Appendix 8:

Our Place, Our Future: Shaping council services in Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight - local Government Reorganisation engagement report

Our Place, Our Future: Shaping council services in Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight

Local Government Reorganisation engagement report

Thinks
Insight & Strategy

18 September, 2025

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Introduction

Background and overview of approach

Background to the engagement

In December 2024, the Government announced its intentions for a large-scale reorganisation of local government. It has asked two-tier local authorities across England to review how local government is organised. In Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, that means local councils are being asked to consider options for replacing the current county, borough, district and unitary authority arrangements.

A group of 12 of the 15 councils* in the area are collaborating on options for reorganising the council boundaries. They have commissioned Thinks Insight & Strategy to conduct large-scale resident engagement to understand what matters most to residents about their area, to ensure that future councils reflect real places, priorities, and people.

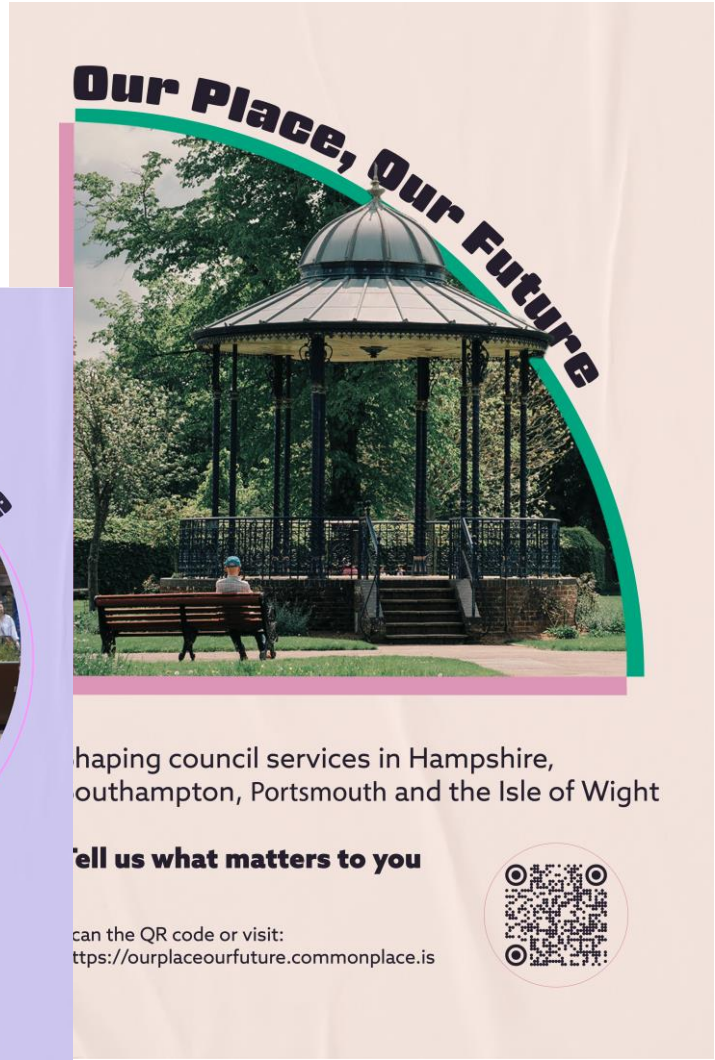
This engagement will inform and support these councils' submissions to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

* Hampshire County Council is working on its own proposal and is consulting on this separately. East Hampshire District Council opted not to participate in commissioning or promoting this engagement, while Gosport Borough Council commissioned a separate survey within this engagement.

Engagement approach

- Working with the 12 commissioning councils, Thinks Insight & Strategy developed a **questionnaire** including a mix of open-ended and closed (e.g. multiple choice, scale questions) questions, as well as supporting materials such as FAQs and background information for respondents. The survey and information about LGR and the engagement were hosted on specialist engagement platform **Commonplace**. The engagement was live between **30th June and 27th July.**
- The survey was disseminated via social media channels, email, and out-of-home advertising (e.g. posters, flyers, paper tags on domestic waste bins) including QR links.
- The survey was designed to be easily **accessible**, with options to request a paper copy or telephone interview for greater inclusion.
- Anyone could respond, with no restrictions or quotas. This means the survey is not necessarily representative of the views of the population as a whole. Rather it shows the views of residents who were keen to have their say on the issue of local government reorganisation.

Example social media post



Example bus stop poster

Notes on approach and how to read this report

- **Survey dissemination:** This survey was publicised and promoted by the commissioning councils via their social media, email, and other channels (including physical posters with QR codes). In East Hampshire, where the District Council did not take part in the engagement, the survey was promoted by Thinks Insight via marketing channels (email and Meta adverts).
- **Other engagement activity:** Basingstoke, Hart and Rushmoor together promoted a north Hampshire specific self-selection survey alongside this survey. This is likely to have reduced response rates from those areas, especially as all the Hampshire mainland options people were asked for feedback on proposed the same north Hampshire council. Similarly, Portsmouth City Council ran its own, localised survey which closed 29th June (the day before this consultation launched), likely affecting numbers on this survey. In addition, Hampshire County Council launched its own engagement on 21st July (about a week before this engagement closed).
- **Sample selection, quantitative representation and weighting:** This engagement sought the views of as broad a selection of residents as possible, looking to hear from everyone who has something to say on the question of LGR. However, as with any opt-in or self-selected sample, the data reported here should not be treated as representative of the wider Hampshire population. Most importantly, those who chose to participate in the engagement are likely to be more engaged and more vocal than the average resident. Demographically, the sample skews towards older, white participants compared to census data. This type of data is not suitable for weighting (i.e. making it more representative through statistical manipulation) as it could result in biased and inaccurate data. Proportionally, there is a much a higher response rate from areas such as the New Forest, Test Valley and Winchester. This means these councils have a larger impact on average values than others. We have also reported on each council separately to avoid this bias.

Notes on approach and how to read this report

- **Incomplete data/responses:** Unlike a representative research survey, almost all questions in this engagement were optional and we included responses from participants who only answered a small number of questions in our analysis. This means the base size for analysis varies between questions.
- **Statistical significance:** By default, a p-value of 0.05 was used for significance testing, in line with industry standards. Differences by sub-groups have been explored throughout the report and those which were statistically significant have been highlighted in red and green. Where statistical significance is mentioned, this refers to a difference *within* the sample, e.g. where respondents from one council are significantly more or less supportive of an option than the average respondent in the engagement.
- **NETs and rounding:** NET, or aggregate, scores have been used in this engagement report to group together responses that are similar (e.g. a NET for satisfaction would show very satisfied + fairly satisfied). These NET scores have been calculated based on *exact values,* while the charts show *rounded values for individual scores.* Because rounding replaces exact values with approximations, i.e. every number becomes a little higher or a little lower than the exact value, small differences can accumulate when adding or subtracting several rounded numbers. As a result, the total of rounded figures may not exactly match the rounded total of the original values.

Survey overview

Completed

1. Start here: Proposals for new councils

In this first section we are going to ask you some questions about local decision-

10325 Have your say

Part 1 of the survey introduced LGR, as well as the three options under consideration by the commissioning councils (see next slide)*. Residents were asked to share their views and preferences for the new unitary authorities.

Completed

2. Local area and community

In this section we will ask you some questions about your local area, your connection to it, what you like and what ...

5858 Have your say

Part 2 of the survey focused on residents' feelings about their local area – the places they go, the services they use, and what they would like to see from their local council.

In addition, we collected demographic information (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, etc.) to support analysis and monitor uptake.

NB. When we initially launched the survey, it was not split into two parts and included a map-based activity which some participants found difficult to use. We removed the map activity after 8th July, and changed the order in which people were directed to the survey (to prioritise the options tile) on 11th July. We received almost twice as many responses to Part 1 (the survey focussed on the options) as we did to Part 2 (with a focus on their local area).

* In the separate survey commissioned by Gosport Borough Council, residents were not shown the three options and instead asked open questions about their preferences for local government more generally.

Respondents were asked about 3 potential options for reorganisation:

Council 1: Basingstoke, Hart, Rushmoor

Council 2: New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester, East Hampshire

Council 3: Eastleigh, Southampton

Council 4: Portsmouth, Havant, Gosport, Fareham

Council 5: Isle of Wight

Council 1: Basingstoke, Hart, Rushmoor

Council 2: Test Valley, Winchester, East Hampshire

Council 3: New Forest, Eastleigh, Southampton

Council 4: Portsmouth, Havant, Gosport, Fareham

Council 5: Isle of Wight

Potential boundary changes, affecting parishes in the New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester and East Hampshire.

Sample overview

Council	Number of respondents	Responses as % of population
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	205	0.11%
East Hampshire District Council	213	0.17%
Eastleigh Borough Council	933	0.67%
Fareham Borough Council	370	0.32%
Gosport Borough Council	304	0.37%
Hart District Council	75	0.07%
Havant Borough Council	271	0.22%
Isle of Wight Council	340	0.24%
New Forest District Council	3,141	1.79%
Portsmouth City Council	755	0.36%
Rushmoor Borough Council	156	0.15%
Southampton City Council	812	0.32%
Test Valley Borough Council	2,773	2.09%
Winchester City Council	1,750	1.34%
Unassigned*	1,236	
Total	**13,334**	

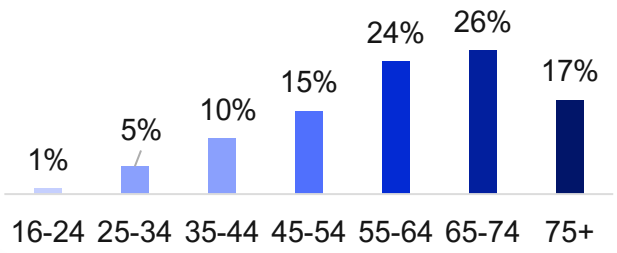
*Most unassigned respondents did not provide a postcode or select a council. A very small number (n < 20) of respondents provided a postcode from outside the area, primarily from Wiltshire.

Sample observations

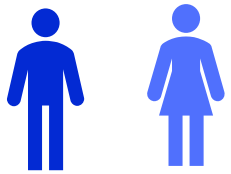
- Compared to similar engagements that have been hosted on Commonplace, this is a very high response rate.
- In proportion to their populations, New Forest (1.79%), Test Valley (2.09%) and Winchester (1.34%) achieved the highest response rate.
- In council areas where other engagements were also promoted, or where there is less of a difference between proposed options, the response rate was significantly lower (e.g. 0.07% in Hart, 0.11% in Basingstoke).
- Demographically (see more on the next slide), the sample skews older, when compared with census data.
- Almost half of respondents are retired and the sample leans towards respondents from a higher socioeconomic background.

