

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Policy & Finance Committee – 26 October 2023
SUBJECT:	Arun District Council Residents Survey 2023
LEAD OFFICER:	Jackie Follis, Group Head of Organisational Excellence
LEAD MEMBER:	Cllr Matt Stanley
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:	
The annual residents survey 2023 provides a valuable insight into public perceptions of and satisfaction with the services we deliver and Arun as a place to live. The survey results enable us to identify areas of high performance and also areas where performance is not so strong, feeding into decisions on how to deliver services during the period of the Council Vision 2022 – 2026.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:	
It is important that all services understand the overall views of our customers and community in order to support the best possible service delivery within existing constraints.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY:	
There are no financial implications	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To inform members about the outcomes from the 2023 ADC Residents' Satisfaction Survey.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.2. To review and note the contents of the survey.
- 1.3. To agree that the Residents Satisfaction Survey should be carried out on a biannual basis in the future, the next survey to be in 2025.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. Each year the council undertakes a Residents Satisfaction Survey as part of its performance framework.
- 2.2. The Residents Satisfaction Survey for 2022/23 was undertaken during June and July 2023. The council instructed BMG Research to undertake the survey.
- 2.3. This report sets out the main findings of the survey for review by members.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1. As part of the council's performance framework, an annual Residents Satisfaction Survey is undertaken each year. BMG Research Ltd carried out the survey on our behalf so that residents can be assured that their responses are anonymised. This report summarises the survey results for 2023, covering performance in 2022/2023. A copy of the survey questions is attached, along with a copy of the final survey report at Appendix A.
- 3.2. Officers recommend that the frequency of the survey is reduced to every other year. It is important background information for members and officers as it asks about residents' perceptions of the council and the services that it offers. Alongside side this information on actual performance is reported regularly to members via the KPI committee reports during and at the end of each year and the annual report on performance against the aims of the 2022- 2026 Council Vision, enabling members to scrutinise performance. The cost of the survey this year was just under £20,000, so a reduction in frequency would result in this saving every two years, whilst still providing valuable information.
- 3.3. Section 1.2 of the report explains the methodology. BMG sent a postal survey to 3000 randomly selected residents, ensuring that this was geographically representative of the whole district. Overall, 755 questionnaires were completed - a total response rate of 25% which is just below the 28% response rate recorded in the equivalent surveys in both 2022 (845 questionnaires) and 2021 (849 questionnaires). Residents had the option of responding online. This is our closed survey and comparisons between the closed and open survey (described in paragraph 4.3 below) are made later in the report.
- 3.4. In order to ensure that all Arun residents had the opportunity to provide their feedback, an 'open' version of the same survey was placed on our website and advertised through social media and press. Respondents were asked to verify their status by entering their home postcode. Analysis of responses to identify multiple responses from one source indicates that no duplicated responses were suspected. The open survey allowed an additional 610 respondents to complete the survey, this was 522 in 2022 and 528 in 2021.
- 3.5. All the data collected was subsequently weighted by area (areas defined in section 1.3, Table 1) and within each area by age and gender.

The data in the report is benchmarked against questions in the Local Government Association's (LGA) national public poll in June 2023 on resident satisfaction with local councils. BMG is careful to point out that the national survey is carried out by telephone and consists of data from 1,001 adults. The cost of carrying out telephone surveys for Arun would have been prohibitive and it is possible that self-completion surveys are less inhibited. The impact of this on findings, if any, cannot be quantified.
- 3.6. Due to the fact that the open survey responses are likely to be a bias sample of those who are more likely to engage with Arun District Council, the open and postal surveys have been analysed separately and a gap analysis is set out later in this report.

- 3.7. It should be noted that the questions and responses are contextualised within the priority themes contained in the Council Vision – 2022-2026.
- 3.8. Another point to note is demonstrated in various tables throughout the report where performance over time is shown. For many questions, performance is notably better in 2020, returning to a similar pattern to 2019 in subsequent years (for example Figure 12). There was a tendency for this to be the same across local government with a perception from communities that local authorities had ‘delivered’ particularly well with a high profile during the early stages of the pandemic. In addition, the 2020 survey was carried out during a period of national lockdown.
- 4.8 To avoid confusion, where tables from the BMG report are referred to or copied into the covering report, they use the same numbering as the BMG report.

