Stroud District Council Resident and Business Satisfaction Survey 2025

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

PHOENIX MRC
INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

Survey Methodology Overview

Residents

Interviewing via: Total 507

Telephone (CATI)
- 347 residents

Face-to face
- 160 residents, top up interviews to help achieve quotas

Representative samples were achieved using quotas:

Quotas for
- Age: 18-34, 35-54, 55-74, 75+
- Sex: Male, Female, Prefer not to say
- Location: 27 wards grouped into 8 areas

Results are benchmarked against:
- Previous 5 years of the council Satisfaction & Budget surveys
- Latest available LGA's national findings - October 2024
- Questionnaire design and interviewing methodologies followed rigorous LGA guidelines to enable like-for-like comparison with LGA data

Business

Interviewing via: Total 202

Telephone (CATI)
- 202 business decision makers

Representative samples were achieved using quotas:

Quota on business size
- Micro: Fewer than 10 employees
- 10 – 49 employees
- 50 or more employees

Results are benchmarked against:
- Previous 5 years of the council Satisfaction & Budget surveys

Qualitative enrichment of survey data

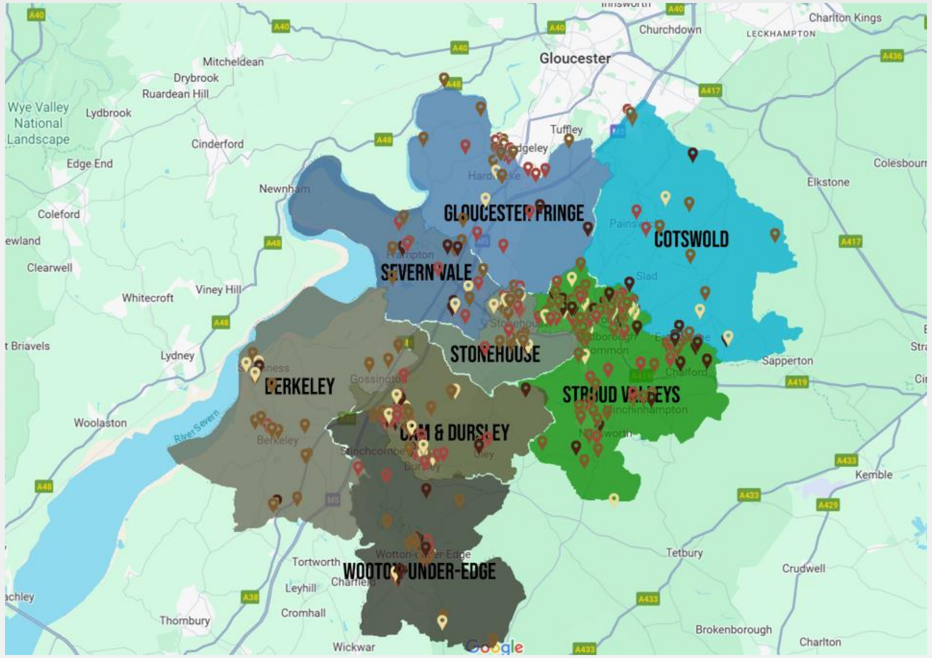
Open-ended responses were coded by hand, in context, drawing from the full questionnaire to provide deeper insights

Survey Methodology: Mapping participants

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Residents

Area by age



18-35

35-54

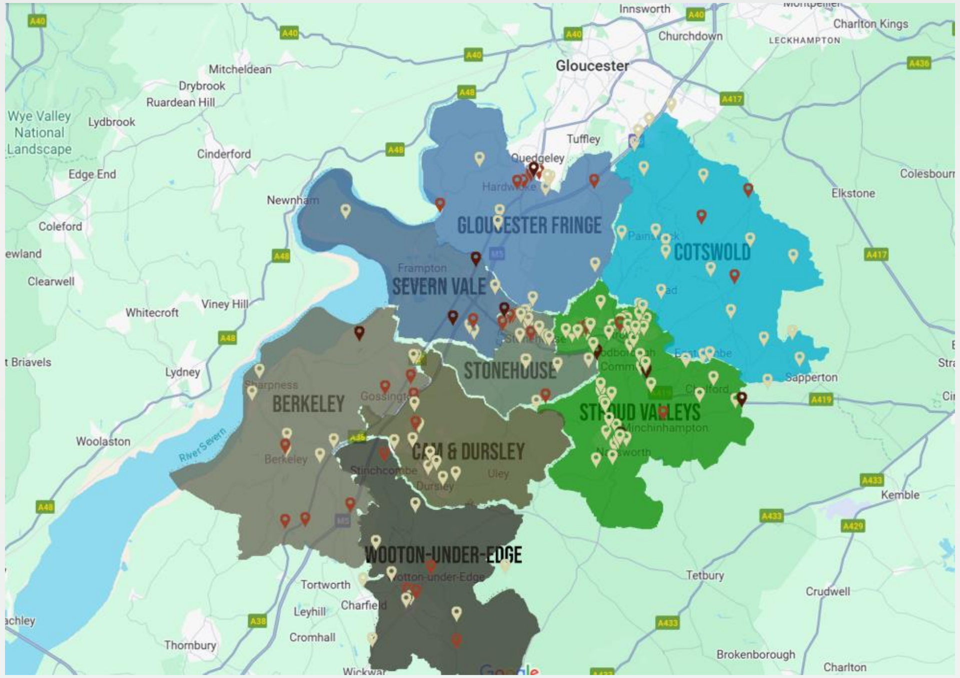
55-74

75+

https://www.batchgeo.com/map/PMRC_SDC_Residential2025

Business

Location by number of employees



Fewer than 10

10 to 49

50+

https://www.batchgeo.com/map/PMRC_SDC_Business2025

Follow the links to see more detail of the geographic distribution of residents and business leaders who participated in the survey.

PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

507 residential & 202 business interviews completed

- Fieldwork carried out between September 1st and October 15th 2025
- All fieldwork carried out to MRS Code of Conduct, ISO 20252 standards and strict GDPR confidentiality
- Charts highlight significant differences by age, sex and location subgroups

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Residents **507** completed

Age	Target	Actual	Sex registered at birth	Target	Actual	27 wards grouped into 8 areas	Target	Actual
18-34	20%	**17%**	Male	48%	**46%**	Severn Vale	5%	**5%**
35-54	32%	**33%**	Female	52%	**53%**	Stonehouse	10%	**12%**
55-74	34%	**35%**	Prefer not to say	-	**0.4%**	Stroud Valleys	41%	**44%**
75+	14%	**15%**				Cam & Dursley	15%	**13%**
						Glos Fringe	13%	**11%**
						Berkeley	6%	**6%**
						Wotton-Under-Edge	8%	**7%**
						Cotswold	2%	**2%**
Total	100%	**100%**		100%	**100%**		**100%**	**100%**

Businesses **202** completed

Size	Target	Actual
Micro (10 or fewer employees)	70%	**74%**
Larger than micro (More than 10 employees)	30%	**26%**

Size	Target	Actual
Small 10-49	25%	**22%**
Medium 50-249	3%	**4%**
Large 250+	2%	**1%**

PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

Summary Findings: Residents

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Stroud District Council’s performance rated higher than the national average

- Across all measures compared, especially *Trust in the council* and *Satisfaction with the Area as a place to live,* 18% higher
- *Value for money* was the weakest area (52%), but still considerably better than the national average (36%)
- Local authority ratings have generally declined over last 5 years, accelerated since 2023. Stroud District Council ratings have consistently outperformed them

Stroud District rated highly as a place to live

- 92% satisfied with their area, higher than the national average
- Strong sense of belonging (86%)
- Little change in recent years

Cost of living impact

- 4 in 5 now concerned about cost of living impact
- *Monthly bills* and *Energy bills* dominate
- 4 in 10 under 35s concerned with *cost of housing*
- *Food costs* entered list of concerns this year (11%)

Contact and communication with the council

- Just over half of residents felt *well-informed by the council*. Residents aged 18-34 felt least informed vs other age groups
- 48% of residents had contacted the council in the last year, most frequently by phone or email
- Email was the most preferred method of contact from the council
- Council staff found to be *helpful & efficient*, but the time *taken to resolve enquiries* was the weakest aspect of contact with the council

Bridging the funding gap

- 69% of residents felt *Prioritising essential services* was the most preferred method to bridge the funding gap

Summary Findings: Business (1 of 2)

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Business sentiment about the council

- 6 in 10 businesses were *Satisfied with the way council runs things and* that *Services have been maintained to a good standard*
- 8 in 10 businesses were *Satisfied as a place to do business*
- Businesses rated the council slightly less highly than residents
- 27% of businesses didn't feel well informed by the council, a sharp drop since last year

Online presence

- 4 in 5 micro businesses have online presence; Nearly all (98%) larger businesses do
- 98% of businesses with an online presence have a website
- 2 out of 3 businesses with an online presence use social media as a tool
- 45% of businesses with an online presence offer online booking and/ or shopping

Communication with the council

- Email was most used method of contacting the council
- 7 in 10 businesses made no contact in the last 12 months
- Main reasons businesses contacted the council: *Rates*, followed by *Planning, Licensing and Waste or recycling*
- Businesses' Satisfaction with contact declined this year, on average by 11%
- *Timely resolution* the biggest issue, with 33% saying they were dissatisfied
- 1 in 3 businesses use the council website, 80% of those who used it were positive about it

PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

Summary Findings: Business (2 of 2)

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Business challenges & priorities

- Negative impacts of cost of living businesses identified were on their *Financial situation, Increasing overheads* and *Customer spend*
- Businesses identified *Staff recruitment* as an issue less frequently than in 2024
- 35% of businesses want the council to support with reduced rates, twice as many as in 2024
- Businesses mentioned *More marketing, Road repairs and Better parking* as ways the council could support tourism

Real living wage

- 75% of businesses now claim to pay the real living wage, up from 55% last year
- 89% of businesses with more than 10 employees pay the real living wage
- Only 11% were registered on the Real Living Wage website

Environmental action

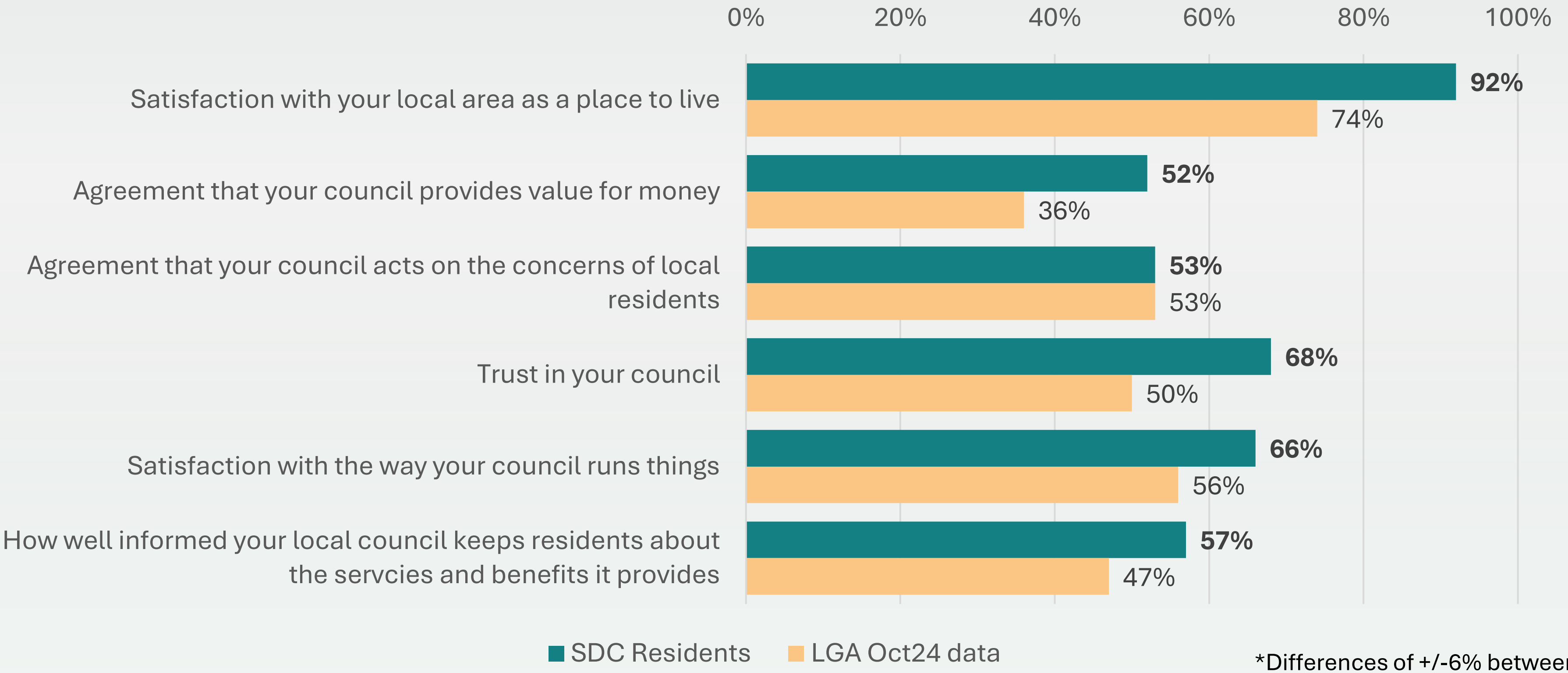
- 6 in 10 businesses are working to reduce energy use
- 49% have eco-friendly policies
- Businesses said the council could help with more grants (33%) or information (33%)

PHOENIX MRC
INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

Residents’ findings

Comparison of Stroud District residents to national sample - Summary

- The council scored significantly better than the national average
- Notably, *Trust in your council* and *Satisfaction with your local area as a place to live* were both 18% higher than the LGA findings



Percentage difference Stroud District to LGA*

Stroud District +18%

Stroud District +16%

Stroud District +0%

Stroud District +18%

Stroud District +10%

Stroud District +10%

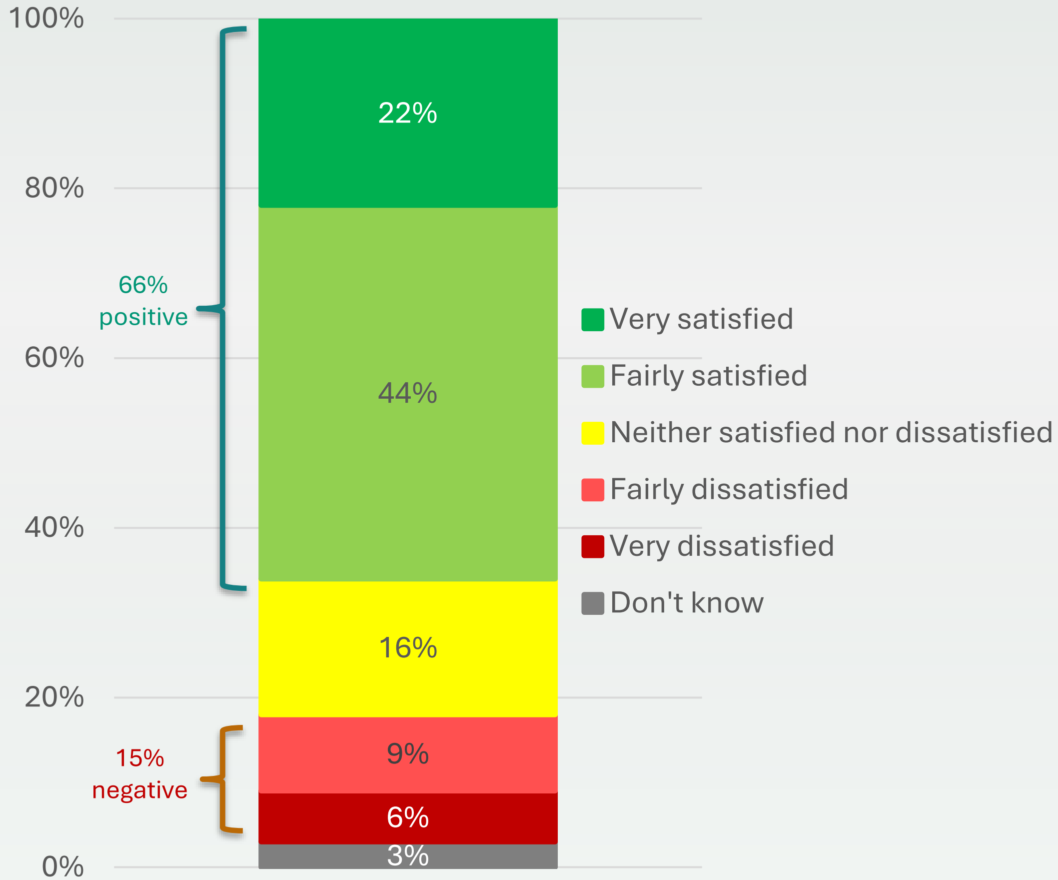
*Differences of +/-6% between the Stroud District 2025 sample and the LGA Oct 24 sample are statistically significant

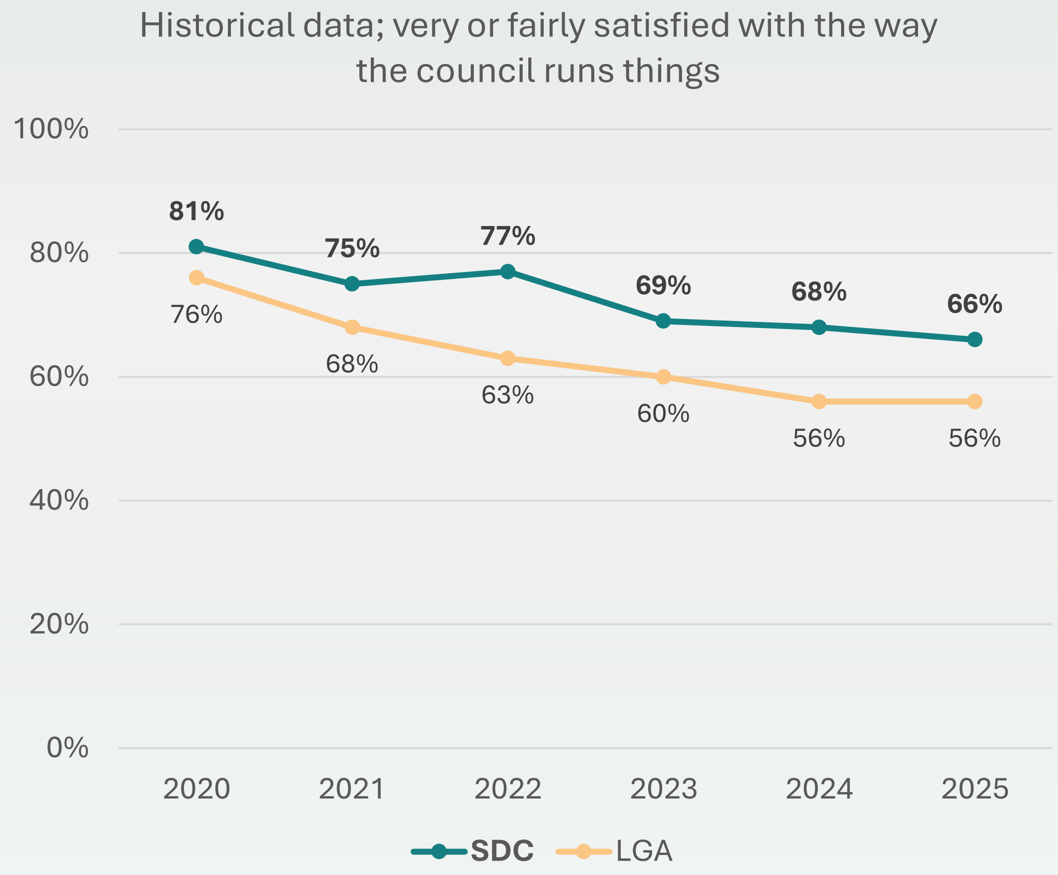
Questions from “Are you being served?”
Base: Stroud District Residents (507), LGA Oct24 Round 39 (1000)

Satisfaction with the way the council runs things

- 66% of residents were happy with the way the council runs things
- Slightly lower than in 2024 but higher than the national average
- Negligible difference within any subgroup

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL





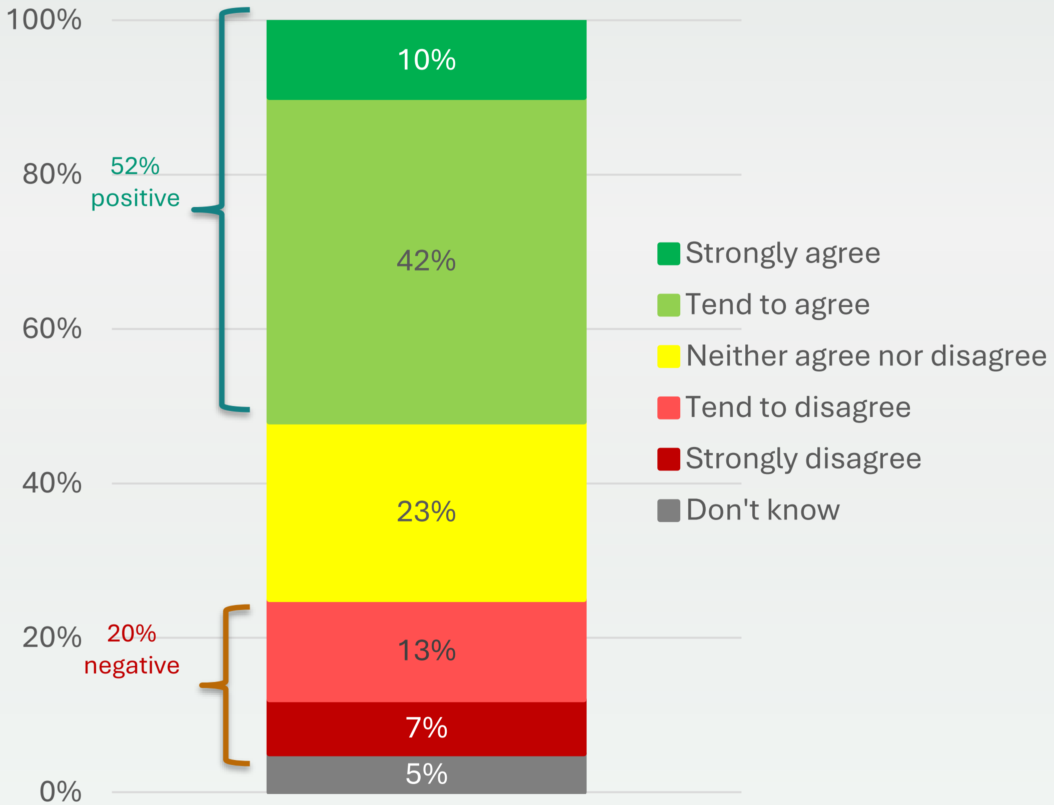
Q2: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Stroud District Council runs things?
Base: Stroud District Residents (507), LGA Oct24 Round 39 (1000)

PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

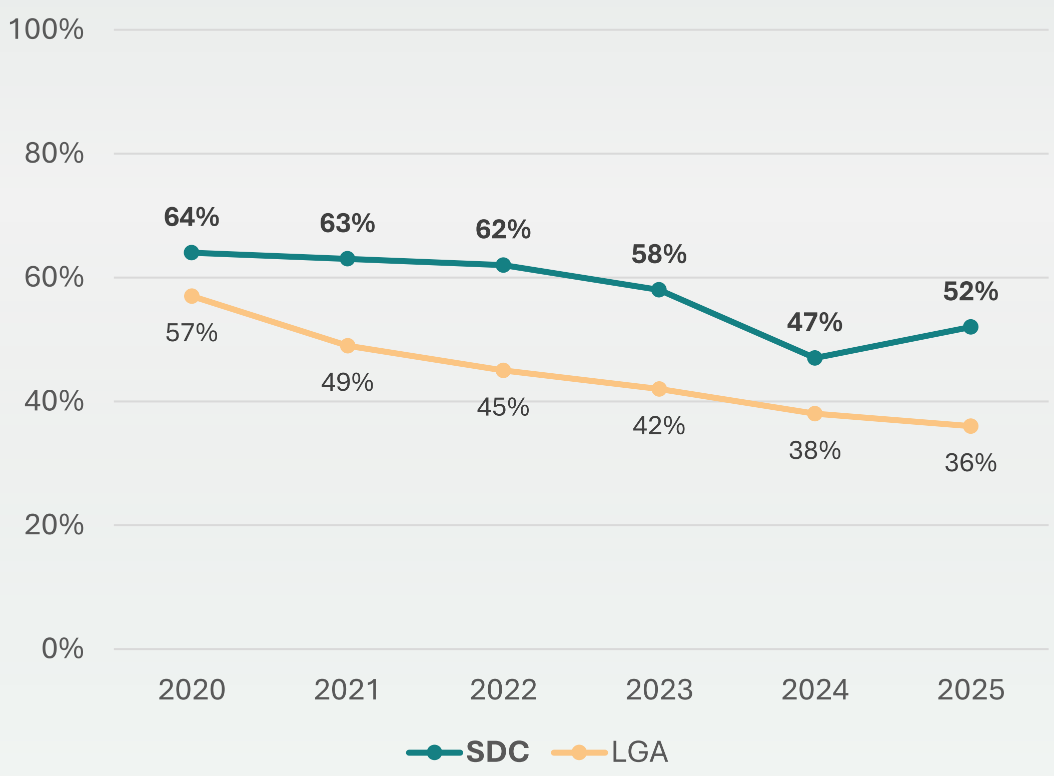
Agreement that the council provides value for money

- 52% agreed *that the council provides value for money*
- Slightly higher than in 2024 but significantly higher than the national average
- Those aged 35-54 agreed least (46%)

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL



Historical data; strongly or tend to agree that the council provides value for money

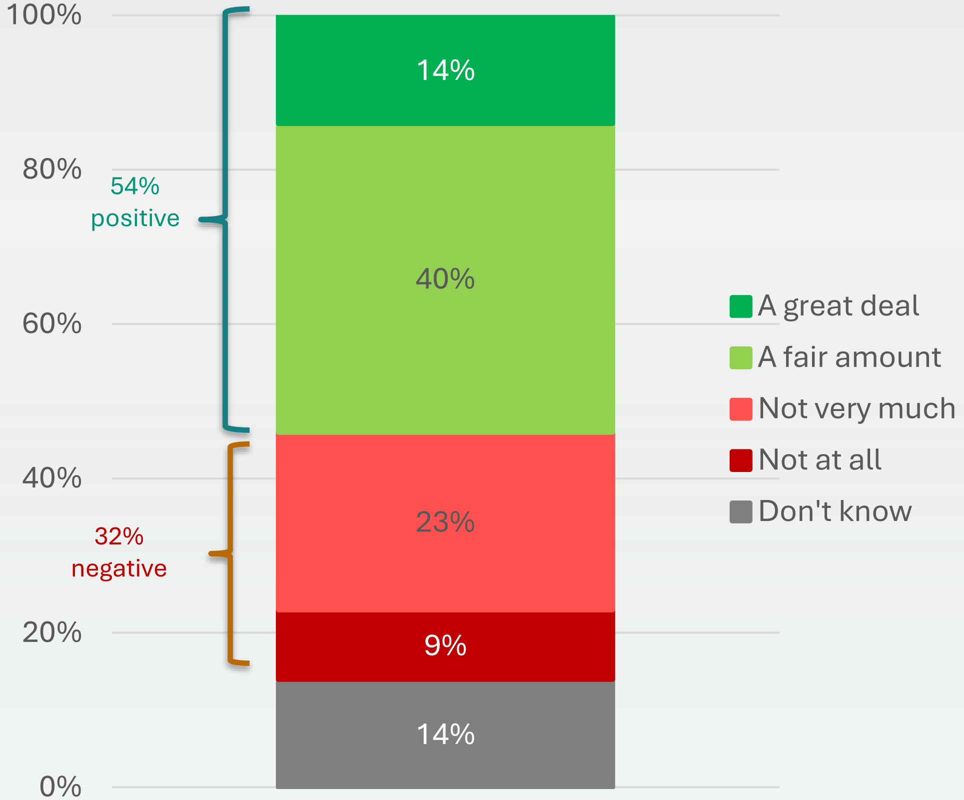


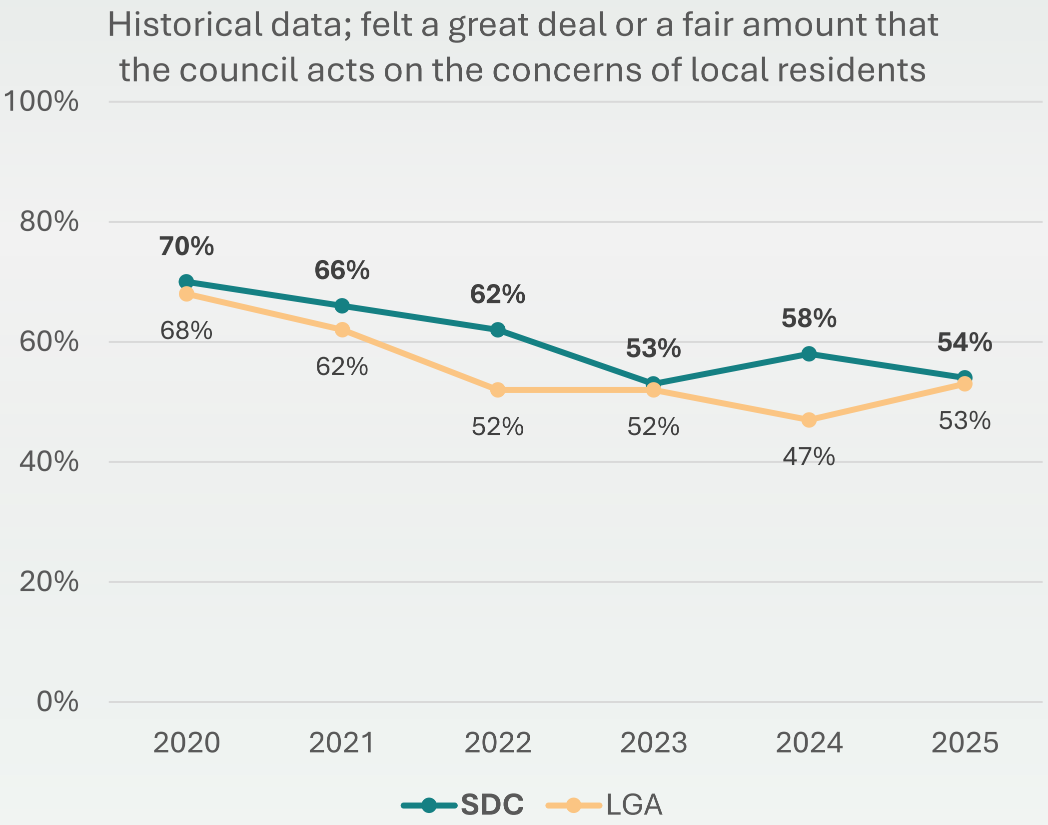
Q3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that Stroud District Council provides value for money?
Base: Stroud District Residents (507), LGA Oct24 Round 39 (1000)

PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

How much the council acts on concerns of local residents

- 54% of residents agreed that the council does *act on their concerns,* same as for national average
- No differences across different subgroups in Stroud District