Demographic sample overview

Age

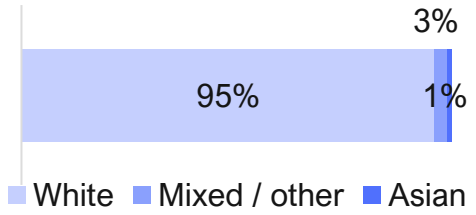


Gender

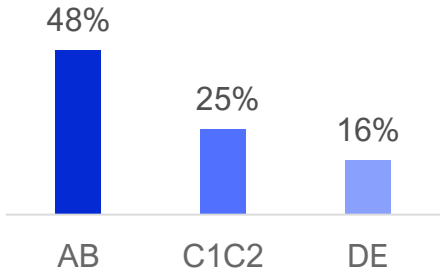


4% identify as non-binary, other or prefer not to say

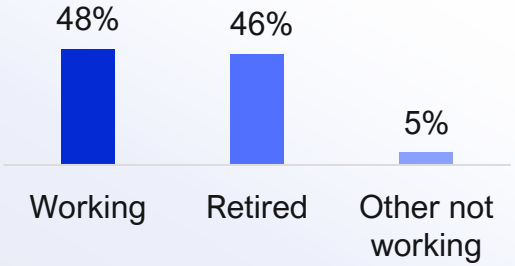
Ethnicity



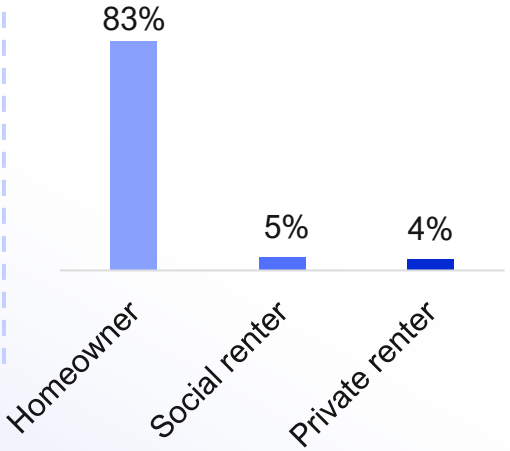
Socioeconomic grade



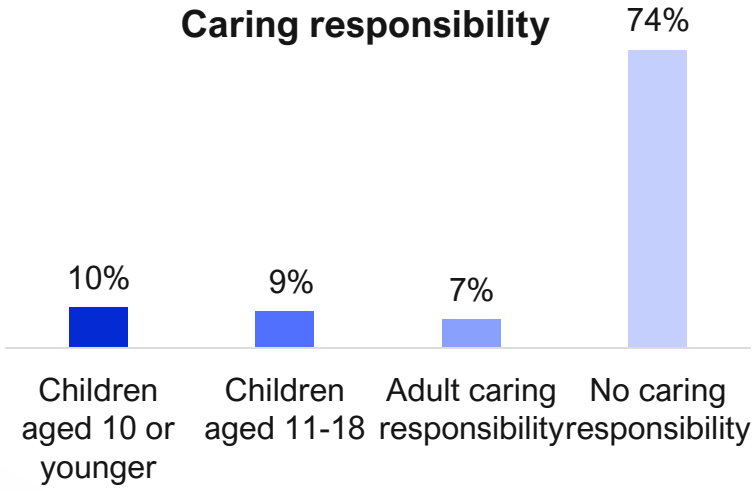
Working status



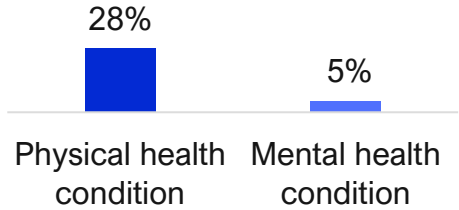
Tenure type



Caring responsibility



Health



Various questions. Varying sample size.

Executive summary

Overarching reflections

1. Respondents to this survey are largely highly engaged residents. Only 7% had not heard of LGR before taking part, and most have also taken a range of actions in the past (e.g. signing petitions, writing to their MP) that suggest they are more politically engaged than the average citizen. Older residents were more likely to respond to this survey than younger people.

2. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the response rate is highest in areas where the options for new unitary authorities vary significantly or where there are potential boundary changes (in particular the New Forest, Test Valley, and Winchester). For these residents, the stakes can feel higher than for residents of areas where the options do not differ, such as those in North Hampshire.

3. Across respondents, the case for reorganisation is not clear. Although only 1 in 10 (9%) residents in the engagement strongly opposes all three options for LGR, qualitatively, respondents tend to support an option which they feel is the “best of a bad bunch”. Most feel that the proposed unitary authorities are too big, impacting local decision-making and service delivery. Many doubt that LGR will help to save money or deliver services more efficiently. Almost all assume that they will lose out in some way as a result of reorganisation.

4. When considering the options, respondents are most likely to refer to what they feel makes most sense for a county that includes very rural areas such as the New Forest alongside conurbations such as Southampton or Portsmouth. This urban-rural divide is seen to be about culture and way of life, but also about relatively wealthy rural councils having to ‘subsidise’ indebted city councils. Rural respondents tend to be more worried about losing their voice as a result of LGR, while urban respondents tend to be more open to decisions being made more centrally on behalf of a wider area.

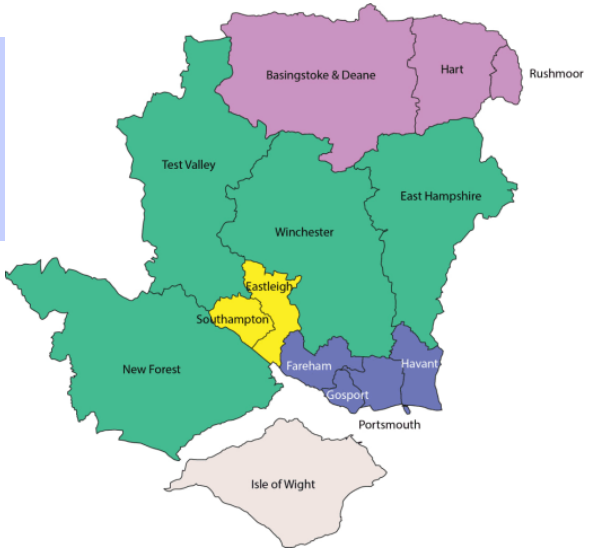
5. Responses to this engagement suggest that there are deeper concerns about urbanisation, overdevelopment, and immigration which underlie these considerations. These combine with a perception of overstretched and underfunded public services and infrastructure – from social care to roads, education and GP surgeries.

Key findings on Option 1

- Even if the area feels very large, Option 1 is strongly preferred by respondents from Test Valley and New Forest, based on a sense that rural councils should stick together to preserve their way of life. These respondents also argue that services would be easier to administer as these areas have more similar needs.
- Their preference is also based on a mutual rejection of Southampton, which respondents in this engagement visit regularly but do not feel culturally aligned with.
- Respondents from East Hampshire and Winchester residents do not agree – they feel Council 2 is too large an area to effectively govern under this proposal.
- Those in other areas have less strongly held views on the options overall, but make similar points regarding the urban-rural alignment and worry about the size of the new unitary authorities.

With it covering such a large area I believe we would lose some of identity and as a result an understanding in community needs. Issues in the New Forest are not he same as issues in East Hampshire seeing as the density of population is more.
Winchester, 75-84

It links together the rural communities better than the other options. This is very important for Totton and the New Forest. The South Downs national park and the new forest have much in common.
New Forest, 55-64



Option 1

Council 1: Basingstoke & Deane, Hart, Rushmoor

Council 2: New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester, East Hampshire

Council 3: Eastleigh, Southampton

Council 4: Portsmouth, Havant, Gosport, Fareham

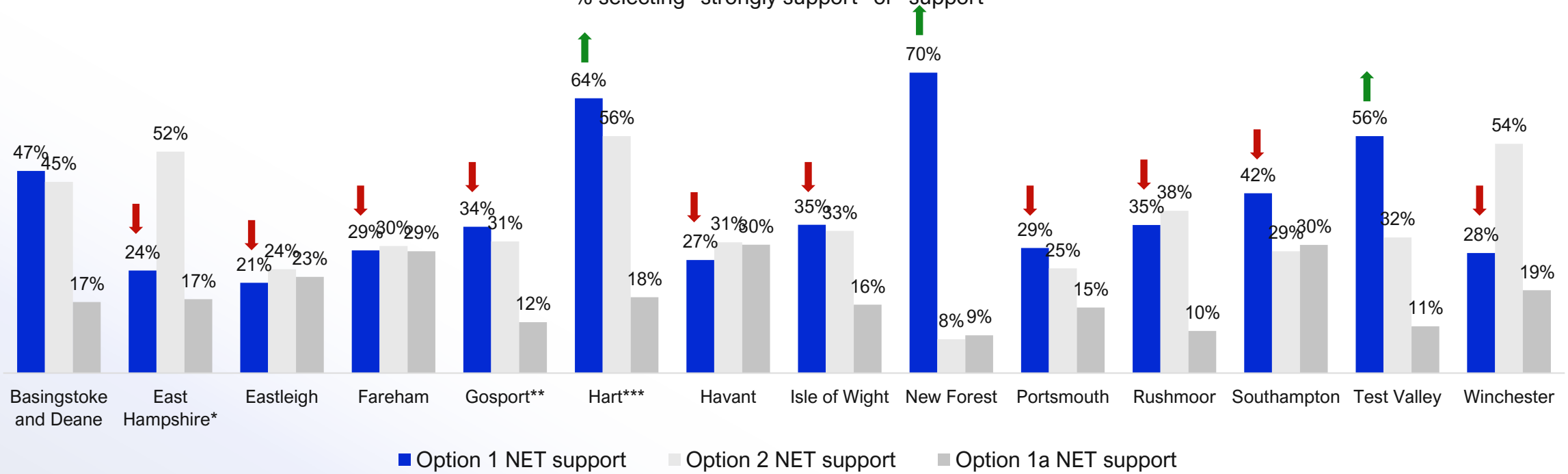
Council 5: Isle of Wight

Test Valley and New Forest have a clear preference for Option 1, which would see them form a larger, majority rural unitary authority

statistically significantly **higher** than average

statistically significantly **lower** than average

Support for option 1
% selecting “strongly support” or “support”



Q12. To what extent do you support or oppose each of these options? Base: All respondents who answered this question in Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (n=154), East Hampshire District Council (n=154)*, Eastleigh Borough Council (n=662), Fareham Borough Council (n=264), Gosport Borough Council (n=67)**, Hart District Council (n=45)***, Havant Borough Council (n=166), Isle of Wight Council (n=184), New Forest District Council (n=2,585), Portsmouth City Council (n=515), Rushmoor Borough Council (n=95), Southampton City Council (n=198), Test Valley Borough Council (n=2,278), Winchester City Council (n=1,496)

*Note that East Hampshire District Council did not co-commission this project or promote this engagement.
**The majority of respondents from Gosport did not answer this question, as they were routed to a different survey.
*** Caution: low base size of n < 50.

Key findings on Option 2

- Those who responded from the New Forest are strongly opposed to Option 2, and worry about losing their identity and access to services, fearing that the needs of Southampton would be prioritised.
- Respondents from Eastleigh and Southampton also have reservations about being joined in a larger unitary authority they perceive as quite disparate.
- However, this is the preferred option for respondents in East Hampshire and Winchester. While they express concerns about impacts for the New Forest, geographically this is seen to make more sense. While the area still feels very large under this option, to many respondents from those eastern areas, Option 1 is simply too big.
- As with Option 1, In the areas where there is no difference between the two options, opinions are split but less strongly held.

I like that the cities Southampton, Portsmouth and areas such as Havant are separate from EH & Winchester. I prefer that New Forest is in a council closer to it geographically and that council 4 covers more of the area that is local to me (by taking away the New Forest).
East Hampshire, 45-54

Would the New Forest want to be linked with Southampton?
Eastleigh, 75-84

Option 2

Council 1: Basingstoke & Deane, Hart, Rushmoor

Council 2: Test Valley, Winchester, East Hampshire

Council 3: New Forest, Eastleigh, Southampton

Council 4: Portsmouth, Havant, Gosport, Fareham

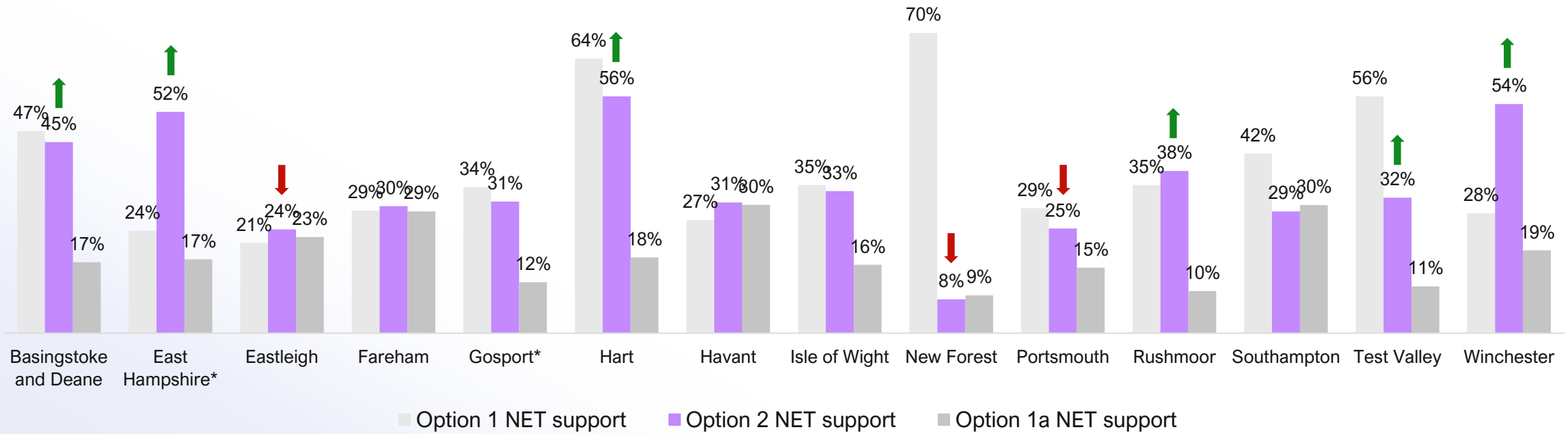
Council 5: Isle of Wight

East Hampshire and Winchester respondents lean towards Option 2, which they feel is preferably to the larger Option 1. New Forest and Southampton respondents are both sceptical about the proposed union

statistically significantly **higher** than average

statistically significantly **lower** than average

Support for option 2
% selecting “strongly support” or “support”