Living in Arun District (Section 2)

4.9 Overall Satisfaction (section 2.1)

Overall satisfaction levels are high, with 77% of residents saying they are either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with their local area (15-20 minutes walking distance of their home). This is slightly less than the results seen in 2022 (80%). The downward trend for Arun since 2020 (Figure 2.1) mimics the overall national picture for local government which has seen satisfaction levels fall from 87% in June 2020 to 73% in June 2023. Arun is therefore still above the national average.

BMG suggests that perceptions of the local area as a place to live tends to inform satisfaction with the council. Residents from Eastern areas are significantly more satisfied with the local area as a place to live (84%), with those in Western areas (75%) and Downland areas (72%) being less satisfied.

A key driver analysis has been carried out which can be found in section 2.2, Figure 1.2, which correlates levels of satisfaction with the importance of various indicators. The factor which appears to be the strongest driver for high levels of satisfaction is “satisfaction with the local area as a place to live” with the strongest drivers for low satisfaction being “trust the council to make the right decision”, “provides value for money” and “trust the council to make the right decision”. These are similar to 2022. It is suggested that the council looks for opportunities to increase positive perceptions around these areas.

4.10 Community Cohesion (section 2.3)

52% of respondents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, 16% disagree. This is very similar to 2022 at 54% and 17%, like last year a high proportion of people (32%) are neutral. The majority of those who agree ‘tend to agree’ rather than ‘strongly agree’ which potentially identifies an area for the council to consider in terms of future action. It is possible that the high ‘neutral’ figure is because people do not consider that they have significant contact with people from different backgrounds. There is more detail around potential factors influencing this in the BMG report.

4.11 Cleanliness of Arun District (section 2.4)

In 2023, 59% of respondents are satisfied overall with the cleanliness of the district. This is a decline on satisfaction seen in 2022 when it was 66%. The detailed analysis (section 2.5, Figure 6) gives more detail on different kinds of places in the district. Parks & Open Spaces and Beaches & Promenades have the highest levels of satisfaction, with Public Toilets at the bottom of the list. The level of satisfaction for public toilets is however marginally higher than recorded previously. Table 2 shown below shows how these have changed over time (red indicates significantly lower than overall average and green significantly higher).

Table 2: Satisfaction with cleanliness over time (All valid responses: Sample bases in parenthesis)

Cleanliness of...	Proportion satisfied										
	2013 (510)	2014 (515)	2015 (399)	2016 (574)	2017 (473)	2018 (585)	2019 (579)	2020 (611)	2021 (806)	2022 (805)	2023 (741)
Parks and open spaces	75%	72%	76%	79%	73%	70%	74%	79%	79%	77%	75%
Beaches and promenades	69%	70%	71%	68%	74%	67%	77%	78%	72%	75%	72%
Town/village centre shopping areas	66%	63%	67%	68%	69%	62%	65%	69%	70%	69%	62%
Out of town shopping areas	62%	62%	61%	65%	62%	62%	62%	59%	67%	67%	59%
Car parks	58%	63%	62%	64%	60%	55%	58%	60%	63%	65%	59%
Residential roads	54%	59%	57%	56%	54%	50%	57%	66%	59%	60%	52%
Public toilets	34%	36%	34%	34%	29%	25%	36%	35%	43%	41%	44%

Table 3 below shows perceptions of cleanliness by age and location

Table 3: Satisfaction with cleanliness by age and location (All valid responses: base size in parenthesis)

	Total	Age			Area		
		18-44	45-64	65+	Downland	Western	Eastern
Parks and open spaces (682)	75%	62%	78%	81%	74%	72%	79%
Beaches and promenades (696)	72%	70%	77%	71%	74%	64%	80%
Town/village centre shopping areas (730)	62%	52%	62%	69%	66%	53%	70%
Out of town shopping areas (631)	59%	58%	62%	66%	53%	56%	68%
Car parks (681)	59%	52%	64%	63%	62%	51%	67%
Residential roads (729)	52%	57%	52%	55%	54%	44%	62%
Public toilets (545)	44%	40%	45%	47%	45%	32%	60%

The detailed analysis in the BMG report describes differences between different locations by age and where the resident lives in Arun which may reflect how these are used by different members of the community, for instance residents with children are less likely to be satisfied with the cleanliness of parks.

