

Appendix O

Year 10 and Year 12 Student Survey Insight Report

Background

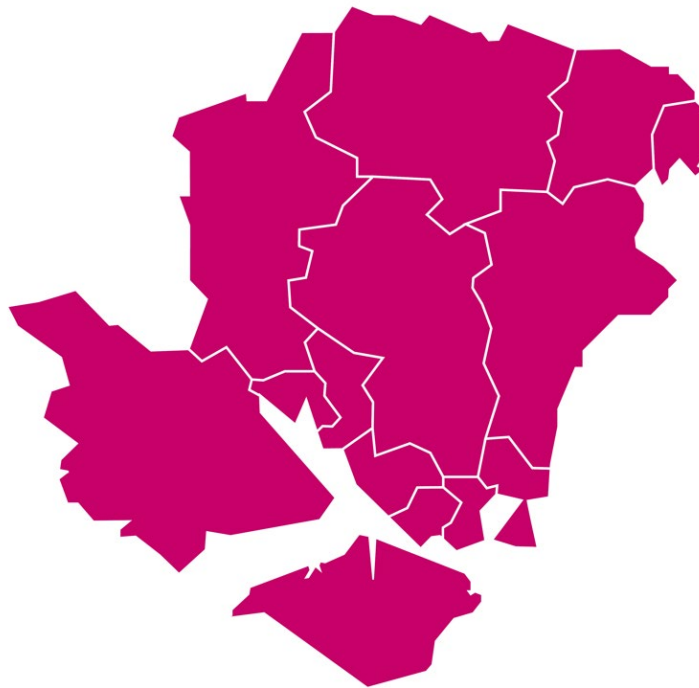
In summer 2025 Hampshire County Council undertook public and stakeholder engagement to help inform a proposal for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) across Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight. The aim was to provide valuable evidence to ensure that the new structure and unitary councils would be designed in a way that meets local needs and priorities.

As part of a wider project, Year 10 and Year 12 students from education settings in Hampshire were asked how they felt about the upcoming changes and what they might achieve.

The survey ran from 01 to 22 July 2025. It received a total of 406 responses from its target audience, of whom 343 were Year 10 students and 63 were Year 12 students. The main body of this report focuses on the findings from these respondents, and where the report refers to 'the respondents' it is in this context.

In addition, 132 responses were from people outside this age group. The views of these participants are recorded separately at the end of this report.

Please note that the sizes of some groups who responded to the survey are quite small and therefore may not be representative of the group to which they belong in the wider population. Where group sizes are particularly small (below 20), this is indicated on the page to reflect what the data tells us these groups' views are, but with lower confidence than amongst groups with higher sample sizes.



Headline findings

Sense of community and local identity

- Overall, respondents identified more strongly with local areas such as their neighbourhood, compared with areas such as Hampshire overall, although this feeling was less strong amongst those living in the proposed South-East unitary area than in other parts of Hampshire and the Solent
- Respondents' comments suggested that feelings of local identity particularly relate to a strong sense of local community, such the relationships they have with other community members and their own place within it
- Outdoor spaces and local festivals and events were the things that most made respondents feel part of their community

Respondents' awareness of LGR

- 21% of respondents were aware of LGR before taking this survey, higher amongst Year 12 students (29%) than Year 10 students (20%)

What respondents wanted from local government and LGR

- Respondents most frequently wanted LGR to deliver investments or improvements in their local area, such as support for local priorities
- There was a particular desire for investment in leisure and recreational facilities, community safety, and green initiatives
- When asked about council priorities, respondents felt that quality of services, effectiveness of joint working with other organisations, and understanding local needs were most important, with less importance placed on where services are located and how well they engage with residents

Potential benefits and risks of LGR

- The most common perceived benefit of LGR was improved efficiency of councils' operations and services, with other common benefits relating to resident engagement, investment in recreational facilities, benefits to the local community (such as improved cohesion), and investment in strategic priorities such as highways and housing
- In contrast, the potential risks that respondents mentioned most frequently related to a loss of local focus, reductions in service quality, and impacts of new unitaries dealing with the larger populations compared with existing district or borough councils