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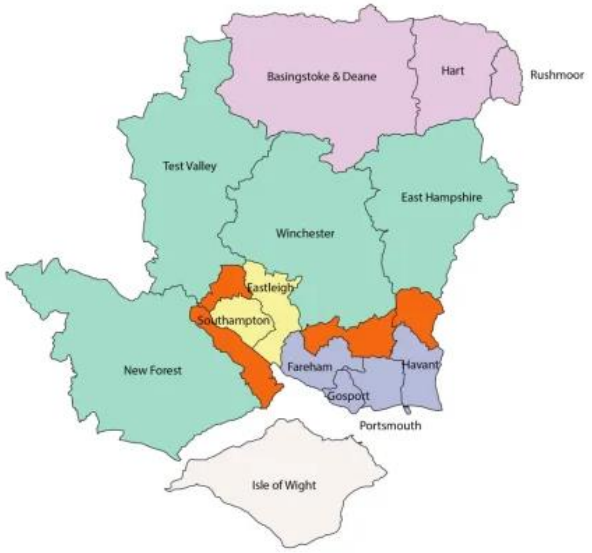
Key findings on Option 1a – boundary changes

- This option is most disliked and considered controversial by many respondents. It is also the most poorly understood, with respondents wondering whether the affected areas will be split out into smaller separate councils, or joined to the proposed larger councils. This would need to be carefully explained to residents in affected parishes.
- Across all areas, those unaffected, i.e. not living in one of the parishes, are relatively more likely to see benefits to this; however, only very few in the potentially affected parishes agree.
- Across councils, respondents argue against their parishes being absorbed into more urban unitary authorities, which they see as threatening their rural way of life and paving the way to urbanisation, overdevelopment, and deprivation. These respondents also worry about their voice being trumped by those of city residents in decision-making. This is felt more strongly in the New Forest and Test Valley, compared to East Hampshire and Winchester.
- Only a small minority in these parishes agree that this could lead to a better representation of how people already live, work and access services. These views are more common in the southern parishes of East Hampshire and Winchester than New Forest or Test Valley.

This matches areas to the larger areas they serve. I think it presents a more realistic picture
Winchester, Not affected, 25-34

The Waterside is NOT a suburb of Southampton. We would be peeled away from our longstanding community in the New Forest.
New Forest, Affected, 55-64



Option 1a

Potential boundary changes, affecting parishes in the New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester and East Hampshire:

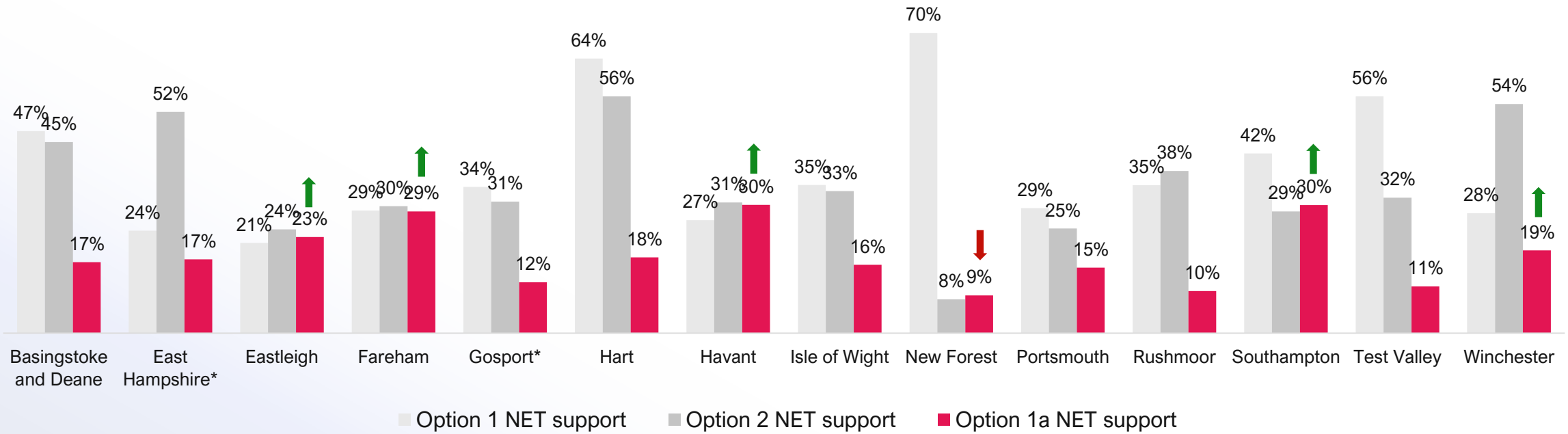
- Totton & Eling, Marchwood, Hythe & Dibden and Fawley.
- Nursling & Rownhams, Chilworth, Valley Park and North Baddesley.
- Denmead, Newlands, Boarhunt, Southwick & Widley, Wickham & Knowle and Whiteley.
- Horndean, Clanfield and Rowlands Castle.

Option 1a is almost universally disliked, particularly among those potentially affected by boundary changes. However, this rejection is more pronounced in Test Valley and New Forest than in Winchester and East Hampshire

statistically significantly **higher** than average

statistically significantly **lower** than average

Support for Option 1a
% selecting "strongly support" or "support"



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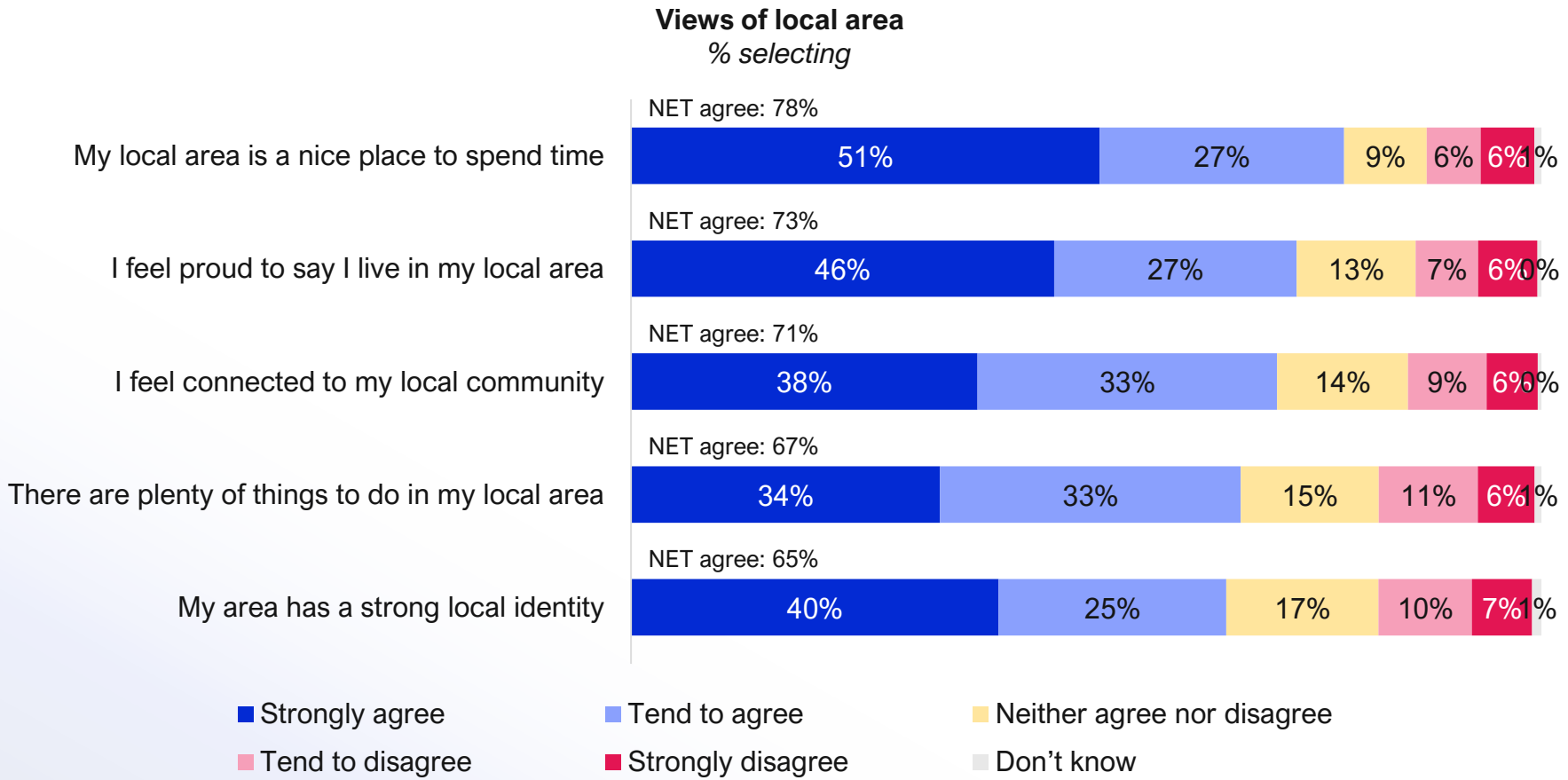
Overarching findings from the engagement

Views of the local area

The majority of residents engaged in this survey enjoy living in their local area and feel connected to their community



At more than 8 in 10 **(87%),** respondents in **New Forest** are most likely to say they feel proud of their local area, especially compared to **Southampton** respondents (**52%** of whom agree). Respondents in **New Forest (81%)**, **Portsmouth (77%),** and **Winchester (73%)** are most likely to say there are plenty of things to do in their local area.

Q4. We want to understand how people feel about the area they live in. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: All who responded to this question (n=5,855-5,862), in New Forest (n=942), Southampton (n=516), Portsmouth (n=384), and Winchester (n=466)

Respondents in this engagement value easy access to green spaces and the seaside, and active local communities

- **Access to green spaces**, with the seafront, New Forest, AONBs and nice landscapes nearby
- **Active communities**, with clubs, groups and things to do and a friendly environment
- **Access to amenities and nearby towns or** cities for shops and things to do
- **Transport hubs** nearby by car, train or plane
- **Peace and quiet**, particularly in rural areas
- **Good schools** for younger people

Welcoming community. Easy to get involved and feel part of the village. Really good pubs and great walking. Disused railway line is a real bonus.
Winchester, 65-74

Peaceful and plenty of green outdoor space. Sense of community in the village. Not too far from a few city centres if you want to go out to restaurants or shopping.
Winchester, 35-44

The road system allows for easy access to all parts of the area. Plenty of nice open spaces and parks which are all well maintained.
Eastleigh, 85+

The countryside, the friendliness of people, good schools, good access to London and major roads to other cities.
East Hampshire, 25-34

Q7. What do you like most about your local area?