4.12 Problem behaviours in Arun

Residents were asked if any anti-social behaviours are a problem and the results are set out in section 2.6 and Figure 7. Levels of problematic behaviour have mainly stayed in line with results seen in 2022. It is worth noting that the prevalence of all these issues increased significantly between 2020 and 2022, but now appear to be more stable. There are some areas of more concern for those living in the Western area and these are set out in more detail in the BMG report.

Customer Satisfaction with the Council and its Services

4.13 Satisfaction with the overall quality of services (section 3.1)

59% of residents are satisfied with the quality of service provided by the council, compared to 63% last year.

Those aged 65+ are significantly more likely to be satisfied with the local council overall. The same is true of those who are satisfied with the cleanliness of their local area and agree that the council provides value for money. Residents who

rent from the council are significantly less satisfied with the overall quality of council services. It is worth noting that Western areas satisfaction levels are in line with total average scores.

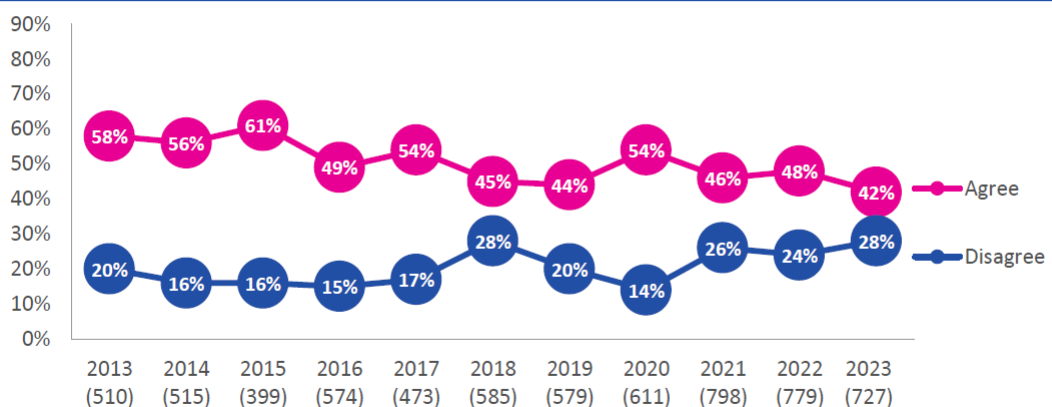
4.14 Satisfaction with specific council services (section 3.2)

This remains high for the specific services which residents were questioned on, and total satisfaction is shown in Figure 9, with performance over time at Figure 10. The figure for waste collection and recycling is 90% which is an improvement on the 2022 level of 83% and the LGA benchmark which is 78%. Satisfaction levels are 76% for parks, open spaces and play areas in line with 78% for 2022. The LGA benchmark is 80%. Satisfaction with council-owned leisure centres is 60%, down on 66% for 2022. Figure 10 shows the trends over time.

4.15 Value for money (section 3.3)

To frame responses to this question, respondents were reminded that Arun’s 2023/24 council tax is £3.89 for a Band D dwelling, they were also reminded which services Arun provides. 42% of respondents agree that the council provides value for money, this is the same as the LGA benchmark. This is down from the 2022 figure of 48%. Figure 12 below shows how this has changed over time. There are some variations reported such as residents aged 65 or over tend to be more positive about this, whilst agreement levels are significantly higher than average in Eastern areas and significantly lower in Downland areas.

