Research Report

Residents' Survey 2020

Prepared for: Arun District Council
Prepared by: BMG Research

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and method

In spring 2020 Arun District Council commissioned BMG to undertake research in order to understand the residents' views on their local area and their perceptions of, and satisfaction with, Arun District Council. The research was conducted in April and May, with a randomly sampled postal survey of Arun residents. This report summarises the key findings.

1.2 Methodology

Using the Royal Mail's Postal Address File (the most complete source of residential addresses available), 1,800 addresses were selected at random across the district to receive a short questionnaire by post. This questionnaire included details of how the survey could be completed online. The distribution of the selected addresses was checked against ward population data to ensure that the sample selection was spatially representative. Mid way through the survey period, any address that had not returned a survey to BMG Research was sent a reminder letter and a fresh version of the questionnaire in order to maximise the response rate. Overall, 611 questionnaires were completed and returned to BMG, representing a total response rate of 34%. This compares to a 32% response rate recorded in the equivalent residents' survey completed in 2019.

A sample of 611 is subject to a maximum standard error of ±3.22% at the 95% confidence level on an observed statistic of 50%. Thus, we can be 95% confident that if a census of Arun residents had been conducted and the whole population had responded, the actual figure would lie between 46.78% and 53.22% respectively.

The data collected has been subsequently weighted by area and, within each area, by age and gender. The exact profile of the data prior to weighting and after weighting can be reviewed in the profile summary within the final section of this written report.

1.3 Report contents and analysis

This report outlines the findings from the research into experiences of living in Arun, and perceptions of the Council. Where possible these findings are contextualised within the Priority Themes contained within the Corporate Plan 2018-2022.

Throughout the data report, area analysis has been used. Wards have been grouped together into the three areas shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Area definitions

Western	Eastern	Downland
Aldwick East	Beach	Angmering and Findon
Aldwick West	Brookfield	Arundel and Walberton
Bersted	Courtwick with Toddington	Barnham
Felpham East	East Preston	Yapton
Felpham West	Ferring	
Hotham	River	
Marine	Rustington East	
Middleton-on-Sea	Rustington West	
Orchard		
Pagham		
Pevensey		

Throughout this report the word 'significant' is used to describe differences in the data. This indicates where the data has been tested for statistical significance. This testing identifies 'real differences' (i.e. differences that would occur if we were able to interview all residents in Arun rather than just a sample). Within tables in this report, all figures highlighted are significantly higher (green) or lower (pink) compared to the total.

The data in the report is benchmarked against the Local Government Association's national public polling on resident satisfaction with local councils. This benchmarking is included wherever consistent question wording was used to allow for the comparison with a national dataset. These surveys are conducted every four months, and the data used for benchmarking in this report is from the latest survey which took place between 27 February and 1 March 2020.

The Local Government Association February 2020 survey consists of data from a representative random sample of 1,001 British adults (aged 18 or over). It is important to note that the LGA polling was carried out by telephone, rather than the postal methodology used for this research. There may a difference in the findings produced by the self-completion methodology used in this research (i.e., postal or online) compared to an interview administered survey on the phone, as used by the Local Government Association. Self-completion surveys can produce less inhibited, more critical responses. The impact of this on the findings, if any, cannot be quantified, but should be considered when comparing the datasets. Throughout the report, data from the February wave of the Local Government Association's national public polls is referred to as the "LGA Benchmark."

Where tables and graphics do not match exactly to the text in the report this occurs due to the way in which figures are rounded up (or down) when responses are combined. Results that differ in this way should not have a variance which is any larger than 1%.

In keeping with previous surveys, the responses are shown as a percentage out of all the surveys received, even where certain questions were not answered by individual

residents. Therefore, the sample size for all 2020 data included in the report is 611, and the responses may not always sum to 100%.

1.4 Broader context for this research

This research ran against the wider backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown period. These unique circumstances were referenced in the covering letters sent out in this research, signed by Nigel Lynn which stated:

"Whilst we are in this unprecedented pandemic situation, your opinions are just as important, but we would like you to think about how our services are delivered all year round, not just during this extraordinary period."

It is not possible to ascertain to what extent, if at all, the responses of residents' were influenced by the unique circumstances that the lockdown period produced. However, as context for this research, ad hoc polling from the LGA on resident satisfaction with council's response to COVID-19 offers some insight. A national sample of 905 adults polled by telephone between 15th and 22nd May showed that the role of local authorities to date during the crisis has been viewed positively by a majority:

- Seven out of ten people polled (70%) are 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with the way their local council is supporting them and their household during the coronavirus pandemic.

- More than six out of ten people polled (62%) are 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with the way their local council is supporting their local community during the coronavirus pandemic.

Looking to the future, a third of the people polled (33%) think their local council/ councillor is best placed to help their local area recover after the coronavirus lockdown is over. The same proportion of people polled think the UK Government is best placed to do so. While this data is from a national sample rather than from Arun specifically, it does not immediately suggest the COVID-19 crisis would be detrimental to wider perceptions of local authorities.

2. Living in Arun District

To understand the everyday experiences of residents in Arun, respondents were asked about their perceptions of their local area. This is important context in which to view their satisfaction with the Council, as this tends to inform it. Understanding residents' experiences of their local area can also be used to instruct Council decisions regarding services and resources. Therefore, Arun residents were asked, "Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?"

2.1 Overall satisfaction

Overall satisfaction levels are high, with 87% percent of residents saying they are either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with their local area (15-20 minutes walking distance of their home) as a place to live. This is compares favourably to the LGA benchmark figure of 81%, and is significantly higher than the 2019 score (80%). 1% of respondents did not provide an answer for this question.

Figure 1: Q1 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? (All responses: 611)
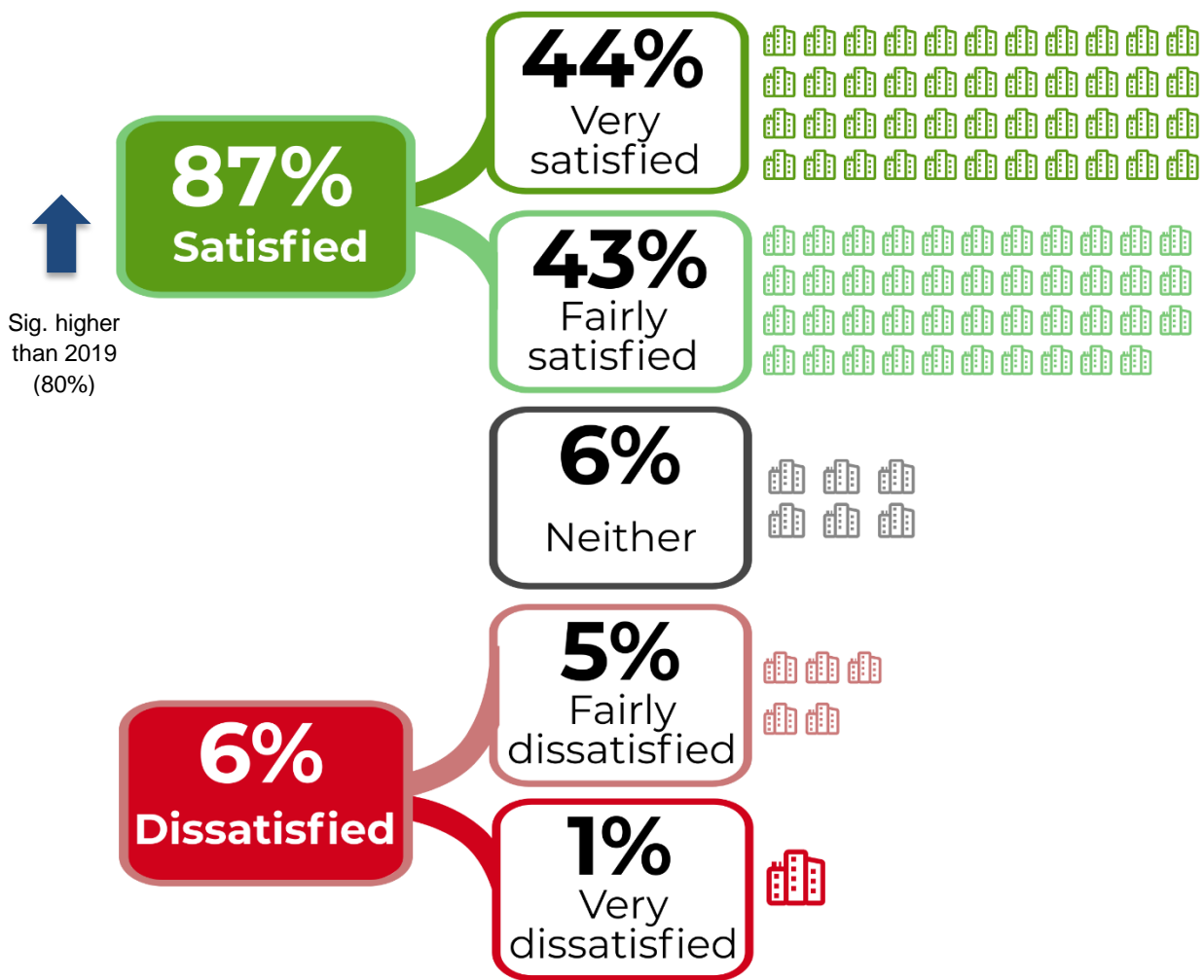
Satisfaction levels are above the LGA benchmark figure for all three areas, although the figure for the Eastern area is significantly lower than the average for the dataset (83% cf. 87%). This compares to 89% of residents being satisfied in both the Western and Downland areas. This is largely driven by neutral rather than negative responses, with 11% of respondents from this area stating that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their area as a place to live. Residents of Bognor Regis are also significantly less likely to be satisfied with their local area when compared to the total average (75% cf. 87%), with 17% of these respondents being dissatisfied.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, perceptions of the quality of Council services and the cleanliness of the local area appear to influence satisfaction levels: just 39% of respondents who are dissatisfied with the quality of Council services are satisfied with their local area overall, and just 48% of those who are dissatisfied with the cleanliness.