Respondents also agree on the negatives: over-development, issues with traffic and transport, high house prices

- **Overdevelopment**, which is causing strain on existing infrastructure
- An increase in **crime, anti-social behaviour** which is making residents feel unsafe
- **Inaccessible transport**, with poor links in rural areas, expensive bus or ferry tickets and expensive parking
- **Heavy traffic** in towns and on main roads (A326, M27), and associated noise and pollution
- **Unaffordable housing**, making it difficult for younger people to find homes
- **Few shops or activities**, particularly for younger groups
- **Littering** and limited maintenance

> *TOO CROWDED. Too many new homes with no supporting infrastructure. Traffic is a nightmare.*
> Eastleigh, 65-74

> *The public transport is poor, there is effectively no option to travel any great distance but to drive.*
> New Forest, 25-34

> *I wish there was more to do in town socially, like nice places to eat or drink for my age group.*
> Test Valley, 35-44

> *Those who do not treat our surroundings with respect, poor quality of roads and general littering, unsatisfactory police presence.*
> New Forest, 75-84

Q7. What do you like most about your local area? What do you dislike most?

Despite these similarities, not everyone has the same experience of life in Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight

Urban / rural

Urban residents in the area are usually more satisfied with their ability to access services, activities and entertainment. They are also most likely to be satisfied with their access to public transport. However, even though many can access green spaces relatively easily, they experience challenges around traffic, noise, pollution and crime.

Rural residents are more likely to be satisfied and proud of where they live. However, this group is often older, and are more likely to experience issues getting around the wider Hampshire area and accessing services.

Older / younger

Older residents are more likely to be satisfied with the activities and community life that is available, even when living in villages or rural areas. However, the oldest generations often experience challenges getting around on public transport, and feel that it isn't always accessible to them or well connected enough.

Younger people express more frustration around the range of activities and events that are available near them – especially those living in rural areas. Those living in cities are more likely to be excited by the range of events, shops and restaurants on offer.

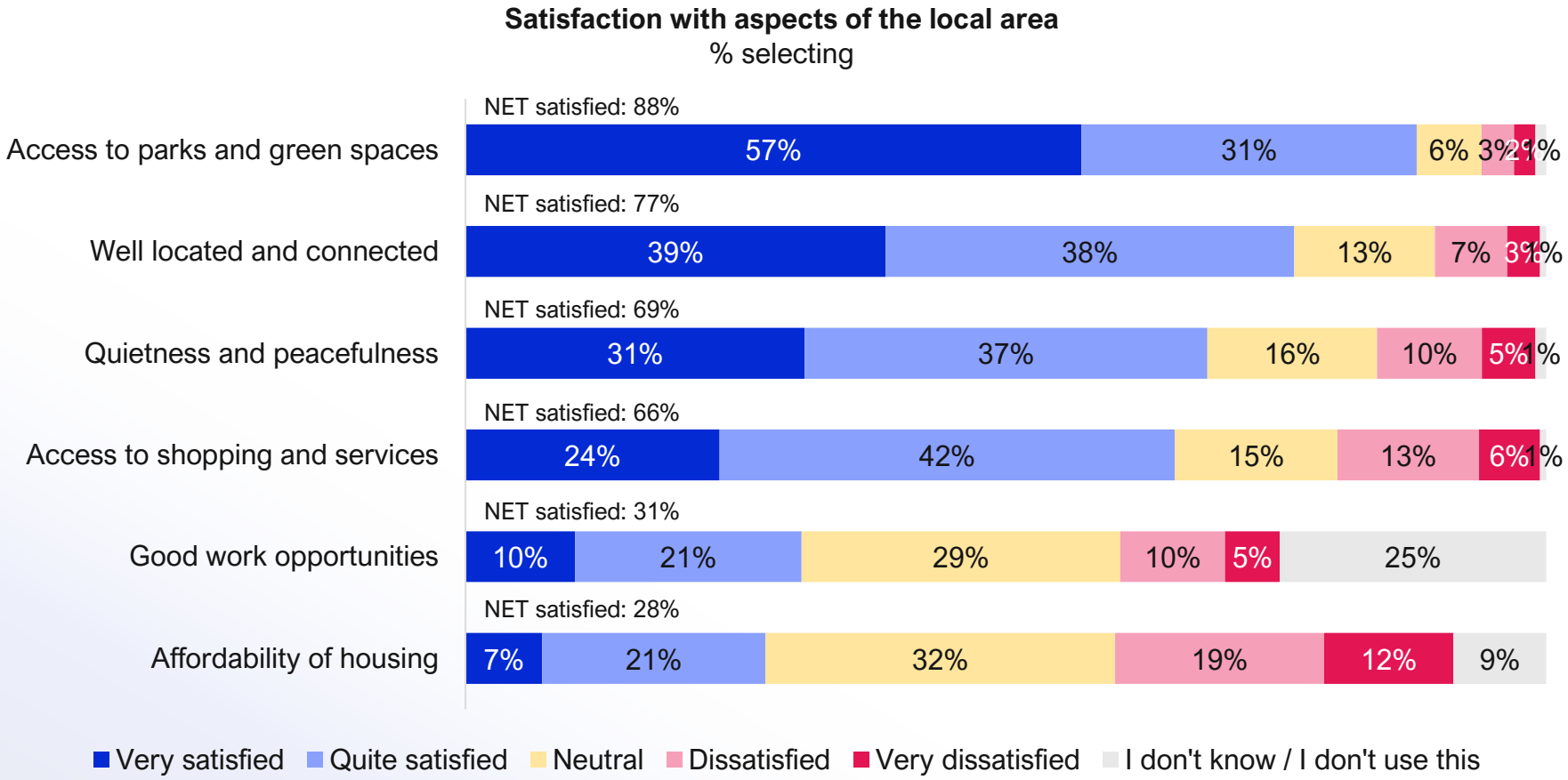
Rich / deprived

Residents across the sample talk about differences between 'richer' and 'poorer' areas, often raising concerns about how the two might interact when it comes to decision-making and service delivery.

While most name urban areas as more likely to be poorer, have social housing and more people experiencing deprivation, residents also raise concerns around deprived rural communities being forgotten. There is a sense that support and services for this group are largely available in cities, and are inaccessible to those living rurally.

Q7. What do you like most about your local area? What do you dislike most?

Respondents generally feel their area is well located and peaceful, but housing is expensive and work opportunities can be limited



Access to parks and green spaces: Those living in the New Forest (95%), Winchester (92%) East Hampshire and Hart* (both 95%) are most likely to be satisfied.

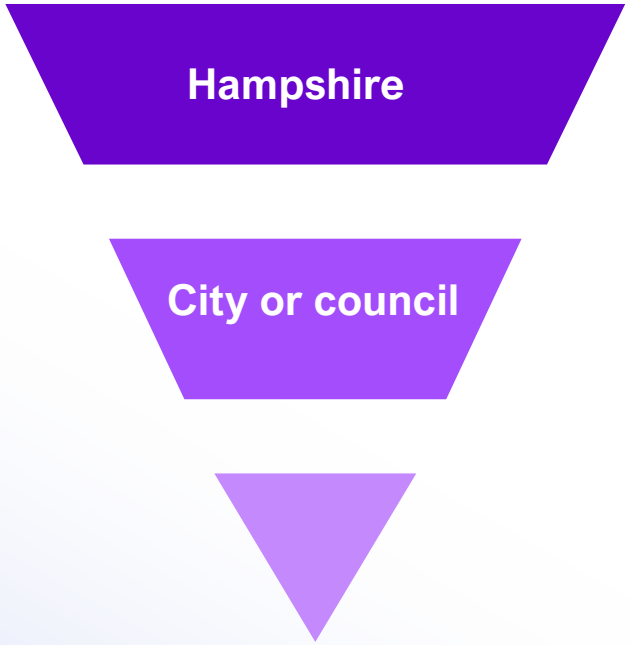
Access to shopping and services: Those living in the New Forest (75%) and near cities in Winchester (72%) and Portsmouth (71%) are most likely to be satisfied.

Work opportunities: Those living on the Isle of Wight (15%), Gosport (20%) and East Hampshire (25%) are least likely to be satisfied.

Affordability of housing: Those living in Gosport (35%) and Portsmouth (34%) are most likely to be satisfied, while those in Winchester are least satisfied (20%).

Q5. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your local area? Base: All who responded to this question (n=5822)

Residents in this engagement identify differently with their local area, but many are accessing services in their nearby city



Some see the whole of Hampshire as their local area, often because they travel around the wider area for work or for leisure. These people have often lived in multiple places around Hampshire, or have friends and family spread around the wider area.

Many mention their town, city or current council area, such as ‘Test Valley’ or ‘Winchester’ as it is the main place they work, access services and spend their leisure time. Even those who don’t see the whole city as their local area tend to say they have to go there to access services.

Other define their local area as specific villages or neighbourhoods, such as ‘Bishops Waltham’ or ‘Waterside’, even if they have to leave regularly to access facilities and services nearby. These are most often people living rurally, who identify strongly with their community.

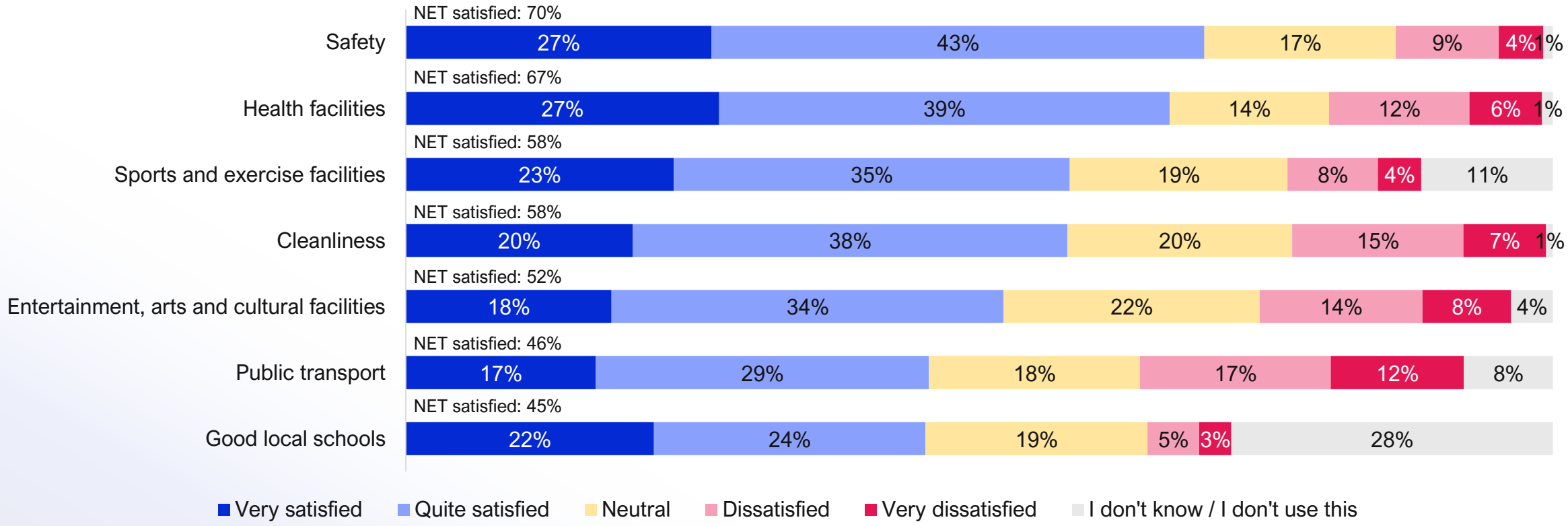
Working adults are generally more mobile, often commuting to hubs such as Southampton, Winchester, or Portsmouth, but also London. Many are going to urban centres across Hampshire to access services. Retired residents, especially those who make more use of public services, are likely to travel in their immediate local area for most of their needs, but sometimes find they have to go quite far for specific needs (e.g. for hospital appointments, better shopping options, etc.).