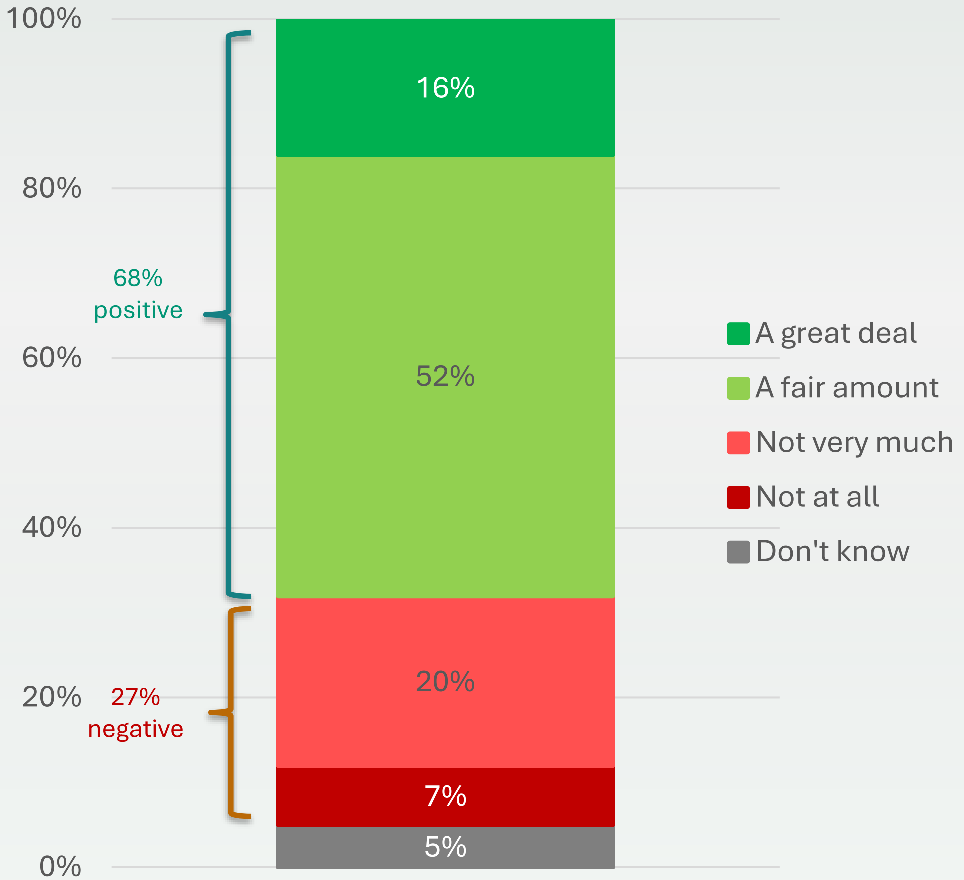


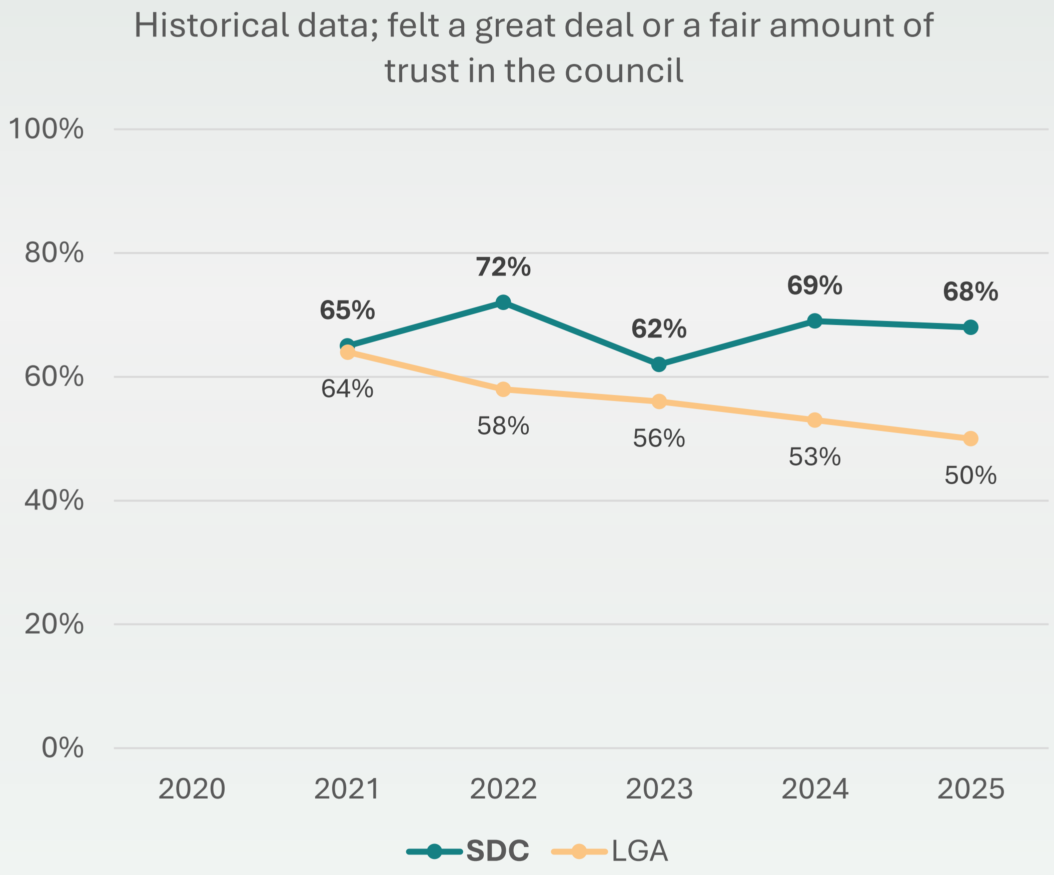


Q4: To what extent do you think Stroud District Council acts on the concerns of local residents?
Base: Stroud District Residents (507), LGA Oct24 Round 39 (1000)

Amount of trust in the council

- 68% of residents agreed they *trusted the council* in 2025
- While levels of trust across the nation continue to fall year on year, *trust for the council* continues to be significantly higher than the national average

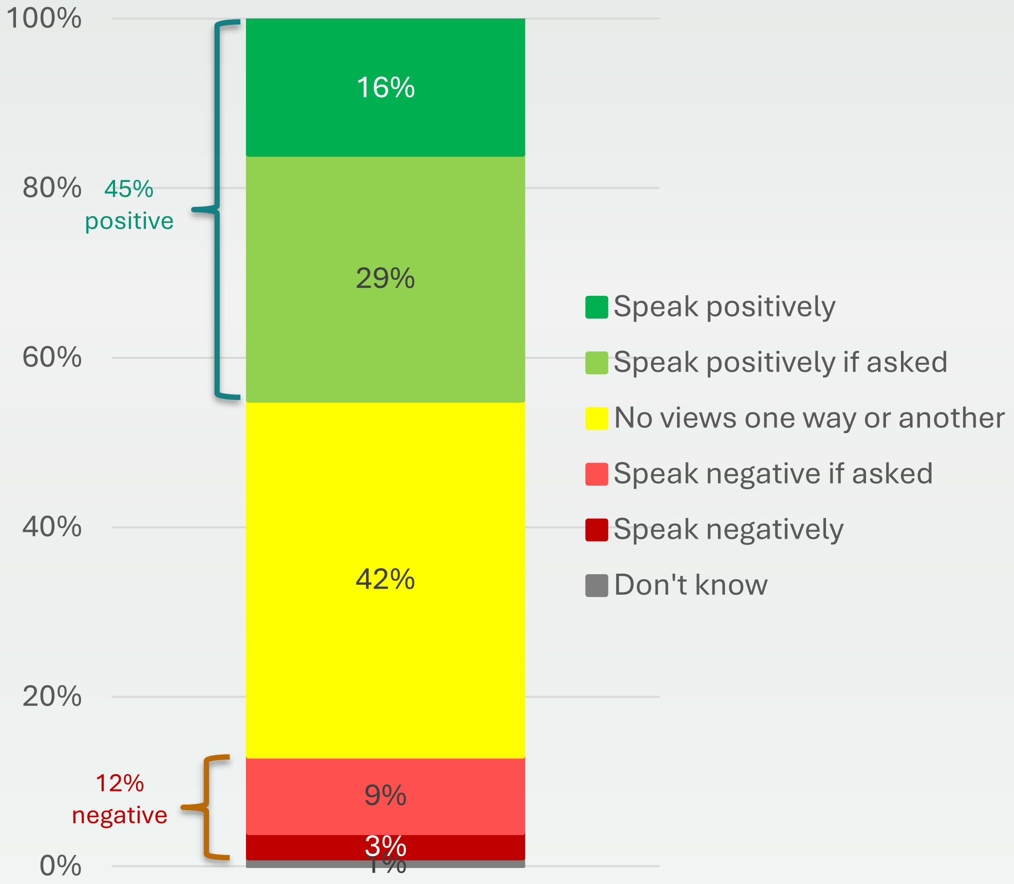


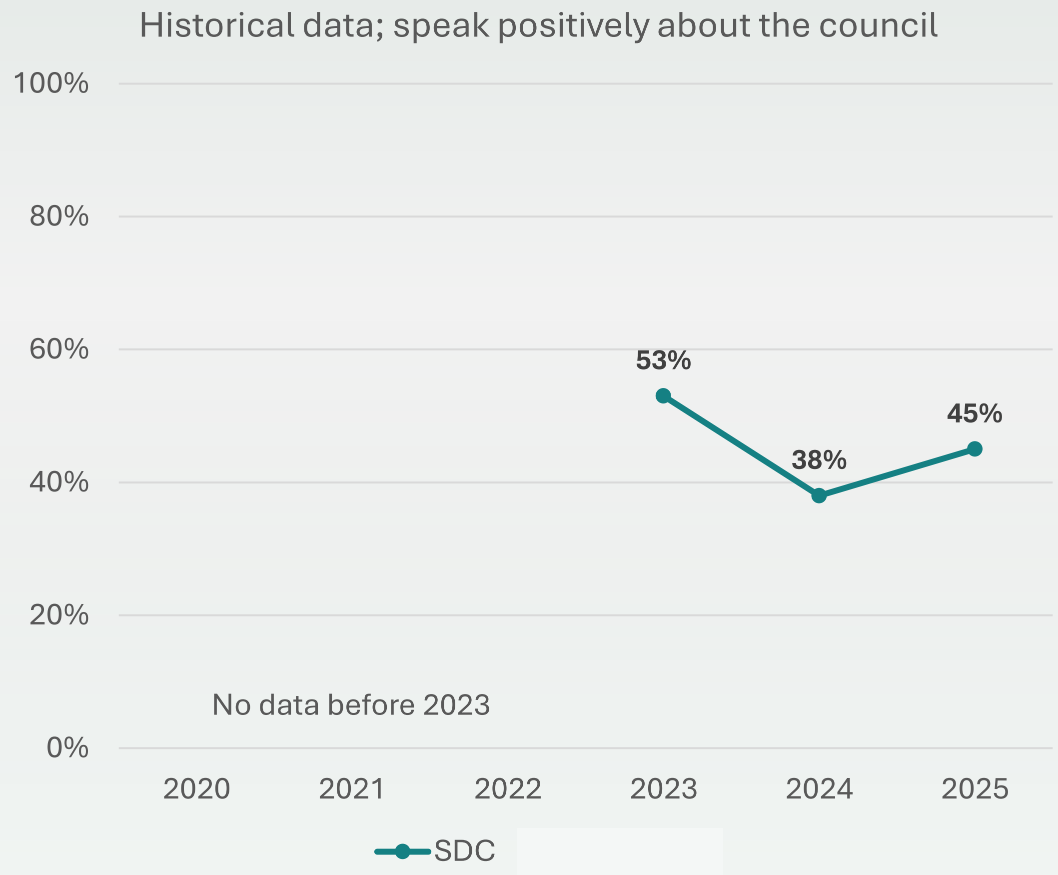


Q10: How much do you trust Stroud District Council?
Base: Stroud District Residents (507), LGA Oct24 Round 39 (1000)

Speak positively or negatively about the council

– 45% *speak positively about the council*, a significant increase from 38% in 2024
– Just 12% had a negative view, the same as in 2024

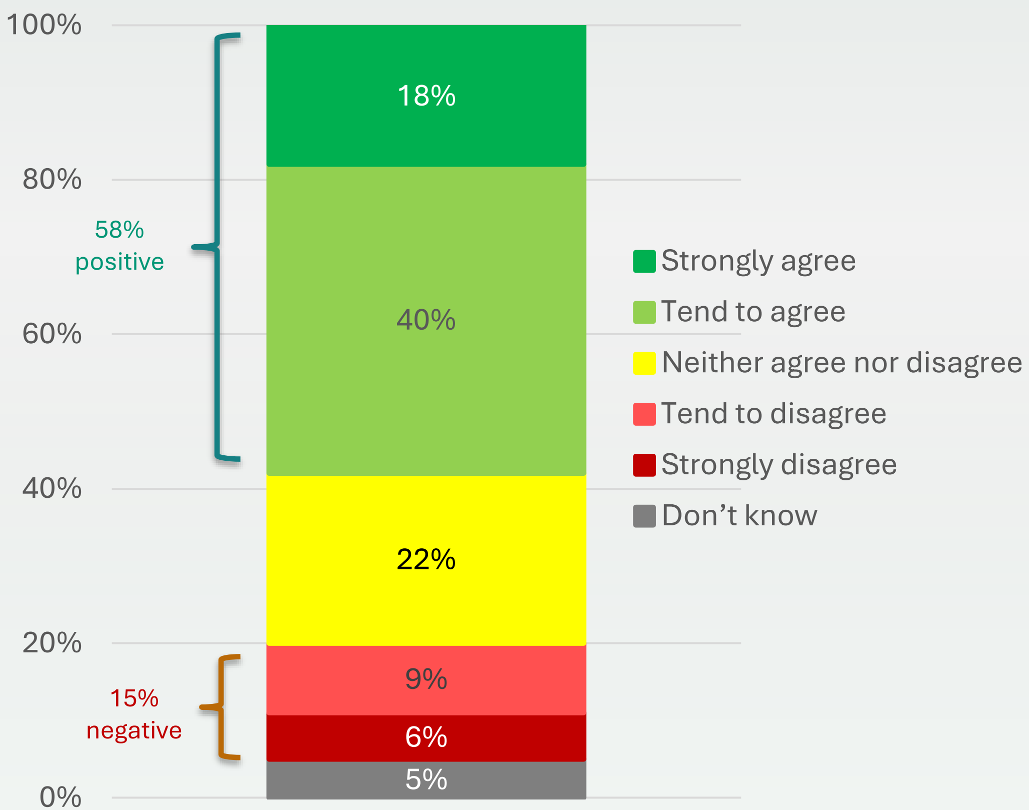


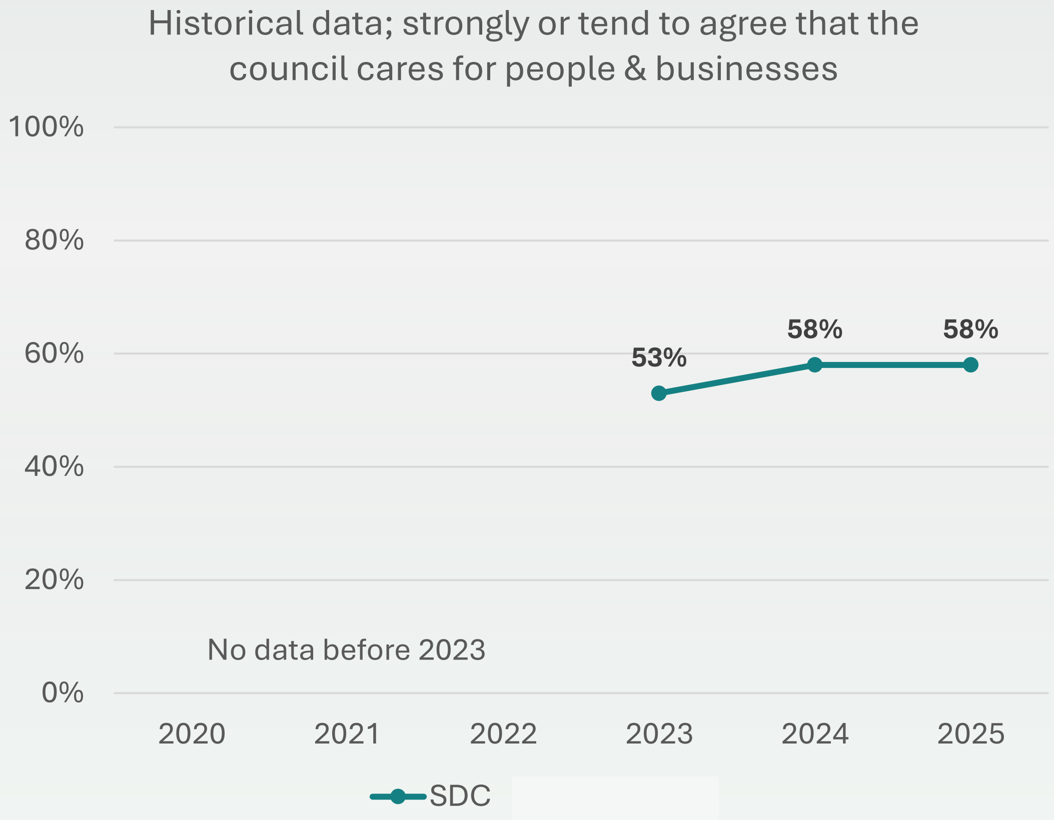


Q9: On balance, which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel about Stroud District Council?
Base: All (507)

The council cares about people and businesses in our communities

- 58% of residents agreed that the council cares about the people & businesses in the community, same as in 2024
- Same across all subgroups in Stroud District

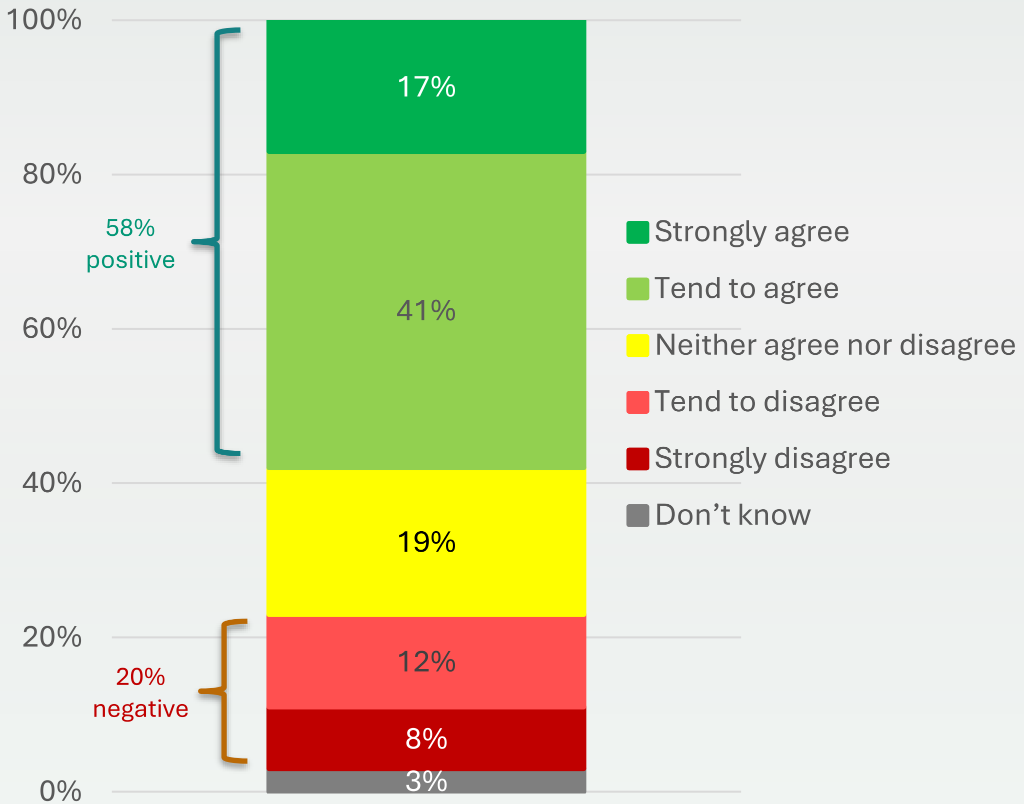


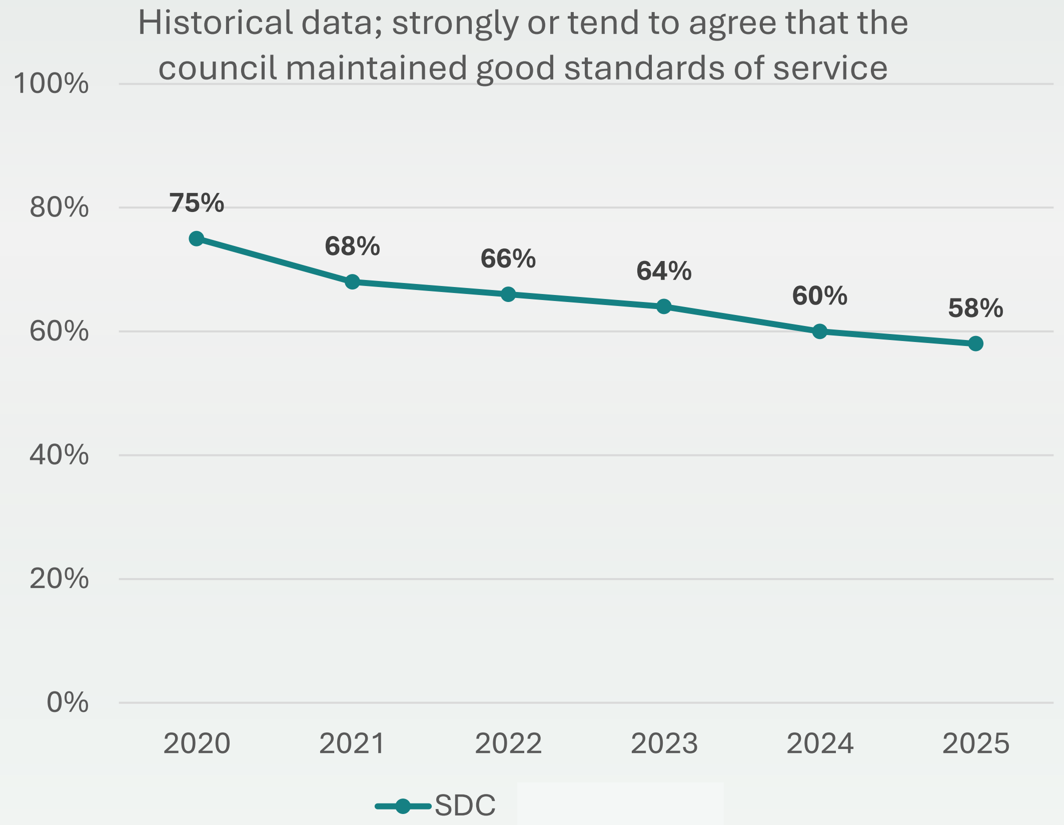


Q14.a: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I believe that Stroud District Council cares about the people and businesses that make up our communities
Base: All (505)

The council has *maintained services to a good standard over past few years*

- 58% of residents agreed that services provided by the council are maintained to a good standard
- Slightly lower than in 2024, another year of gradual decline
- Middle aged residents (aged 35-74) were slightly less likely to agree compared to younger (18-34) or older (75+) residents

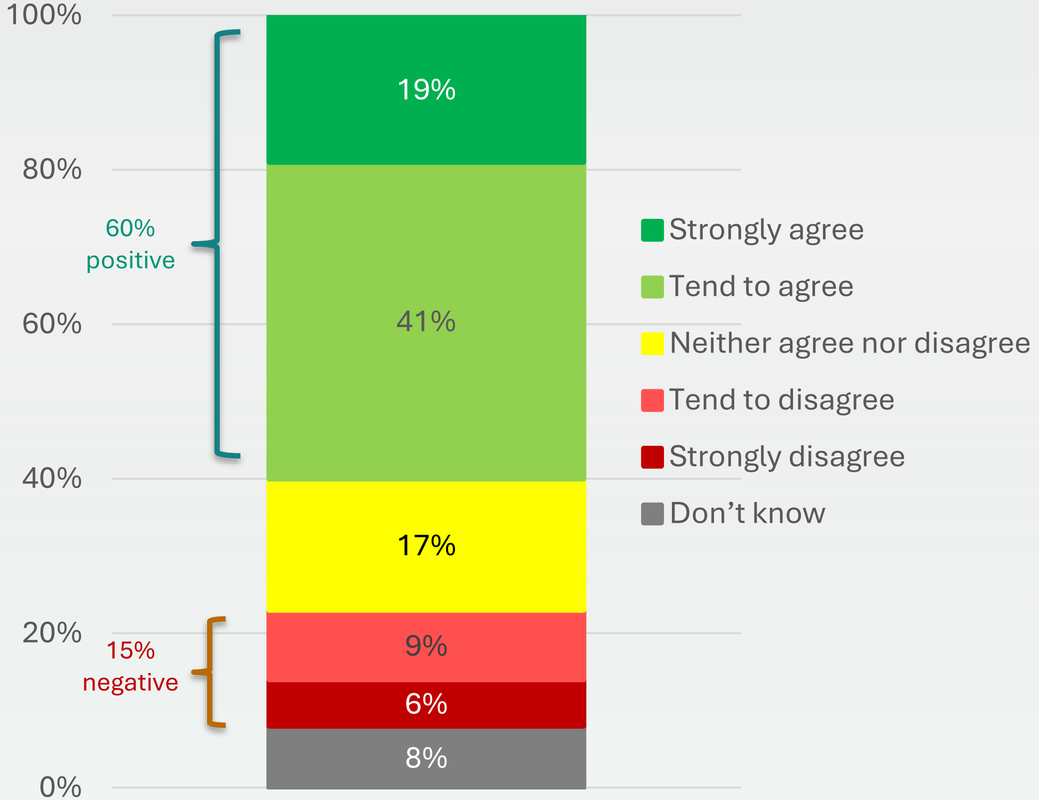


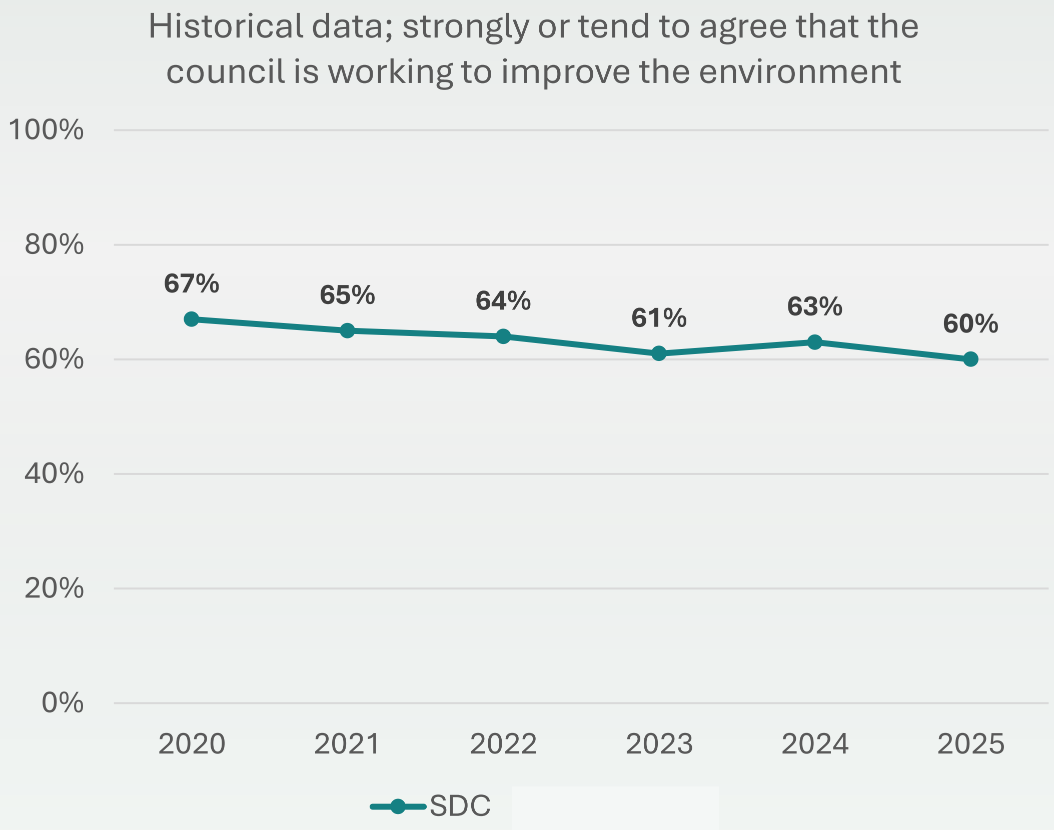


Q14.b: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Overall during the past few years, the services provided by Stroud District Council have been maintained to a good standard
Base: All (505)

The council is working to improve the environment

- 3 out of 5 residents (60%) agreed that the council *is working to improve the environment*
- Similar pattern to previous years
- Same across all age, sex and area groups in the council