2.2   Community cohesion

To understand more about residents' daily lives, they were asked whether they agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Slightly under half of the respondents (49%) agree, while 11% disagree. The majority of those who agree said they tend to agree, with just 1 in 10 respondents agreeing strongly. A high proportion of respondents (29%) selected the neutral option for this question, while 6% said that they did not know. As such, there may be an opportunity for the Council and its partners to improve the sense of community cohesion with future initiatives if they are possible, as currently residents are fairly ambivalent to the statement.

Disagreement is higher among those aged under 45 (18% cf. 11% at a total respondent level and 5% among the over 65's). It is also significantly higher for residents of Bognor Regis, with 21% of these respondents expressing disagreement. It may also be interesting to note that a quarter of respondents classified as unemployed, sick, disabled or a homemaker disagree with this statement. While the sample base size for this subgroup of respondents is just 51, this may be indicative of a lack of opportunity for residents who are not in employment to meet and interact with others from different backgrounds.

Figure 2: Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together? (All responses: 611)
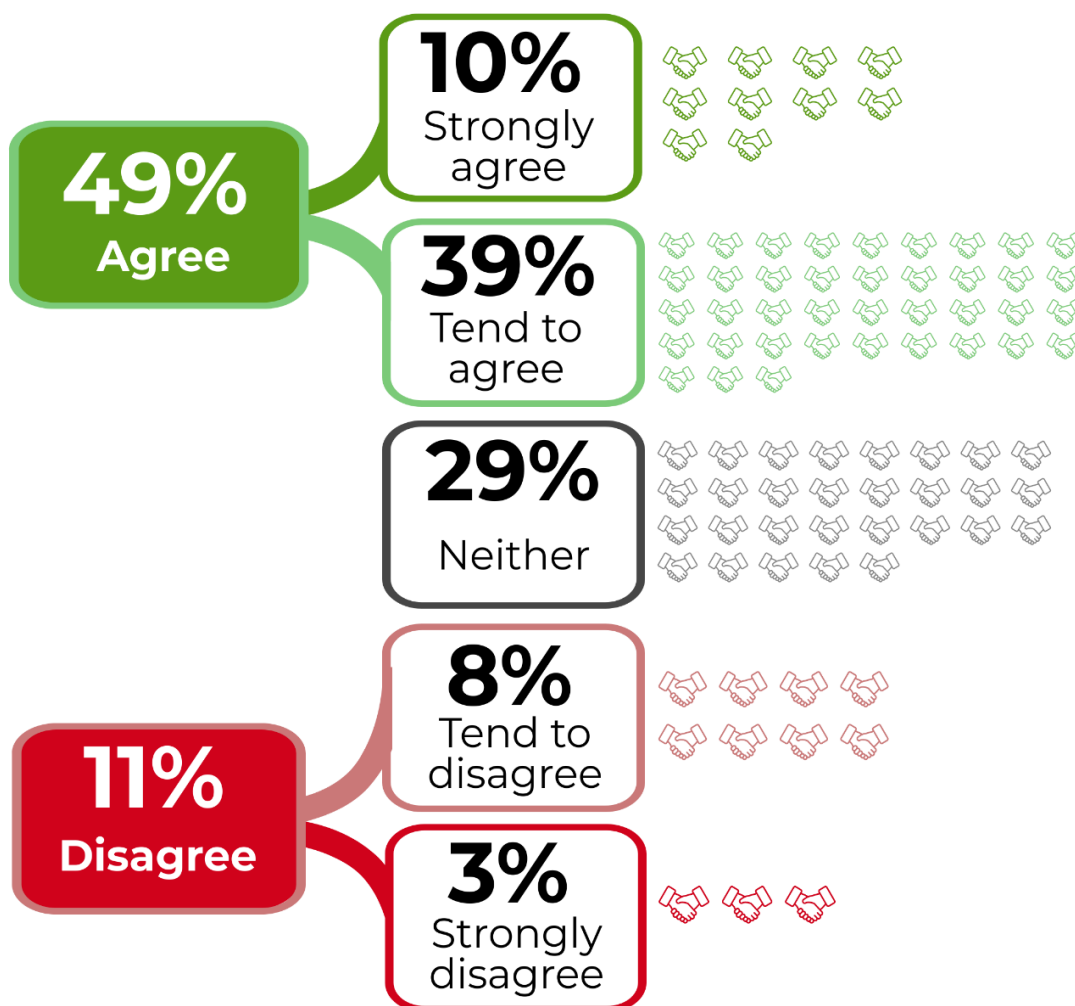
2.3 Cleanliness of Arun District

Customer satisfaction with the cleanliness of the district is of crucial importance to the Council. As part of the Council's Corporate Plan for 2018-2022 it has sought to improve satisfaction with the cleanliness of the district by delivering the best services possible in this regard. Residents were therefore asked about their levels of satisfaction with the cleanliness of the places that the Council has responsibility for.

Overall, 78% of respondents are satisfied with the cleanliness of the district, while 1 in 10 are dissatisfied. 2% of respondents did not provide an answer for this question.

Figure 3: Q10. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall cleanliness of the district? (All responses: 611)
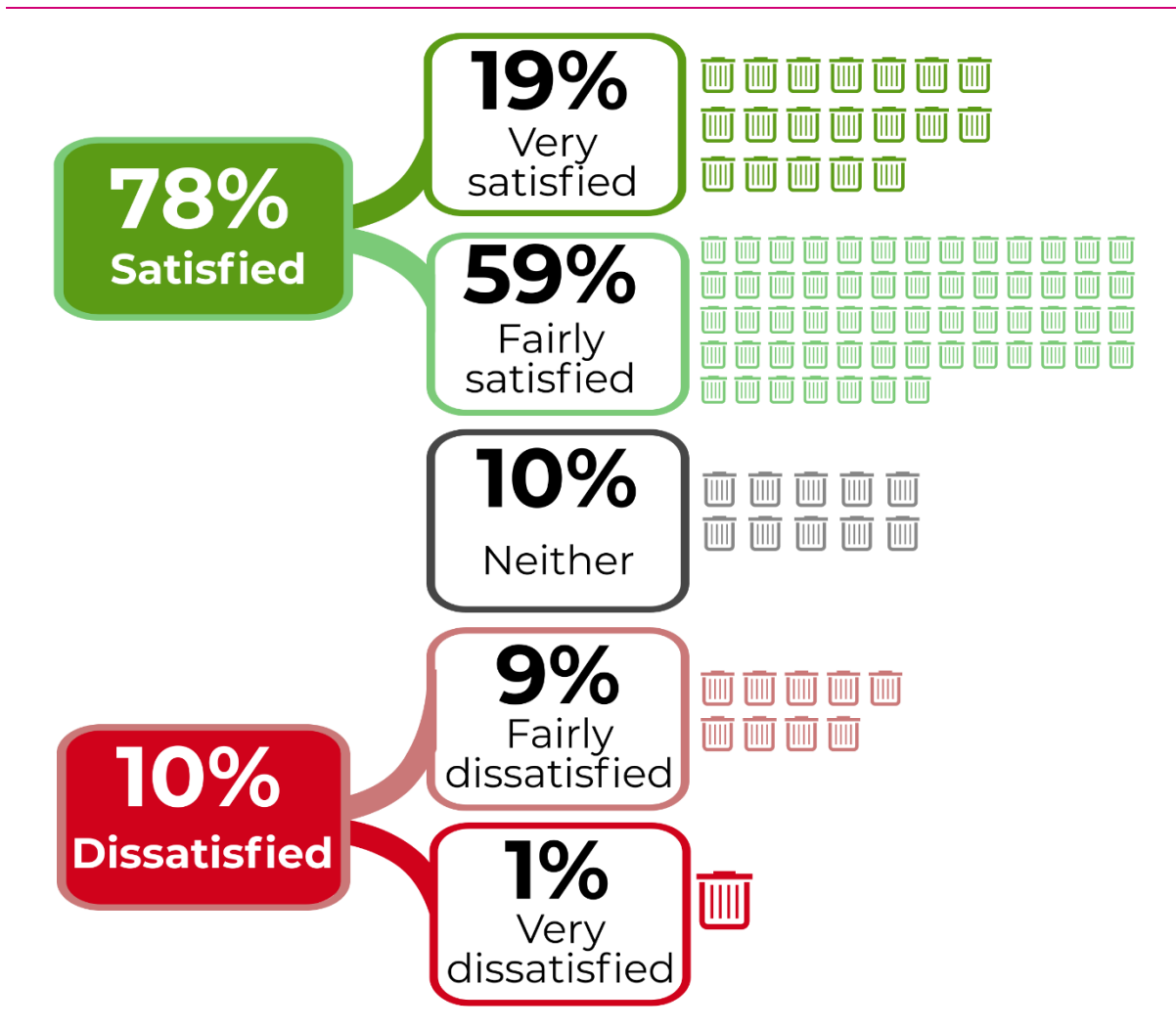
In order to pinpoint particular areas for improvement, respondents were then asked how satisfied they were with the cleanliness of different facilities in the district. Notably, there are high levels of satisfaction with the cleanliness of beaches/ promenades (78%) and parks (79%). Satisfaction with the cleanliness of town and village shopping centres is 10% points higher than for out of town facilities; however, dissatisfaction with town/village shopping centres is also higher (11%, cf. 4% for out of town facilities). This is explained by the higher proportion of 'don't know' responses for out of town shopping centres (10%, cf. 1% for town and village shops), perhaps indicating that respondents are less likely to regularly visit these facilities. The lowest levels of satisfaction are with public toilets (35%), with 17% of respondents being dissatisfied. It is worth noting, however, that almost 3 in 10 respondents (28%) answered 'don't know' to this question, with a further 2% not responding.