Q3. Thinking about Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight, tell us the area you think of as your 'local area'

Views of the local council

Across the county, respondents agree that their areas are green and safe, though access to services is more variable

Satisfaction with aspects of the local area
% selecting



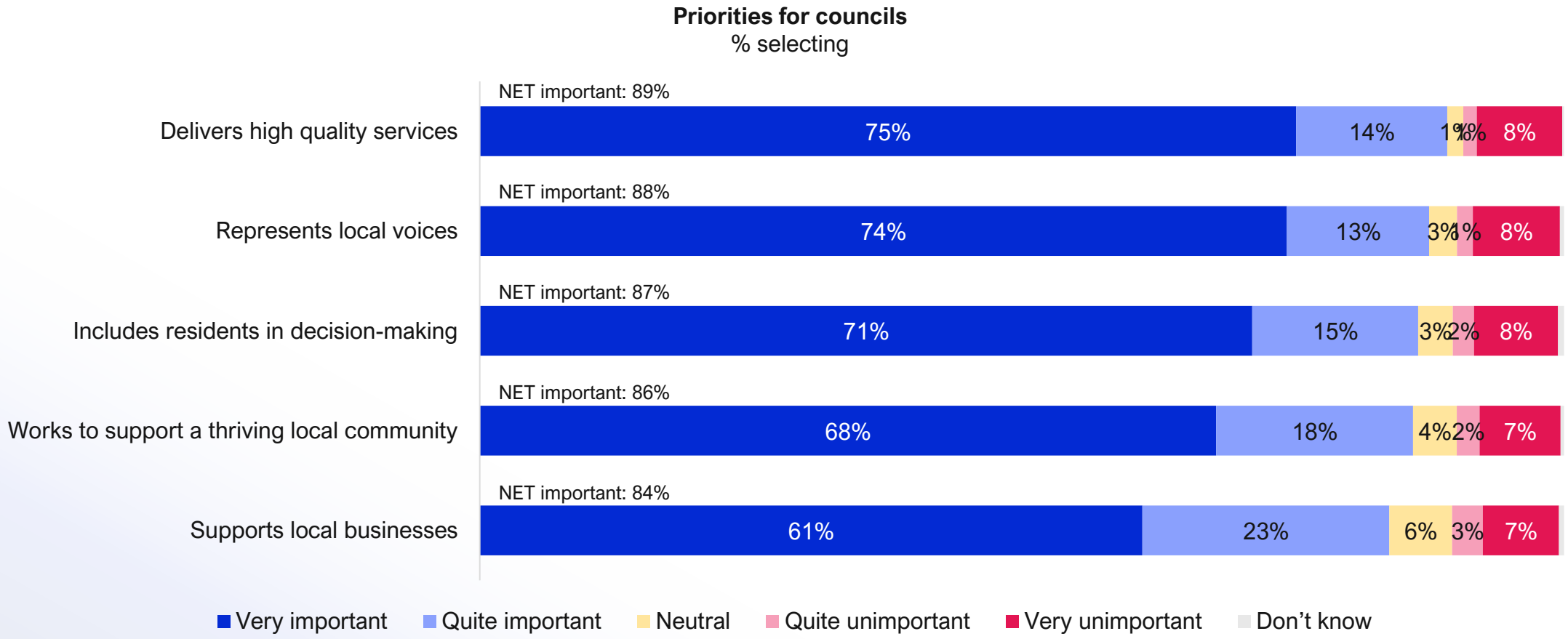
Q5. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your local area? Base: All who responded to this question (n=5822)

Rural respondents tend to be more satisfied with safety and cleanliness, while those in urban areas benefit from better infrastructure and public transport

	More satisfied	Less satisfied
Safety	Respondents in rural councils are most satisfied: Hart* (84% satisfied), New Forest (82%) as well as those living in Winchester City Council (82%).	Those living in Southampton (48% satisfied), Rushmoor (54%), Gosport (55%) and Portsmouth (60%) are least likely to be satisfied.
Cleanliness	Those more likely to be rural are most satisfied with this: those living in Hart* (82%), New Forest (77%), Test Valley (70%) and East Hampshire* (69%) but also those living in Winchester (73%).	On the other hand, those living in Southampton are least likely to be satisfied (26% satisfied), followed by Rushmoor (30%) and Havant (36%).
Public transport	Respondents living in cities such as Portsmouth are most satisfied (72%), followed by Southampton (64%) and Rushmoor (63%).	Those living in Hart* are least satisfied with public transport (16%), followed by East Hampshire* (35%) and Winchester (35%).
Entertainment and things to do	Those living in Portsmouth are most likely to be satisfied (71%), followed by those living in Basingstoke & Deane (65%) and Fareham (62%). Many of those living in cities feel more neutrally, with 57% feeling satisfied in Southampton and Winchester.	Less than a quarter of those living in Gosport are least satisfied (23%), followed by East Hampshire (26%) and Havant (34%).

Q5. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your local area? Base: All who responded to this question (n=5822)

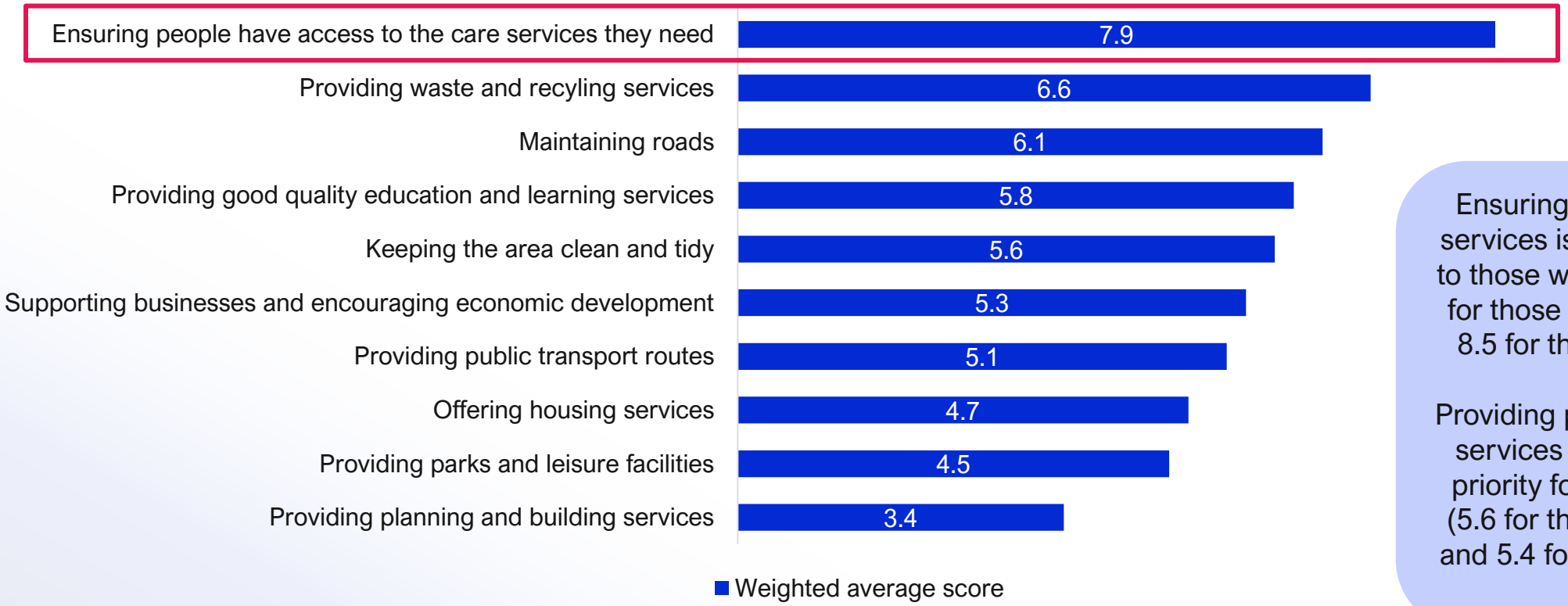
The vast majority of respondents feel the council should prioritise delivering high-quality services, and representing local voices



Q6. How important is it to you that your council… Base: All who responded to this question (n=5834)

Access to care services is a clear priority across the county, reflecting one of the most prominent concerns about service provision after LGR

What councils should prioritise in the future
*Showing weighted average score for each option out of 10**



Ensuring access to care services is most important to those who are older (8.1 for those aged 65-74 and 8.5 for those ages 75+).

Providing parks and leisure services is also a higher priority for young people (5.6 for those aged 25-34 and 5.4 for those aged 35-44).

Q8. In the future, what would you like your council to prioritise? Number each option in order of priority, with 1 being the highest.
* Responses were ranked using a weighted scoring system where Rank 1 = 10 points, Rank 2 = 9 points, … Rank 10 = 1 point. Base: All who responded to this question (n=1785)

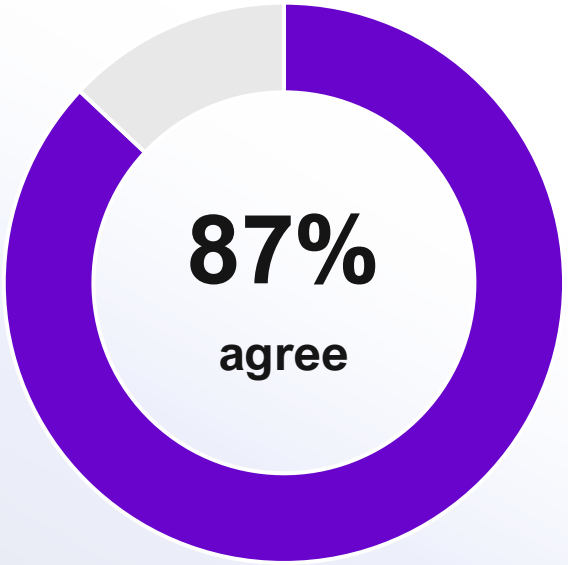
Residents express similar priorities and areas for improvement, connected to the negative aspects of their local areas

Overdevelopment	Improving infrastructure in areas that are being further developed. Also ensuring that green spaces are cared for and protected, with a focus on biodiversity and making them attractive.
Crime and anti-social behaviour	Improving social cohesion and activities for younger people to build a stronger sense of community. Also increasing policing and surveillance, and targeting areas where anti-social behaviour is worst.
Inaccessible transport	Improving and integrating public transport routes, as well as ensuring they are all accessible – particularly on the Isle of Wight, and providing better bus services in the evenings.
Heavy traffic	Encouraging more public transport and active travel, as well as rethinking major roads to ensure they are able to cope with the volume of traffic.
Unaffordable housing	Improving housing stock, building more social housing, and ensuring that there are options for younger local people (in strong tension with fears and perceptions of overdevelopment).
Few shops or activities	Supporting businesses (especially independent ones) to make town centres more lively and vibrant, and attractive to all different age groups. Also providing better access to services such as banks.
Vandalism and littering	Providing more proactive maintenance and repairs, and increasing policing or fines for littering and vandalism.

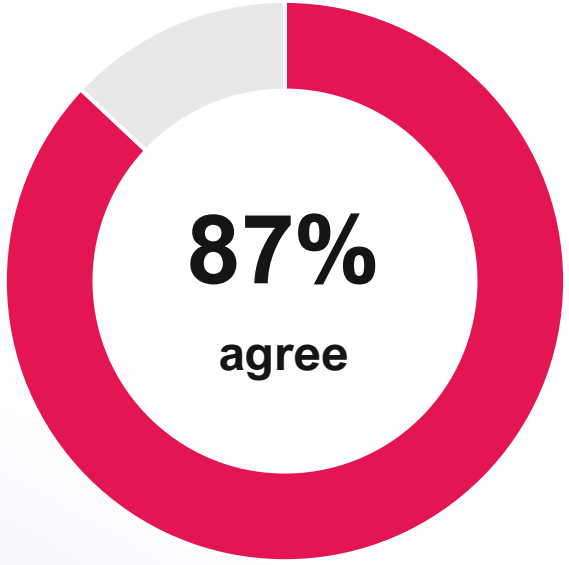
Q9. What one thing would you like your council to focus on the most? Please be as specific as possible.