Figure 12: Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Arun District Council provides value for money? - Over time (All valid responses: Sample bases in parenthesis)



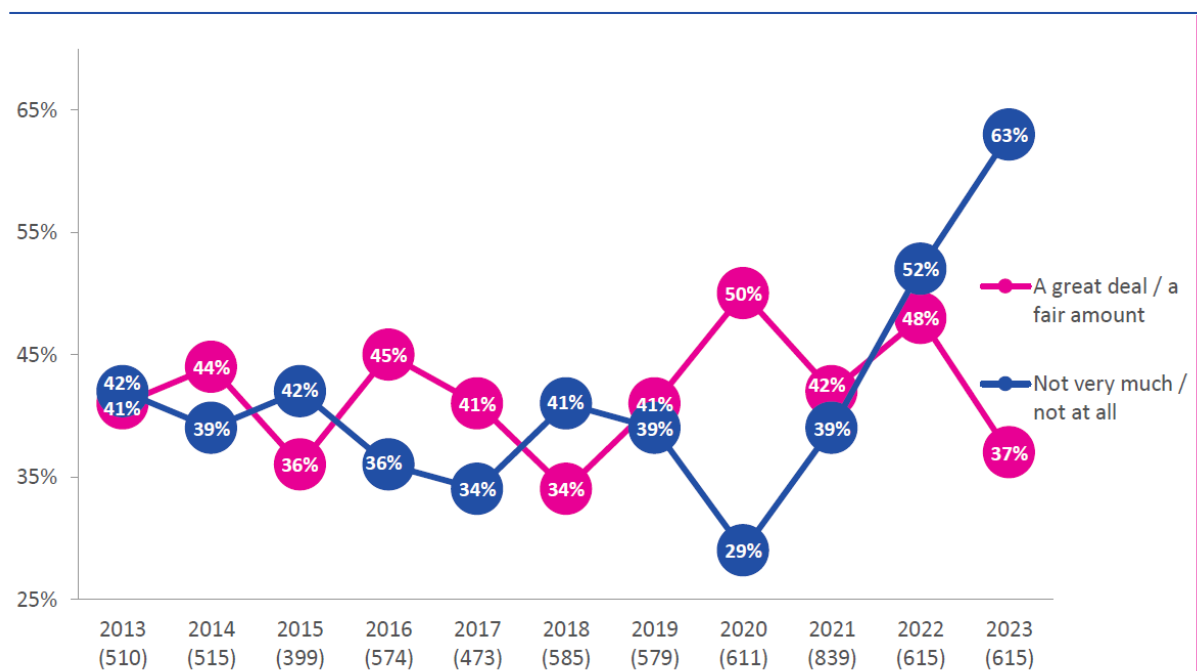
4.16 Trust in the council to make the right decision (section 3.4)

46% of respondents say they trust the council to make the right decision (58% in 2022) with the majority of respondents (43%) saying they trust the council a fair amount. This is somewhat below the LGA benchmark of 56%, but the LGA question is more generic: “how much do you trust your local council”, which may account for the difference in responses. There is some geographical variation in responses to this question shown in table 5. Notable is that level of trust in the council is significantly down since last year for Western areas (down from 51% to 40%) and Downland areas (61% to 31%), whilst remaining almost identical in Eastern areas.

4.17 Acting on concerns

37% of respondents agree the council acts on residents’ concerns which is slightly lower than 39% last year. 63% think that they don’t act much at all on residents’ concerns, an increase from 52% in 2022. Figure 15 below shows changes over time and emphasises the difference from last year with more polarised responses.

Figure 15: Q4. To what extent do you think Arun District Council acts on the concerns of local residents? - Over time (All valid responses: Sample bases in parenthesis)



Residents aged 65+ are significantly more likely to feel that the council acts on their concerns and respondents in Eastern areas are also significantly more likely to feel that the Council acts on their concerns. Agreement that the council acts on residents’ concerns is significantly lower than the LGA benchmark of 52% (which has also seen a significant decrease from 60% in 2022).