Figure 4: Q11. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the level of cleanliness of the following places within the district? (All responses: 611)

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total satisfied
Parks and open spaces	30%	49%	8%	5%	<1%	79%
Town/village centre shopping areas	21%	48%	16%	9%	2%	69%
Out of town shopping areas	19%	41%	24%	4%	1%	59%
Public toilets	8%	27%	18%	9%	7%	35%
Car parks	18%	43%	25%	5%	1%	60%
Residential roads	18%	48%	17%	10%	5%	66%
Beaches and promenades	28%	49%	9%	6%	1%	78%
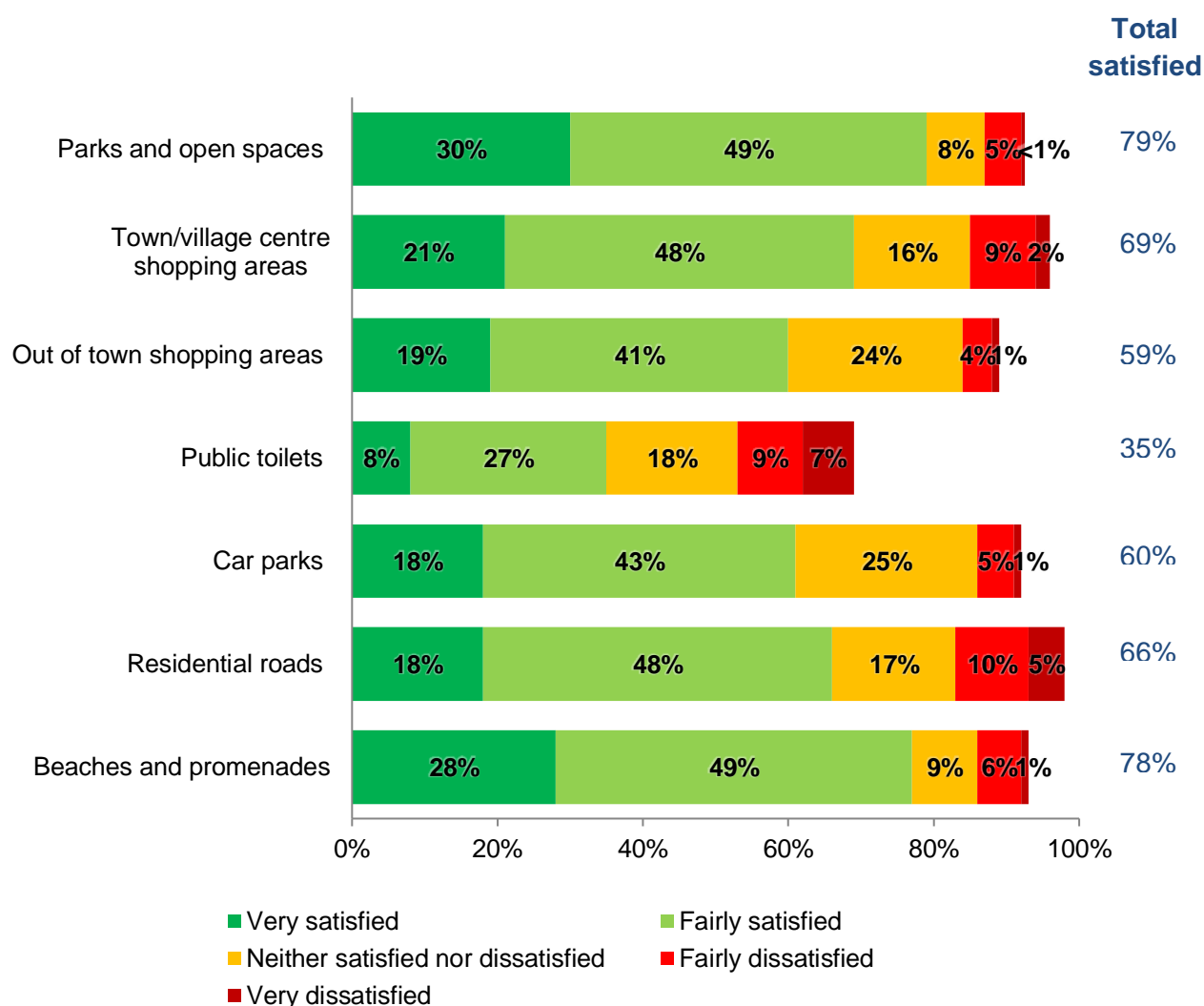
The 2019 iteration of this report noted the success of the Council's plans to improve residents' perceptions of the cleanliness of the district. This success continues to be evident, with no significant decline in satisfaction in any areas. Between 2018 and 2019, satisfaction with the cleanliness of both beaches and promenades and public toilets grew significantly (by +10 and +11% points respectively). In 2020, satisfaction levels for both remain stable. Meanwhile, satisfaction with the cleanliness of parks and open spaces and residential roads has seen a significant increase since 2019 (by +5 and +9% points respectively).

In the below table, showing satisfaction with cleanliness over time, green indicates a significant growth, and pink indicates a significant decrease.

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

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

Satisfaction with the cleanliness of parks, car parks and public toilets are similar across all demographics. Looking at satisfaction with cleanliness in other places, the data evidences some variation. For beaches and promenades, satisfaction with cleanliness is significantly lower in Downland (64%) and higher in the Eastern area (84%) when compared to the total average. Satisfaction with the cleanliness of residential roads is also higher in the Eastern area (72%, cf. 66% for the total sample). Residents in Western areas, meanwhile, are less satisfied with the cleanliness of town and village shopping areas (63%, cf. 69% of the total sample), and residential roads (61% cf. 66% of the total sample). As the Council prioritises the improvement of cleanliness, it may therefore be worth allocating resources in Western areas to tackle these issues. However, it should be noted that residents were asked about their satisfaction with these places across Arun district as a whole, so they may also be considering places outside of their immediate neighbourhoods.

Younger residents are less likely to be satisfied with the cleanliness of out of town shopping areas (49%, cf. 59% of the total sample). However, this is because almost 4 in 10 (39%) stated that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and so does not indicate strong levels of dissatisfaction with this area.

The below table shows satisfaction with cleanliness by area and age, green indicates a figure significantly higher than the total average for the sample, while pink indicates a figure significantly lower.

Table 3: Satisfaction with cleanliness by age and location (Samples bases in parenthesis)

		Age			Area		
	Total (611)	**18-44 (71)**	**45-64 (197)**	**65+ (326)**	**Downland (115)**	**Western (259)**	**Eastern (237)**
Parks and open spaces	**79%**	74%	83%	79%	77%	79%	80%
Beaches and promenades	**78%**	76%	80%	76%	64%	79%	84%
Town/village centre shopping areas	**69%**	65%	71%	76%	77%	63%	74%
Out of town shopping areas	**59%**	49%	67%	62%	60%	61%	58%
Car parks	**60%**	59%	62%	63%	56%	59%	65%
Residential roads	**66%**	71%	64%	67%	68%	61%	72%
Public toilets	**35%**	29%	35%	38%	39%	31%	37%

2.4 Problem behaviours in Arun

As well as being asked their views on the cleanliness of the area, residents were asked whether any anti-social behaviours are a problem. The most prominent issues to be identified are people using or dealing drugs and rubbish and litter, with 21% of respondents identifying each as a problem. Drunkenness is also identified as a problem relatively commonly by residents (18% of respondents said this), followed by graffiti and vandalism (13%). There is little evidence of noisy neighbours or parties being an issue.