While more than half agree that other areas' needs should be considered, they strongly feel that decision-making should be local

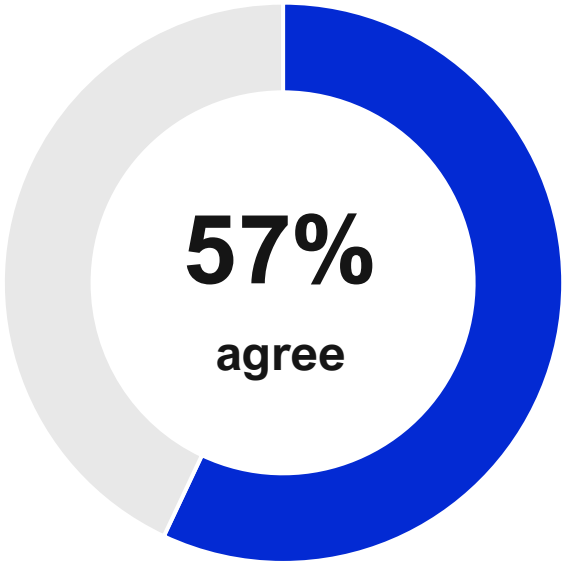
"It is important that my council reflects the identity of my local community"



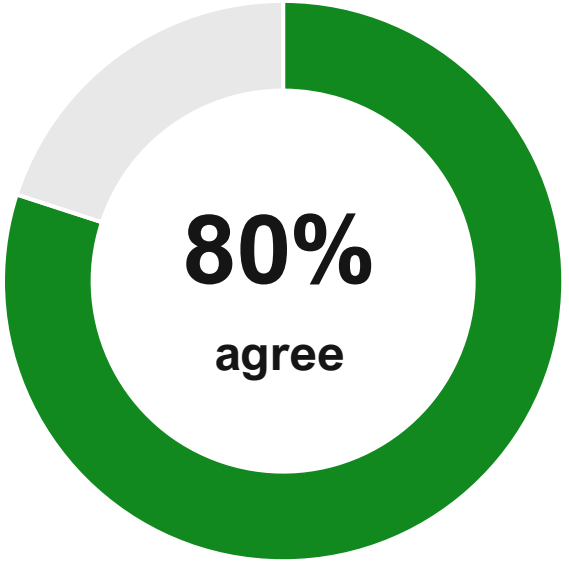
"Decisions about my local area should be made near my community"



"Decisions about my local area should be considered alongside other areas"



"Local voices should have the strongest influence in decision making"

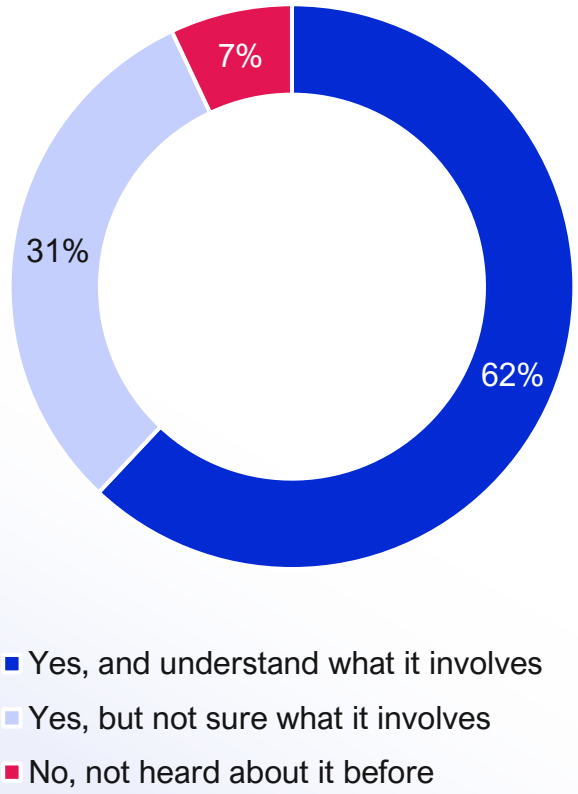


Q10. Here are some statements about local decision-making. Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the statements. Base: All who responded to this question (n=11410)

Views of local government reorganisation

Most say they had heard of LGR prior to taking part in the engagement, with 6 in 10 claiming to be well informed

Awareness of LGR
% selecting



Those living in areas that are most likely to be affected – so where Options 1 and 2 would involve them being part of differing councils, or those living in parishes affected by Option 1a – are most likely to be well informed about local government reorganisation.

Q11. Have you heard about the government's plans to reorganise councils in Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight? Base: All who responded to this question (n=11065)

These relatively engaged residents express a high level of concern and scepticism about LGR in principle

Generally, there is a high level of concern around Local Government Reorganisation as a whole. Although only 1 in 10 (9%) of respondents in the engagement say they “strongly oppose” all three options included for consideration, many feel forced to pick the “best of a bad bunch” of options.

Residents struggle to understand why a change is needed and have a strong sense that they will ultimately lose out:

Losing the local touch	Losing funding	Losing services	Losing influence
With councils covering a larger area, many are worried that councils will lose their understanding of the local area, and a ‘local touch’. They raise fears around council staff and councillors becoming too generalised as they will be spread too thin.	Funding allocation may change – which for many suggests that less will be spent on their area. There are also concerns about how this will impact council tax, and how debt held by different councils will be spread.	Services being moved away from them, with many raising issues around ease of access. They worry about the way decisions will be made about where services are provided, and that urban areas will always be prioritised over rural locations.	Concern that they will have less power to influence local decision-making – for example, if local meetings happen further away from their homes, or if a local councillor has a lesser understanding of their needs.

Why go through all this disruption instead of putting the time and resources into improving public services?
Winchester, 55-64

Decision-making and funding will be biased towards wherever the bureaucratic centre of the council is (eg - Winchester for Council 2) as that's where most of the council employees will live. The places on the edge of those councils, or far from the bureaucratic centres will be marginalised.
Test Valley, 45-54

Those living in rural areas tend to be more sensitive to the perceived risk LGR poses to local decision-making

Decisions being made near their community is most important for those living in predominantly rural councils:

- 81% of respondents in the New Forest and Hart* strongly agree this is important
- 73% in Test Valley strongly agree

This is less important to those living in urban and city councils:

- 53% of respondents in Southampton strongly agree
- 61% in Winchester and in Havant strongly agree

> *Because of the suggested shift of my Parish into a large urban area I believe that decisions will be driven by the urban majority view and we will become just another densely built area of a very large conurbation where decisions will not regard the rural aspects of my area with any sense of importance in the whole new Unitary Council area. Simply put I believe bad decisions are more likely if this option [1a] was to be implemented.*
>
> East Hampshire, 65-74

Those living in rural areas are more likely to express concerns that they will be forgotten about when it comes to decision-making and service delivery. They worry that more populated urban areas and cities will be prioritised, and that larger numbers of voters will take precedence over relatively smaller rural populations.

However, some recognise that LGR may have some positive effects on service delivery and decision-making

Efficiencies

Larger authorities may help councils deliver efficiencies of scale, by offering similar services to a larger number of people. It also feels like an opportunity to provide better coverage of services, especially for places which are geographically more distant from the majority of their current council.

Centralisation can bring organisational benefits such as purchasing efficiencies, facilities provision and streamlining of decision-making.
Portsmouth, 65-74

Connecting communities

Avoiding over-fragmenting communities in different council boundaries, which feel arbitrary to some, and better recognising the way that people travel and use services in the Hampshire area.
Some are keen to see this address some issues about particular villages or neighbourhoods they feel have been in the wrong council all along e.g. Chilworth or Denmead.

Would be both cheaper to run and allow better coordination of transport networks, an increase in job opportunities and collaboration on climate change initiatives.
Portsmouth, 75-84

Better decisions

Different councils will be able to learn from each other, challenging each other to make better decisions.
For some, this as an opportunity to address specific concerns and frustrations they have around the running of their own council.

Better decision making - affecting larger areas rather than lots of smaller decisions.
Winchester, 25-34

Residents were asked specifically about 3 potential options…

Option 1

Council 1 (Pink): Basingstoke, Hart, Rushmoor

Council 2 (Green): New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester, East Hampshire

Council 3 (Yellow): Eastleigh, Southampton

Council 4 (Blue): Portsmouth, Havant, Gosport, Fareham

Council 5 (Grey): Isle of Wight

Option 2

Council 1 (Pink): Basingstoke, Hart, Rushmoor

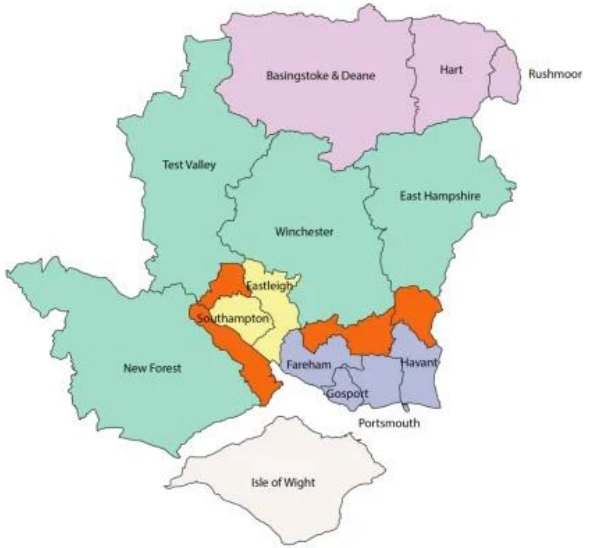
Council 2 (Green): Test Valley, Winchester, East Hampshire

Council 3 (Yellow): New Forest, Eastleigh, Southampton

Council 4 (Blue): Portsmouth, Havant, Gosport, Fareham

Council 5 (Grey): Isle of Wight

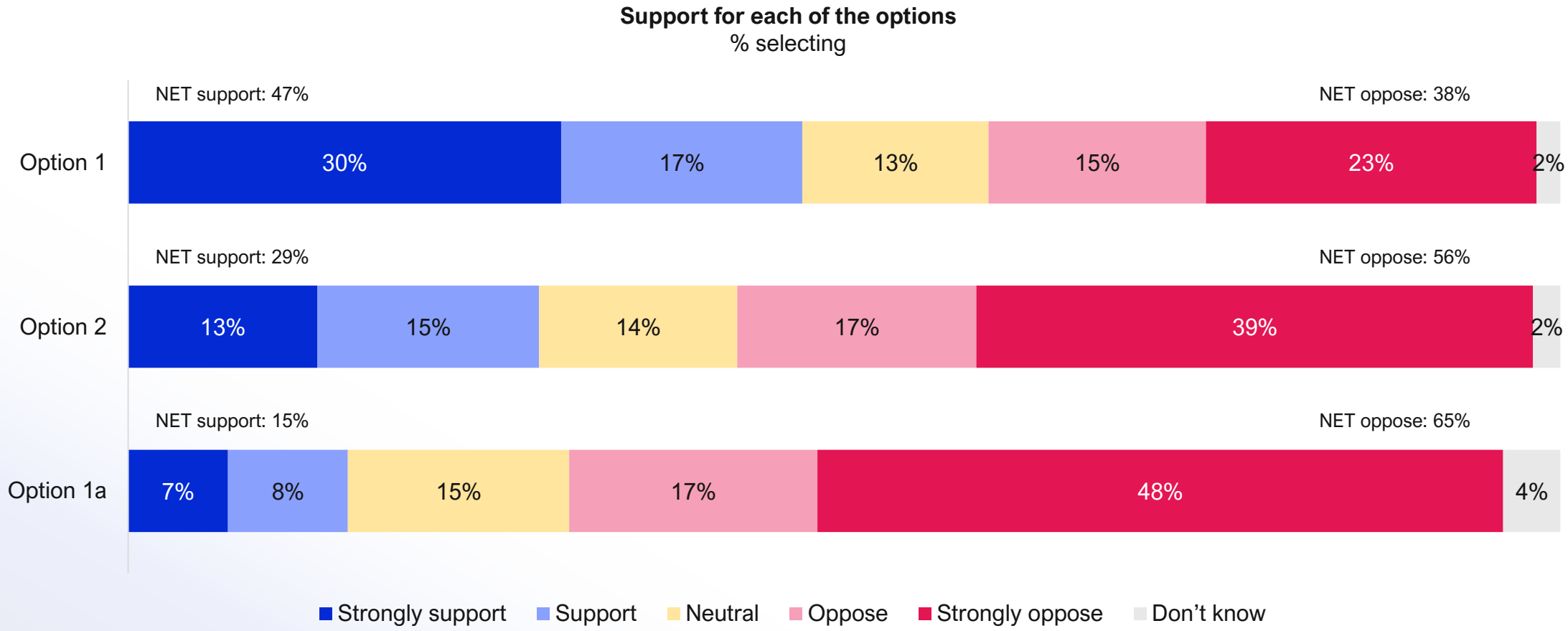
Option 1a



Existing Council:	New Forest	Test Valley	Winchester	East Hampshire
Parishes potentially affected by boundary changes:	Totton & Eling, Marchwood, Hythe & Dibden and Fawley	Nursling & Rownhams, Chilworth, Valley Park and North Baddesley	Denmead, Newlands, Boarhunt, Southwick & Widley, Wickham & Knowle and Whiteley	Horndean, Clanfield and Rowlands Castle