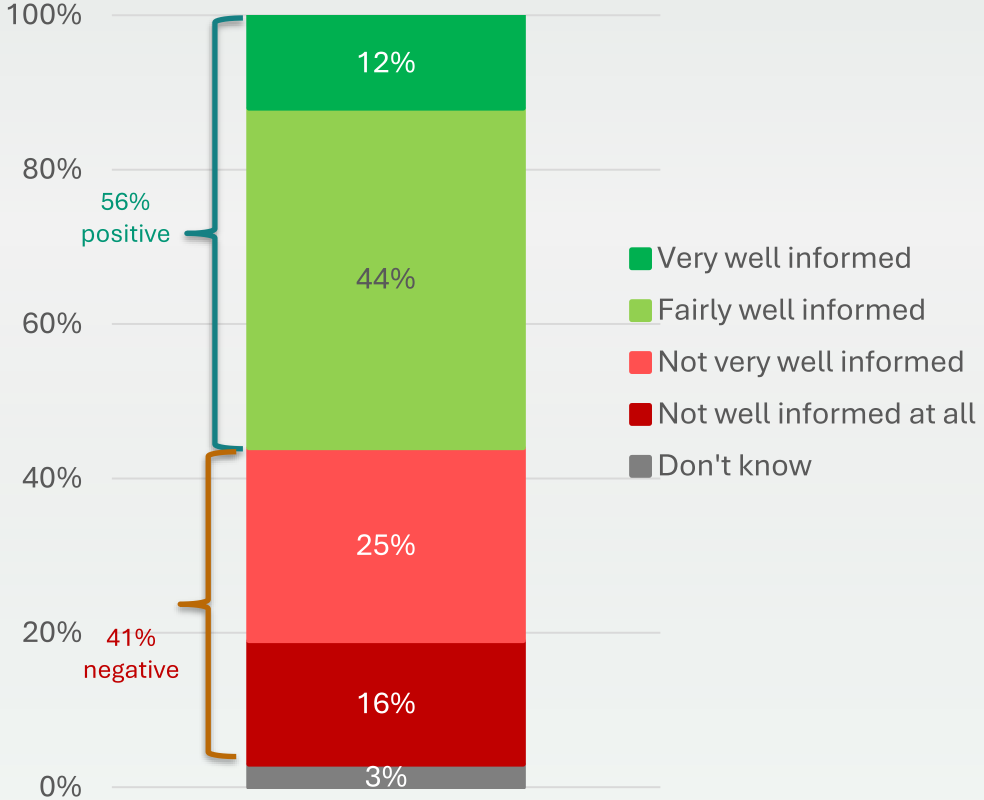


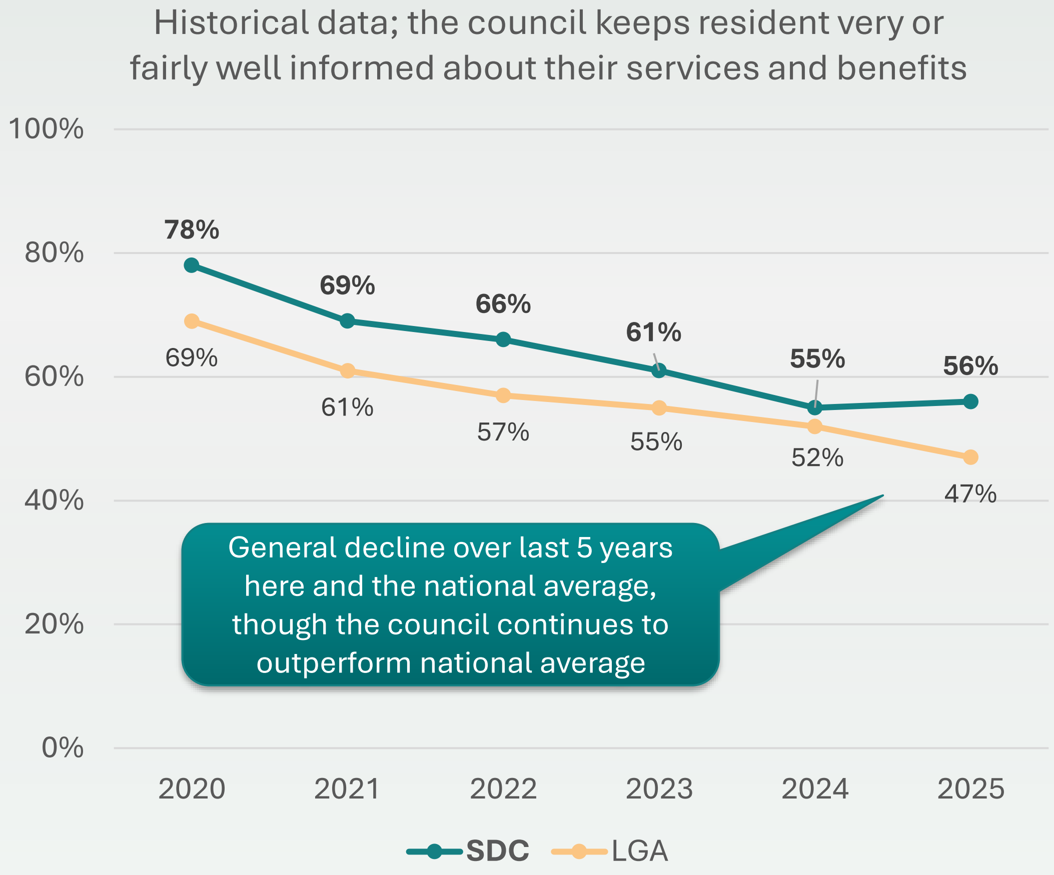
Q14.c: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Overall, I am satisfied that Stroud District Council is working to improve the environment
Base: All (505)

Contact with the council

Stroud District Council keeps residents well informed

- Considerable decline over last 5 years, but plateaued this year
- Over half of all residents (56%) *felt well informed*, same as last year
- Lowest amongst those under 35 years (46%), rising with age and so highest amongst those over 75 (64%)

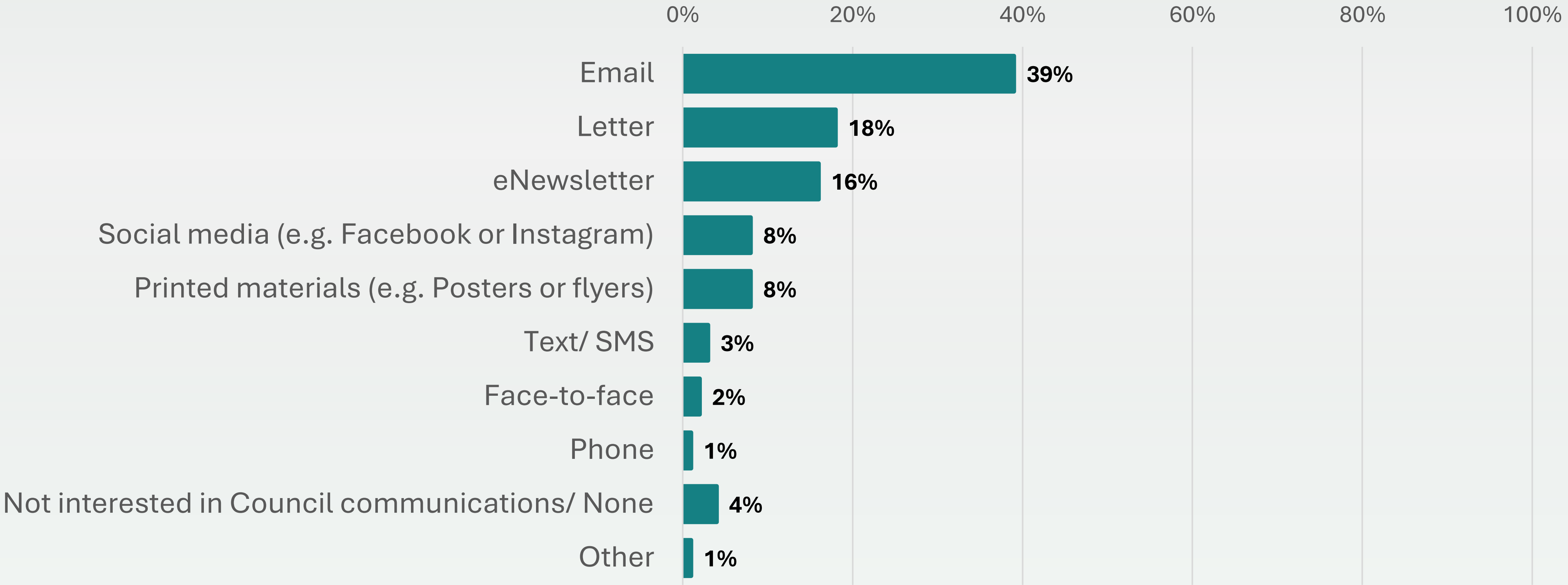




Q5: Overall, how well informed do you think Stroud District Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?
Base: Stroud District Residents (507), LGA Oct24 Round 39 (1000)

How residents *prefer to be kept informed about things happening at the council*

- Electronic communications clearly preferred; *email* the most popular (39%)
- Residents aged under 55 were more likely to prefer *social media* (13% versus those aged over 55 year (4%)
- Residents aged 75+ were more likely to prefer *letters* (30%) compared to those under 75 years of age (17% or less)



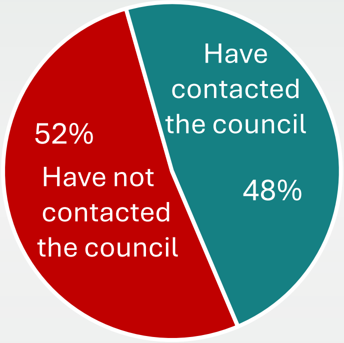
Q6: Which of the following, if any, is your preferred way to be informed about things happening at the council?
Base: All (507)

Contact with the council in last 12 months

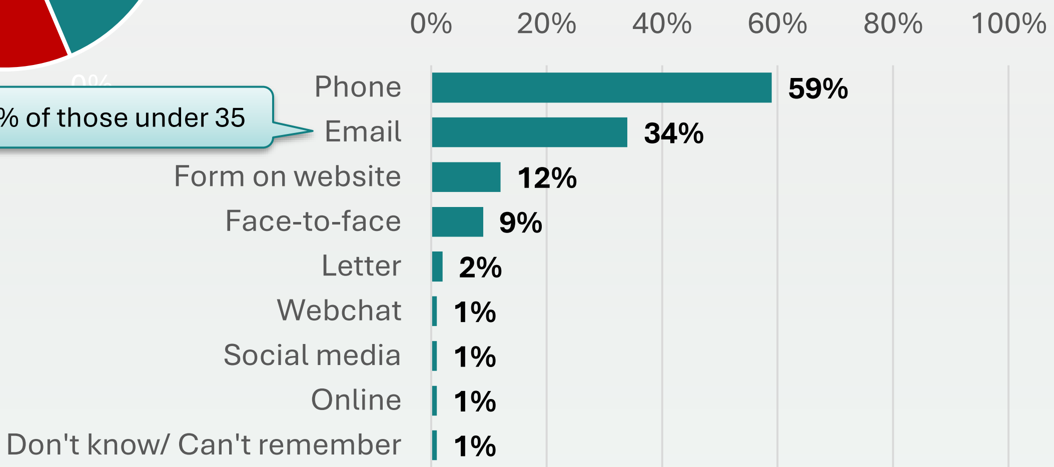
- Just under half had *contacted* the council *in the last year* (48%)
- Slightly higher than in 2024 (43%)
- Primary means of contact were *phone* (59%) or *email* (34%)
- The majority were satisfied with the outcome, but fewest agreed that the council *resolved requests in a timely manner*

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Whether contacted the council (n=507)

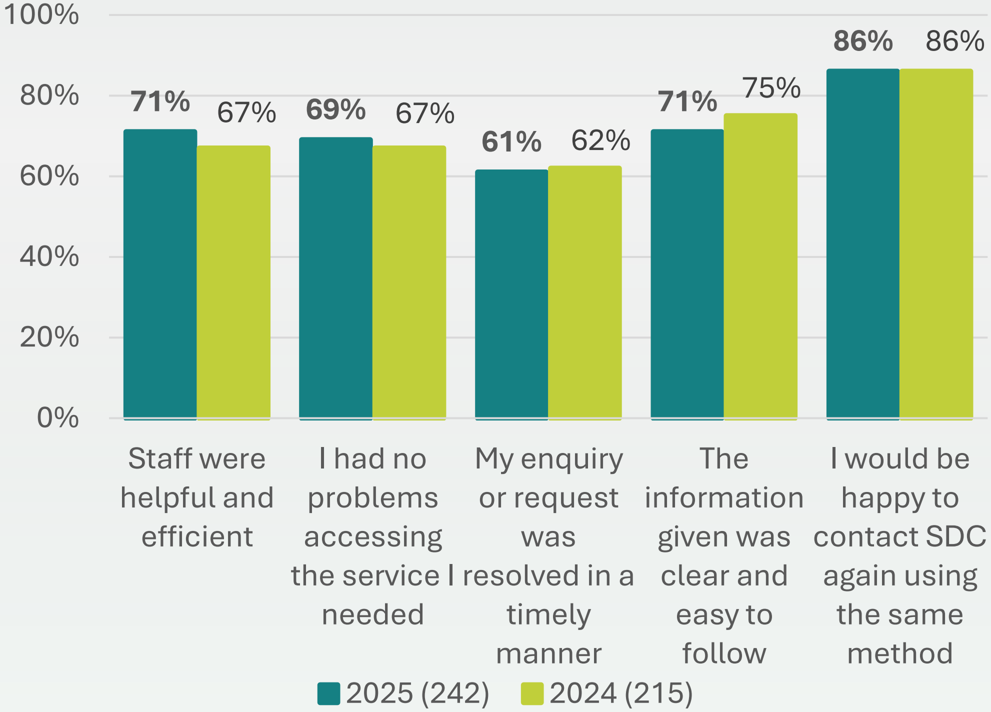


How contacted the council (n=245)



NB: 58% of those under 35

Strongly or tend to agree with experience of contact with the council



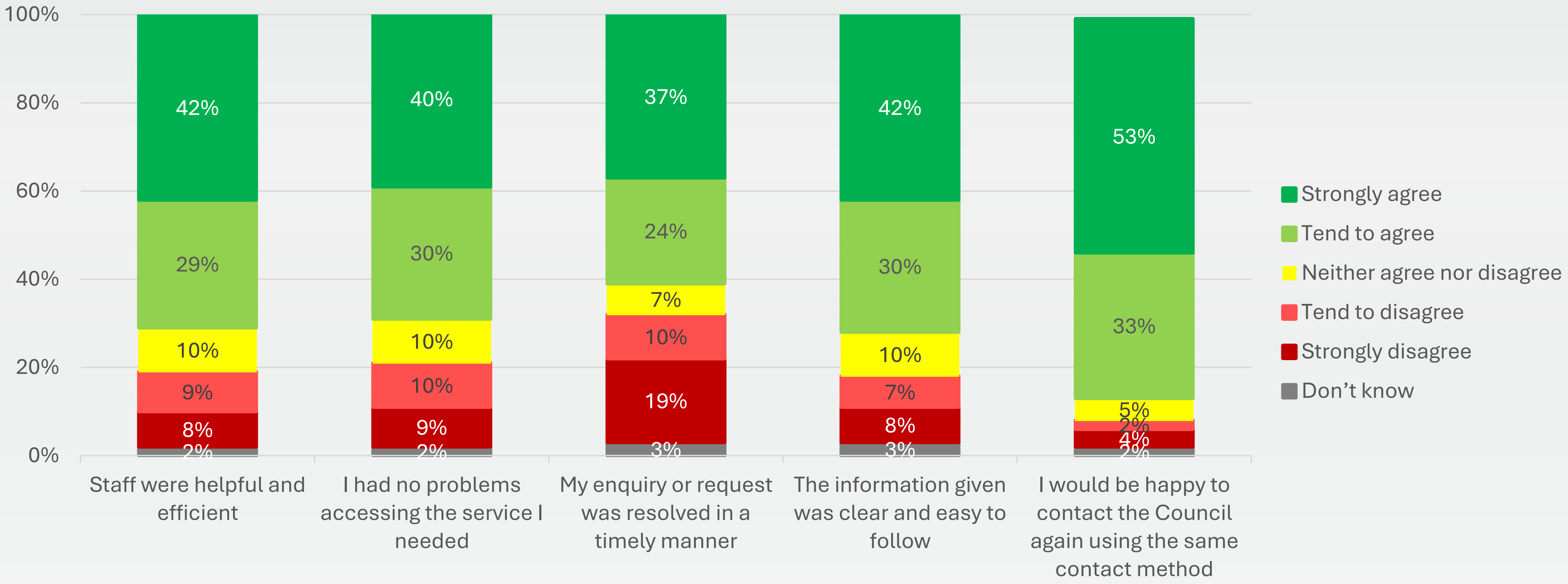
Q7a: Have you contacted the council in the last 12 months using any of the following methods?
Base: Vary, see charts

Q7b: Thinking about your contact with the council, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: Those contacting the council, bases vary, see chart

Views about contact with the council

– Satisfaction was high across all measures (70% - 86%) **except:**
  - *Timely resolution* (60%), the weakest aspect of contact measured
  - Residents in the Northern Cluster area were *significantly less likely to agree Timely resolution* was achieved than residents from other areas

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

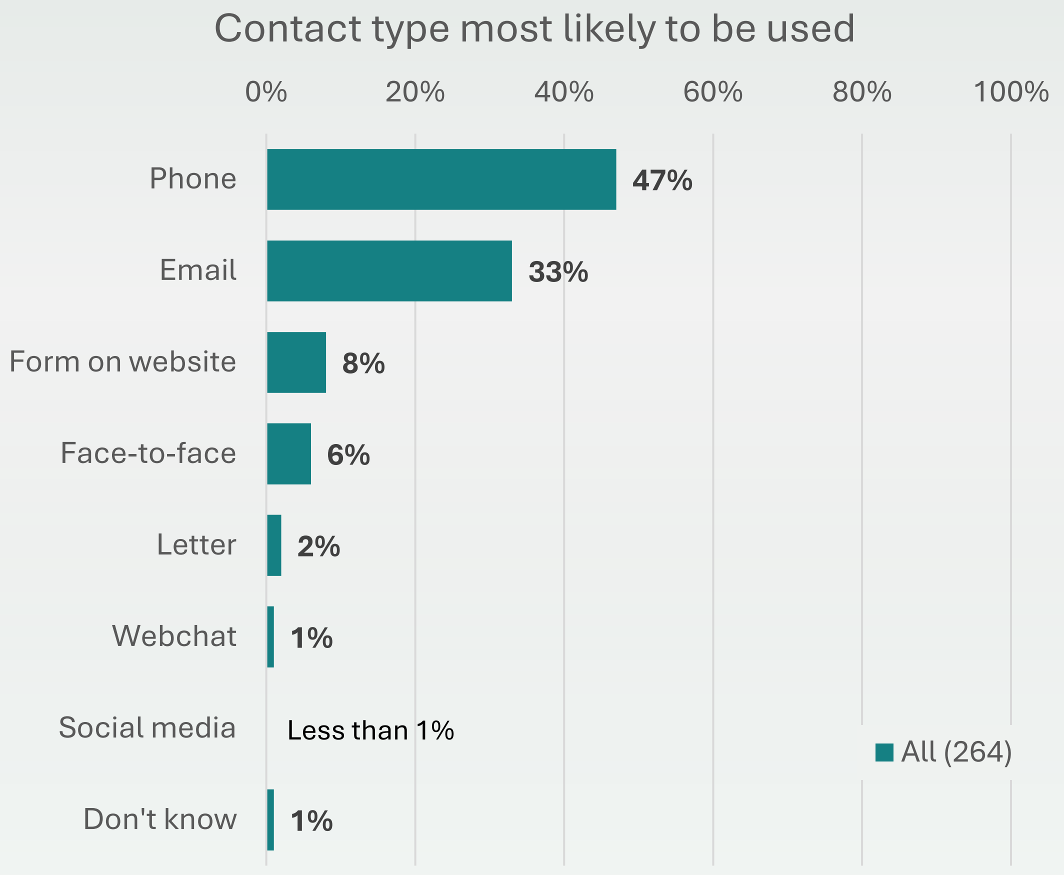


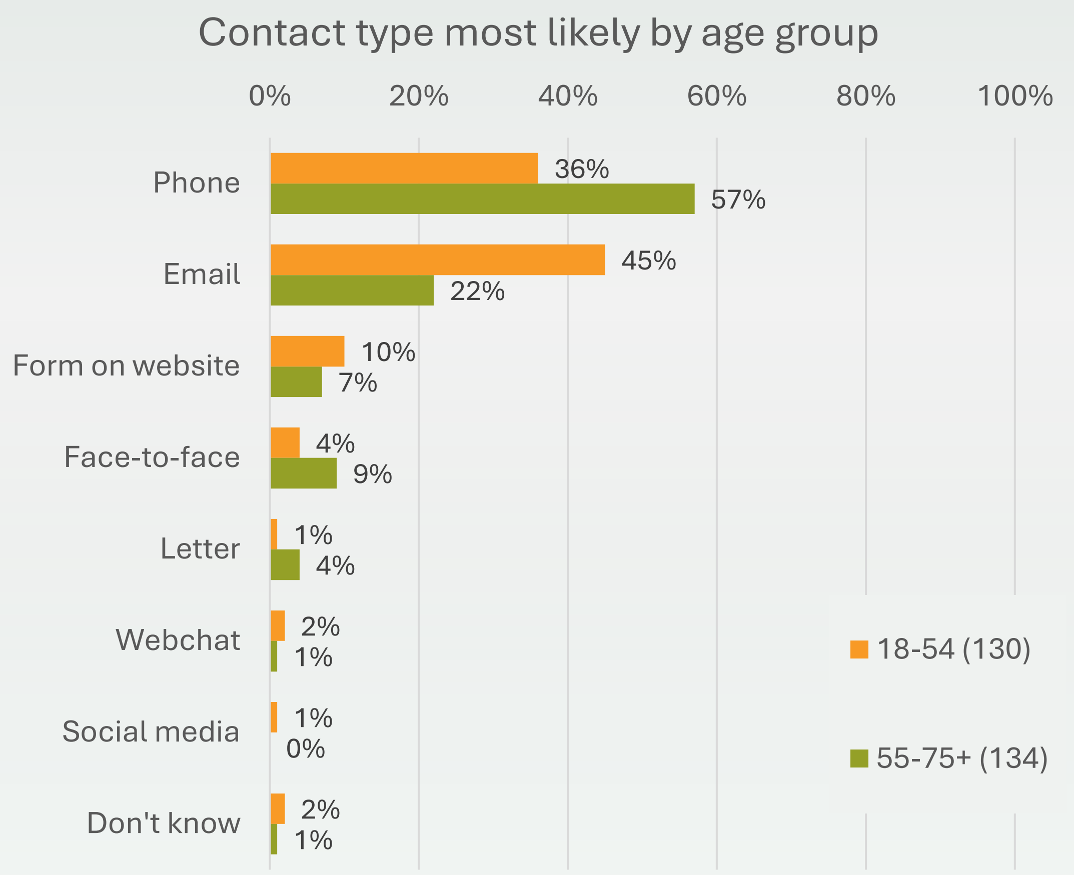
Q7b: Thinking about your contact with the council, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: Those contacting the council (242)

PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

Preferred contact method for those who had NOT made contact

- *Phone* and *email* were the most likely ways they would contact the council
- Note difference across ages: *email* and *phone* preference were reversed by age, i.e. the younger the more likely to use *email* vs *phone*



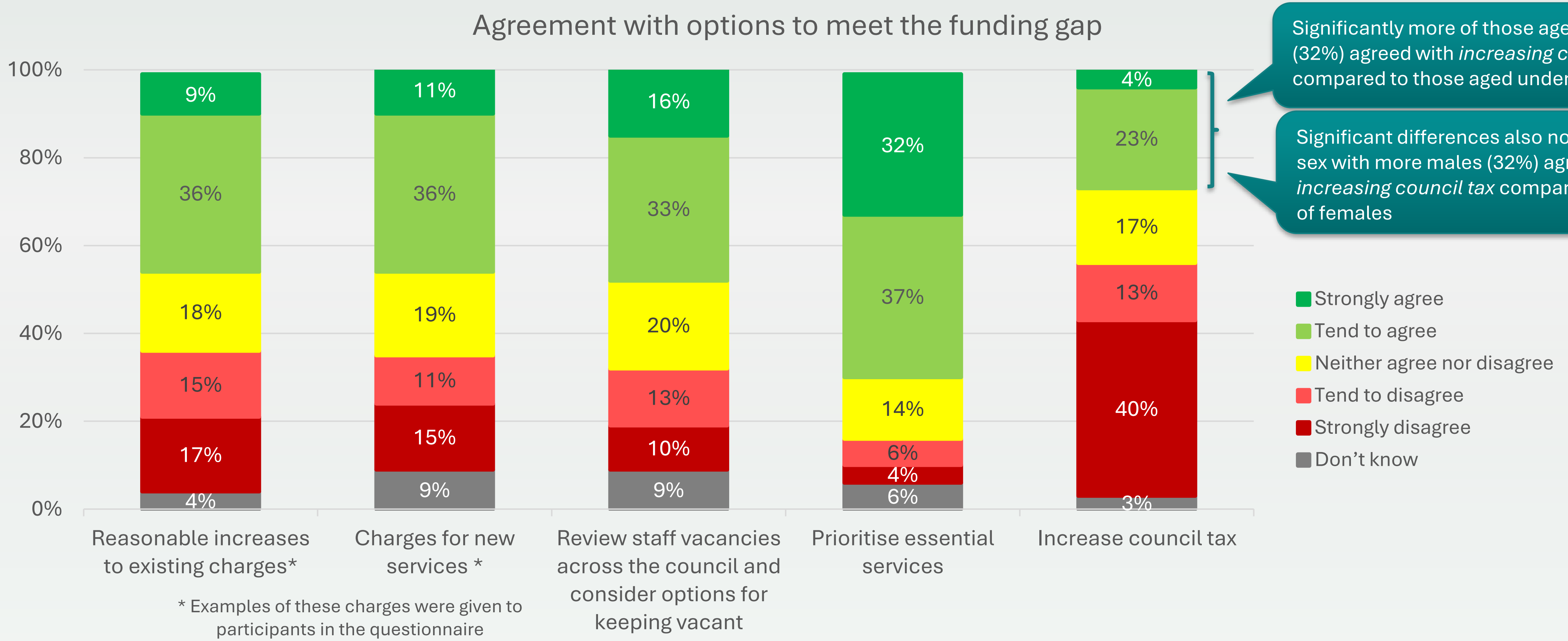


Q7c: If you were to contact the council, which of these would you be most likely to use?
Base: Those not contacting the council (bases vary, see charts)

Council tax funding gap

Options to *bridge the council funding gap*

- *Prioritising essential services* clearly most popular option (69%)
- *Increasing council tax* remained an unpopular choice (28%)
- Just under half supported the other three options presented



Significantly more of those aged over 35 (32%) agreed with *increasing council tax* compared to those aged under 35 (23%)

Significant differences also noted across sex with more males (32%) agreeing with *increasing council tax* compared to 23% of females

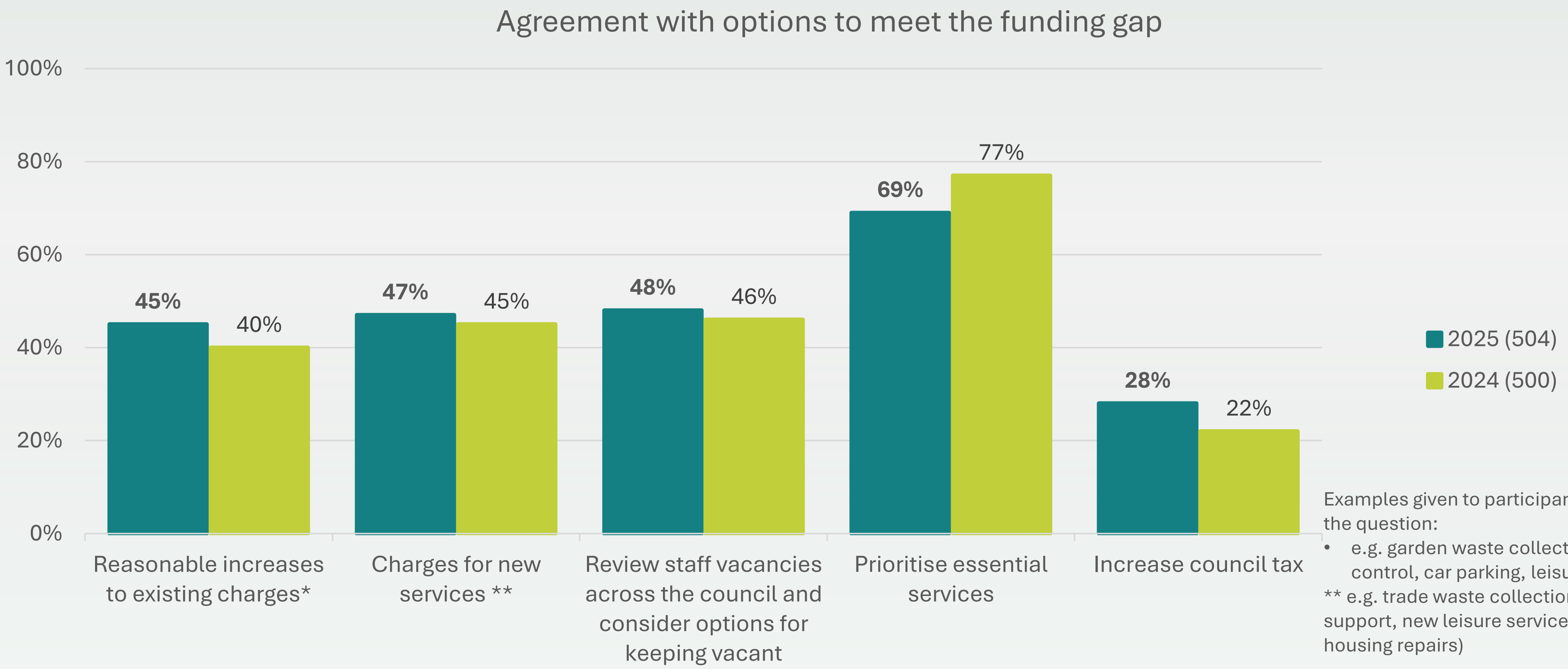
* Examples of these charges were given to participants in the questionnaire

Q15a-e: Residents were informed that, "*Stroud District Council is currently forecasting a gap between its income and expenditure of £2.5 million, 11.7% of its budget, by 2027. This is a result of rising costs and predicted falls in funding levels*". To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following options for the council to consider as part of its plans to meet the funding gap? Base: All (504)

Options to bridge the council funding gap: 2025 vs 2024

- Small increases since 2024 in levels of agreement across all proposals **except:**
  - *Prioritise essential services*. Still most popular but significantly lower now than last year

Information given before the question:
In 2024, residents were informed that, "*Stroud District Council is currently forecasting a gap between its income and expenditure of £3.5 million, 16.7% of its budget, by 2027. This is a result of rising costs and predicted falls in funding levels*"



Examples given to participants before answering the question:
- e.g. garden waste collection, room hire, pest control, car parking, leisure centre fees)

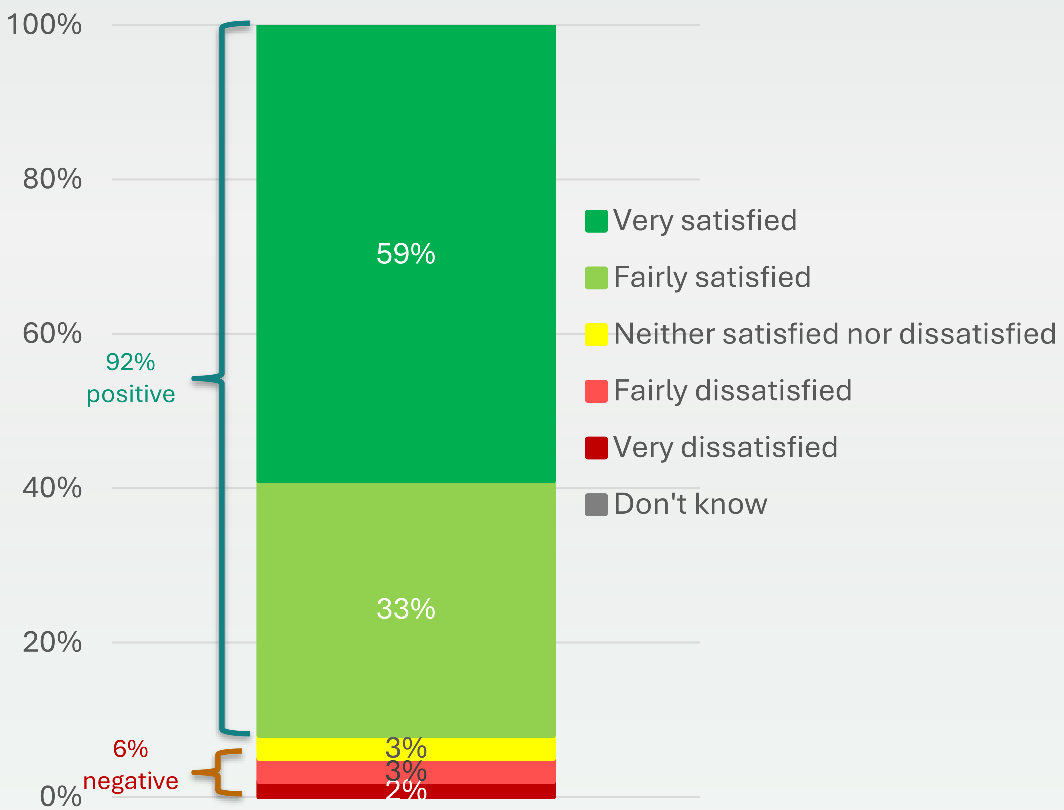
** e.g. trade waste collection, carbon reduction support, new leisure services, private sector housing repairs)