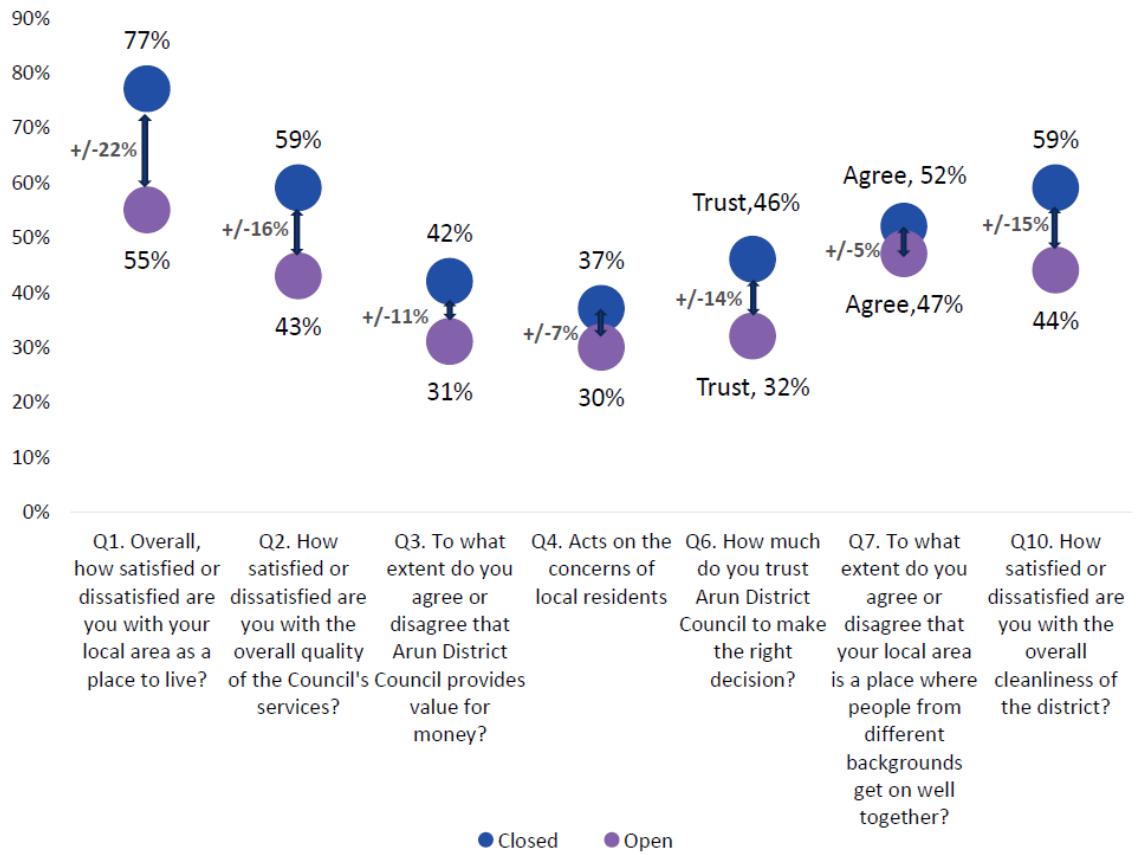
Residents' preferred channels to be kept informed (section 3.6)

4.18 Essential to building a relationship of trust with the council is that our residents feel well informed. The numbers for most of the channels are in line with last year. However, residents express much less of a preference for using the council's website at 42%, against 57% in 2022 and 49% in 2021. This is a significant change which confirms that we should continue to make our website as accessible and effective as possible and continue to monitor its use carefully. This is followed by the Arun Times (hard copy) at 34%, with a number of those aged 65+ preferring this to digital channels. There are other more digital preferences being expressed by different age groups which are covered in more detail in the full report.

Closed survey versus open survey (Section 4)

4.19 Figures 17, 18, 19 and 20 show the difference in perceptions between the open and closed surveys. BMG do some further analysis in their report. In the majority of instances residents in the closed survey report more positive perceptions than the open survey, suggesting that residents have engaged with the open survey because in some instances they are unhappy with a certain issue or service.

Figure 17: Gap analysis chart



*This chart is showcasing satisfaction levels, unless otherwise stated

Figure 18: Gap analysis chart (continued) - Q8. Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are?