Potential boundary changes, affecting wards highlighted (Orange) in the New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester and East Hampshire

Option 1 is most popular, while Option 1a is considered highly controversial, especially by those in affected parishes

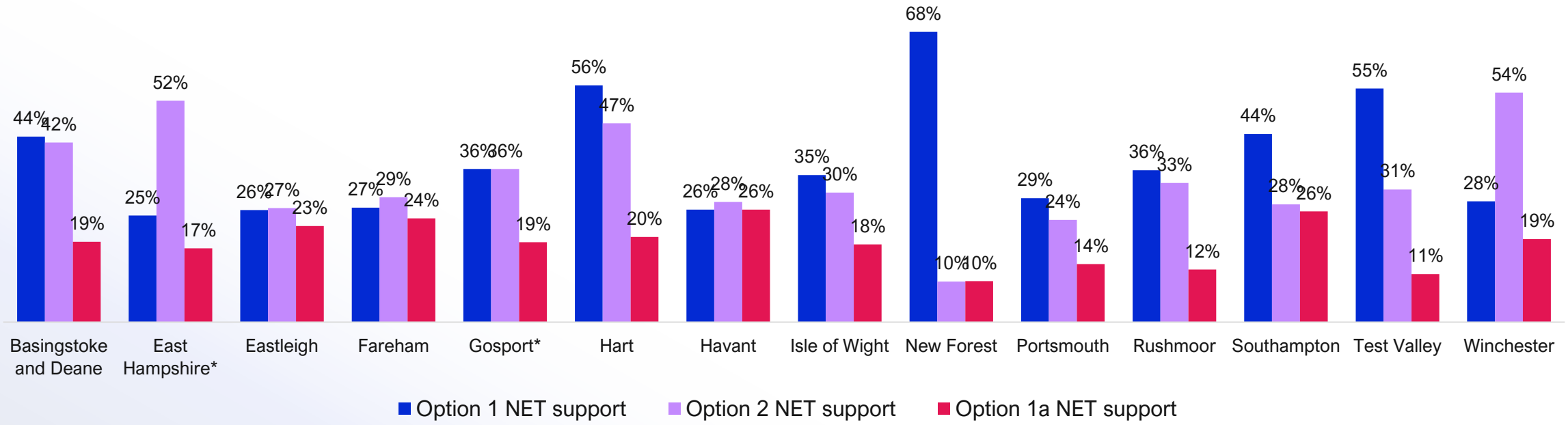


Q12. To what extent do you support or oppose each of these options? Base: All who responded to this question (n=10476)

Residents who feel they have more at stake tend to have a stronger preference for an option, but they do not always agree

While Option 1a is almost universally disliked, residents are more split on Options 1 and 2. Most significantly, Test Valley and New Forest have a clear preference for Option 1, while East Hampshire and Winchester lean towards Option 2.

Support for each of the options
% selecting “strongly support” or “support”

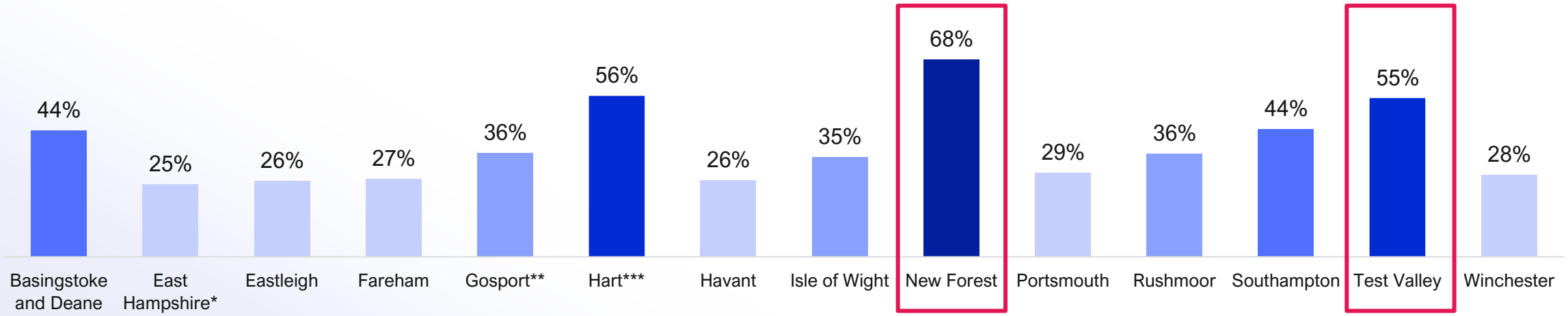


Q12. To what extent do you support or oppose each of these options? Base: All who responded to this question (n=10476), in Basingstoke and Deane (n=154), East Hampshire (n=154), Eastleigh (n=662), Fareham (n=262), Gosport (n=67), Hart (n=45), Havant (n=166), Isle of Wight (n=184), New Forest (n=2585), Portsmouth (n=515), Rushmoor (n=95), Southampton (n=498), Test Valley (n=2278), Winchester (n=1496)

Option 1 is seen as making the most sense politically, socially and demographically, though not geographically

This option is strongly preferred by residents in New Forest and Test Valley, who feel most threatened by the proposal to merge New Forest and Southampton.

Support for Option 1
% selecting “strongly support” or “support”



Q12. To what extent do you support or oppose each of these options? Base: All respondents who answered this question in Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (n=154), East Hampshire District Council (n=154)*, Eastleigh Borough Council (n=662), Fareham Borough Council (n=264), Gosport Borough Council (n=67)**, Hart District Council (n=45)***, Havant Borough Council (n=166), Isle of Wight Council (n=184), New Forest District Council (n=2,585), Portsmouth City Council (n=515), Rushmoor Borough Council (n=95), Southampton City Council (n=198), Test Valley Borough Council (n=2,278), Winchester City Council (n=1,496)

*Note that East Hampshire District Council did not co-commission this project or promote this engagement.
**The majority of respondents from Gosport did not answer this question, as they were routed to a different survey.
*** Caution: low base size of n < 50.

Thinks Insight & Strategy

Residents like that Option 1 groups councils that *feel* similar, but worry about creating overly large councils

Residents feel there are positives around…

- Grouping similar councils, with similar characteristics, who will have experience providing services for similar types of areas.
- Grouping people around cities.
- Preserving the rural identities and focus for areas like the New Forest and Test Valley.
- Keeping urban centres like Southampton and Eastleigh together.
- Leads to councils which feel smaller in terms of population size.

But drawbacks around…

- The large geographic area for council 2, potentially diluting council services, funding and powers.
- Grouping together councils because they are rural, ignoring their identified and differences – with particular concerns around the uniqueness of the New Forest.
- Concern that the new councils are being split between ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ areas.

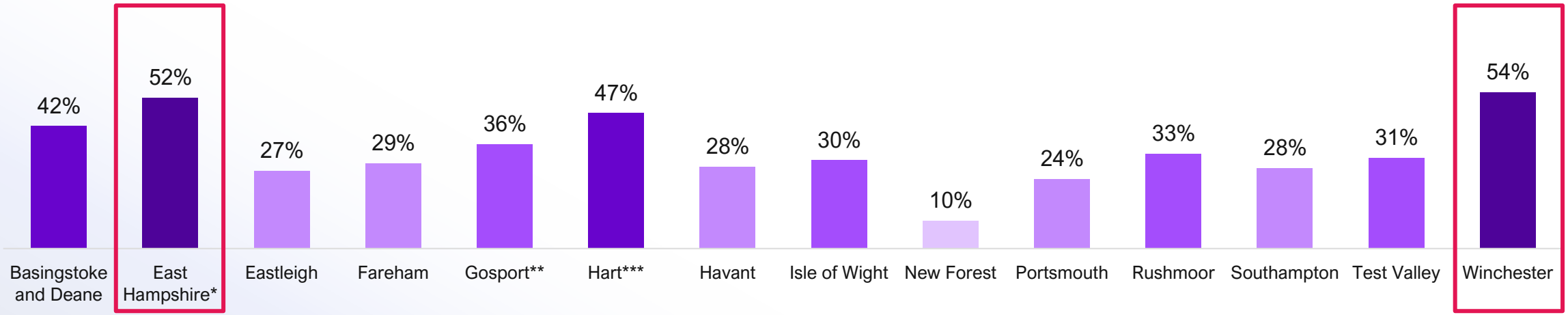
What council plans would need to address: Residents struggle to picture how a local authority would work in practice across such a large geographical area – council plans would need to show how the needs of different neighbourhoods would be met, and how services will be delivered and spread across a wider geographical area.

Q14. How do you feel option 1 might… Impact the way you use services locally? Impact the way that decisions are made in your local area? Impact the way you engage with local decision-making?

Winchester and East Hants are most in support of Option 2, while those most affected, the New Forest, are least supportive

Those supporting Option 2 mostly consider Option 1 too large a geographical area to administer effectively. Across the county, there is also a sense of "solidarity" with the New Forest, which many feel should not be merged with Southampton.

Support for Option 2
% selecting



Q12. To what extent do you support or oppose each of these options? Base: All respondents who answered this question in Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (n=154), East Hampshire District Council (n=154)*, Eastleigh Borough Council (n=662), Fareham Borough Council (n=264), Gosport Borough Council (n=67)**, Hart District Council (n=45)***, Havant Borough Council (n=166), Isle of Wight Council (n=184), New Forest District Council (n=2,585), Portsmouth City Council (n=515), Rushmoor Borough Council (n=95), Southampton City Council (n=198), Test Valley Borough Council (n=2,278), Winchester City Council (n=1,496)

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*** Caution: low base size of n < 50.

Residents express strong concerns about linking urban and rural areas together, but recognise that it makes geographic sense

Residents feel there are positives around…

- The geographic logic of linking the New Forest with Southampton and Eastleigh, as many are already accessing services there.
- Avoiding creating one very large council.
- Provides balance between rural and urban areas, and may even out population across the five proposed councils.

But drawbacks around…

- Merging areas that are very different to each other, with concerns that either rural or urban areas will be left behind.
- The potential risk of urban areas being prioritised over rural areas, and the way funding will be allocated. Those in rural areas also worry that urban centres will want to develop and urbanise them.
- Concerns around services being centralised in urban areas.
- Concerns around financial strain.

What council plans would need to address: Residents need more reassurance that any model combining historically rural areas with cities will still be able to cater to their needs, and that provision of services will account for differing needs in different areas. They particularly want to know whether services will all be centralised into urban hubs, or whether provision will be spread across the larger unitary authorities.

This looks like it makes more sense for the New Forest. Closer to those making the decisions. No one in Winchester should be decision making for the New Forest.

Rushmoor, 35-44

Southampton's priorities will absolutely swallow up all the time, energy, focus (and money!) from all our rural areas in the New Forest. We all know local councils are horribly underfunded - there will be "needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few" decisions and we will lose out I'm afraid.

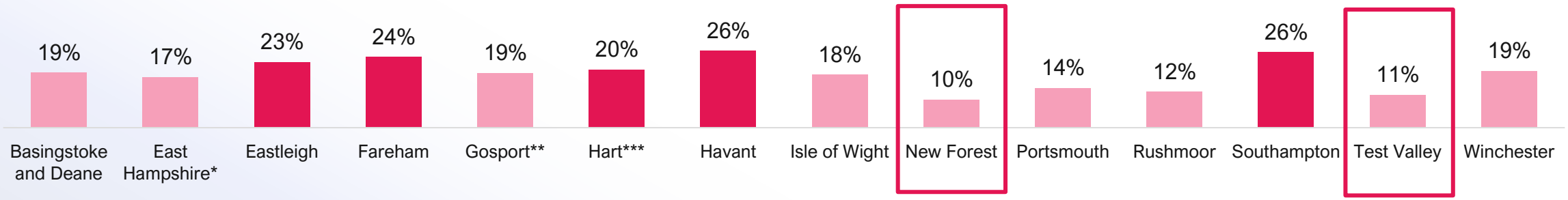
New Forest, 55-64

Q145 How do you feel option 2 might… Impact the way you use services locally? Impact the way that decisions are made in your local area? Impact the way you engage with local decision-making?