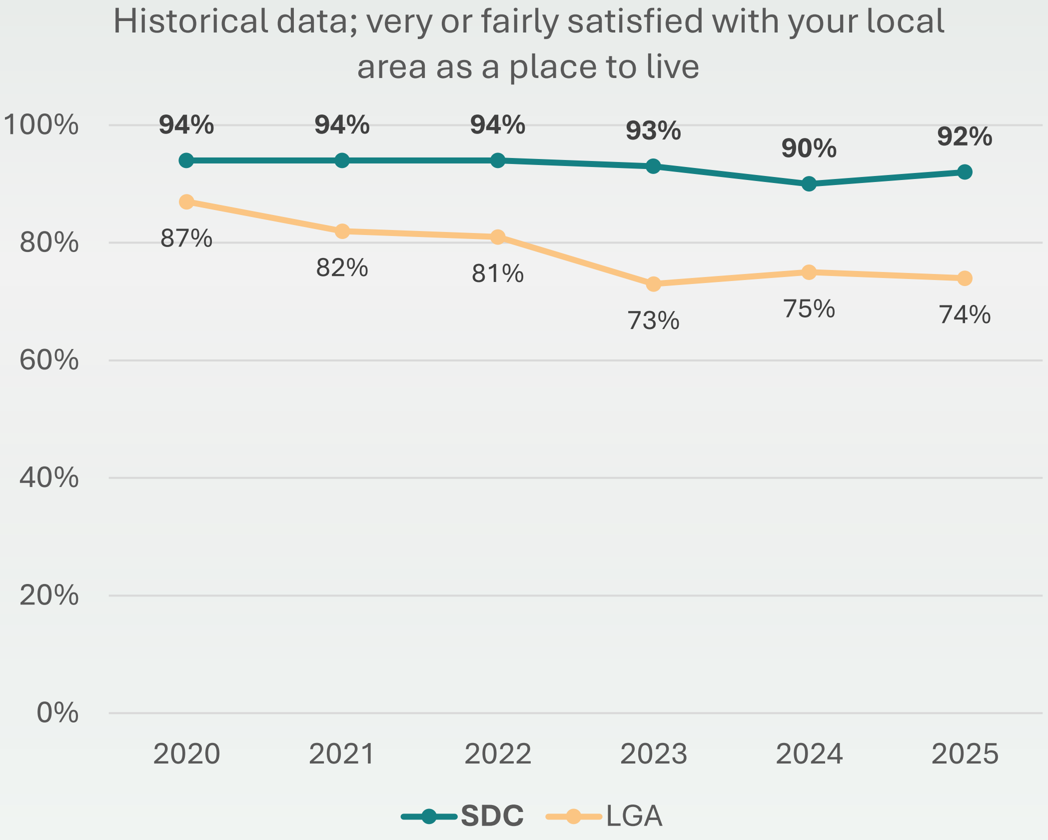
Q15a-e: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following options for the council to consider as part of its plans to meet the funding gap?
Base: All, bases vary, see chart

The local area

Satisfaction with your local area as a place to live

- Overwhelming majority of residents satisfied (92%)
- Again, negligible difference across subgroups with all equally satisfied
- Relatively steady across last 5 years and significantly higher than the national average, which have decreased over time



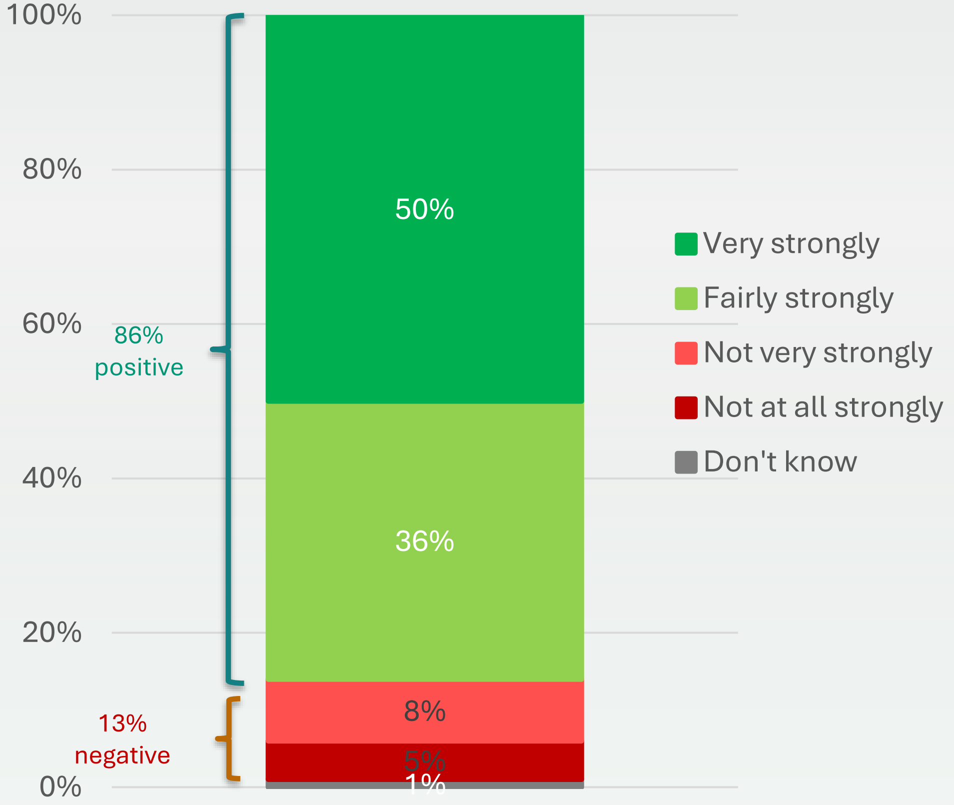


Q1: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?
Base: Stroud District Residents (507), LGA Oct24 Round 39 (1000)

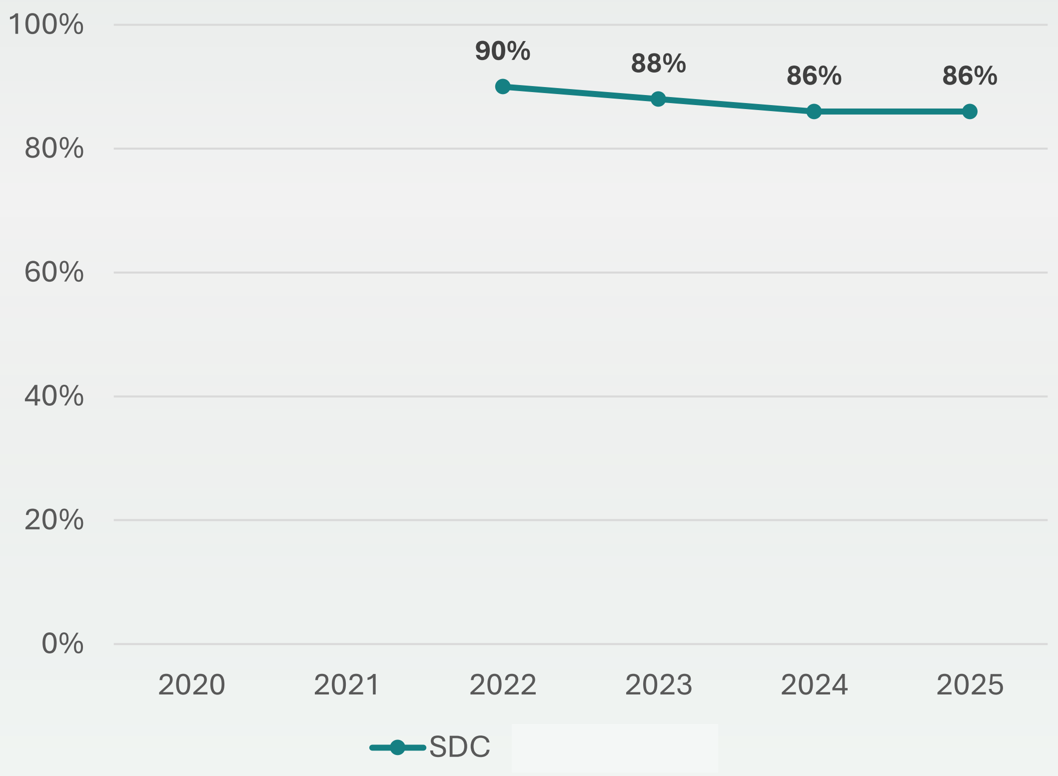
How strongly you feel you belong to your local area

- A large majority (86%) feel they strongly *belong to their local area*
- No change from 2024
- No difference across all age, sex and area groups in the council

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL



Historical data; very or fairly strongly agree that feel belong to local area

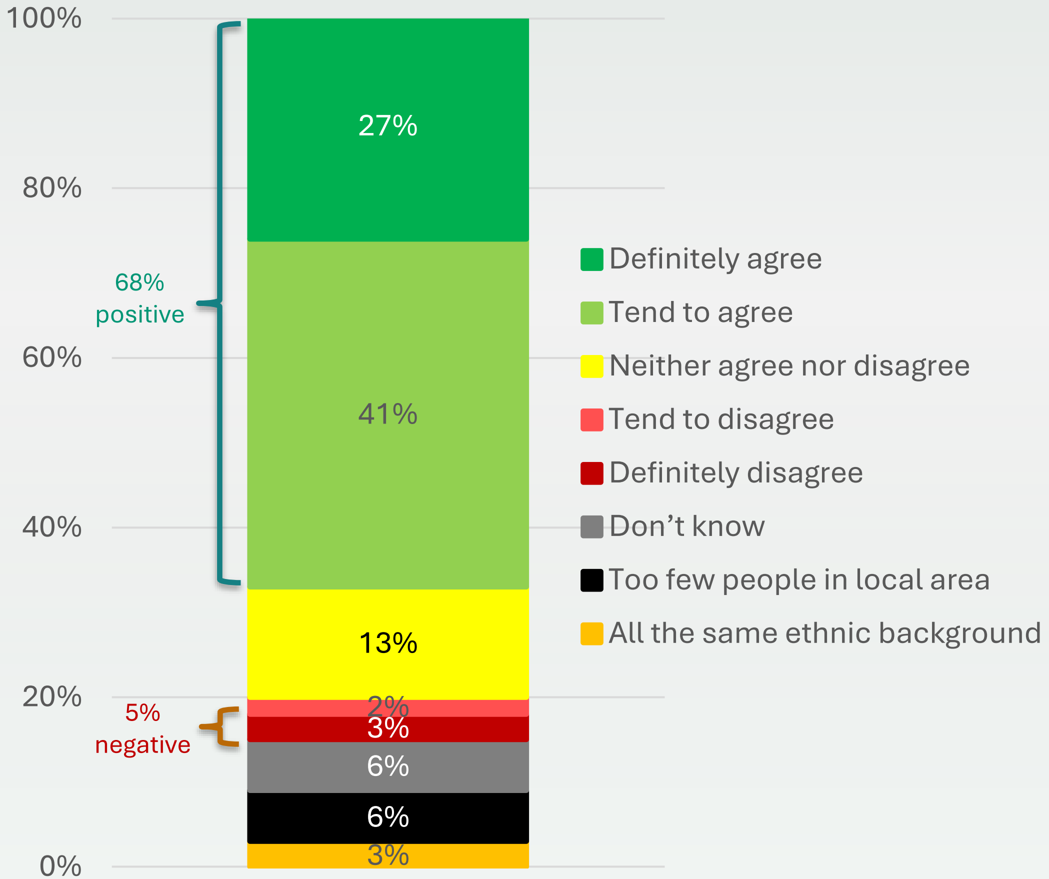


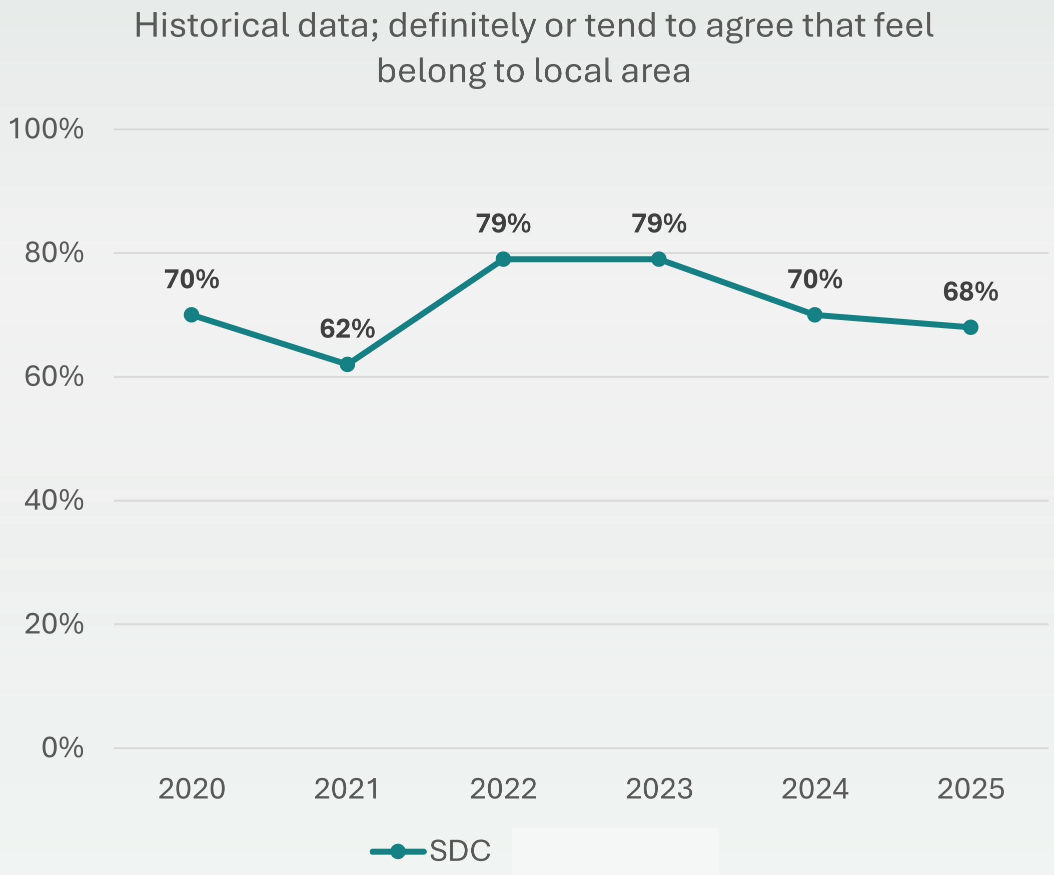
Q8: How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?
Base: All (507)

PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

Agreement that different ethnicities get on in the local area

- Over 2 in 3 (68%) residents agreed and only 5% disagreed
- The remainder had *too few neighbours or little diversity in their local area* (9%) or *didn't know* or *neither agreed nor disagreed* (19%)

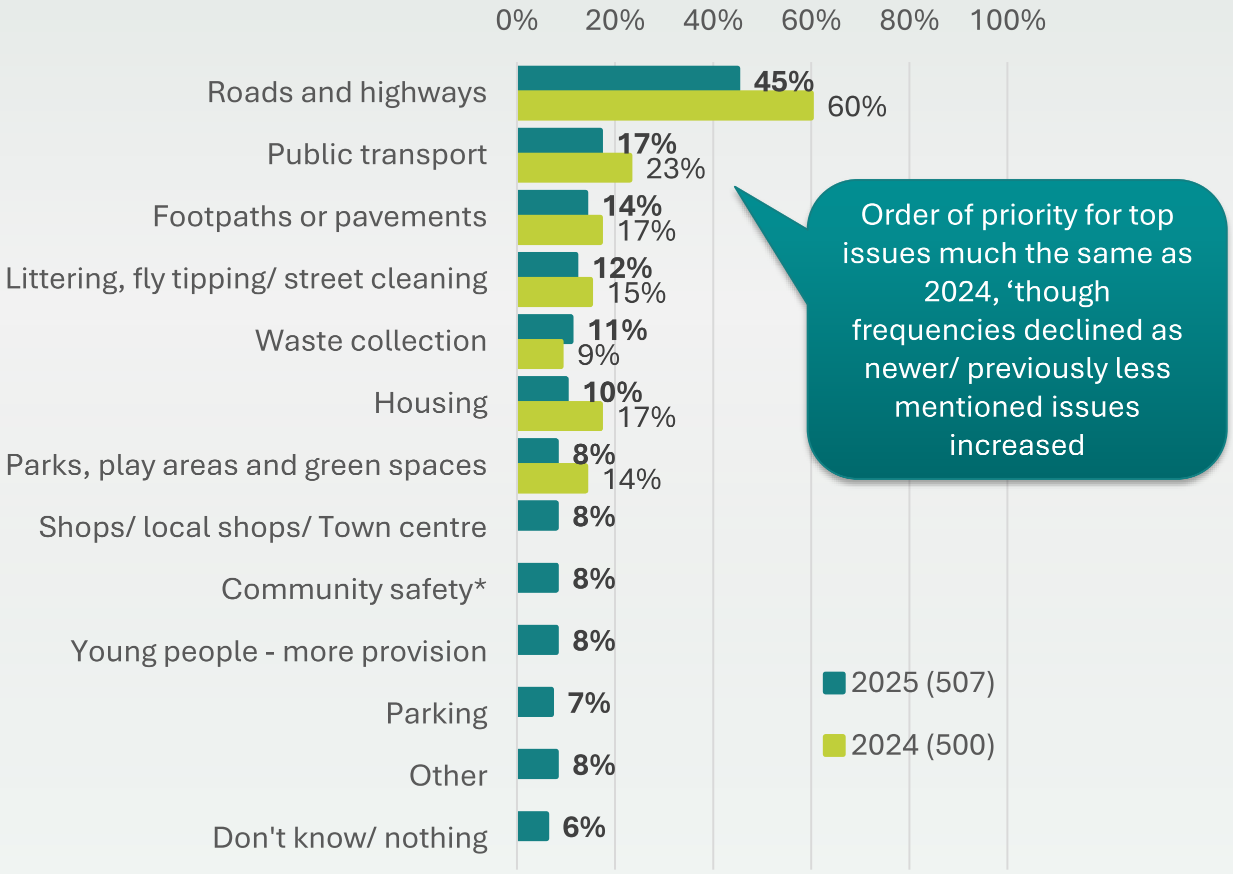




Q11: To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together? By getting on well together, we mean treating each other with respect.
Base: All (507)

Three things most need improving in my local area

- *Roads and highways* was mentioned by nearly half (45%)
- Next most mentioned were *Public transport* (17%), *Footpaths & pavements* (14%), *Littering/ fly tipping* (12%), *Waste collection* (11%) and *Housing* (10%)



* policing/ low level crime/ graffiti/ vandalism

Improvement continued:

- More communication/ community engagement/ respond to emails 5%
- Children - more facilities/ activities/ services 5%
- Schools and education 5%
- Verge/ hedge cutting 4%
- Control traffic speed 3%
- Healthcare: hospitals, GP, dentist 3%
- Planning - make easier/ faster 2%
- Street lighting 2%
- Dog mess/ clean up /more bins 2%
- Council housing maintenance issues 2%
- More/ better leisure facilities 2%
- Infrastructure planning 2%
- Support local business/ consult/ lower business rates 1%
- Too many houses being built/ not enough infrastructure for new developments 1%
- Adults - more facilities/ activities/ services 1%
- Council tax 1%
- Support for homeless/more shelters 1%
- Safer road crossings for children Less than 1%
- Social care 1%
- School bus 1%

"Other" comprised individual comments not included above

Q12: What three things do you feel most need improving in your local area?
Base: All (bases vary, see chart). Totals can add to more than 100% as residents could mention up to three issues

Three things most need improving in my local area by subgroups

- There were notable differences within the age and area subgroups
- Arrows indicate statistically significant differences between subgroups

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

	ALL (507)	18 to 34 (87)	35 to 54 (166)	55 to 75 (180)	75+ (74)	Stroud Valleys (222)	North Cluster (133)	South Cluster (152)
Roads and highways	45%	▼32%	▲49%	▲47%	47%	▼35%	▲59%	48%
Public transport	17%	21%	13%	17%	23%	▼14%	▲26%	▼14%
Footpaths or pavements	14%	▼5%	13%	▲16%	▲19%	16%	10%	13%
Littering or fly tipping/ street cleaning	12%	10%	13%	13%	8%	14%	12%	9%
Waste collection	11%	8%	13%	12%	8%	14%	8%	10%
Housing	10%	▲18%	▼8%	▼7%	8%	11%	9%	8%
Parks, play areas and green spaces	8%	8%	▲12%	▼5%	9%	9%	8%	7%
Shops/ local shops/ Town centre	8%	▲11%	▲10%	8%	▼1%	▲14%	▼5%	▼5%
Community safety*	8%	9%	10%	8%	3%	▲12%	7%	▼4%
Young people - more provision	8%	▲14%	▲10%	6%	▼0%	9%	5%	7%
Parking	7%	9%	7%	8%	4%	7%	▼4%	▲11%

* policing/ low level crime/ graffiti/ vandalism

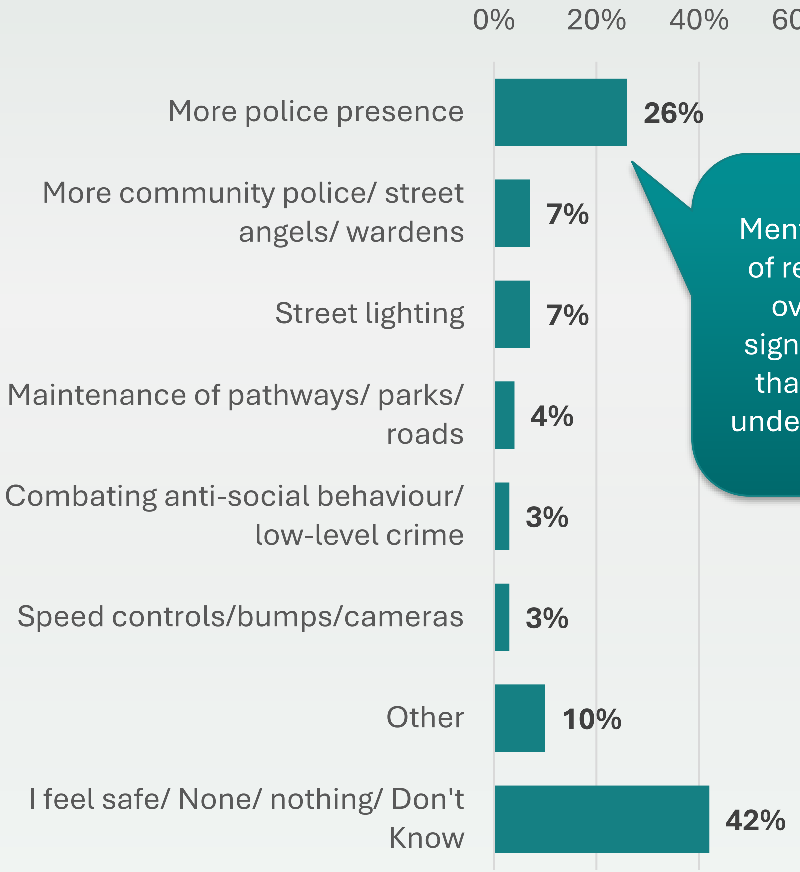
Q12: What three things do you feel most need improving in your local area?
Base: Vary, see table. Totals can add to more than 100% as residents could mention up to three issues

PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

Single thing to feel (more) *safe in my local area*

- Over 4 in 10 (42%) *already felt safe* or *had no suggestions*
- *Policing*, whether official or voluntary was next most mentioned (33%)
- Improved *Street lighting* was mentioned by 7%

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL



Mentioned by 29% of residents aged over 35 years, significantly more than those aged under 35 years (9%)

No significant differences by sex

Improvement continued:

- More CCTV 2%
- Communication with the council/ Involvement with the community 2%
- Public transport/ more/ run later 1%
- Encourage community cohesion/ Bring people together 1%
- Facilities for young people 1%
- Support for vulnerable people 1%
- Neighbourhood Watch 1%

Mentioned by significantly more residents from the Northern Cluster area and by more of those with non-white ethnic background

"Other" comprised individual comments not included above

Q13: What single thing, if anything, can Stroud District Council do to support the community to feel safe in your local area?
Base: Those mentioning a safety improvement (492)

PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

Single thing to feel (more) *safe in my local area*

– typical verbatim comments

Stroud District Council

Keep Stroud Angels going

More PCSOs walking around

More Police on the Street, to be visual, not in cars

More work on neighbourhood watch

More presence of community officers on beat

Policing crackdown on asbos in public area, smoking cannabis in parks

More community police around... neighbourhood policing needs upgrading

More to combat alcohol groups in the park

Keep the street parking lights on. They switch them off at night

More rural lighting

I don't feel unsafe but perhaps good lighting in correct areas

I feel safe but more cameras in open spaces would help. Also more street lighting

I've lived here 30 years and the lighting has got worse walking into town

I think they do a good job with limited resource they have

Better public transport. Getting home after dark, after 6 pm on Sunday, Bank Holidays

We used to have a bus to the village twice a week. It was useful for people who could not drive

Pathways clearing to make it safe for our aging population

Improve bus shelters and speed of roads going through the village

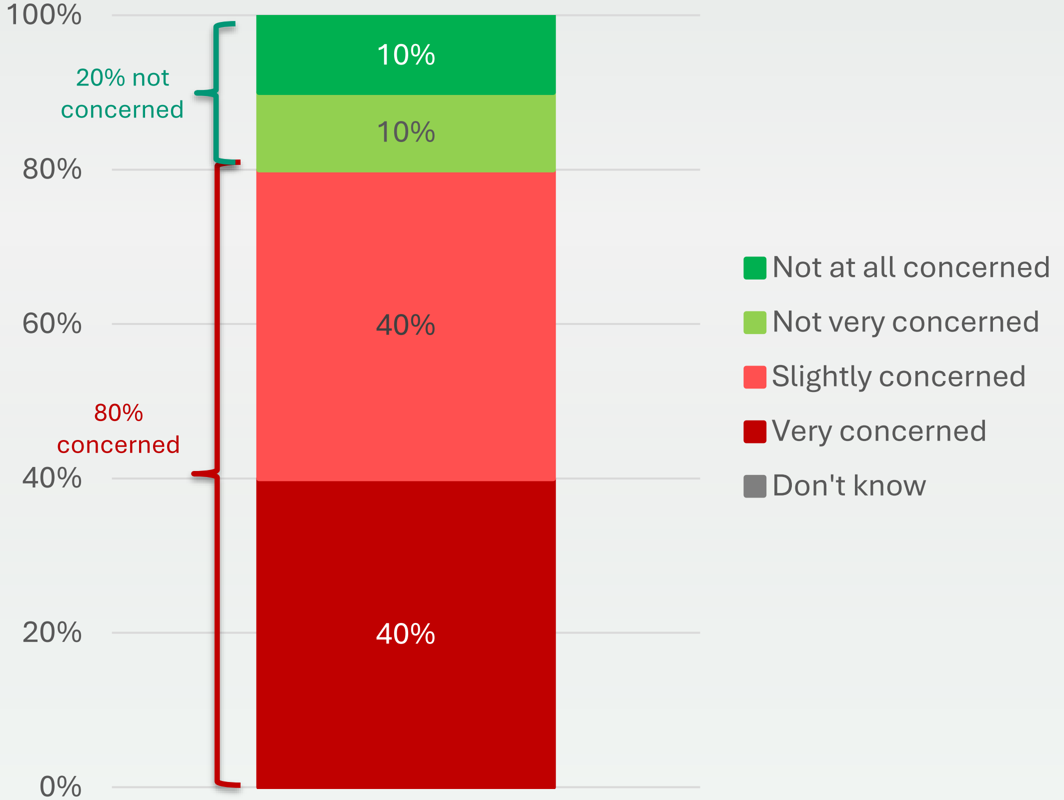
Q13: What single thing, if anything, can Stroud District Council do to support the community to feel safe in your local area?
Base: Those mentioning an improvement (492)

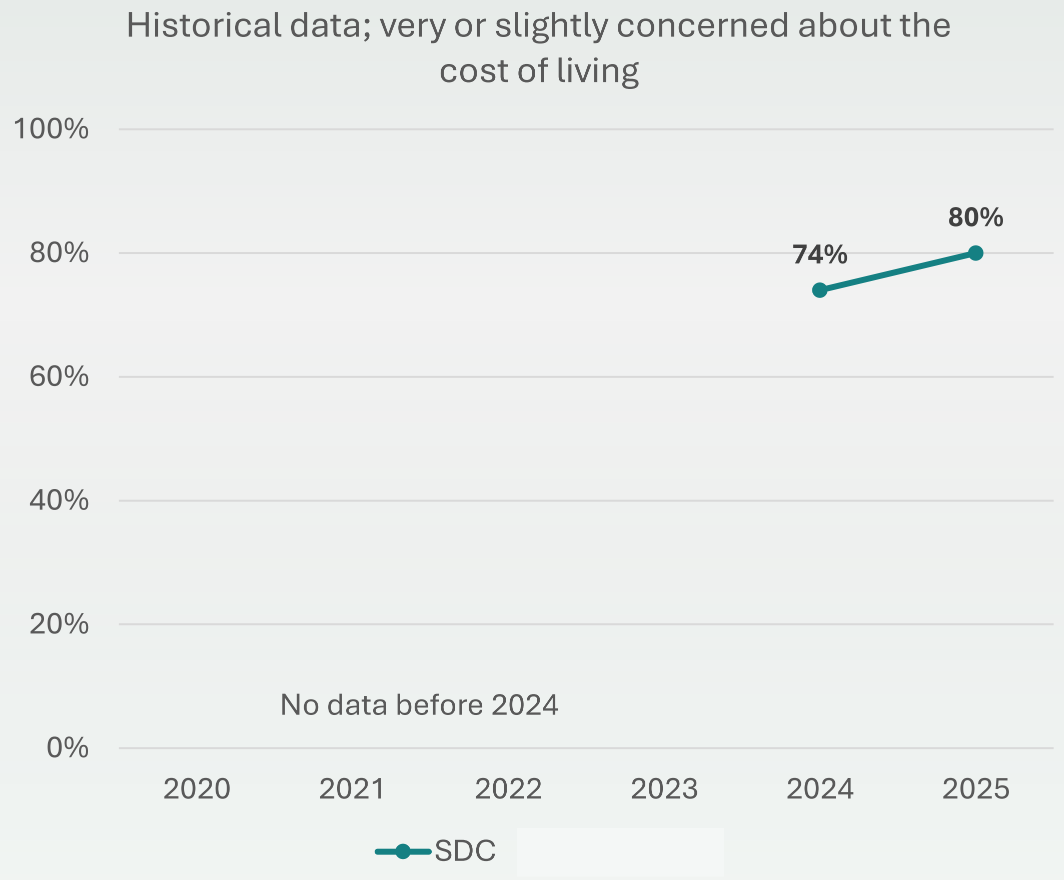
PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