It is worth noting that the prevalence of all of these issues has declined since the 2019 iteration of this survey: significantly so for rubbish and litter (21% cf. 34%), people using and dealing drugs (21% cf. 34%), vandalism (13% cf. 27%) and drunkenness (18% cf. 31%). The proportion of respondents citing noisy neighbours as a problem has declined by 2% points since 2019.

Figure 5: Q8. Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are? (All responses: 611)

Total problem

Category	A very big problem	A fairly big problem	Not a very big problem	Not a problem at all	Total problem
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	1%	4%	30%	59%	5%
Rubbish or litter lying around	7%	14%	49%	26%	21%
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	2%	11%	46%	35%	13%
People using or dealing drugs	9%	12%	28%	29%	21%
People being drunk	5%	13%	33%	38%	18%

■ A very big problem   ■ A fairly big problem
■ Not a very big problem   ■ Not a problem at all

Overall, there are few significant differences in prevalence of these issues by area. However, residents of Bognor Regis are significantly more likely to note several of the problems:

- 43% of respondents from Bognor Regis see rubbish and litter as a problem, compared to 21% of the total sample. 19% of these respondents describe rubbish and litter as a very big problem, compared to just 7% of the total sample.

- Additionally, 47% of respondents from Bognor Regis view the using and dealing of drugs in their area as a problem, compared to 21% of the total sample. 26% of these respondents describe using and dealing drugs as a very big problem in their area, compared to just 9% of the total sample.

- 46% said drunkenness is a problem (cf. 18% of total respondents), with most (35%) saying that it is a fairly big problem.

3. Customer satisfaction with the Council and its services

Within the broader context outlined above, the rest of this report explores residents' perceptions of the Council and its services. Initially, residents were asked about their overall satisfaction with Arun District Council. It should be noted that the wording of this question has changed since 2019, where residents were asked 'Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Arun District Council runs the things they are responsible for?', as opposed to 'How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall quality of the Council's services?' in the current iteration.

3.1 Satisfaction with quality of service

77% of respondents are satisfied with the quality of service provided by Arun District Council. This is a significant increase from last year's findings (+11% points), although the change in question wording noted above should be taken into account. Just 6% of respondents are dissatisfied against this metric. These findings compare positively against the LGA benchmark, where 63% of residents are satisfied on average (noting that the benchmark also uses the previous question wording).

Figure 6: Q2. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall quality of the Council's services? (All responses: 611)
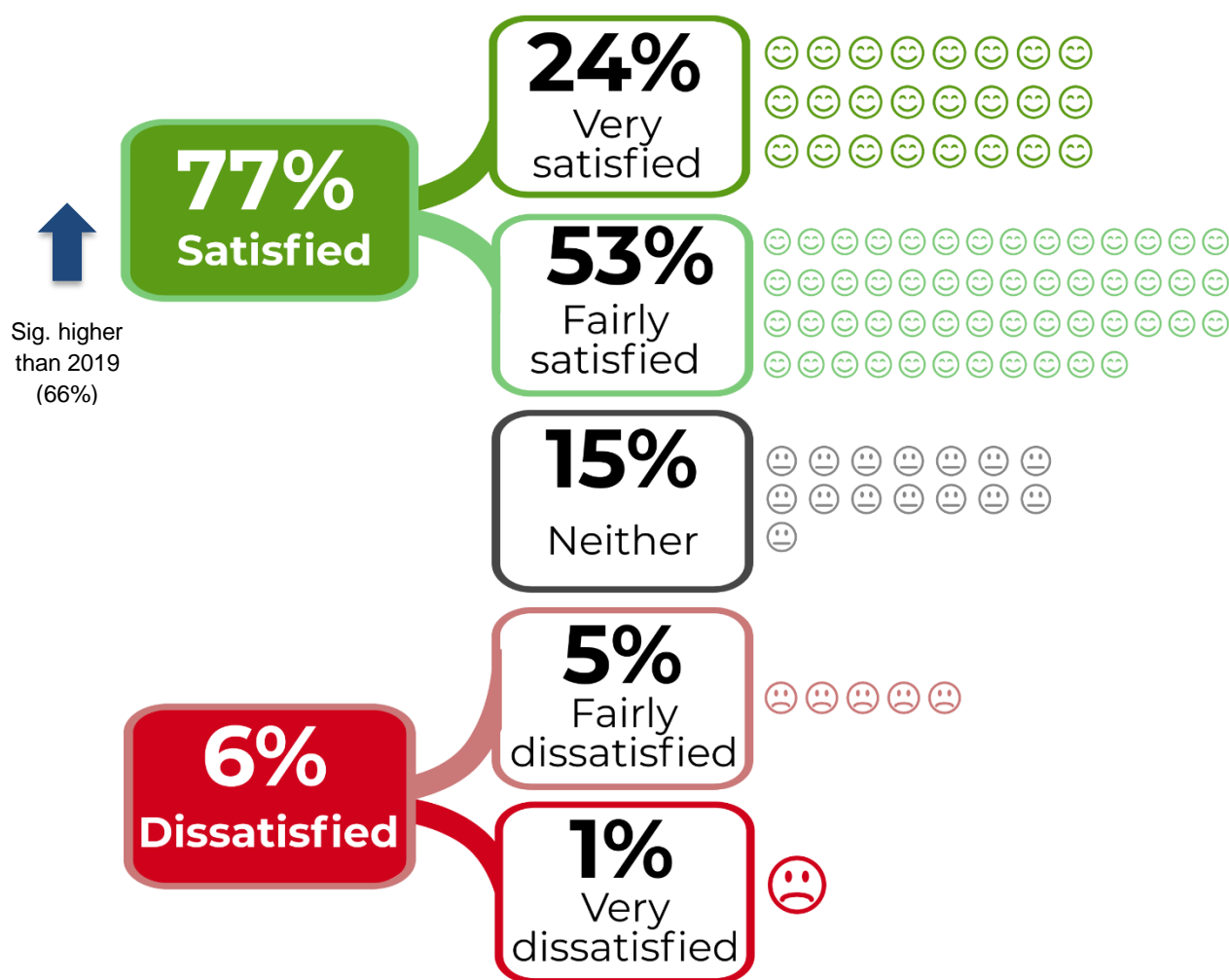
Those aged 65+ are significantly more likely to be satisfied with the local Council when compared to the total average (85% cf. 77%), as are those who ae satisfied with the cleanliness of their local area (84%), and who agree that the Council provides value for money (90%).

3.2 Satisfaction with specific Council services

To understand what is driving satisfaction with the Council, residents were asked about specific services that the Council offers.

Satisfaction across services is high, especially for waste collection and recycling, a facet of the Your Future priority. Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) are very satisfied with waste collection and recycling, and 91% are satisfied overall. Although not directly comparable due to differences in the wording, the closet LGA comparison, satisfaction with waste collection, is 78%, putting satisfaction with the service provided by Arun District Council significantly higher. Although council-owned leisure centres have lower levels of satisfaction (49%), this is driven by a high proportion of residents who do not use the leisure centres and therefore have no opinion (32%), and there are very low levels of dissatisfaction (5%). Overall, the level of satisfaction with Council services continues to evidence successful implementation of high-quality services against the of the corporate Plan 2018-2022.

Figure 7: Q9. The following services are provided by Arun District Council. Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with Arun District Council's performance for each of them (All responses: 611)

Total satisfaction

Waste collection and recycling: 64% / 27% / 6% / 2% / 1% — **91%**

Parks, open spaces and play areas: 40% / 41% / 8% / 4% / 1% — **80%**

Council owned Leisure centres (i.e. Felpham Leisure Centre, The Wave, Littlehampton): 24% / 25% / 11% / 3% / 2% — **49%**

