email* (63%) followed by *letter* (34%) and *newsletter* (16%).
- Only 5% of businesses had seen the Council's website, The Natural Place.

Cost of Living

- The cost of living has had biggest negative impact on businesses *financial situation* (79% *extremely or fairly negative impact*) and *cashflow* (72%), followed by *supply chain* (67%), *your customers/ customer spend* (66%) and *employees* (56%).

Summary – Business Survey (Cont.)

Recruitment

- 11% of businesses said that they were struggling to recruit employees.
- Of those who were, 55% were struggling to recruit skilled staff, 18% unskilled and 27% both.

Environment

- 77% said that they were considering the environmental aspect of their business.
- The most popular things that businesses were doing were *reducing energy use* (68%), *introducing environmentally friendly policies* (51%), *monitoring environmental impact* (40%), *using renewable energy* (25%), *educating employees* (21%), *prioritising eco-friendly suppliers* (19%).

Digital and Online Visibility

- 69% of businesses said that they had an online presence (78% in 2022).
- The most popular was *website* (99%), *Facebook* (38%), *Instagram* (13%), *LinkedIn* (12%) and *X (Twitter)* (10%)