Impact of the cost of living

Level of concern about *the cost of living on your household*

- 4 out of 5 residents (80%) are concerned
- Significant increase in concern in 2025 compared to 2024
- Those 35-50 are significantly more concerned, as are women than men

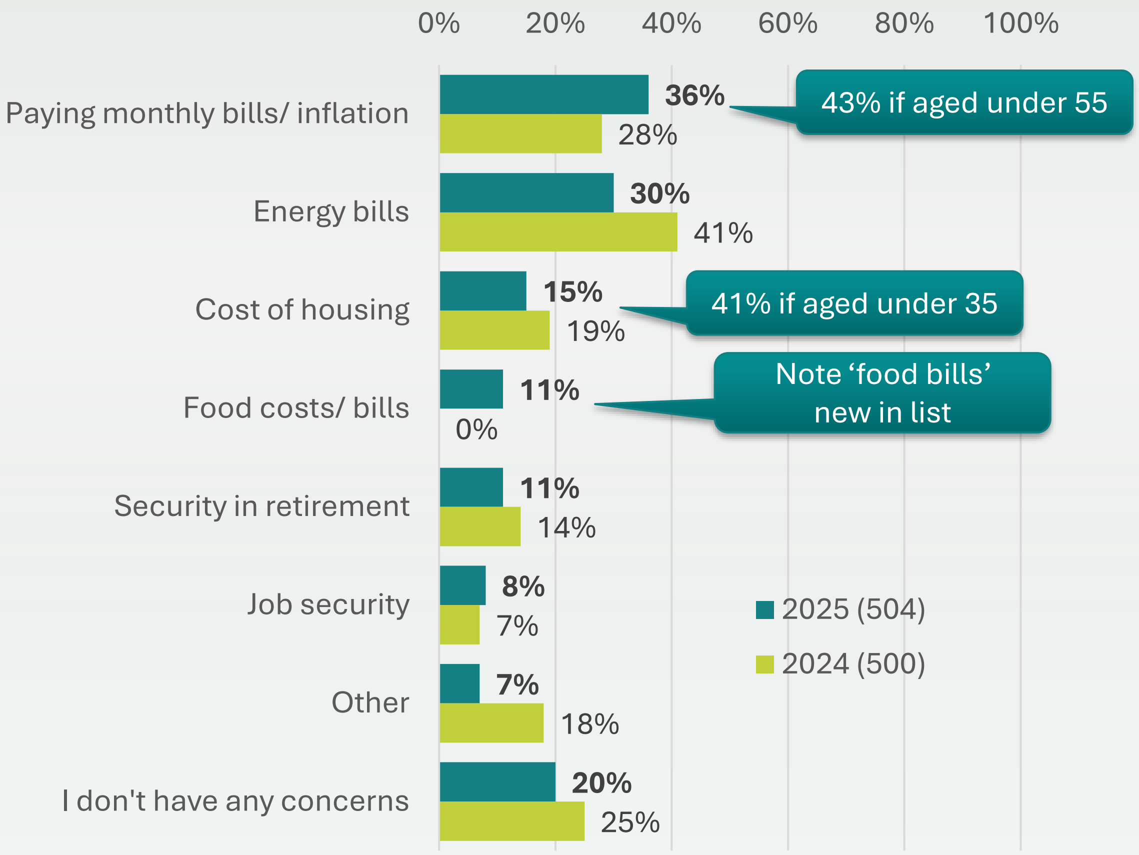




Q16.a: How concerned are you about the impact of the cost of living for your household?
Base: All (504)

Main concerns about your future financial security

- *General monthly bills/ inflation* (36%) was most mentioned
- Most frequent specific items were *Energy bills* (30%) and *Housing* (15%)
- 11% mentioned *Food costs*
- *Tax/ council tax* was only mentioned by 5%



Main concerns continued (5% or lower)

- Tax/ Council tax 5%
- Education costs for children 5%
- Availability of housing 4%
- Needing time off work to look after parents/ children 2%
- Debt 2%
- Cost of care (adults) 2%
- Cost of childcare/ costs associated with children 2%
- Children's future financial security 2%
- Transport costs/ car costs 2%
- Needing time off work if sick 1%
- Uncertainty as self employed 1%

“Other” comprised individual comments not included above

Q16.b: What are your main concerns, if any, regarding your future financial security?
Base: All (bases vary, see chart). Multiple codes allowed so may add to more than 100%

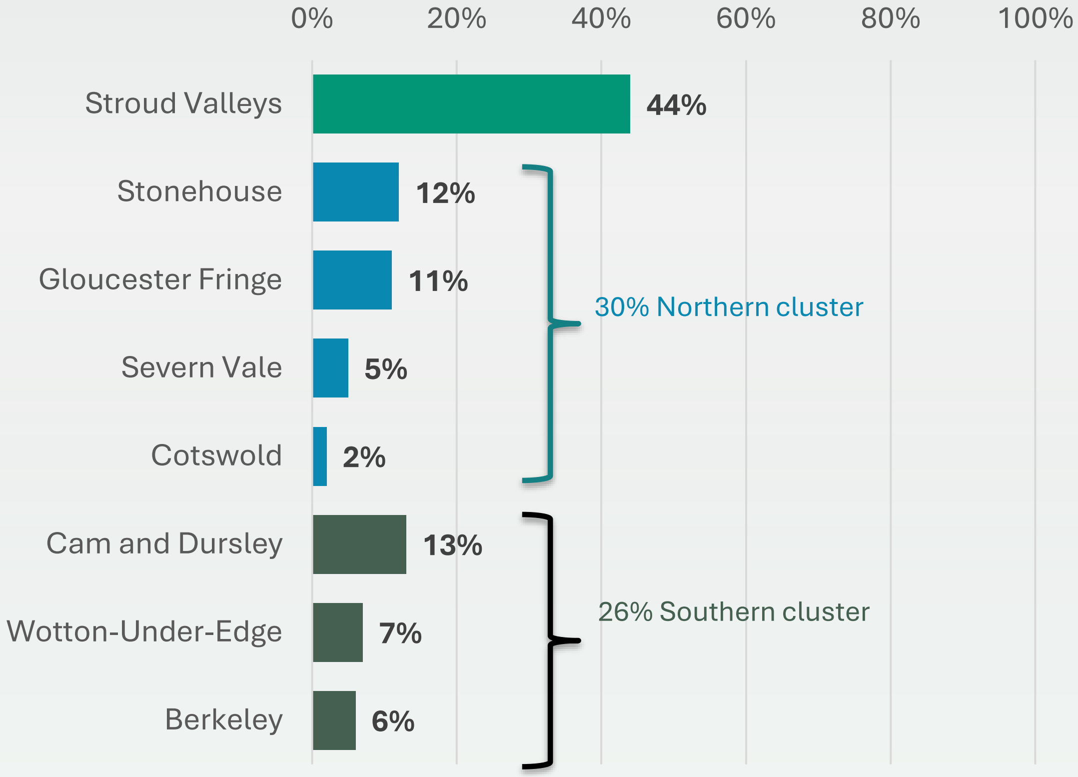
Residents Profile

Resident profiles: Home location

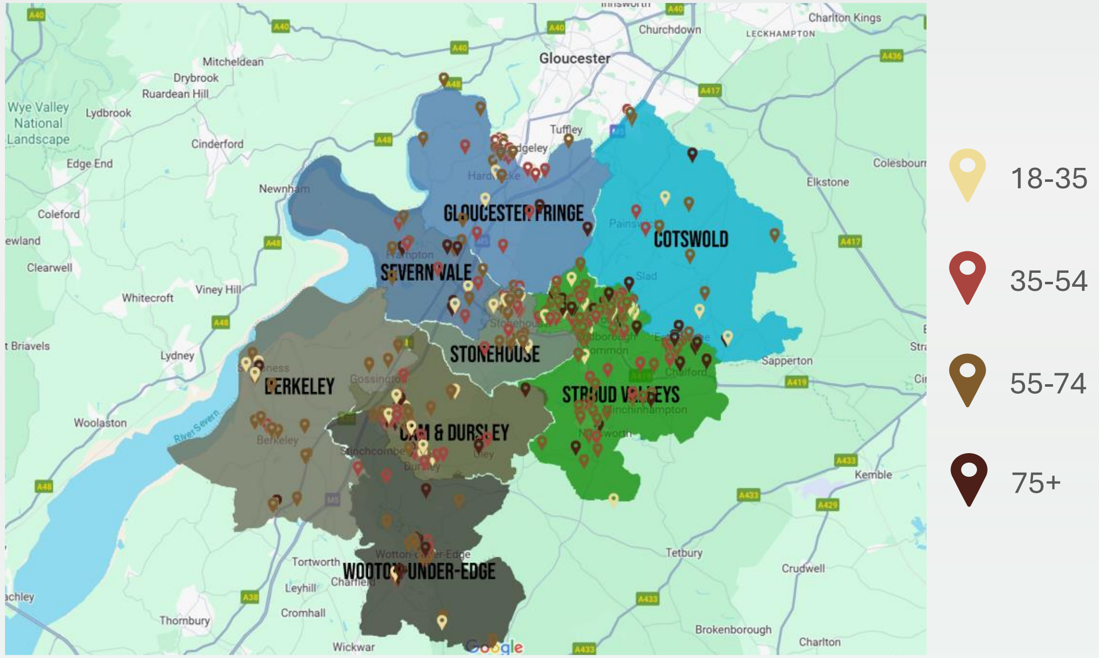
- Participants' postcodes were collected to ensure a good spread by home location across Stroud District
- For analysis, the 8 areas were grouped into 3 clusters
- Follow the link to an interactive map showing age, sex, postcode & area for each resident interviewed

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Area



Area by age



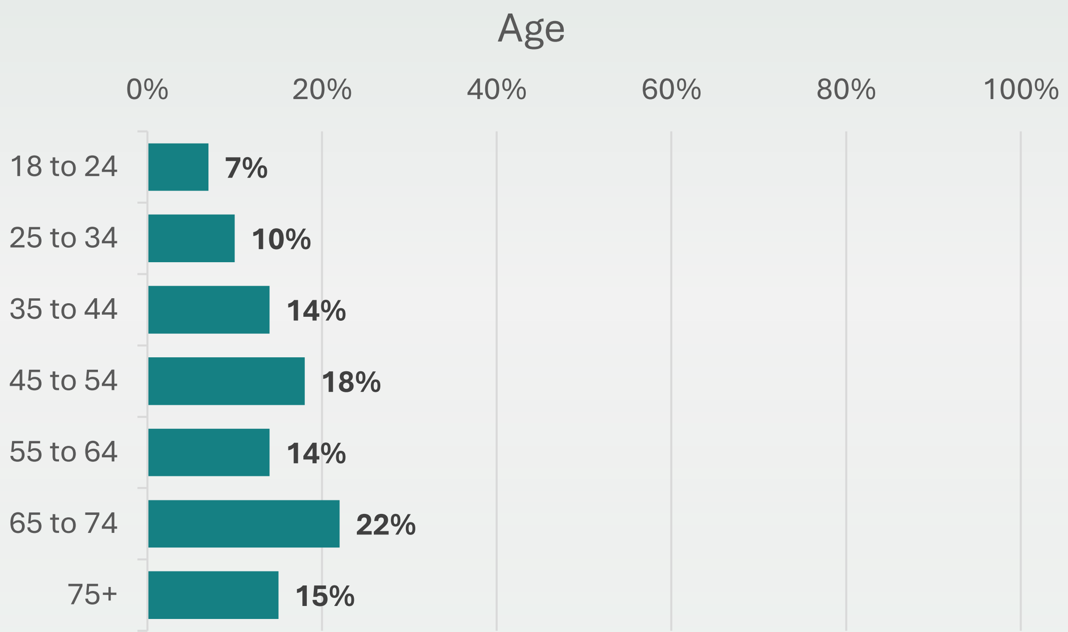
https://www.batchgeo.com/map/PMRC_SDC_Residential2025

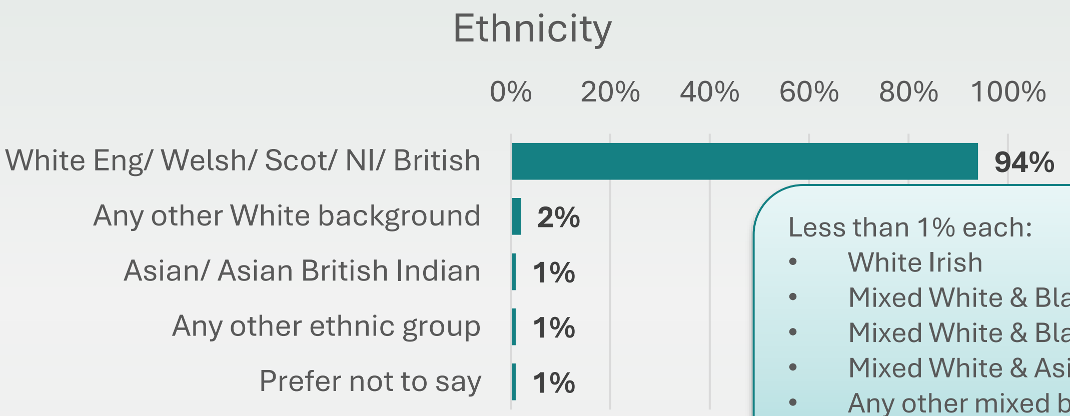
S3: What is your postcode? (Coded into 8 areas)
Base: All (507)

PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

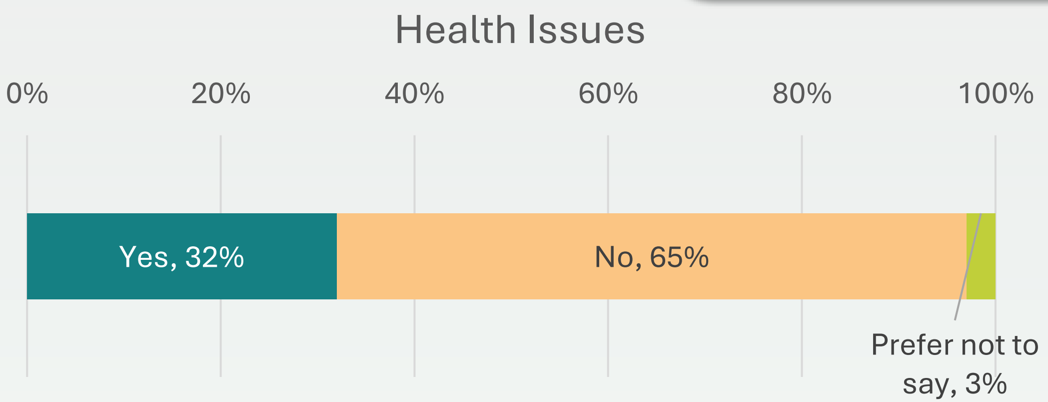
Resident profiles: Age, Sex, Ethnicity and Health condition

- Quota recruitment ensured a representative sample by age and sex
- Ethnicity and presence of long-term health issues were also asked





Less than 1% each:
- White Irish
- Mixed White & Black Caribbean
- Mixed White & Black African
- Mixed White & Asian
- Any other mixed background
- Black/ Black British Caribbean

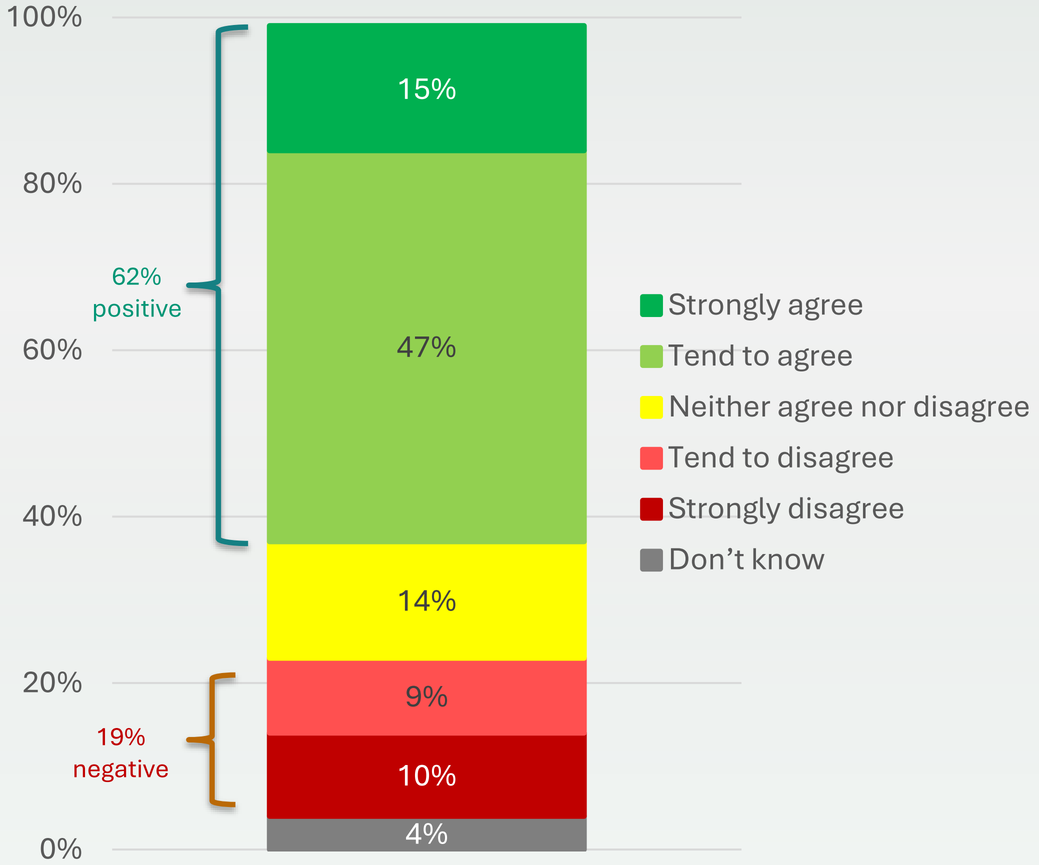


S1: Please tell me your age, S2: What was your sex registered at birth?, S5: What is your ethnic group?, S6: Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more? Base: All (507)

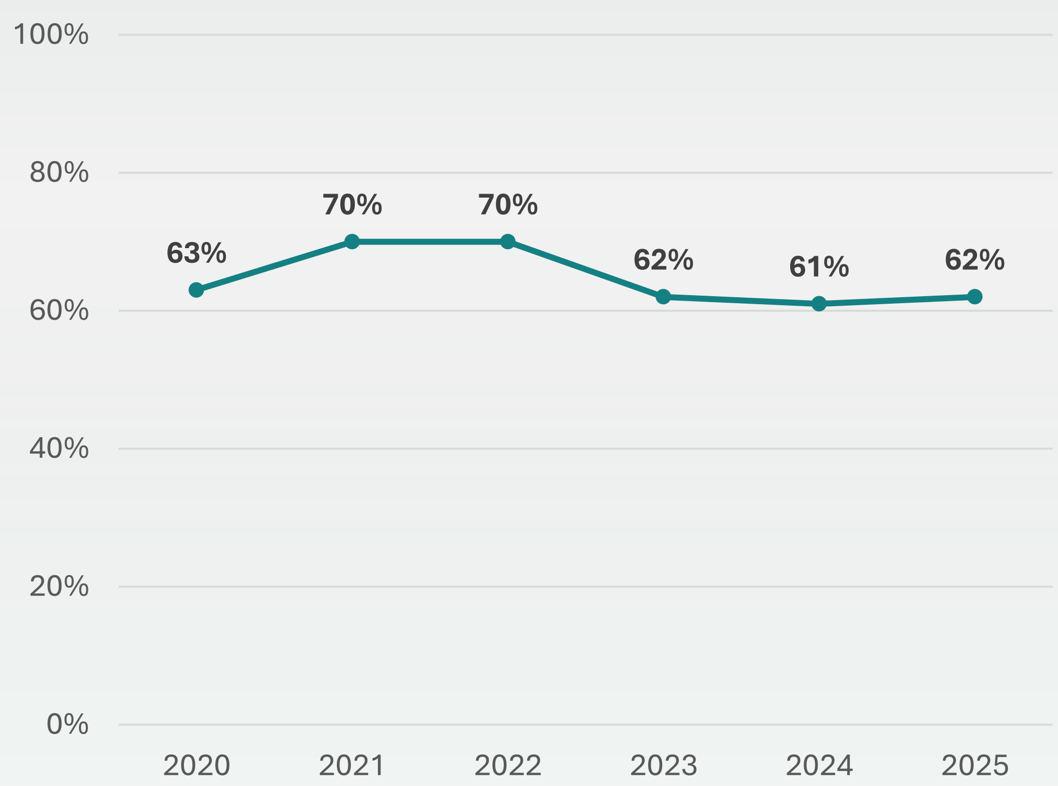
Business findings

Satisfaction with the way the council runs things

- 62% of businesses were *satisfied with the way the council runs things*
- Little change in businesses' satisfaction over the last 3 years



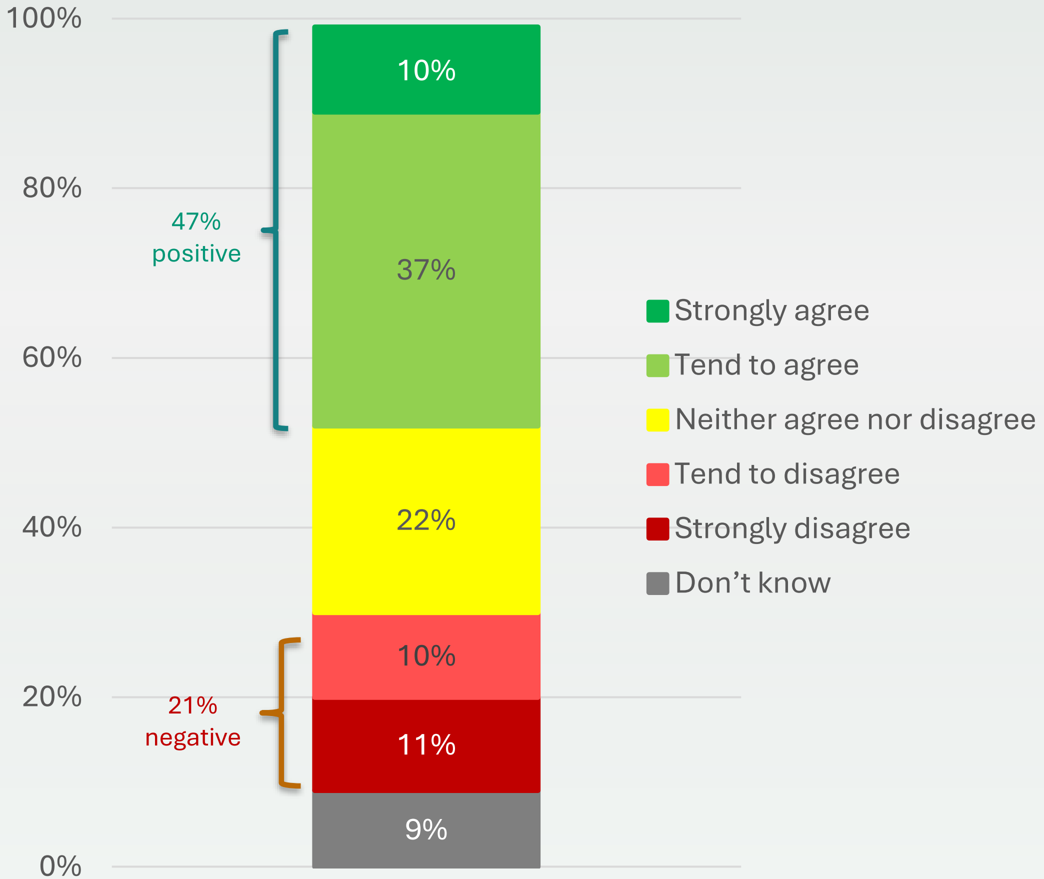
Historical data; strongly or tend to agree to be satisfied with the way the council runs things

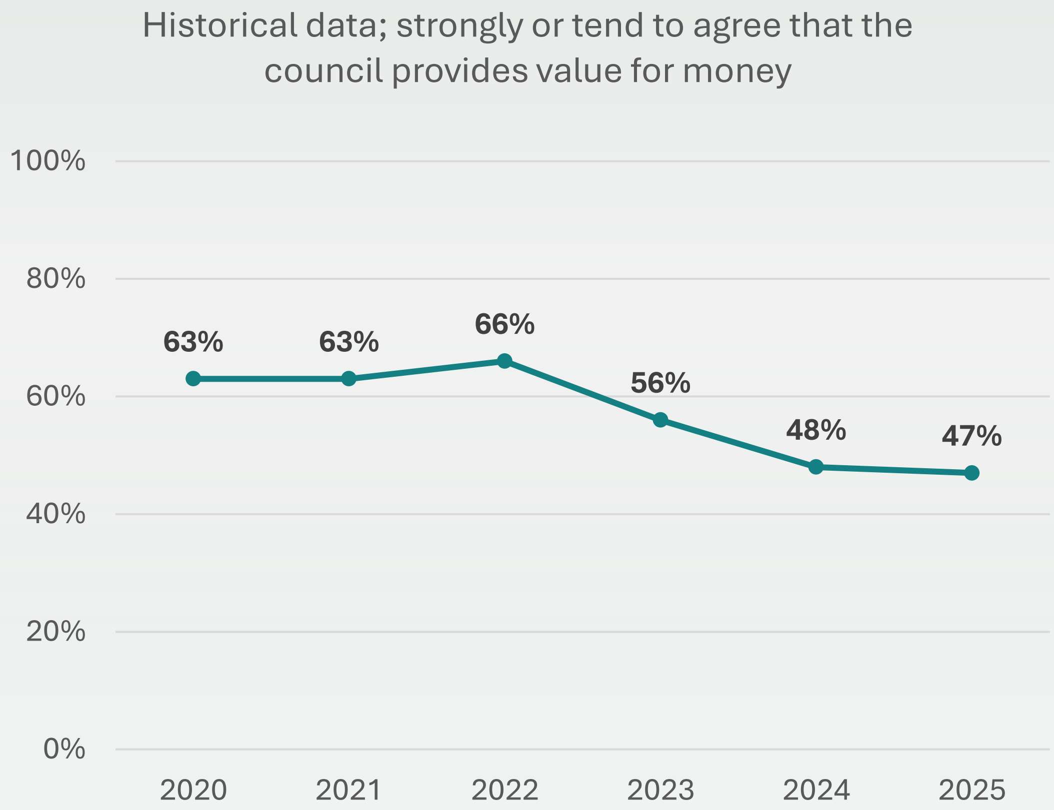


Q1c: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Overall, I am satisfied with the way Stroud District Council runs things
Base: All (202)

Whether the council *provides value for money*

– About half of businesses agree (47%)
– Unchanged from 2024

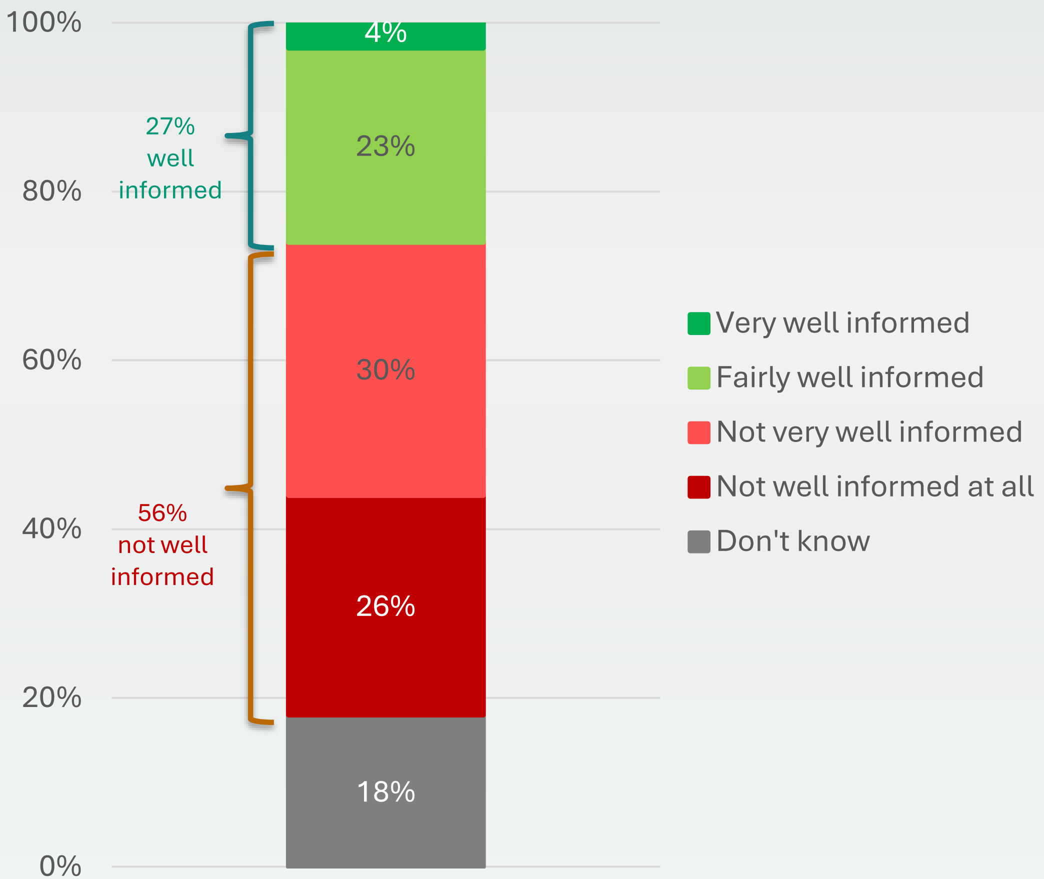


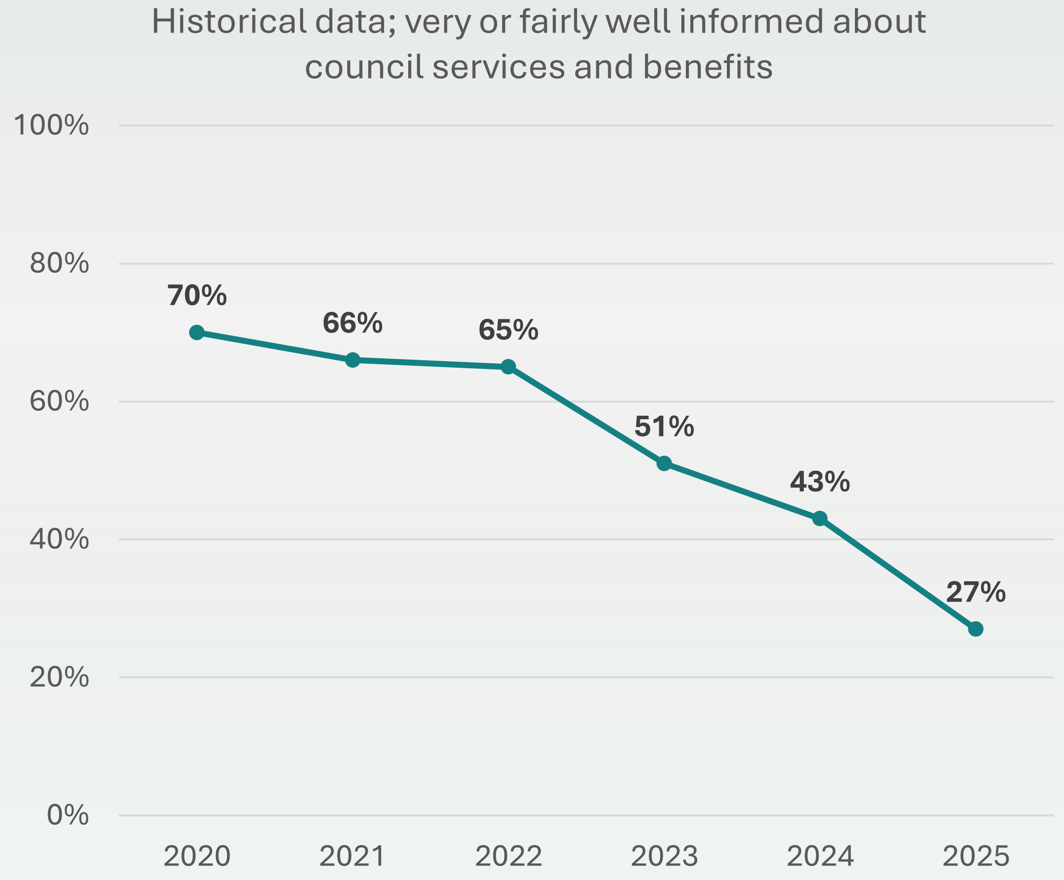


Q1e: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I agree that Stroud District Council provides value for money
Base: All (202)