- ■ Very satisfied
- ■ Fairly satisfied
- ■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ■ Fairly dissatisfied
- ■ Very dissatisfied
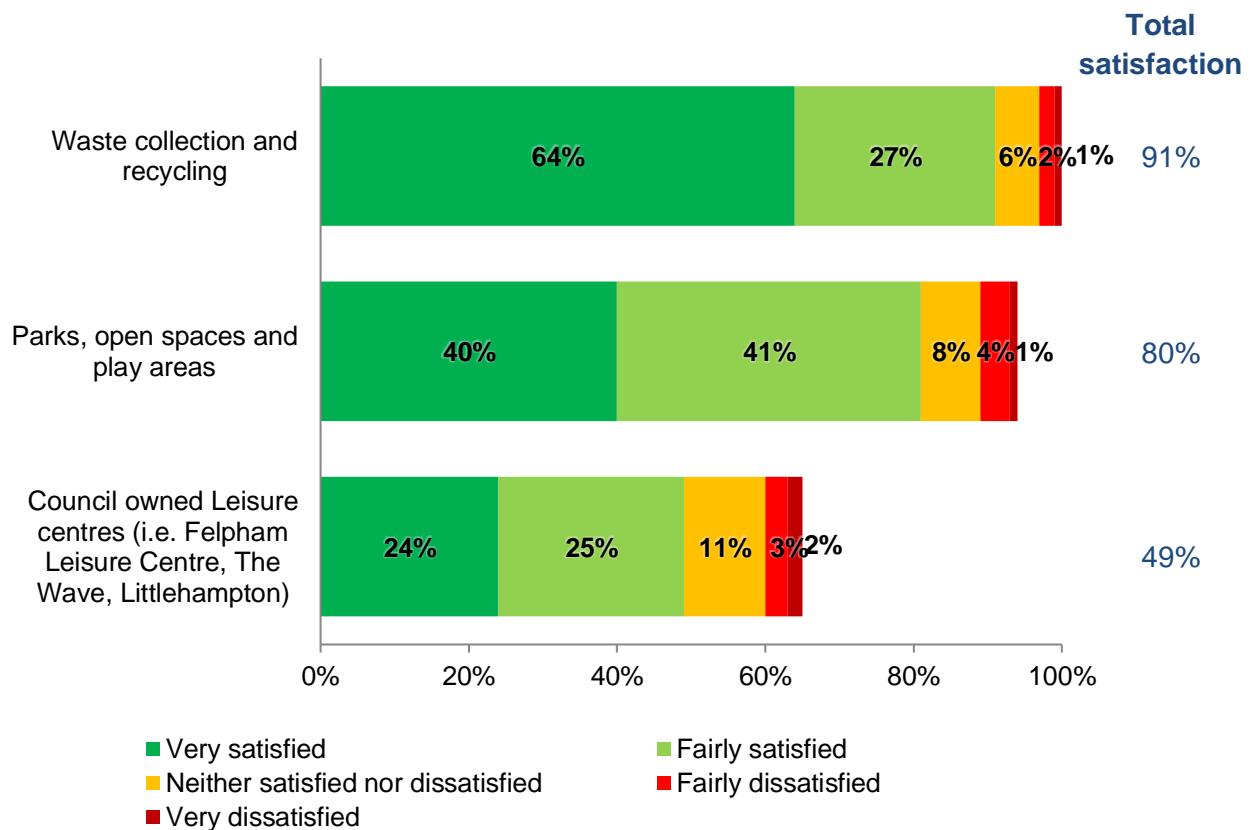
Looking over the longer term, the data shows that satisfaction with refuse collection has remained consistently high, and has this year risen back to the levels recorded in 2017. Satisfaction with parks, open spaces and play areas has increased by 3% points since 2018, and put satisfaction levels at their highest point in the study to date for this service.

Figure 8: Q9. The following services are provided by Arun District Council. Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with Arun District Council's performance for each of them (All responses: base sizes vary)
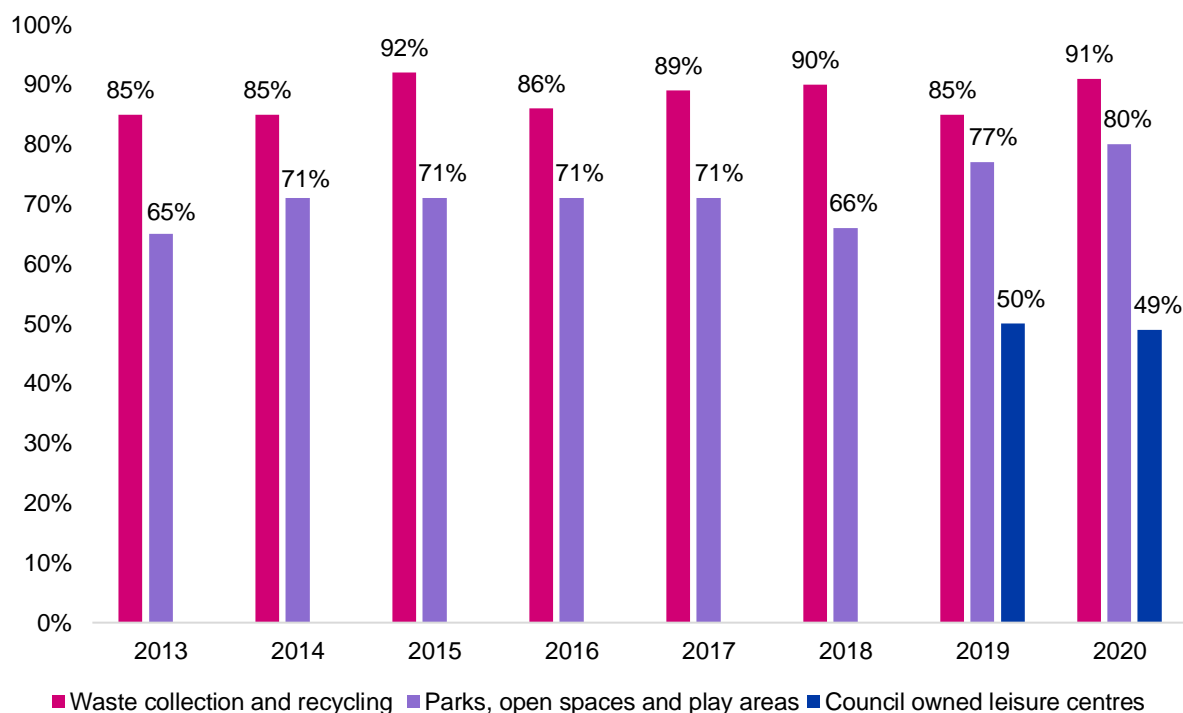
Those aged 65 and over are significantly more likely to be satisfied with waste collection and recycling services (96%, cf. 91% of the total sample), while those aged 18-44 are significantly less (83%). Residents aged over 65 show lower levels of satisfaction with council-owned leisure centres (40%), although it appears that this is because they are less likely to use them - 42% of respondents in this age category answered 'don't know' to this question.

In the below table, showing satisfaction with Council services by age and area, green indicates a figure significantly higher than the total average for the sample, while pink indicates a figure significantly lower.

Table 4: Satisfaction with Council services by age and area (Sample bases in parenthesis)

		Age			Area		
	Total (611)	**18-44 (71)**	**45-64 (197)**	**65+ (326)**	**Downland (115)**	**Western (259)**	**Eastern (237)**
Waste collection and recycling	**91%**	83%	92%	96%	89%	93%	89%
Parks, open spaces and play areas	**80%**	78%	83%	80%	77%	82%	80%
Council owned Leisure centres	**49%**	53%	55%	40%	43%	50%	51%

3.3 Value for money

In order to gain a greater depth of understanding of residents' perceptions of Council services, respondents were asked to consider whether they feel the Council provides value for money. To frame responses to this question, all respondents were reminded that Arun's 2019/20 Council Tax is £3.59 per week for a Band D dwelling.

54% of respondents agree that the Council provides value for money, with most (46%) tending to agree. This compares favourably with the LGA benchmark figure (48% agreement). 14% of respondents disagree with this statement. 1% did not provide an answer to the question.

As demonstrated in the figure overleaf, agreement that Arun Council provides value for money has risen significantly since 2018, and is now on par with pre-2017 levels. Disagreement has also declined significantly since 2018 (- 6% points). Still, 28% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, indicating that there is still a certain level of ambiguity about this statement.

Figure 9: Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Arun District Council provides value for money? (All responses: 611)

54% Agree

Sig. higher than 2019 (44%)