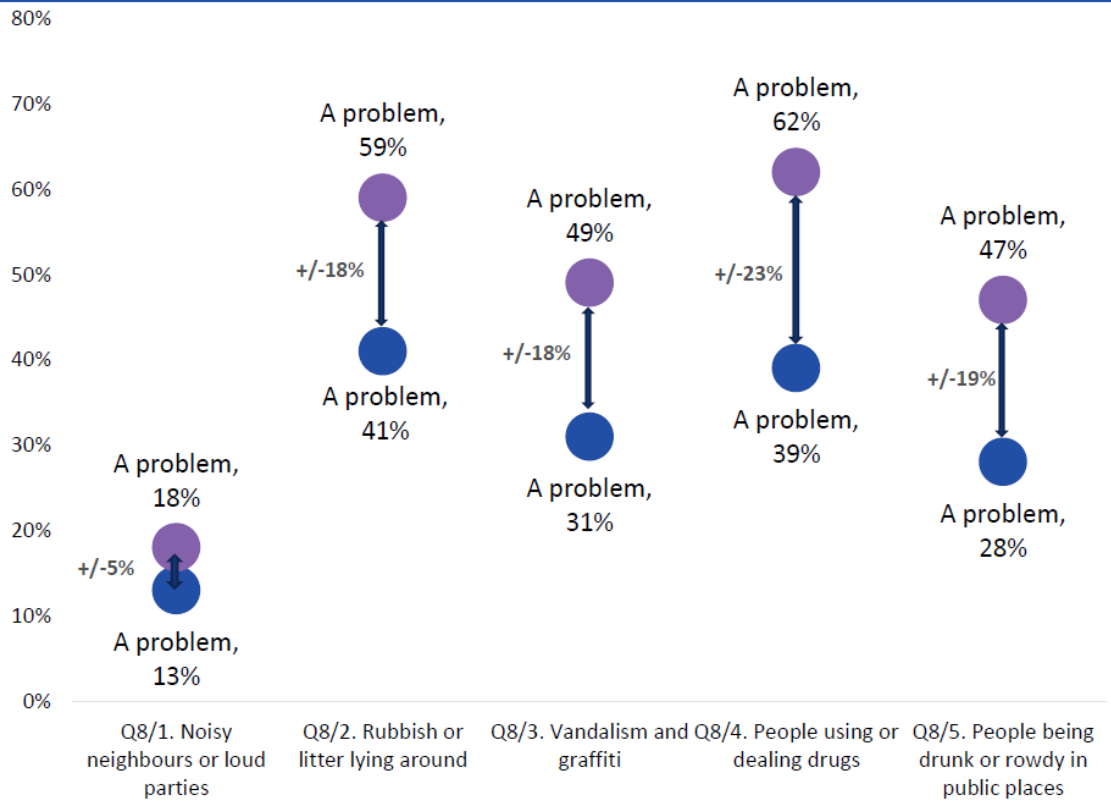


Figure 19: Gap analysis chart (continued) - Q9. Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with Arun District Council's performance