Keeps businesses well informed about [its] services & benefits

- Only 27% agree the council does so
- Accelerating decline over the last four years
- More than half now disagree (56%)

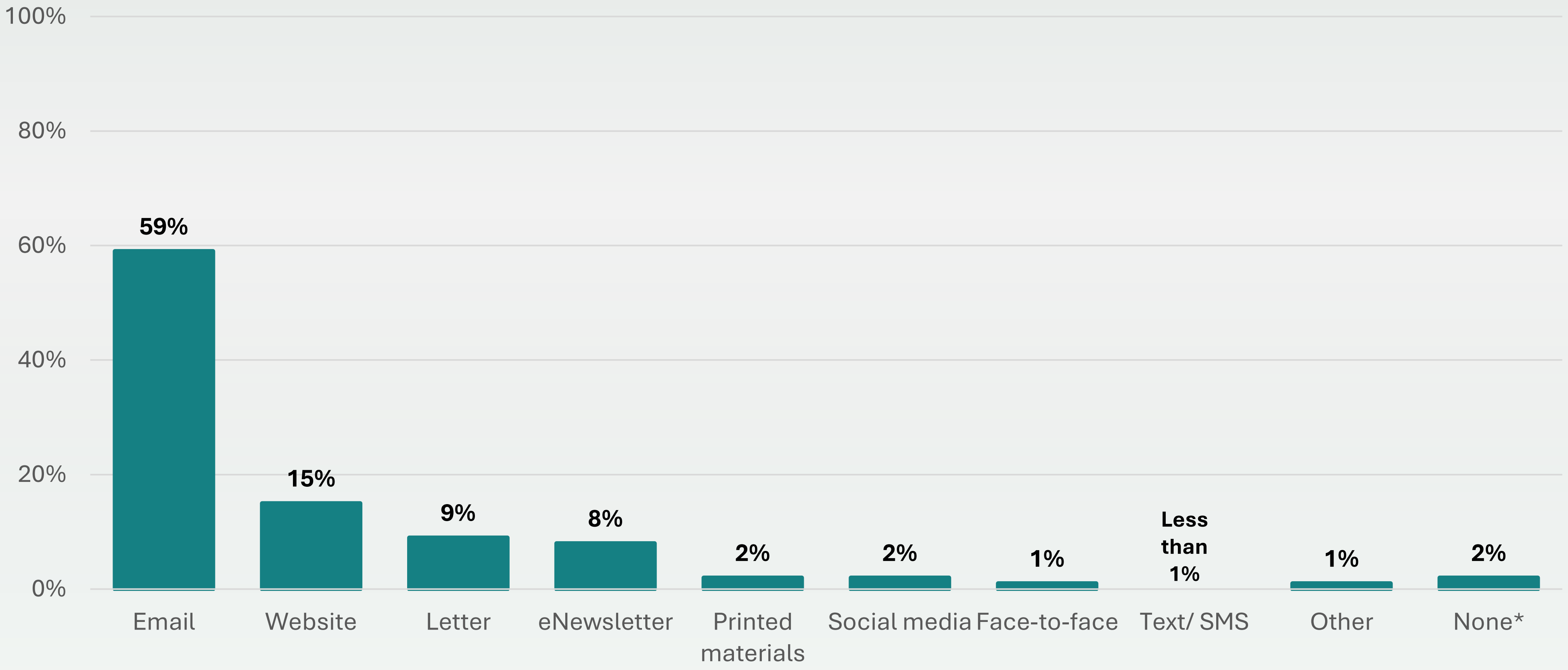




Q8: Overall, how well informed do you think Stroud District Council keeps businesses about the services and benefits it provides?
Base: All (202)

Preferred way to be informed of things happening at the council

- Businesses clearly prefer electronic communications
- *Email* was by far the most popular way to be informed (59%)
- Only 11% chose hard copy in 2025 (9% *Letter*, 2% *Printed materials*)



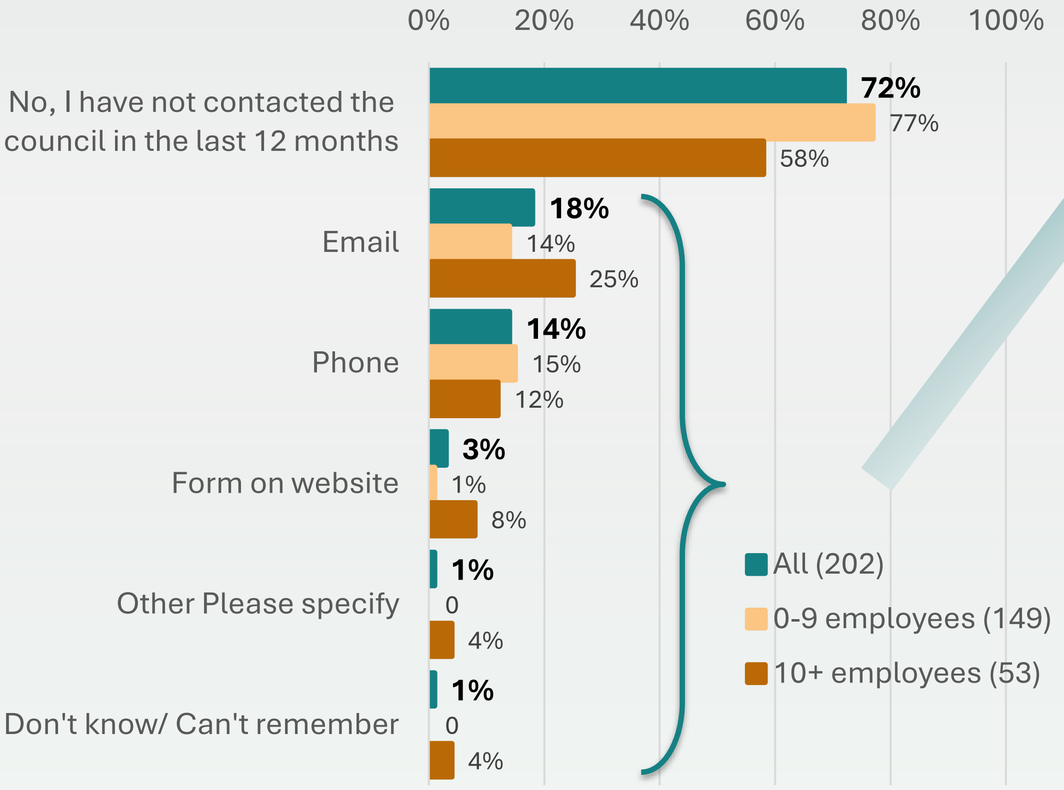
* I am not interested in receiving communications from the council

Q9: Which of the following, if any, is your preferred way to be informed about things happening at the council?
Base: All (202)

Contact with the council in last 12 months

- Majority of businesses *hadn't contacted* the council in the last year (72%)
- Those who did contact the council, used *email* or *phone*
- Contact was mostly about *Rates* (35%), *Planning* (16%), *Licensing* (14%) or *Waste & recycling* (10%)
- Note *Waste & recycling* more of an issue for micro businesses; *Licencing* and more mentioned by larger businesses

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL



Contacted the council for:	All (n=55)	0-9 employees (n=35)	10+ employees (n=20)
Business rate issue/ rate relief	**35%**	37%	30%
licensing	**24%**	17%	35%
Planning	**18%**	14%	25%
Waste & recycling/ street cleaning	**11%**	14%	5%
Food Safety, Health & Safety	**4%**	6%	-
Building control	**4%**	3%	5%
Business being a council tenant	**4%**	6%	-
Don't know/ Can't remember	**2%**	-	5%
Other	**22%**	22%	25%

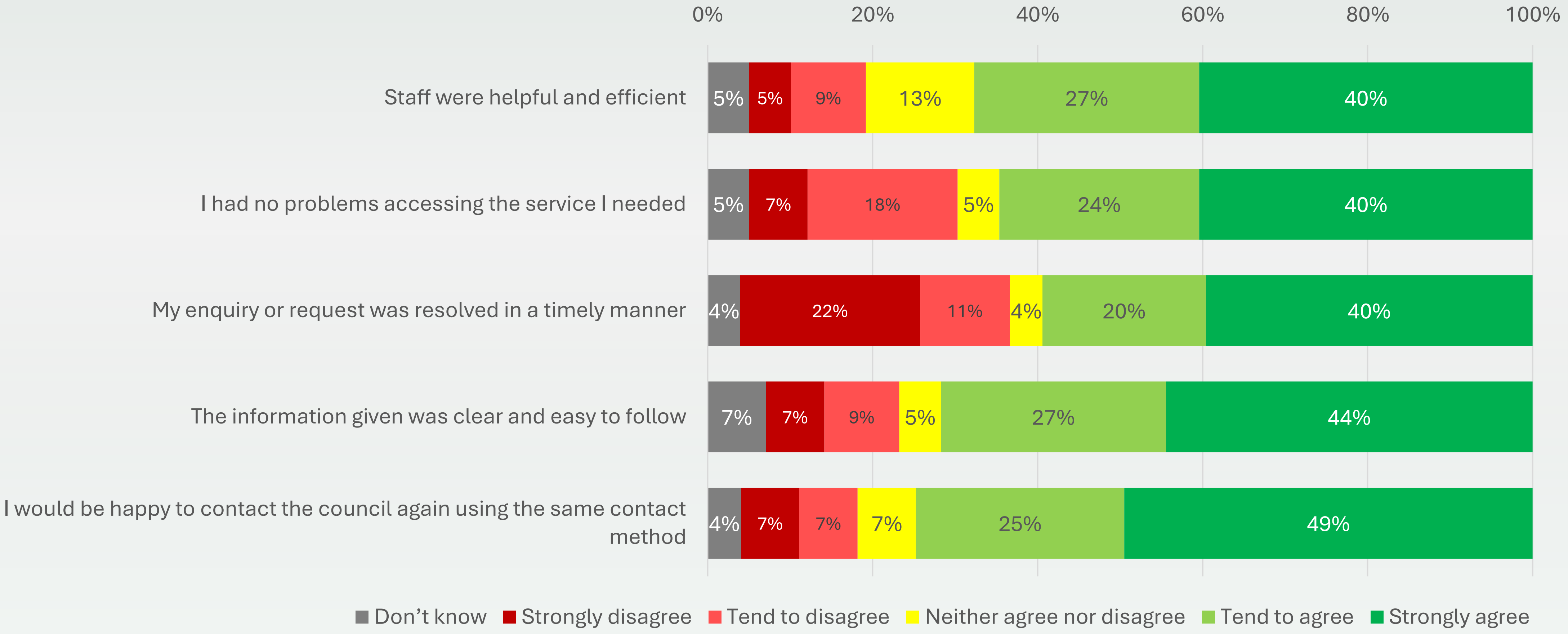
Q10a: Have you contacted the council about your business in the last 12 months using any of the following methods? Base: All (bases vary, see chart)

Q10b: What was the matter concerning?
Base: Those contacting the council (bases vary, see table)

PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

Satisfaction with the contact with the council

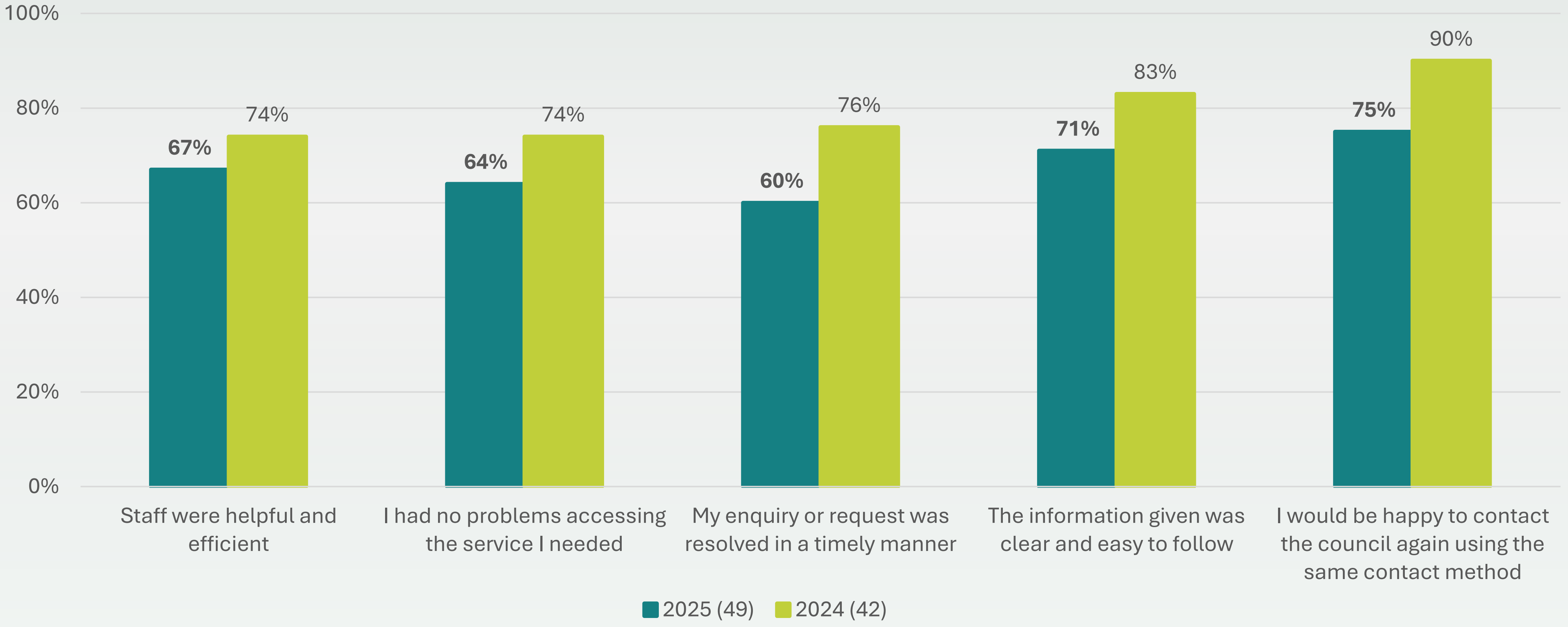
- Businesses who contacted the council were satisfied with most aspects, although less so than last year
- As for residents, lack of timely resolution of the enquiry led to the most dissatisfaction (33%)



Q10c~g: Thinking about your contact with the council, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: Those contacting the council (49)

Satisfaction with the contact with the council: 2025 vs 2024

- Satisfaction declined across all measures in 2025 compared to 2024
- *Timely resolution* was noteworthy, a 16% decline since 2024
- No significant differences were observed as function of size of business



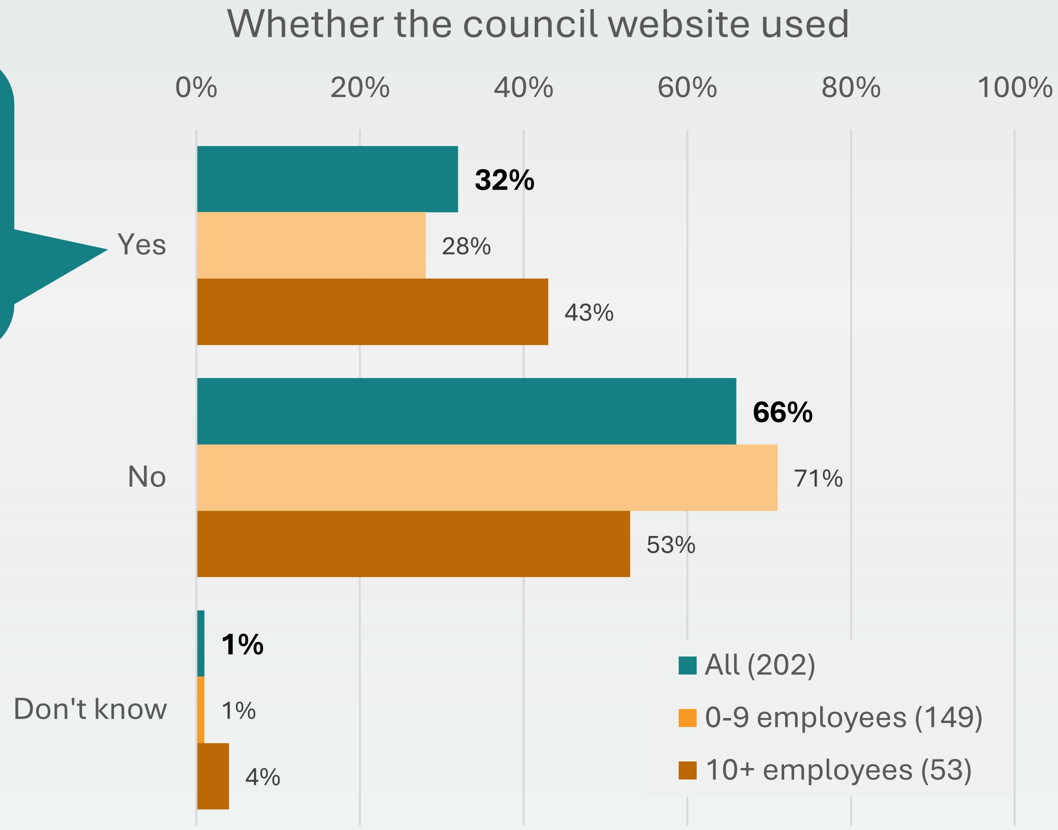
Q10c~g: Thinking about your contact with the council, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: Those contacting the council, bases vary, see chart

Business use of the council website (1 of 2)

- Only 1 in 3 businesses *used the council website* (32%)
- Fewer who used the website in 2025 *found it useful* than in 2024 (81% vs 91%)
- Larger businesses were significantly more likely to use the website (43% vs 28%)

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

81% of those who had used the council website said they found it useful



Q11a: Do you access the council's website for information about services and support on offer to businesses?
Base: All (bases vary, see chart)

Q11b: How useful do you find the information provided? Base: Those using the council website (65)

Business use of the council website (2 of 2)

- *Have people to speak to/ More contact numbers* was most mentioned website improvement (15% of those who used website)
- 36% of businesses not using the council website *were not aware it could be relevant/ didn't see a need*

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Improvements suggested to the website by those who used it

	Those using website (n=65)
Nothing - I think it's good the way it is	31%
Have people to speak to/ provide contact numbers/ provide more than one contact number	15%
More user friendly/ intuitive/ easier to navigate	9%
Better search function/ easier to find information	5%
Clear/ better organised information	3%
Other	3%
Don't use it often enough to know/ suggest any changes	29%

Reasons businesses had not used the council website

	Those not using website (n=134)
Not seen a need/ Not aware I could/ Not aware relevant	36%
Prefer to speak to someone	7%
Can't find information/ Not easy to use/ navigate	4%
Other	3%
Nothing/ don't know	50%

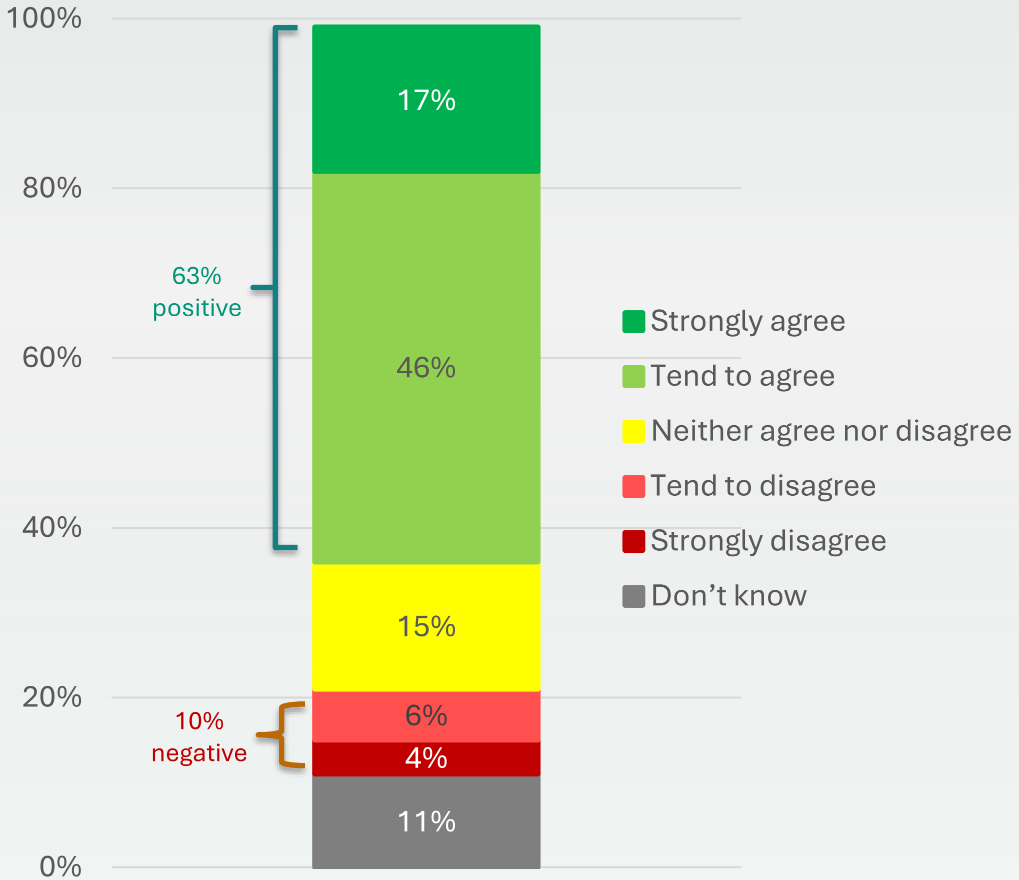
Q11c: What one thing, if anything, do you think could improve the website content?
Base: Those using the council website (65)

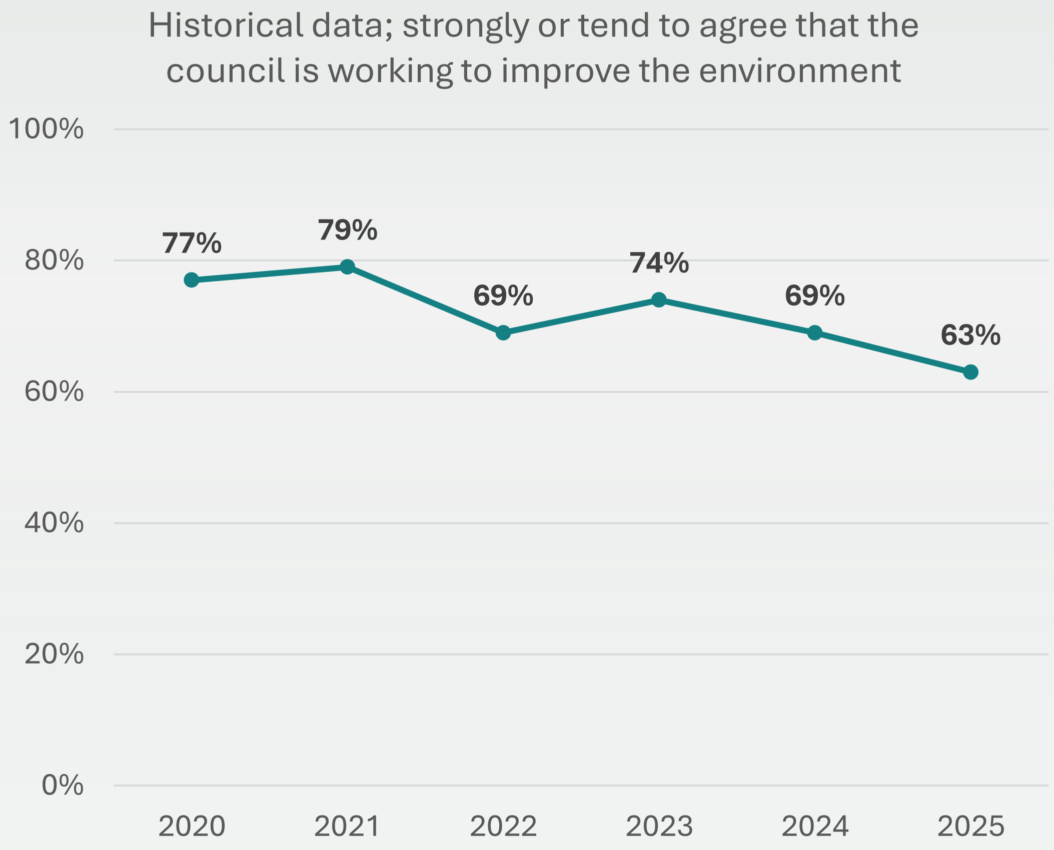
Q11d: What is the main reason you do not access business information on the website?
Base: Those not using the council website (134)

Environmental aspects

The council is working to improve the environment

- 63% of businesses agreed, regardless of size of business or location
- Slight trend of decline over last two years

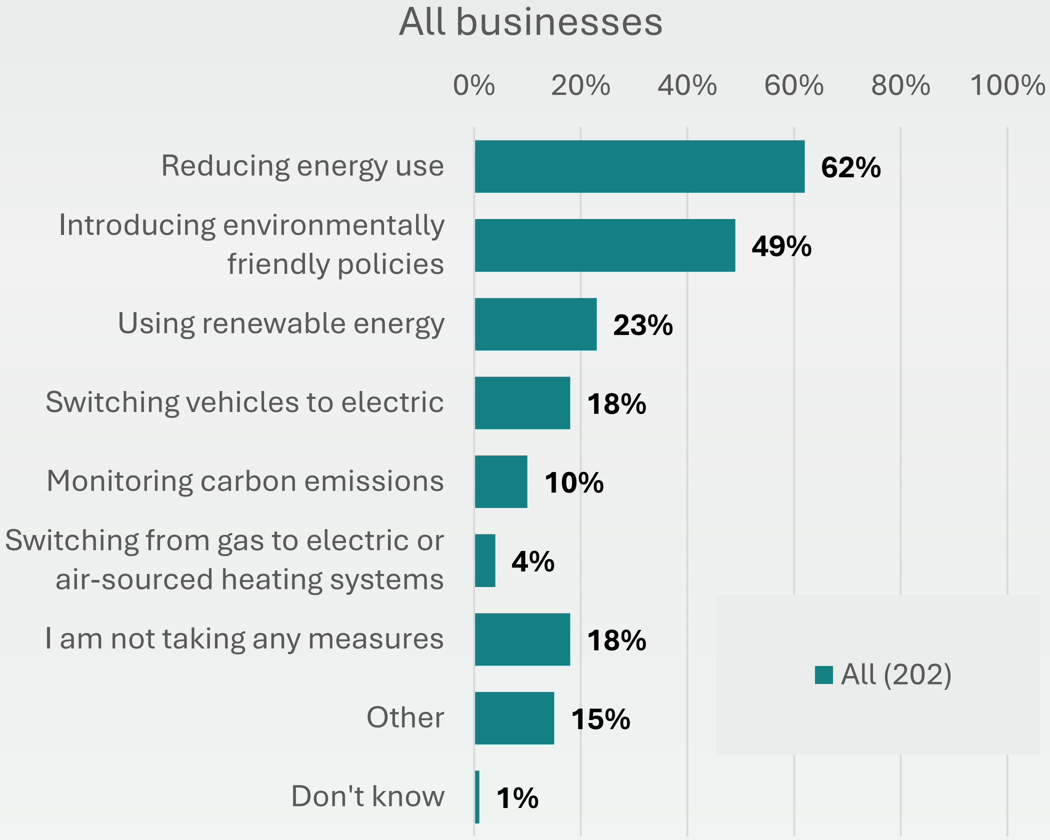


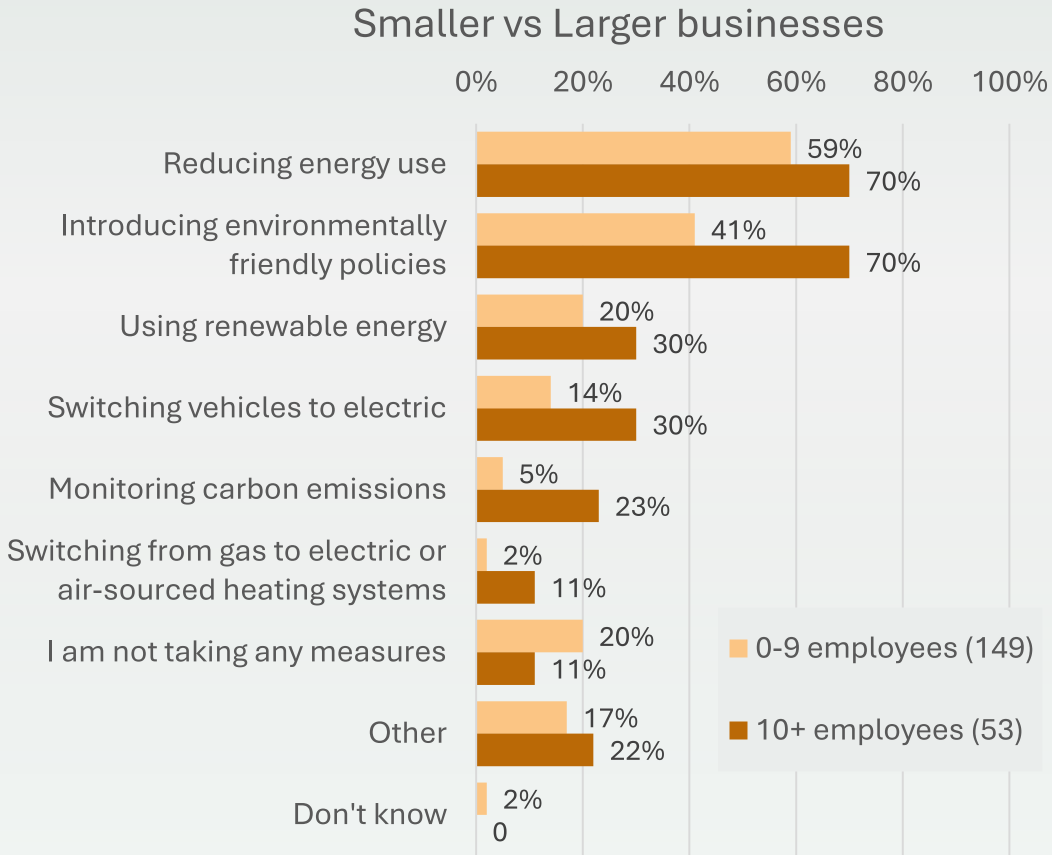


Q1f: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Stroud District Council is working to improve the environment
Base: All (202)