9% Strongly agree

46% Tend to agree

28% Neither

14% Disagree

12% Tend to disagree

3% Strongly disagree

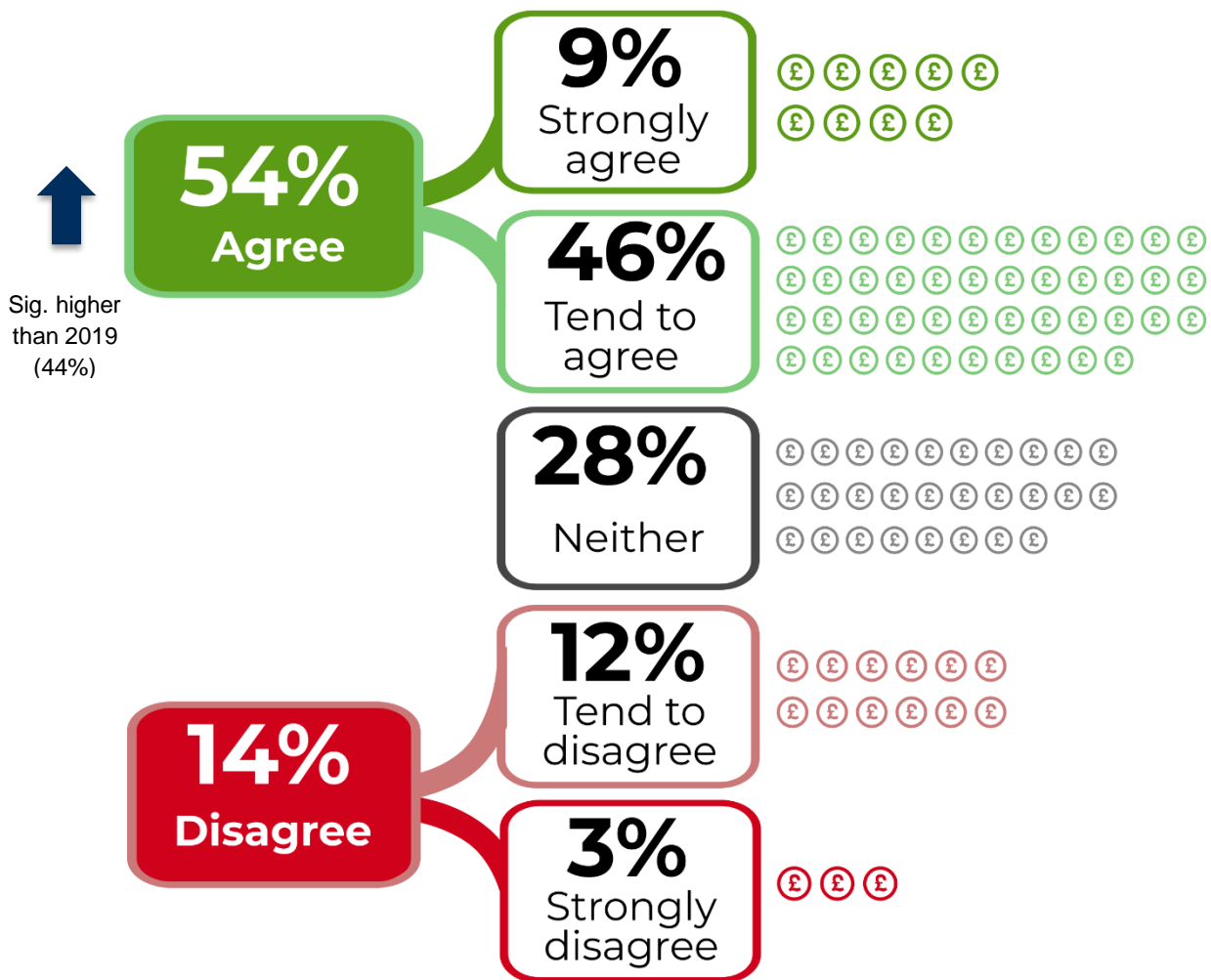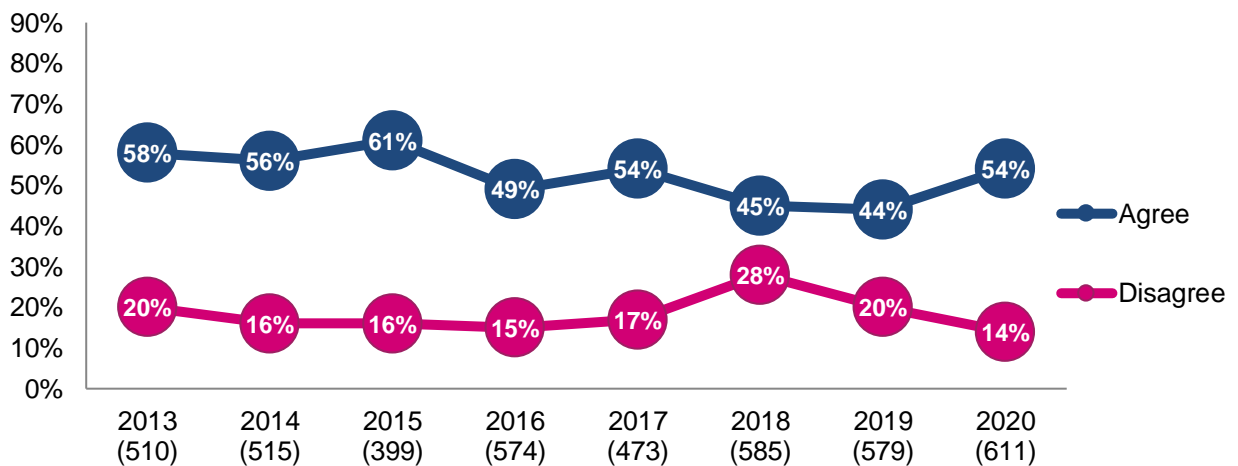**Figure 10: Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Arun District Council provides value for money? - Over time (Sample bases in parenthesis)**

	2013 (510)	2014 (515)	2015 (399)	2016 (574)	2017 (473)	2018 (585)	2019 (579)	2020 (611)
Agree	58%	56%	61%	49%	54%	45%	44%	54%
Disagree	20%	16%	16%	15%	17%	28%	20%	14%

Mirroring their higher levels of satisfaction with the Council, residents aged 65 or over also tend to have higher positivity regarding value for money (59% agreement, cf. 50% among those aged under 45), although this difference is not statistically significant. By area, Eastern residents tend to have higher levels of agreement that the Council provides value for money (57%), whilst levels in Downland areas agreement tends to be lower (51%). Less than half of the respondents from Bognor Regis (47%) agree that the Council provides value for money, with a high proportion (31%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing with this statement.

3.4 Trust in the Council to make the right decision

63% of respondents said that they trust the Council to make the right decision. This is a significant increase from the 2019 figure (52%). Most of those residents said they trust the Council a fair amount - 56% of all the residents surveyed. The closest question to this in the LGA benchmark is 'How much do you trust your local council?'. Taking the average for this question, Arun District Council compares favourably (63% cf. 59% LGA average).

Figure 11: Q6. How much do you trust Arun District Council to make the right decision? (All responses: 611)
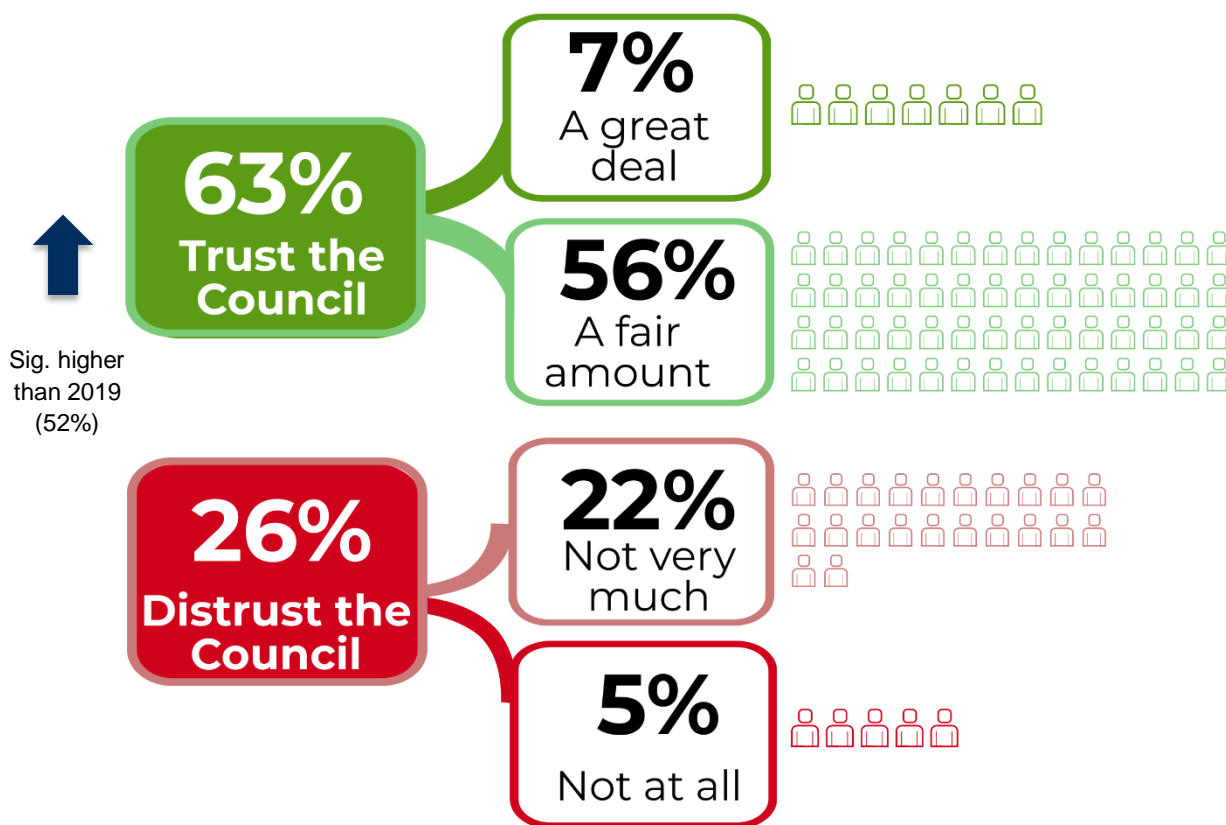
By area, residents in Eastern areas are significantly more likely to say that they trust the Council to make the right decisions (76%, compared to 63% of the total sample and 54% in Western areas). Just 12% of residents in Eastern areas say that they do not trust the Council, compared to 35% in Western areas. A significant proportion of respondents from Bognor Regis (36%) also say that they do not trust the Council.

In the below table, showing levels of trust by area, green indicates a figure significantly higher than the total average for the sample, while pink indicates a figure significantly lower.