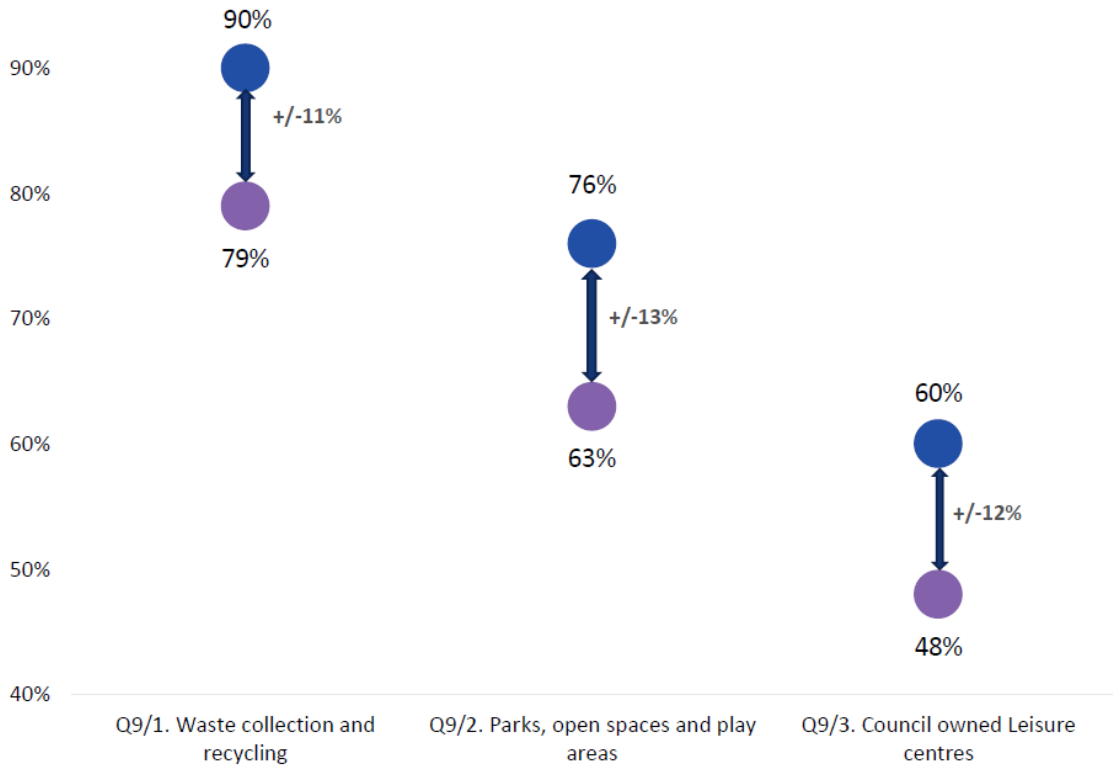
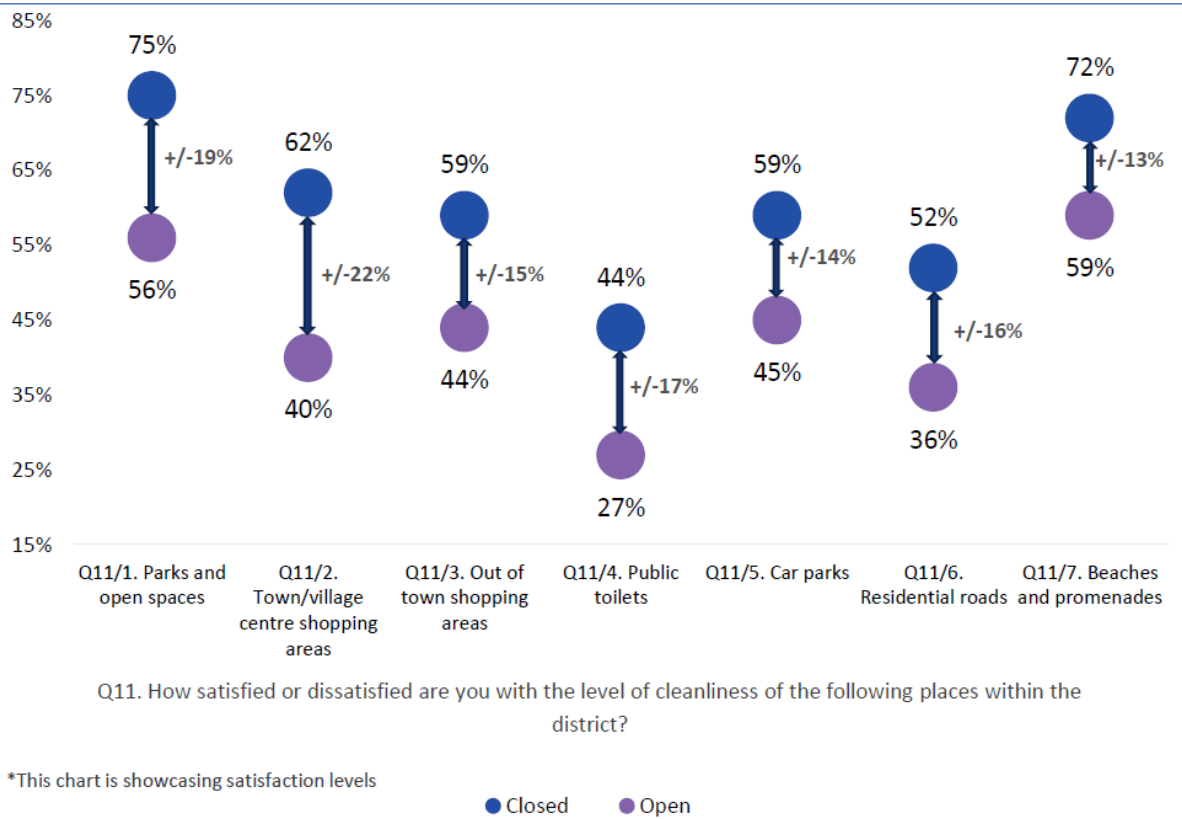


Figure 20: Gap analysis chart (continued) - Q11. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the level of cleanliness of the following places within the district?