Measures businesses are taking *to reduce carbon emissions*

- Most frequently taken measures: *Reducing energy use* (62%) and *Introducing environmentally friendly policies (49%)*
- Smaller businesses are less likely to take specific actions and most likely not be taking any measures to reduce carbon emissions

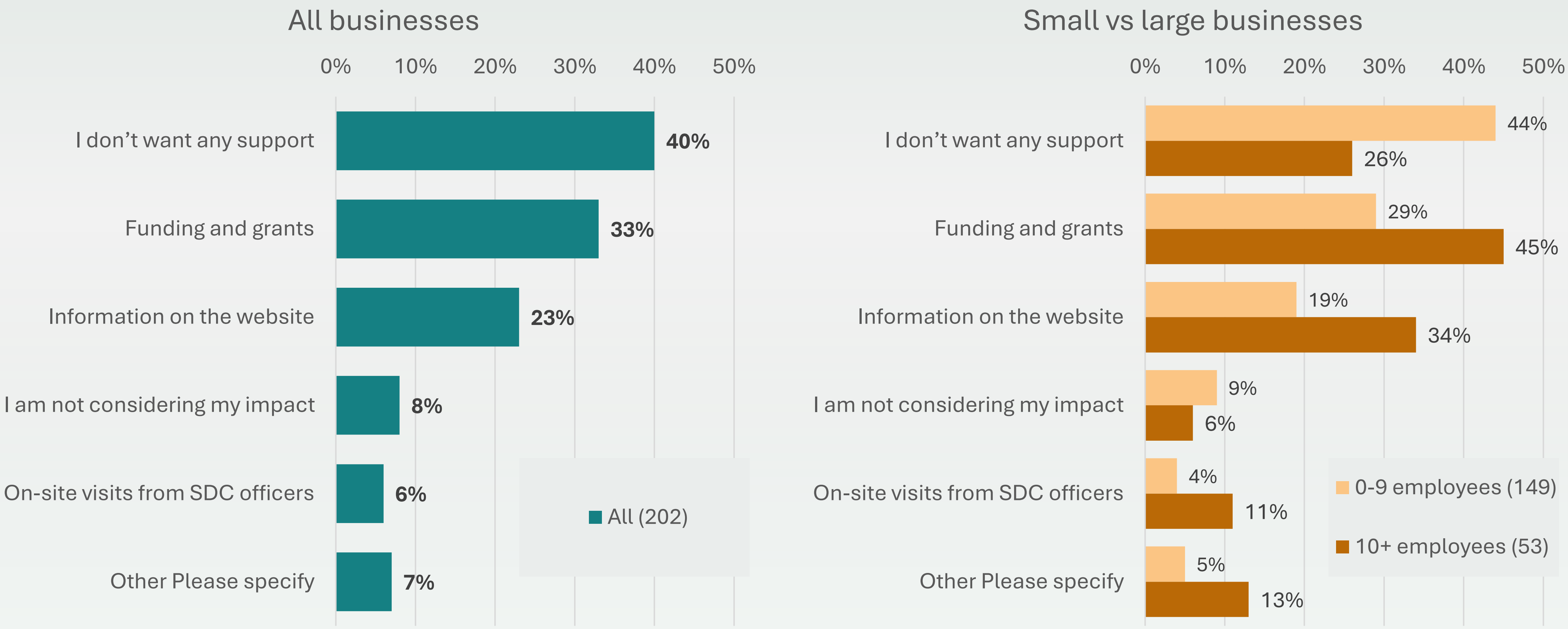




Q6a: What measures are you taking to reduce your carbon emissions?
Base: All (bases vary, see charts)

Support businesses want to *help reduce carbon emissions*

- *Grants & funding*, then *Information on the website* most wanted support
- Smaller businesses most likely to <u>not</u> want support to reduce carbon emissions

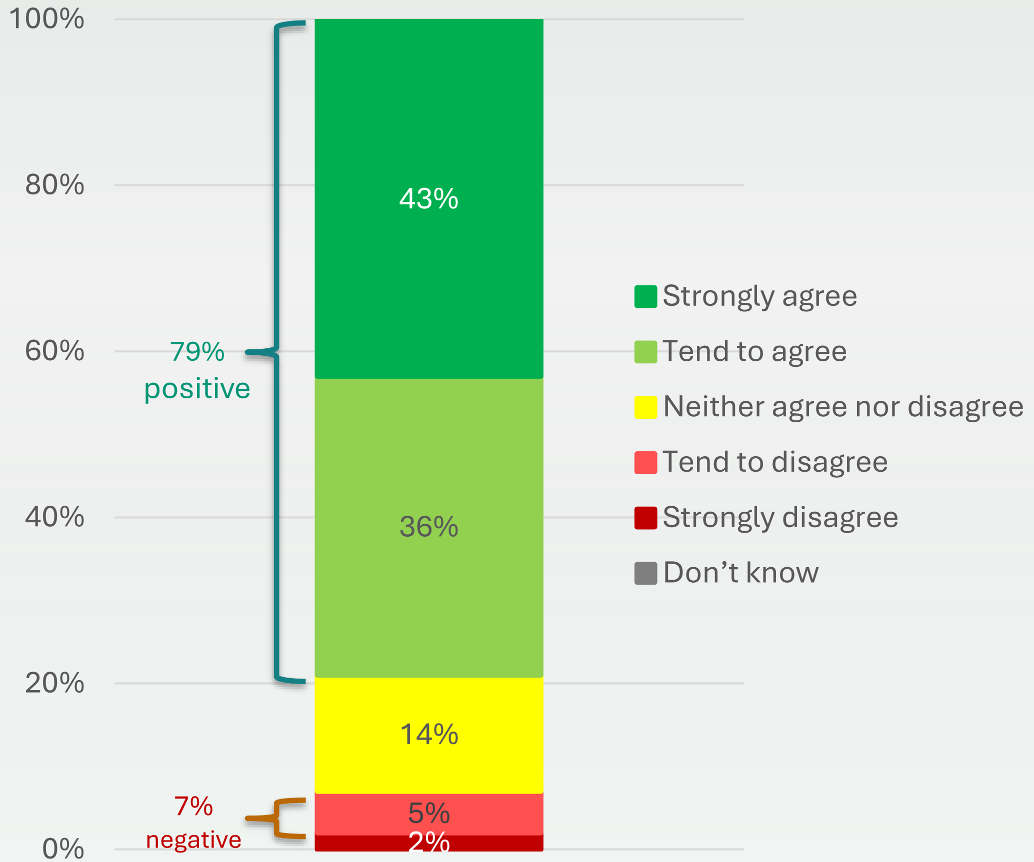


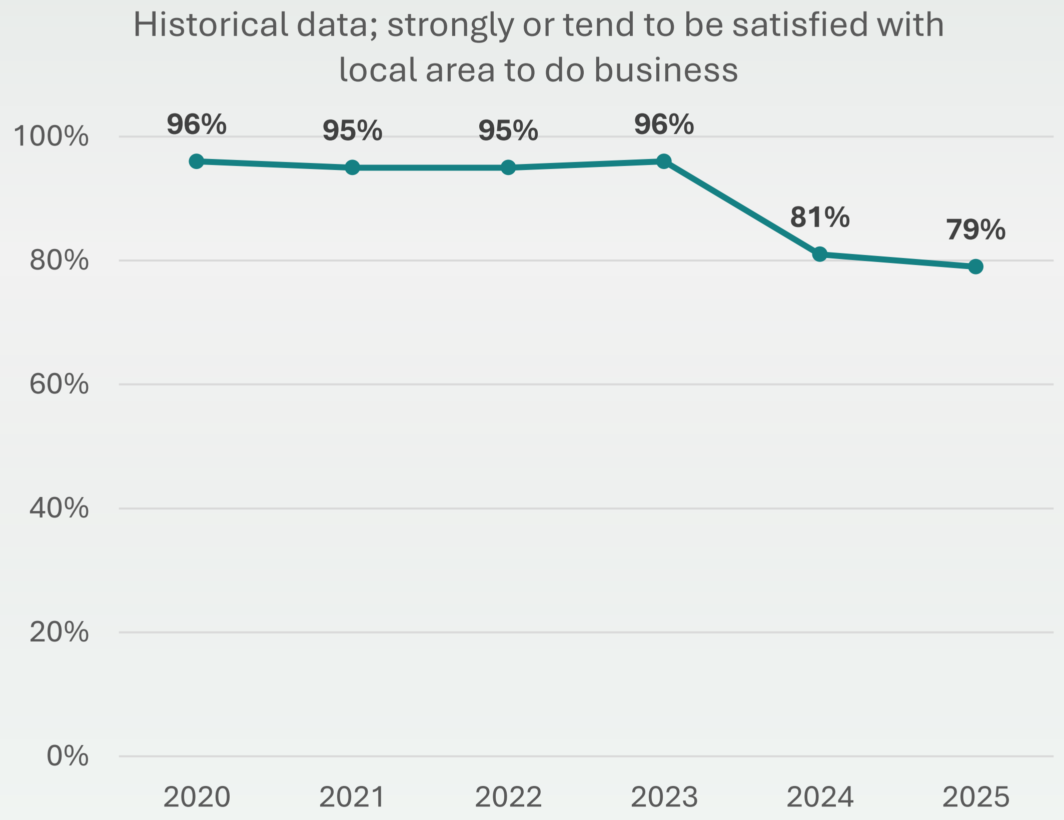
Q6b: What support, if any, would you need to help reduce your carbon emissions?
Base: All (bases vary, see charts)

Business and the local area

Satisfaction with the *local area as a place to do business*

- 79% of businesses were *satisfied with their local area*
- Both small and large businesses were equally *satisfied with the local area as a place to do business*
- Decline in satisfaction seen in 2023 not yet reversed

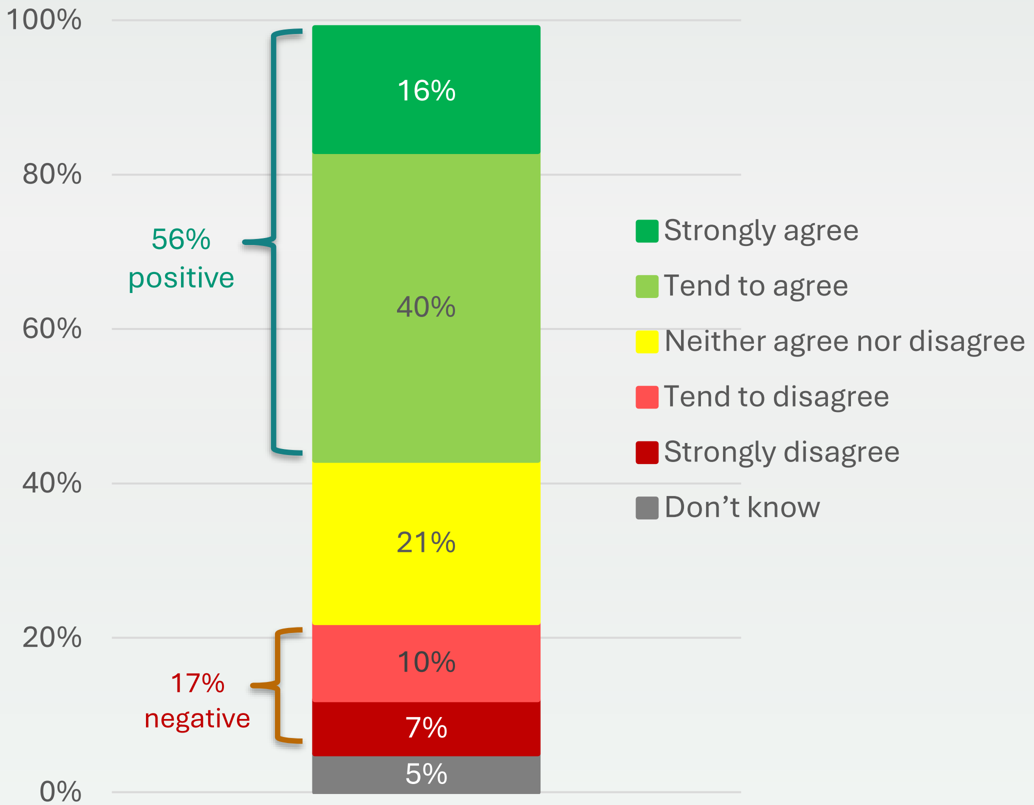


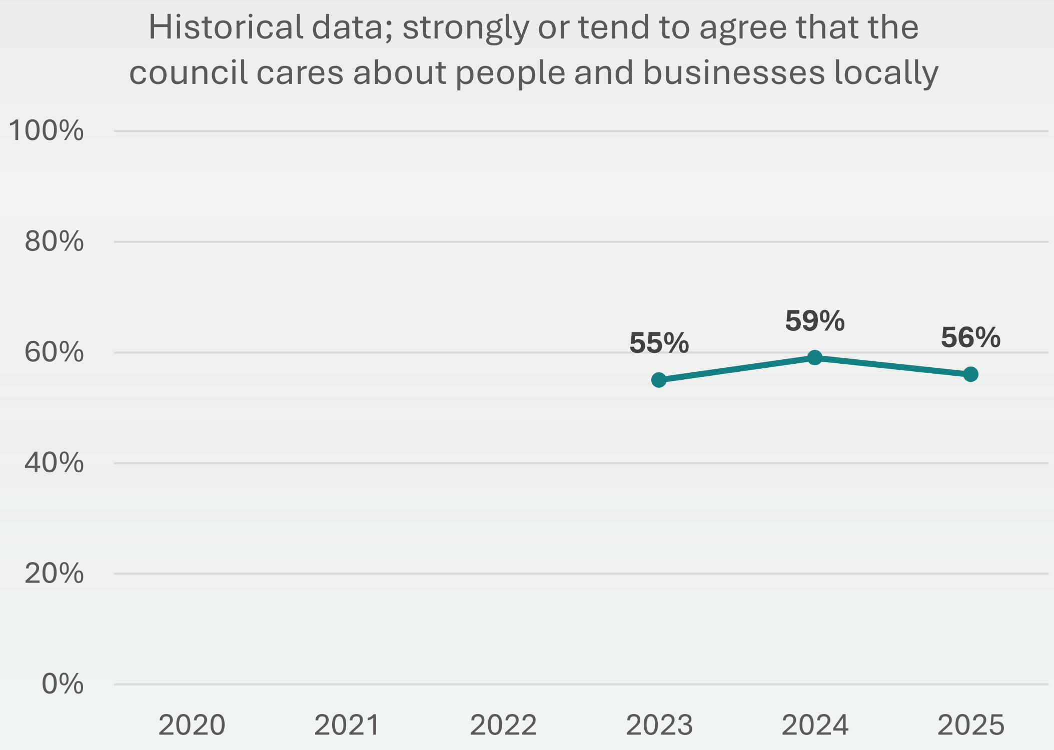


Q1a: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Overall, I am satisfied with my local area as a place to do business
Base: All (202)

Agree *the council cares about people & businesses in the community*

- 56% of businesses believed *the council does care*
- Little change over time for this measure
- Marginally more positive amongst larger businesses



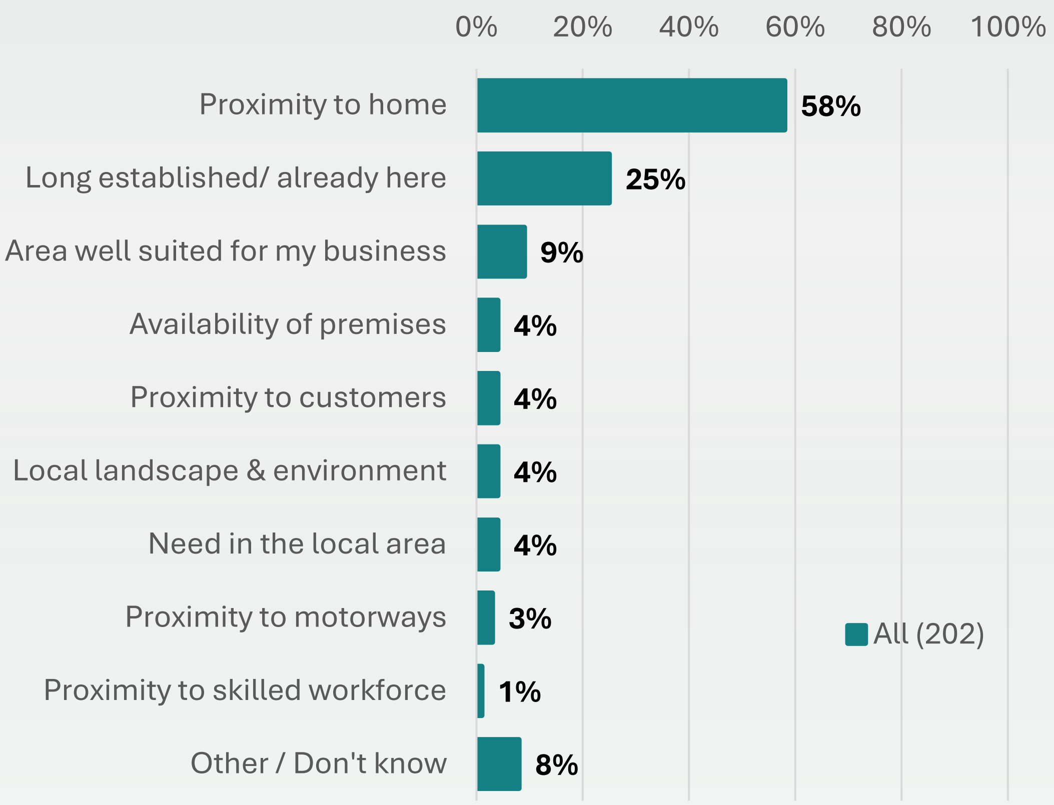


Q1b: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I believe that Stroud District Council cares about the people and businesses that make up our communities
Base: All (202)

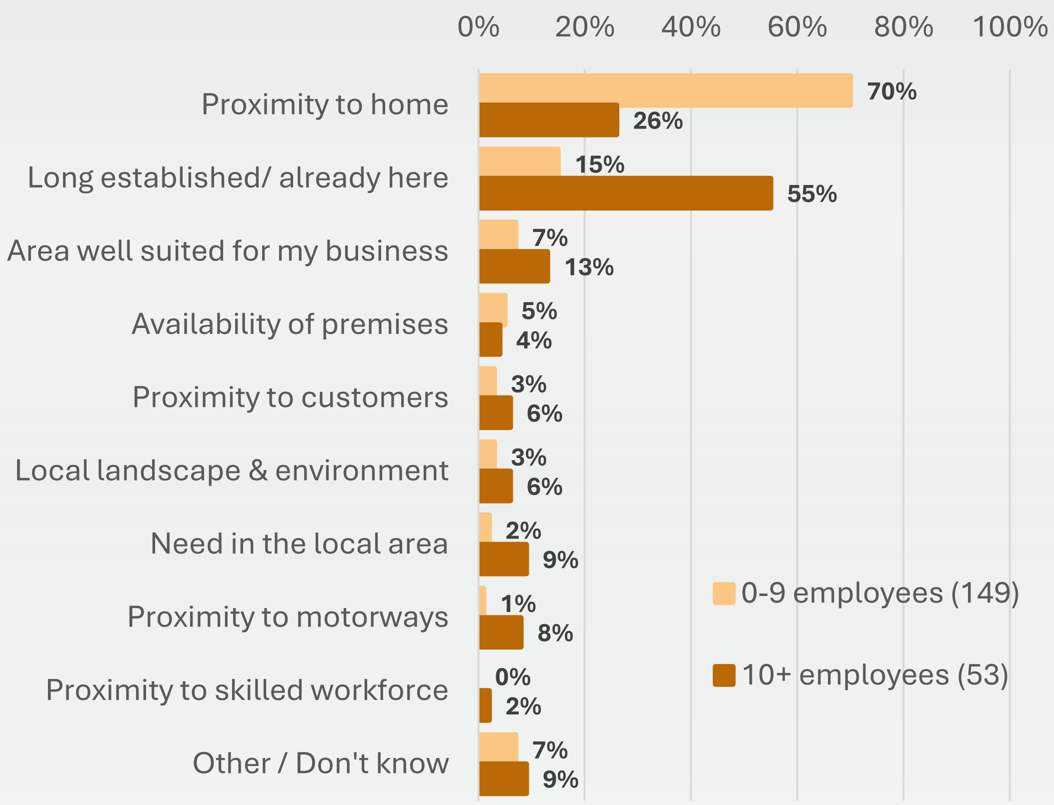
Why businesses set up in this area

- Micro businesses chose a location *close to their home*
- Larger businesses were often *already established there*
- *Proximity of motorways* a factor for 8% of larger businesses

All businesses



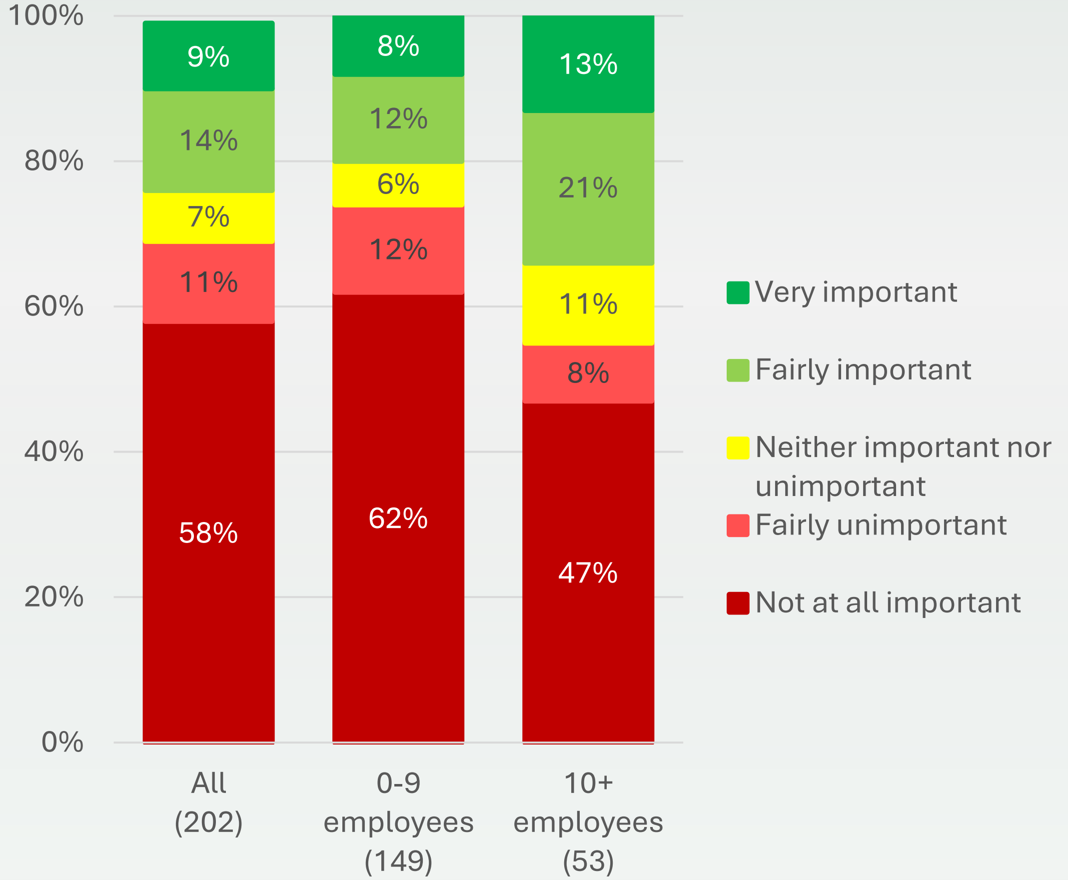
Smaller vs Larger businesses



Q2: Why did you set your business up in this area?
Base: Vary, see charts

Importance of tourism to business

- Important to more larger businesses than micros (34% vs 20%)
- Suggestions for promotion: *Publicity, marketing & social media, more efficient road repairs* and *improvements to car parking*



Suggestions for the council to promote visitors	All
More publicity/ marketing/ social media	19%
Improve roads/ road repairs	9%
Cheaper/ better more car parking	9%
Make it easier for/ promote independents	7%
Events/ attractions	5%
Improve towns' cleanliness/attractiveness	4%
Use vacant shop premises	2%
Collaborate / Talk with local businesses	2%
Other	18%
They are doing okay	5%

Q12a: How important is tourism to your business?
Base: Varies, see chart

Q12b: What is one thing the council can do to promote the Stroud district to visitors? Base: All (202)

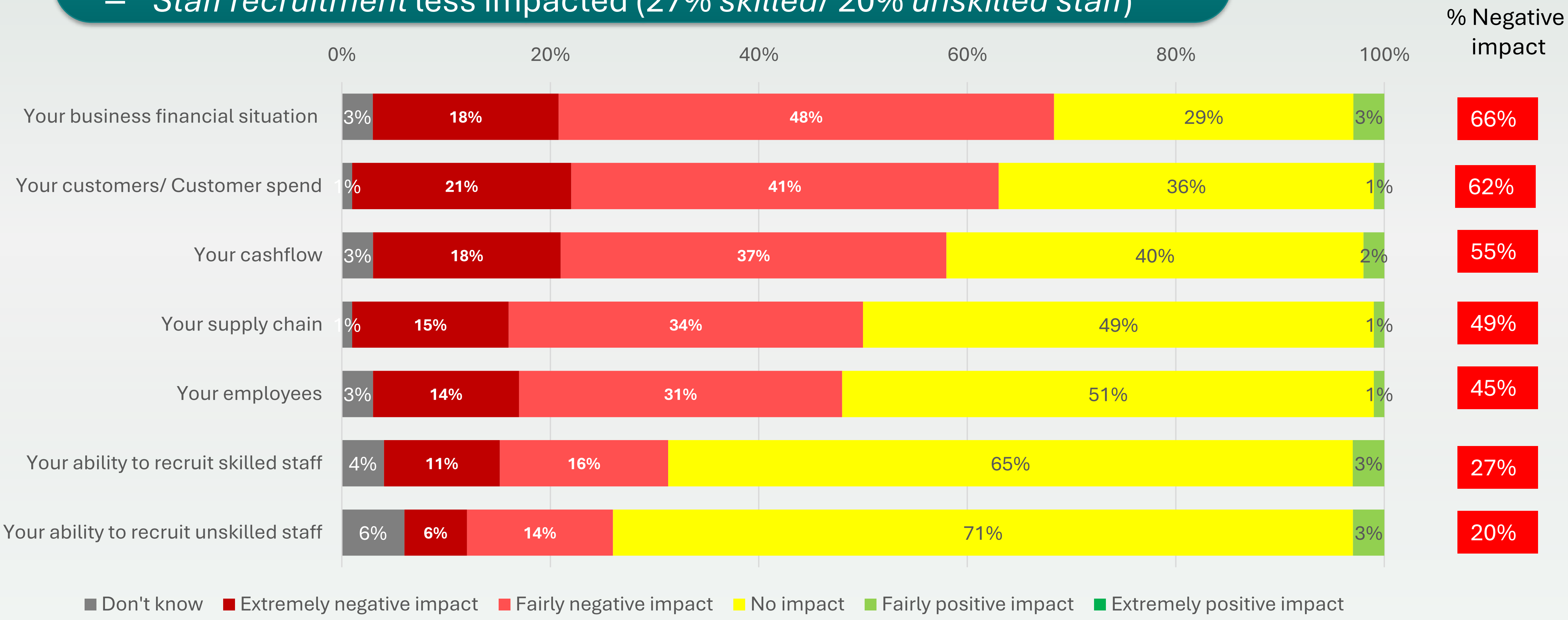
Impact of the cost of living

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

PHOENIX MRC
INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

Impact of the cost of living

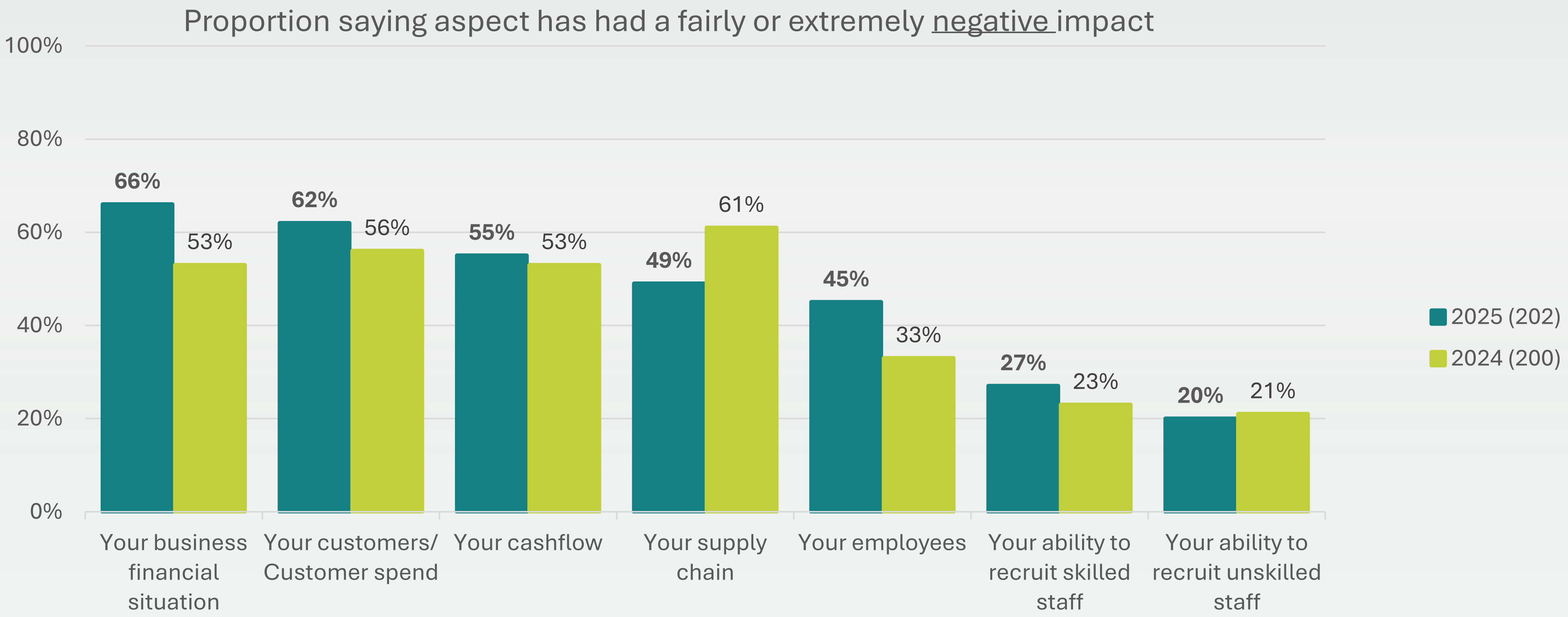
- Negative or no impact on all aspects measured
- Main impacts on *Financial situation (66%), Customer spend (62%) & Cash flow* (55%)
- *Staff recruitment* less impacted (27% *skilled/ 20% unskilled staff*)