Table 5: Trust by area (Sample bases in parenthesis)

	Total (611)	Downland (115)	Western (259)	Eastern (237)	Bognor Regis (72)
Trust (A great deal/ a fair amount)	**63%**	61%	54%	76%	54%
Distrust (Not much/ not at all)	**26%**	32%	35%	12%	36%

3.5 Acting on concerns

Respondents were asked whether they believe that the Council acts on residents' concerns, and half (50%) agree that it does. Most (46%) agree that the Council acts on their concerns a fair amount, with just 5% agreeing that it does so a great deal. 29% of respondents disagree that the Council acts on their concerns, although just 4% feel that it does not act on their concerns at all.

As shown in the chart overleaf, agreement with this statement has increased significantly since 2018 (+9% points), and is now at its highest since the survey commenced. Disagreement has also declined significantly (-10 percentage points). However, agreement is still lower than the LGA benchmark figure of 57% - this is the only metric in this report where this is the case.

Figure 12: Q4. To what extent do you think Arun District Council acts on the concerns of local residents? (All responses: 611)

Sig. higher than 2019 (41%)

50% Acts on concerns

5% A great deal

46% A fair amount

29% Does not act on concerns

24% Not very much

4% Not at all
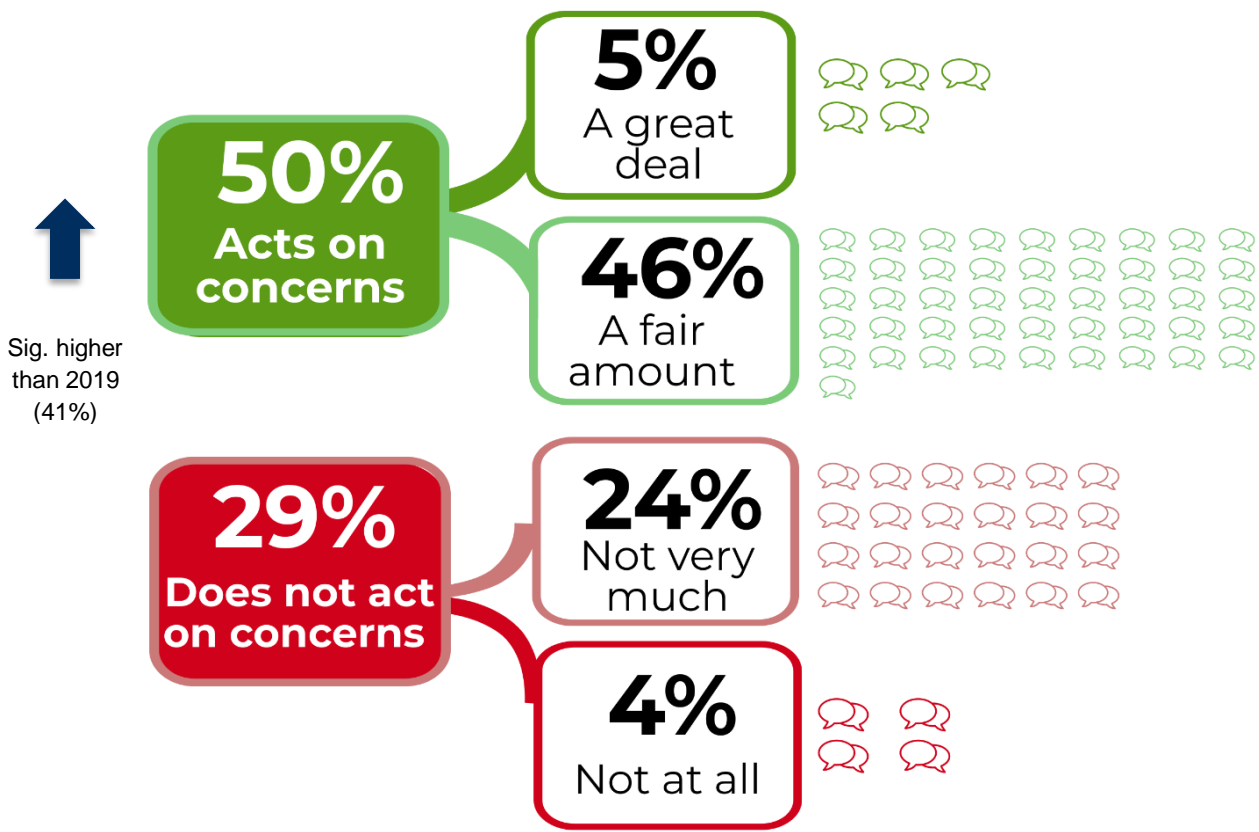
Figure 13: Q4. To what extent do you think Arun District Council acts on the concerns of local residents? - Over time (Sample bases in parenthesis)

A great deal / a fair amount

Not very much / not at all

	2013 (510)	2014 (515)	2015 (399)	2016 (574)	2017 (473)	2018 (585)	2019 (579)	2020 (611)
A great deal / a fair amount	41%	44%	36%	45%	41%	34%	41%	50%
Not very much / not at all	42%	39%	42%	36%	34%	41%	39%	29%
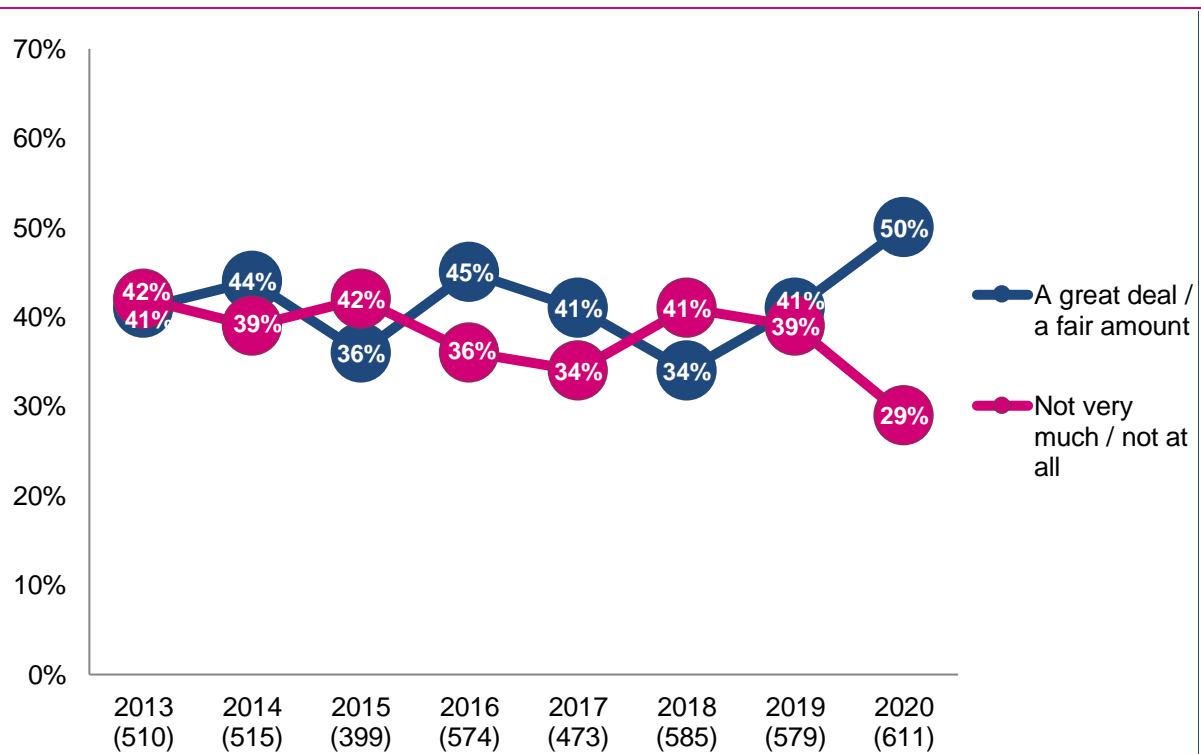
Residents aged 65+ are significantly more likely to feel satisfied that the Council acts on their concerns (57%, cf. 50% of the total sample). By location, respondents in Western areas are significantly more likely to disagree that the Council acts on their concerns (37% cf. 29% of the total sample), while those in Eastern areas are significantly less likely to disagree (17%). Almost 4 in 10 respondents based in Bognor Regis (39%) disagree that the Council acts on their concerns. Considering the higher prevalence of concerns about neighbourhood issues amongst residents of Bognor Regis discussed earlier in this report, this may be an issue to explore further, although it cannot be ascertained from this research whether these respondents have raised their concerns directly with the Council.

In the below table, showing agreement with this statement by area, green indicates a figure significantly higher than the total average for the sample, while pink indicates a figure significantly lower.

Table 6: Acting on concerns by area (Sample bases in parenthesis)

|	Total (611)	Downland (115)	Western (259)	Eastern (237)	Bognor Regis (72)
Agree (A great deal/ a fair amount)	**50%**	51%	46%	55%	47%
Disagree (Not very much/ not at all)	**29%**	30%	37%	17%	39%

3.6 Residents' preferred channels to be kept informed

A key component of building a trusted relationship between council and residents is whether the residents feel that they are kept informed. Residents were therefore asked how they would prefer to be kept informed by the Council, in order to help the Council understand which channels of communication may work hardest for them.