Section 4.2 also includes a table showing the differences between the relative importance of the key drivers of satisfaction (section 4.2) which shows small significant variation.

Table 7: Key drivers' relative importance for closed and opened survey

	Relative importance		
	Closed survey	Open survey	Difference
Satisfaction with local area as a place to live	22%	20%	+/-2%
Provides value for money	21%	25%	+/-4%
Satisfaction with waste collection and recycling	6%	6%	+/-0%
Satisfaction with parks, open spaces and play areas	8%	9%	+/-1%
Satisfaction with the overall cleanliness of the district	10%	9%	+/-1%
Acts on the concerns of local residents	14%	14%	+/-0%
Trust Council to make the right decision	18%	16%	+/-2%

Summary

- 4.20 The overall direction of travel for the responses to the 2023 survey is less positive since 2022. The table below summarises the overall responses to each question and the changes in positive satisfaction since 2022.
- 4.21 A copy of the survey has also been sent to the Council Vision Working Party who are currently reviewing how we measure performance against the aims of the Vision.
- 4.22 The table is colour coded as follows:

Maximum standard error in this sample is +/- 3.56% meaning that we can be 95% confident of the accuracy of the results. For this reason, the direction of travel in 2023 is shown below as green if it has improved by more than this, amber if it is within the standard error, and red if it is more than 3.56% worse than the figure for 2022.

4.23 Summary of report responses

	Better than last year (by more than 3.56%)
	The same as last year (i.e. within sample standard error rate of +/- 3.56%)
	Worse than last year (by more than 3.56%)

Section	Question	High or low is better	2022	2023	% difference in Arun 2022-2023	LGA survey June 23 where available
2.1	Living in Arun District	High	80	77	-3	73
2.3	Community cohesion	High	54	52	-2	
2.4	Cleanliness of Arun District overall	High	66	59	-7	
2.5	Cleanliness of different places					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks & open spaces 	High	77	75	-2	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beaches & promenades 	High	75	72	-3	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town/village shopping areas 	High	69	62	-7	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Out of town shopping areas 	High	67	59	-8	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car parks 	High	65	59	-6	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential roads 	High	60	52	-8	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public toilets 	High	41	44	+3	
2.6	Problem behaviours					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People using or dealing drugs 	Low	43	39	-4	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rubbish or litter lying around 	Low	39	41	+2	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People being drunk or rowdy in public places 	Low	32	28	-4	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vandalism/graffiti and other damage to property or vehicles 	Low	30	31	+1	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noisy neighbours or loud parties 	Low	15	13	-2	

3.1	Satisfaction with overall quality of services	High	63	59	-4	
3.2	Satisfaction with specific services					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste collection and recycling 	High	83	90	+7	78
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks, open spaces and play areas 	High	78	76	-2	80
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council owned leisure centres 	High	66	60	-6	
3.3	Value for money	High	48	42	-6	42
3.4	Trust in the Council to make the right decision	High	58	46	-12	56
3.5	Acting on concerns	High	39	37	-2	52

5 CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation carried out with Arun District residents.

6 OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1 N/A

7 COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1 No financial implications

8 RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 None

9 COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1 There are no direct legal or governance implications arising from this report.

10 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 None

11 HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1 None

12 PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1 None

13 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1 It is important to understand the views of our residents on the services we deliver. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion data and community perceptions should be taken into account and used to support decision making and service improvements. The survey complied fully with accessibility requirements, both digital and in that a physical copy was available for completion if requested.

14 CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1 None

15 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1 It is important that the Council and relevant services understand residents' perceptions of the area and antisocial behaviour, alongside the data that they collect to support service planning and their communications with residents.

16 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1 No immediate impact, but important information to support delivery.

17 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1 The survey met GDPR requirements.

CONTACT OFFICER:

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None