Q5: Has the impact of the cost of living had a positive or negative impact on the following?
Base: All (202)

Impact of the cost of living: 2025 vs 2024

- Year on year *Impact of the cost of living* has worsened
- While impact of *Supply chain* has eased significantly, negative impact on businesses' *Financial situation* and on their *employees* has increased since last year

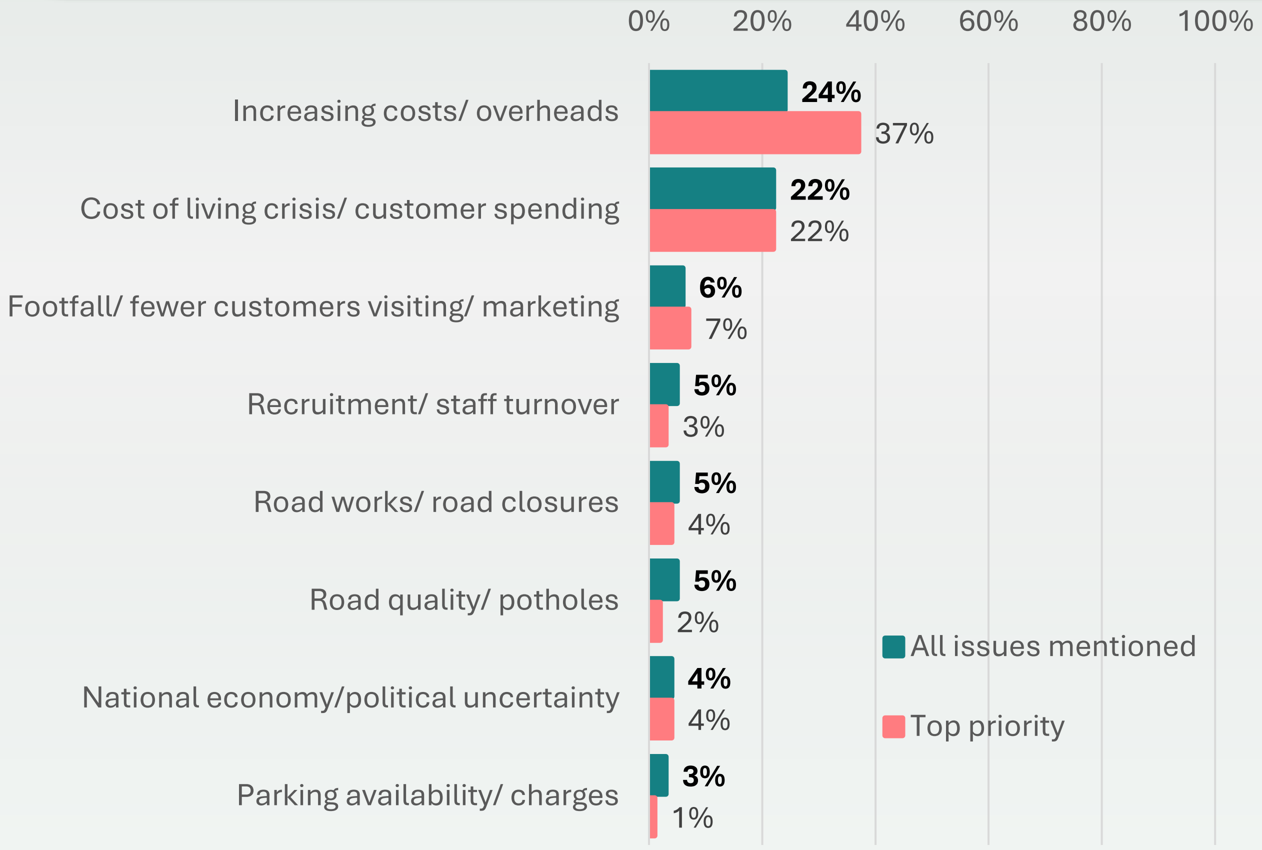


Q5: Has the impact of the cost of living had a positive or negative impact on the following?
Base: All (bases vary, see chart)

Business issues

Three most significant issues for businesses

- Uppermost: *Increasing overheads* and *Customer spending power*
- Larger businesses were more affected by *Recruitment/ staff turnover* issues compared to smaller businesses (8% vs3%)
- No other differences by business size or location



Most significant issues continued (3% or lower)

- Downturn in sales/ business/ competition
- Appearance/ upkeep of local area
- Planning policies/ too slow/ red tape
- Lack of training/ Business coaching
- Lack of business support/ premises/ digital
- Lack of public transport links
- Footfall/ fewer customers visiting
- Business rates/ Council tax
- Increase in NI payments
- Cost of business waste collection
- Social issues e.g. housing, mental health

"Other" comprised individual comments not included above

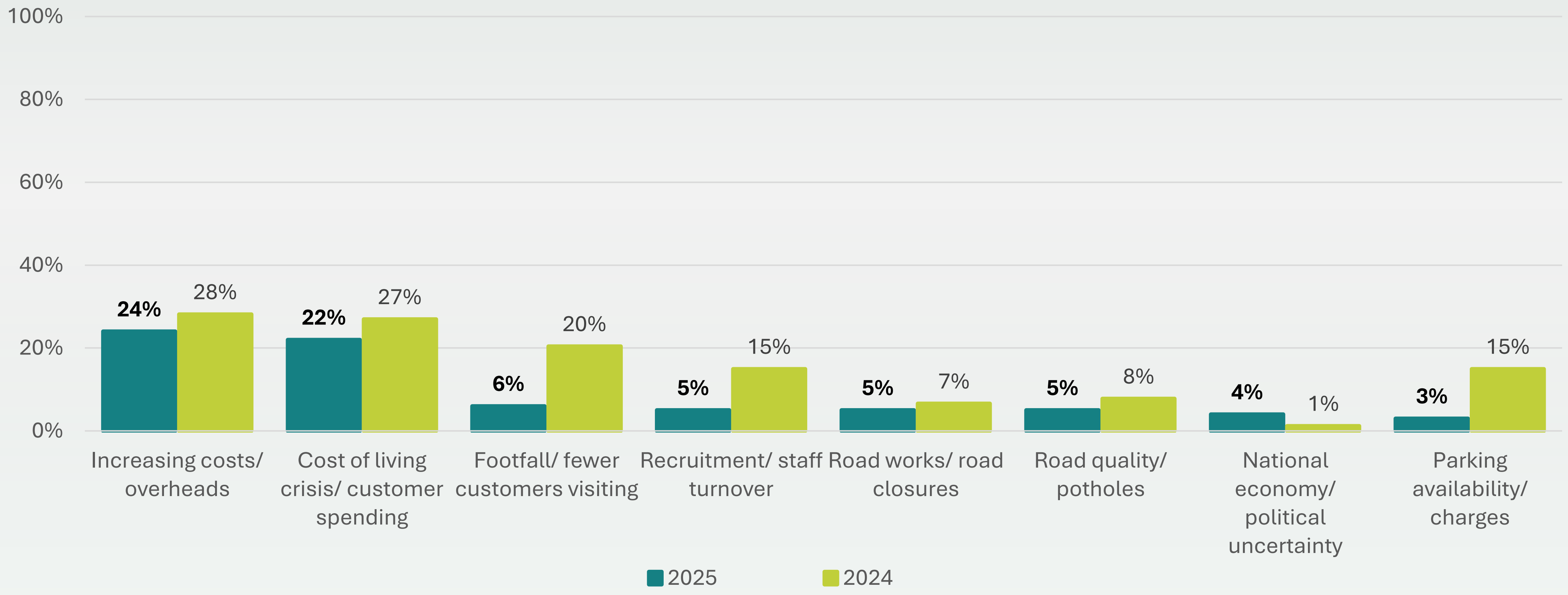
11% of businesses said they had no issues or Don't know

Q14: What are the 3 most significant issues currently for your business?
Base: All mentions from all businesses (400 from 180 businesses) but excluding responses of Don't know/ No Issues (22)
May add to more than 100% due to multiple responses

Three most significant issues for businesses: 2025 vs 2024

- Still most important: *Increasing overheads* and *Customer spending*
- *Customer footfall, Recruitment of staff* and *Parking* have all declined considerably in importance

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL



Q14: What are the 3 most significant issues currently for your business?
Base: All mentions from all businesses (2025: 400) but excluding responses of Don't know/ No Issues
May add to more than 100% due to multiple responses

PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

One thing the council can do to help your business flourish

– *Reducing business rates/ rents* continues to be top mention for all, mentioned by nearly twice as many as in 2024

Mentioned more by larger business (34%) vs micros (18%)

	2025	2024
Reduce costs/ business rates/ rents	▲22%	▼12%
Support small businesses/start ups/ Innovation hubs/ co-working spaces	7%	6%
Invest in tourism/ encourage visitors	4%	4%
Improve roads/ potholes/ fewer roadworks	4%	5%
Improve/speed up planning applications	3%	3%
More communication/ provide information/ promote support available	3%	4%
Grants for small businesses/ start ups	3%	2%
Help with promotion of local businesses/ directory of local businesses	3%	2%
Recycling costs/ facilities	3%	-
Give contracts to local businesses	3%	-

	2025	2024
Improve/ Invest in/ tidy up public places/ town centre	2%	8%
More/ cheaper premises	2%	1%
Better public transport/ transport links	2%	5%
More shops/ fewer empty shops	1%	5%
Grants for vehicles	1%	-
Support for charities	1%	-
More/free/cheaper parking	1%	7%
Other	4%	43%
Nothing	4%	
Don't know	22%	

Q13a: What one thing do you feel the council can do to help your business flourish? Base: All (2025: 202)
2024 question: 'What one thing do you feel the District Council can do to help facilitate growth and increase employment? Base: All (200)

One thing the council can do to help your business flourish: Business size

- *Reducing business rates/ rents* was top mention for all size businesses, although more so by those with more than 10 employees
- Arrows indicate statistically significant differences between subgroups

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

	0-9 employees (n=149)	10-49 employees (n=44)	50-99 employees (n=6)	100+ employees (n=3)
Reduce costs/ business rates/ rents	18%	32%	50%	33%
Support small businesses/start ups/ Innovation hubs/ co-working spaces	9%	2%	17%	33%
Invest in tourism/ encourage visitors	5%	5%	-	-
Improve roads/ potholes/ fewer roadworks	4%	5%	-	-
Improve/speed up planning applications	4%	2%	-	-
More communication/ provide information/ promote support available	▼1%	▲11%	-	-
Grants for small businesses/ start ups	4%	2%	-	-
Help with promotion of local businesses/ directory of local businesses	3%	2%	-	-
Recycling costs/ facilities	4%	-	-	-
Give contracts to local businesses	4%	-	-	33%
Support for charities	▼-	2%	▲17%	-

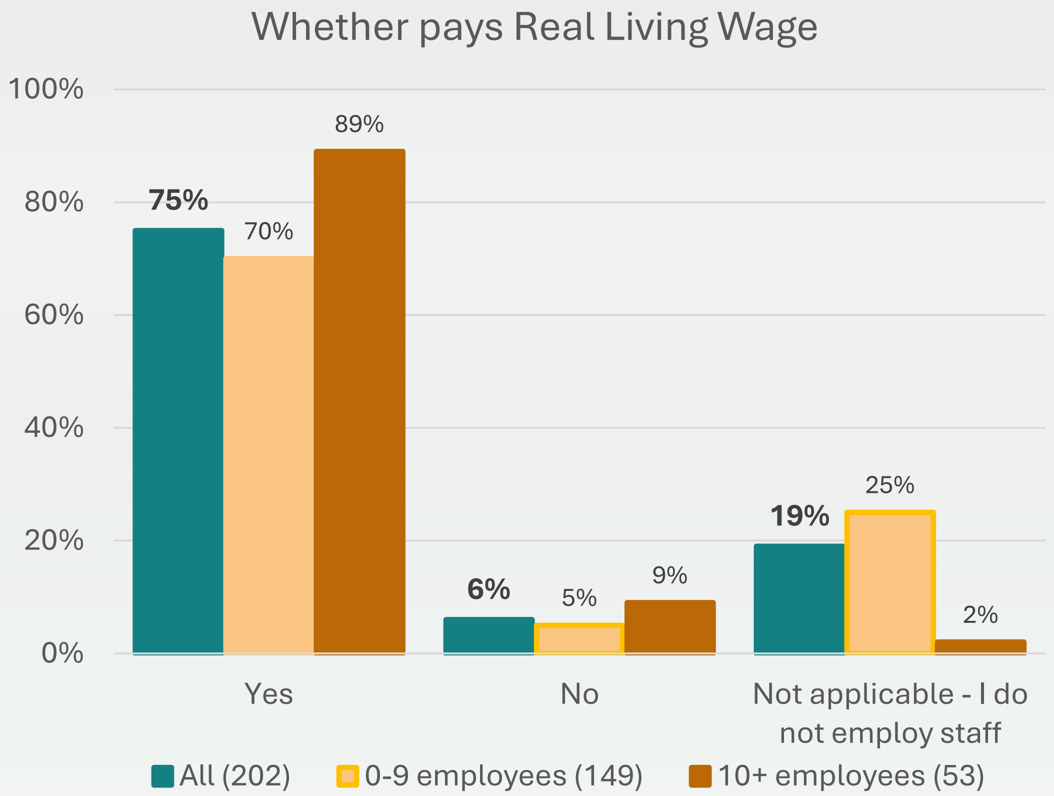
Q13a: What one thing do you feel the council can do to help your business flourish?
Base: All (202)

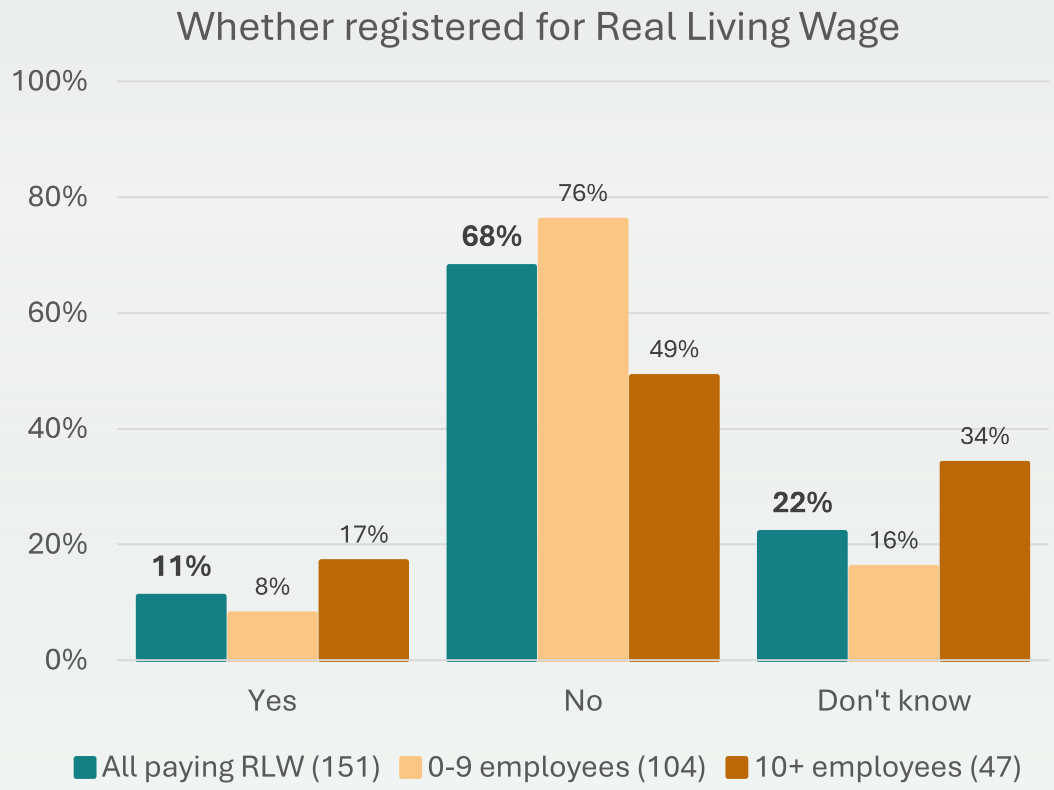
PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY

Real Living Wage

Real Living Wage

- 75% of all businesses now claim to *pay at least the Real Living Wage*
- Significantly increased from 55% in 2024,
- Even higher for larger businesses (89%)
- Even those claiming they are paying the *Real Living Wage* tend not to register it – only 11% had registered





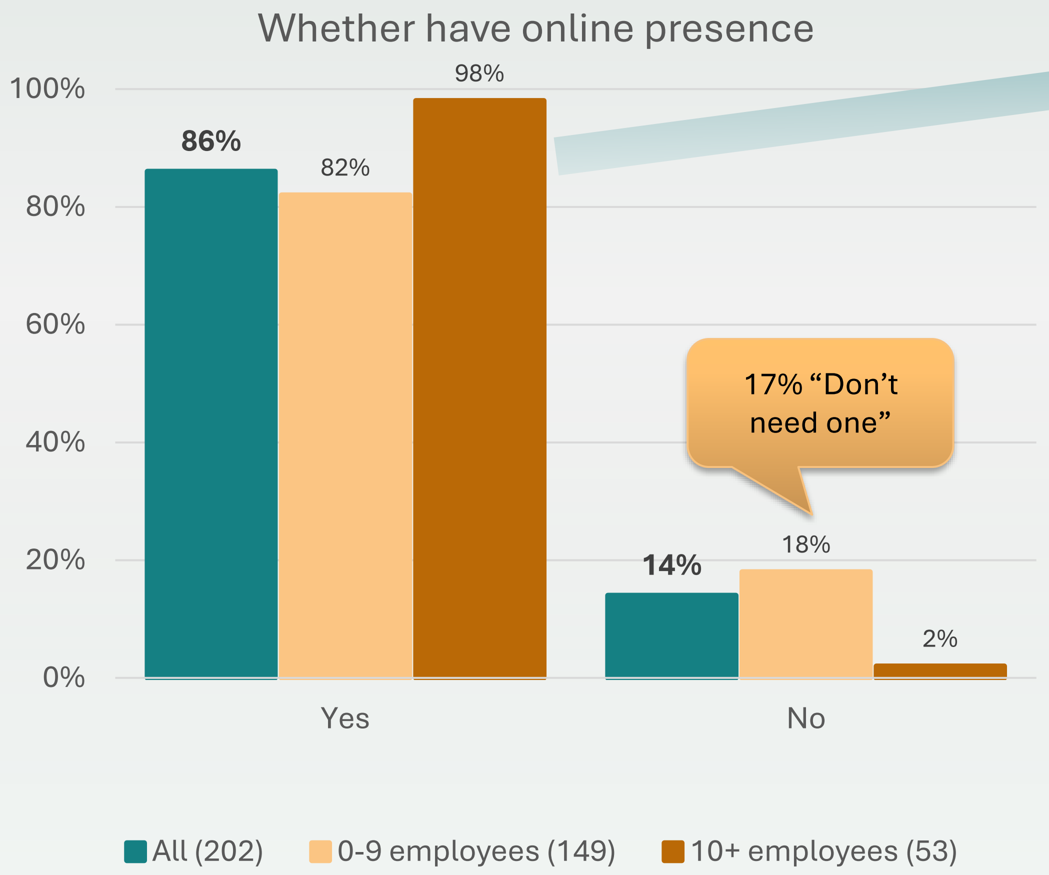
Q7: If you employ staff, do you pay the Real Living Wage (£12.60 per hour) as a minimum? Base: All (bases vary, see chart)

Q7b: Have you registered on the Real Living Wage website (www.livingwage.org.uk)?
Base: Those paying Real Living Wage (bases vary, see chart)

Businesses’ Online Presence

Online presence

- Virtually all larger businesses have online presence; 4 in 5 micros do (82%)
- Of those with online presence, nearly all have a *website* & over 2 in 3 use at least one form of *social media*



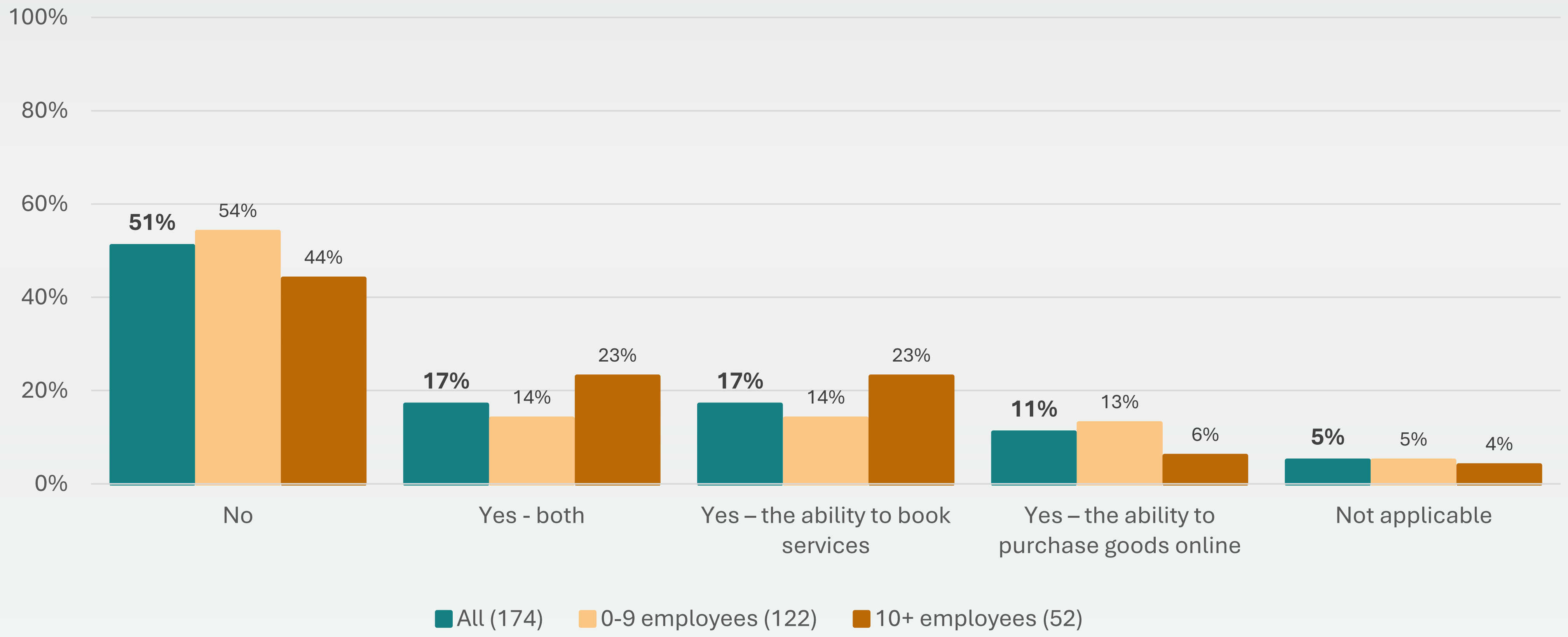
Type of online presence	Base: 174
Website	98%
Facebook	59%
Instagram	39%
LinkedIn	30%
Paid Ads (Google Ads, PPC)	14%
X (formerly called Twitter)	13%
YouTube	12%
Paid marketing (e.g. Mailchimp)	11%
TikTok	6%
Other	2%

Q3a: Does your business have an online presence?
Base: All (bases vary, see chart)

Q3c: What kind of online presence is this?
Base: Those with an online presence (174)

Online shopping services

- Just under half of those surveyed have *online shopping capability* (45%)
- Larger employers slightly more likely to offer *online booking* and/ or *purchasing*

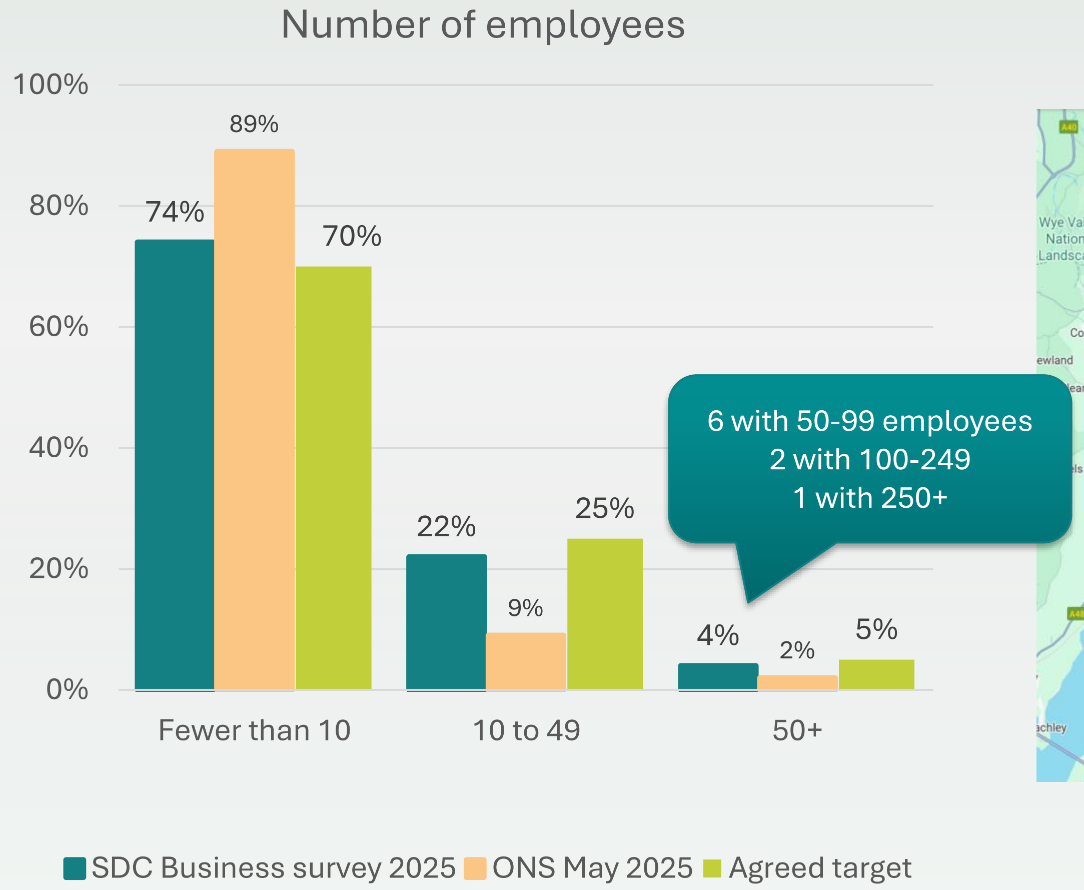


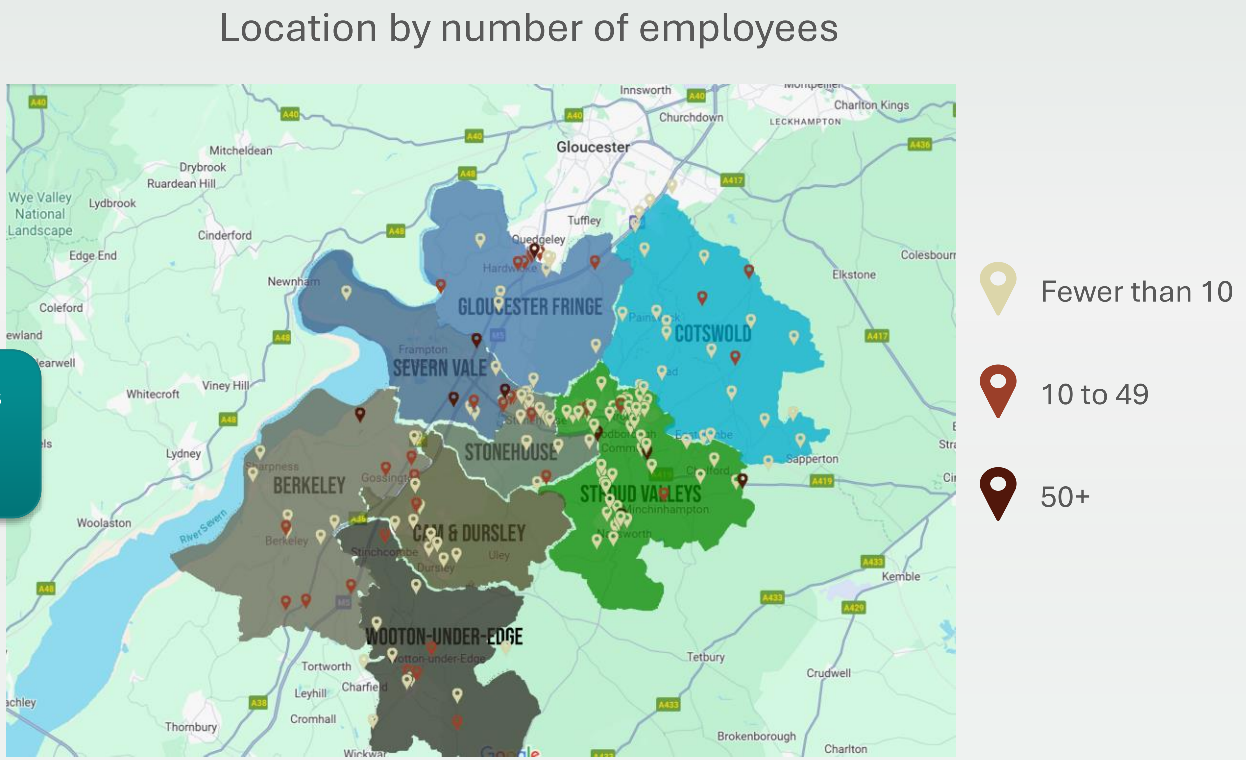
Q4: Does your business have online shopping capability?
Base: Those with an online presence (base vary, see chart)

Business Profiles

Business profiles by business size and location

- Good spread achieved, in line with agreed target proportions
- Follow the link to an interactive map showing size, postcode & area for each business interviewed





https://www.batchgeo.com/map/PMRC_SDC_Business2025

S1: Size of business, S3: Location of business
Base: All (202)

Thank you!

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Phoenix MRC offers sharp insight tools that provide clarity and reduce uncertainty

Mystery Shopping

Modelling & Analytics

Qualitative & Quantitative Research

Innovation & Ideation Workshops

MRI

Customer-centric cultural change

VoC & Performance Improvement

Brand & Proposition Development

Customer Journey Mapping

MARKET RESEARCH SERVICES ISO 20252 Cert No 0465 UKAS PRODUCT CERTIFICATION 036

MRS Evidence Matters™ Company Partner

Whithorne House • London Road • Cheltenham • GL52 6UY • Tel: +44 (0) 1242 256816
www.phoenixmrc.co.uk • enquiries@phoenixmrc.co.uk • Phoenix MRC Limited

PHOENIX MRC INSIGHT • CONSULTANCY