Slightly less than half of residents (49%), prefer to keep informed via the website. Local media, printed information and the Council magazine or newsletter are also indicated as being preferred options relatively commonly, selected by three in ten residents or more. Respondents express a preference for a hard copy of the Council magazine or newsletter over an e-version (36% cf. 24%), although 32% state that they are interested in digital communication from the Council more generally, for example through texts, emails and e-newsletters. Word of mouth, direct contact from Council, and advertising, for example on billboards or noticeboards, are all less preferred as sources of information.

Encouragingly, only 2% of residents said they did not want to find out any information, which suggests an appetite for communication.

Figure 14: Q5. How would you like the Council to keep you informed? (All responses: 611)
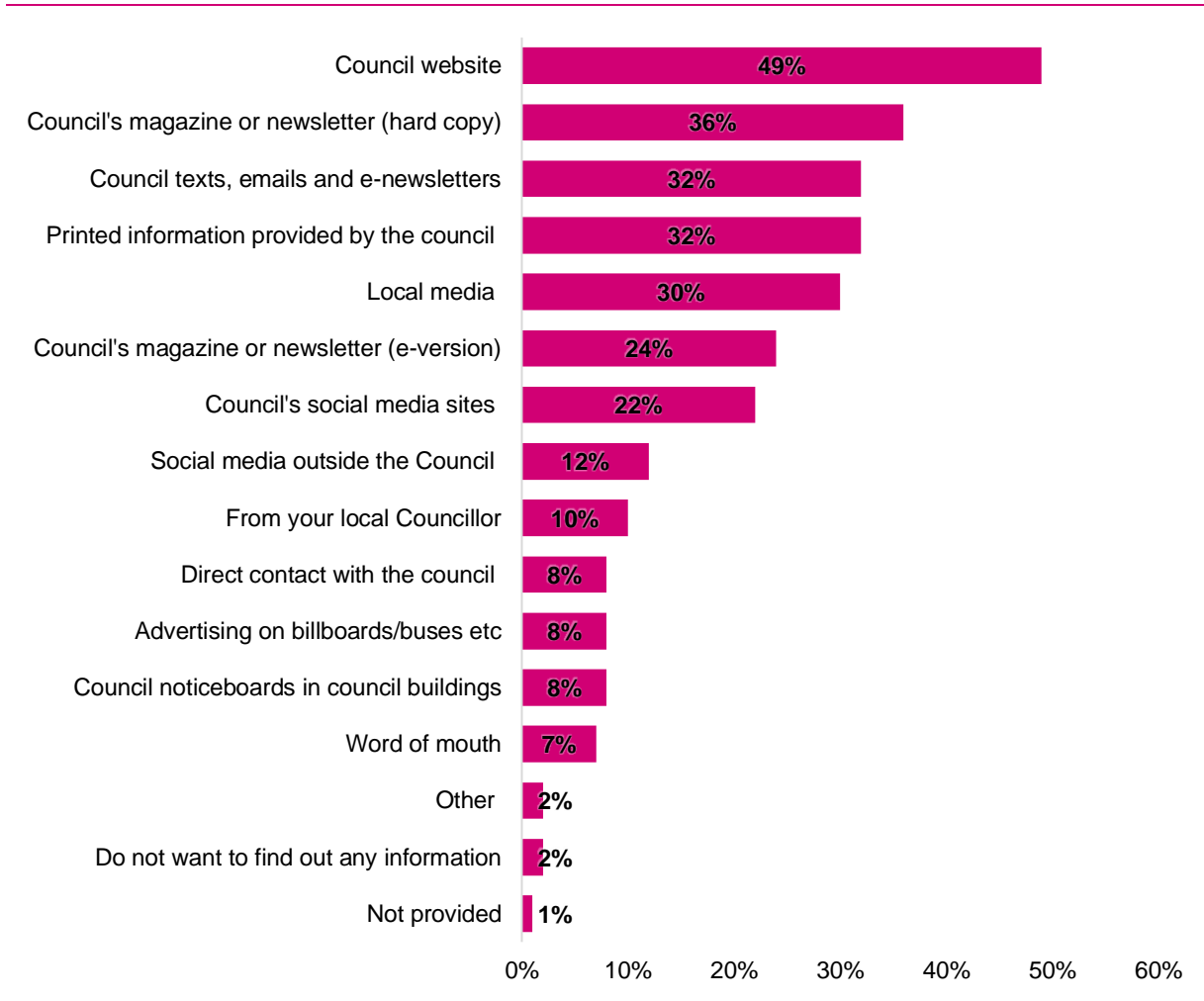
There are some variations by demographics, primarily by age. Those over 65 are less likely to want to use the Council website (34%), or to receive information digitally (21%). Instead, they are far more likely to prefer receiving a hard copy of the Council's magazine or newsletter, with 46% of respondents aged over 65 choosing this as a preferred communication method. By contrast, just a quarter of respondents aged under 44 are interested in receiving a hard copy of the Council magazine, while 60% would prefer to receive information from the website. There is also a strong appetite for direct digital communications amongst this age group, with 47% stating that they would like to receive texts, emails or e-newsletters from the Council.

Interestingly, residents with children in the house also express a preference for digital communication methods: 66% would prefer to use the Council website, 34% to receive an e-copy of the Council's newsletter or magazine, 44% to receive texts, emails or e-newsletters from the Council, and 46% to use the Councils' social media sites. This may be influenced by the fact that respondents with young children are more likely to fall into the younger age category. The time constraints of work and family life may also make digital communication more convenient for these respondents, since it can be accessed at any time.

4. Appendix 1: Sample profile

	Unweighted	Weighted
Gender		
Male	44%	46%
Female	52%	51%
Prefer not to say	2%	2%
Not provided	2%	1%
Age		
18-24	<0.5%	2%
25 -34	3%	16%
35 -44	8%	12%
45 -54	14%	16%
55 -64	18%	15%
65+	53%	33%
Prefer not to say	2%	4%
Not provided	<0.5%	1%
Tenure		
Own outright (freehold or leasehold)	63%	49%
Buying on a mortgage	22%	33%
Rent from Arun District Council	3%	3%
Rent from a Housing Association / Trust	3%	2%
Rent from a private landlord	7%	11%
Other	1%	2%
Not provided	1%	1%
Family status		
Married / living with partner - with children	21%	26%
Married / living with partner - without children	42%	40%
Separated / divorced / widowed - with children	10%	8%
Separated / divorced / widowed - without children	13%	9%
Single - with children	1%	1%
Single - without children	8%	9%
Prefer not to say	4%	6%
Not provided	1%	1%
Number of children aged 16 or under		
None	83%	76%

One	7%	9%
Two	5%	9%
Three	1%	1%
Four	<0.5%	1%
More than four	0%	0%
Prefer not to say	2%	2%
Not provided	2%	1%
Length of time living in Arun		
Less than 1 year	3%	4%
Between 1 and 2 years	5%	4%
Between 3 and 5 years	12%	15%
Between 6 and 10 years	13%	11%
Between 11 and 20 years	19%	17%
More than 20 years	48%	46%
Prefer not to say	1%	2%
Not provided	0%	0%
Number of cars in household		
None	12%	11%
One	45%	39%
Two	32%	38%
Three or more	7%	7%
Prefer not to say	2%	2%
Not provided	2%	3%
Area		
Western	19%	20%
Eastern	42%	45%
Downland	39%	36%
Employment status		
Employed full-time (30+ hours per week)	21%	33%
Employed part-time (under 30 hours per week)	9%	8%
Self-employed, full or part time	7%	8%
On a government supported training scheme (e.g. Modern Apprenticeship / Training for Work)	0%	0%
Full-time education at school, college or university	*%	< 0.5%
Unemployed and available for work	*%	< 0.5%

Permanently sick / disabled and unable to work	4%	4%
Wholly retired from work	51%	36%
Looking after the home	4%	5%
Doing something else	1%	1%
Prefer not to say	21%	5%

5. Appendix 2: Statement of Terms

Compliance with International Standards

BMG complies with the International Standard for Quality Management Systems requirements (ISO 9001:2015) and the International Standard for Market, opinion and social research service requirements (ISO 20252:2012) and The International Standard for Information Security Management (ISO 27001:2013).

Interpretation and publication of results

The interpretation of the results as reported in this document pertain to the research problem and are supported by the empirical findings of this research project and, where applicable, by other data. These interpretations and recommendations are based on empirical findings and are distinguishable from personal views and opinions.

BMG will not publish any part of these results without the written and informed consent of the client.

Ethical practice

BMG promotes ethical practice in research: We conduct our work responsibly and in light of the legal and moral codes of society.

We have a responsibility to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and dissemination of data, in the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings and in the maintenance of standards commensurate with professional integrity.

We recognise we have a duty of care to all those undertaking and participating in research and strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration. All adequate steps shall be taken by both agency and client to ensure that the identity of each respondent participating in the research is protected.

With more than 25 years' experience, BMG Research has established a strong reputation for delivering high quality research and consultancy.

BMG serves both the public and the private sector, providing market and customer insight which is vital in the development of plans, the support of campaigns and the evaluation of performance.

Innovation and development is very much at the heart of our business, and considerable attention is paid to the utilisation of the most up to date technologies and information systems to ensure that market and customer intelligence is widely shared.