Support for Option 1a is low overall, and lowest in New Forest and Test Valley, where residents are most concerned about boundary changes

Option 1a is slightly more popular in areas that stand to gain from the inclusion of new parishes (i.e. Southampton, Havant and Fareham), but very unpopular in areas that are directly affected such as the New Forest and Test Valley. Respondents in Winchester and East Hampshire, who would also be affected, do not feel as strongly and can see some benefits.

Support for Option 1a
% selecting



Q12. To what extent do you support or oppose each of these options? Base: All respondents who answered this question in Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (n=154), East Hampshire District Council (n=154)*, Eastleigh Borough Council (n=662), Fareham Borough Council (n=264), Gosport Borough Council (n=67)**, Hart District Council (n=45)***, Havant Borough Council (n=166), Isle of Wight Council (n=184), New Forest District Council (n=2,585), Portsmouth City Council (n=515), Rushmoor Borough Council (n=95), Southampton City Council (n=198), Test Valley Borough Council (n=2,278), Winchester City Council (n=1,496)

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*** Caution: low base size of n < 50.

Thinks Insight & Strategy

Residents are concerned about boundary changes fragmenting communities and are unsure what it will mean for services

Residents feel there are positives around…

- Aligning more urban areas with Southampton/Portsmouth, which may mean better service delivery for those areas.
- Better reflecting reality for those who live in those areas, and linking them to where they access services.
- Those living in semi-urban areas being served by a council that better reflects their needs.

But drawbacks around…

- Disruption to those living in the affected areas.
- Fragmenting existing communities. Particularly when it comes to separating the New Forest from the Waterside, which is seen as integral to the identity of the area.
- Residents in affected areas losing local representation and influence in decision-making.

What council plans would need to address: Residents want more information about what the changes will entail – they are looking for more certainty about how the boundaries will change, and how this will impact the services they receive from the council, but also from other providers (schools, GPs). There is also a need for more clarity around affected areas joining a larger council, as some respondent assumed they would remain as a small council area rather than joining a larger unitary authority.

Might be better grouping semiurban dormitary areas with the conurbations they serve. Some (not all) are effectively part of the conurbations now and look towards them for services rather to further away more smaller towns/cities.

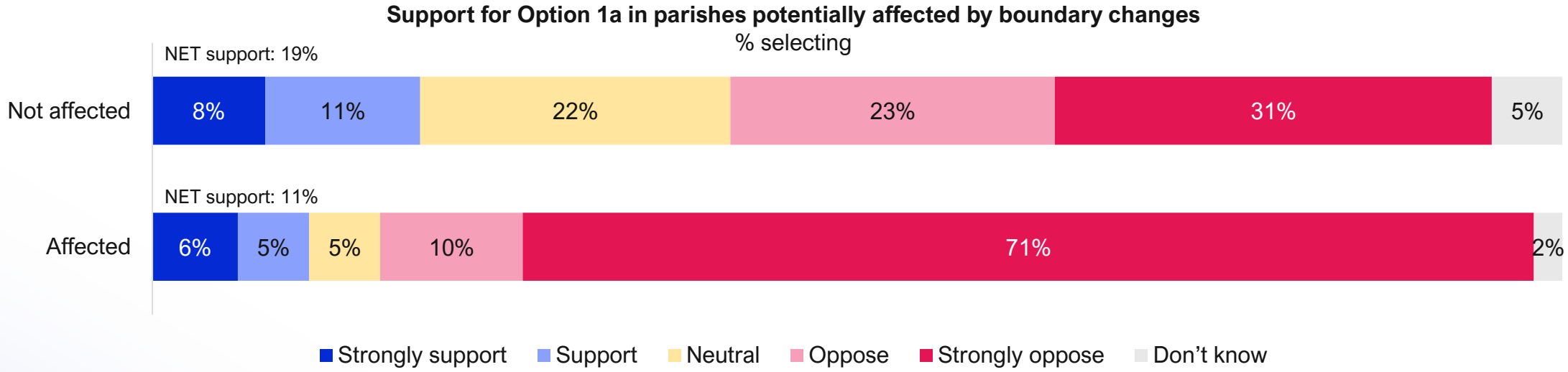
Test Valley, not affected, 65-74

I live in the parish of Fawley and strongly dislike splitting the New Forest area - many New Forest commoners live in this area and have a very strong attachment to the New Forest. My own family have been commoners for over 300 years. People who live in the Waterside parishes regard it as part of the New Forest (historically ponies/cattle also roamed in these areas).

New Forest, affected, 45-54

Q16. How do you feel Option 1a might… Impact the way you use services locally? Impact the way that decisions are made in your local area? Impact the way you engage with local decision-making?

Respondents from potentially affected parishes are most opposed to boundary changes, driven primarily by those in New Forest and Test Valley



Option 1a is more strongly opposed in New Forest and Test Valley than Winchester and East Hampshire:

- Among those respondents whose parishes may be affected in the **New Forest**, three quarters **(75%) strongly oppose** Option 1a, rising to **81%** among respondents from potentially affected **Test Valley** parishes.
- In **Winchester**, meanwhile, just over half **(54%) strongly oppose** this proposal, and in **East Hampshire** it is even fewer respondents (46 of 90 potentially affected respondents - **51%**).

See a breakdown by parish on the next slide.

Q12. To what extent do you support or oppose each of these options? Base: All who responded to this question who are affected (n=1842) Not affected (n=7152). Those in affected parishes in New Forest (n=1302), Test Valley (n=809), Winchester (n=402) and East Hampshire (n=90).

Preferences of those living in parishes potentially affected by boundary changes

District/ Borough	Parish potentially affected by boundary changes	N	Preferred option	Option 1		Option 2		Option 1a	
				Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
East Hampshire	Horndean	31-32	Option 2	6 (19%)	**16 (52%)**	**14 (45%)**	10 (32%)	8 (25%)	**15 (47%)**
	Clanfield	14	Option 2	1 (7%)	**12 (86%)**	**9 (64%)**	4 (29%)	4 (29%)	**5 (36%)**
	Rowland's Castle	38-40	Option 2	**16 (42%)**	11 (29%)	**22 (56%)**	12 (31%)	3 (8%)	**32 (80%)**
New Forest	Fawley	280	Option 1	**191 (68%)**	69 (25%)	19 (7%)	**251 (90%)**	18 (6%)	**244 (87%)**
	Hythe and Dibden	460	Option 1	**327 (71%)**	108 (23%)	32 (7%)	**399 (88%)**	36 (8%)	**381 (84%)**
	Marchwood	168	Option 1	**122 (73%)**	37 (22%)	11 (7%)	**151 (90%)**	7 (4%)	**149 (90%)**
	Totton and Eling	403	Option 1	**295 (73%)**	78 (19%)	27 (7%)	**353 (89%)**	28 (7%)	**246 (87%)**
Test Valley	Chilworth	54-56	Option 1	**48 (86%)**	6 (11%)	5 (9%)	**44 (81%)**	3 (5%)	**51 (93%)**
	North Baddesley	72-79	Option 1	**38 (48%)**	29 (37%)	30 (39%)	**37 (48%)**	13 (18%)	**51 (71%)**
	Nursling and Rownhams	602-619	Option 1	**561 (91%)**	42 (7%)	73 (12%)	**430 (71%)**	14 (2%)	**573 (95%)**
	Valley Park	75-77	Option 1	**35 (47%)**	25 (33%)	26 (35%)	**33 (44%)**	21 (27%)	**45 (58%)**
Winchester	Boarhunt	10-11	N/A	3 (27%)	**7 (64%)**	3 (27%)	**7 (64%)**	3 (27%)	**6 (55%)**
	Denmead	170-174	Option 2	**76 (44%)**	65 (38%)	**102 (59%)**	37 (22%)	35 (20%)	**128 (74%)**
	Newlands	36-38	Option 1a	6 (16%)	**24 (65%)**	14 (38%)	**16 (43%)**	**19 (50%)**	14 (37%)
	Southwick and Widley	10-11	N/A	4 (36%)	**5 (45%)**	4 (40%)	**5 (50%)**	**6 (55%)**	5 (45%)
	Whiteley	95-96	Option 2	34 (35%)	**49 (51%)**	**49 (51%)**	28 (29%)	31 (32%)	**55 (57%)**
	Wickham and Knowle	66-72	Option 2	23 (32%)	**28 (39%)**	**36 (51%)**	21 (30%)	19 (26%)	**48 (67%)**

NB. The scores shown here are the combined NETs (strongly support + support and strongly oppose + oppose), not including those who feel neutrally or answered "don't know" to this question.

Preferences of those living in wards potentially affected by boundary changes

District/ Borough	Ward	N	Preferred option (ward level)	Option 1		Option 2		Option 1a	
				Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
East Hampshire	Horndean Catherington	11	Option 2	2 (18%)	**6 (55%)**	**5 (45%)**	4 (36%)	3 (27%)	**6 (55%)**
	Horndean Downs	6	Option 2	2 (33%)	**4 (67%)**	2 (33%)	**3 (50%)**	1 (17%)	**2 (33%)**
	Horndean Kings & Blendworth	9	Option 2	1 11%)	**5 (56%)**	**4 (44%)**	2 (22%)	2 (22%)	**4 (44%)**
	Horndean Murray	6-7	Option 2	1 (17%)	**2 (33%)**	**3 (50%)**	2 (33%)	2 (29%)	**4 (57%)**
	Clanfield	16	Option 2	1 (6%)	**14 (88%)**	**9 (56%)**	6 (38%)	4 (25%)	**7 (44%)**
	Rowlands Castle	38-41	Option 2	**16 (41%)**	12 (31%)	**22 (55%)**	13 (33%)	3 (7%)	**33 (80%)**
New Forest	Fawley, Blackfield, Calshot & Langley	154-156	Option 1	**107 (69%)**	38 (24%)	9 (6%)	**139 (90%)**	9 (6%)	**135 (88%)**
	Hardley, Holbury & North Blackfield	124-127	Option 1	**84 (68%)**	31 (25%)	10 (8%)	**112 (89%)**	9 (7%)	**109 (86%)**
	Hythe Central	160-162	Option 1	**110 (68%)**	47 (29%)	10 (6%)	**141 (88%)**	10 (6%)	**137 (85%)**
	Hythe South	134-138	Option 1	**98 (71%)**	35 (25%)	9 (7%)	**122 (91%)**	18 (13%)	**106 (79%)**
	Marchwood & Eling	208-210	Option 1	**152 (72%)**	45 (21%)	13 (6%)	**188 (90%)**	10 (5%)	**186 (89%)**
	Totton Central	92-95	Option 1	**67 (71%)**	22 (23%)	7 (8%)	**81 (88%)**	9 (10%)	**78 (85%)**
	Totton North	146-148	Option 1	108 (73%)	25 (17%)	9 (6%)	**129 (88%)**	11 (8%)	**123 (85%)**
	Totton South	119-120	Option 1	**90 (76%)**	23 (19%)	9 (8%)	**106 (89%)**	5 (4%)	**108 (90%)**
Test Valley	Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams	663-682	Option 1	**612 (90%)**	52 (8%)	80 (12%)	**479 (72%)**	20 (3%)	**626 (94%)**
	North Baddesley	85-87	Option 1	**41 (47%)**	31 (36%)	32 (38%)	**40 (47%)**	17 (21%)	**55 (69%)**
	Valley Park	61-62	Option 1	**30 (49%)**	19 (31%)	22 (36%)	**26 (43%)**	14 (23%)	**39 (63%)**
Winchester	Southwick & Wickham	110-113	Option 2	32 (29%)	**52 (47%)**	**49 (45%)**	42 (38%)	39 (35%)	**65 (58%)**
	Denmead	191-193	Option 2	**80 (42%)**	77 (40%)	**110 (58%)**	44 (23%)	43 (22%)	**136 (70%)**
	Whiteley & Shedfield	125-126	Option 2	46 (37%)	**58 (46%)**	**58 (46%)**	34 (27%)	36 (29%)	**76 (61%)**