How strongly young people identified with different areas

Overall respondents identified quite strongly with all the local areas suggested, with the strongest connection being to local neighbourhoods

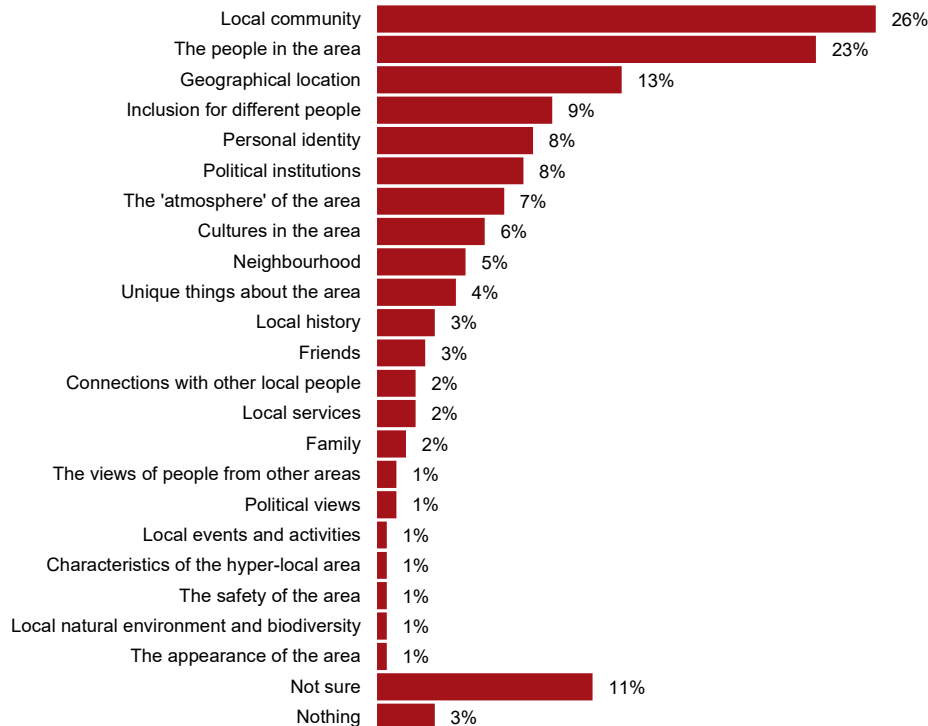
Proportion of respondents who identified 'very' or 'quite' strongly with...	Higher amongst	Lower amongst
The neighbourhood immediately surrounding their home (base: 385)  73%	East Hampshire residents (89%) Fareham residents (88%)* Rushmoor residents (87%)	Portsmouth residents (50%)* Respondents living outside Hampshire and the Solent (50%)* Havant residents (53%) Proposed South-East unitary residents (58%)
Hampshire (base: 390)  68%	Respondents living outside Hampshire and the Solent (88%)* Non-binary gender respondents (86%)* New Forest residents (86%)*	Hart residents (44%)* Respondents who had lived under five years in Hampshire and the Solent (54%) Portsmouth residents (58%)* Disabled respondents (58%)
Their local district or unitary authority (base: 334)  65%	Winchester residents (93%)* Portsmouth residents (91%)* Eastleigh residents (76%)	Non-binary gender respondents (43%)* Rushmoor residents (54%) Test Valley residents (55%), Respondents who had lived under five years in their neighbourhood (55%)
Their closest large town or city (base: 386)  62%	Portsmouth residents (92%)* New Forest residents (86%)* East Hampshire residents (81%)	Basingstoke and Deane residents (44%)* Fareham residents (50%)* Winchester residents (50%)*

What 'local identity' means to young people

A broad range of definitions were suggested, although most often 'local identity' related to respondents' experience and sense of the local community in which they live and the people within it

What does 'local identity' mean to you?

(multi code, base: 197 comments, coded using automated text recognition)



"It's how people see themselves in relation to where they live — and what makes their community feel distinct or meaningful"

"Importance of local people, heritage, environment"

"The character of an area but also the physical boundaries of the area"

"The sense of belonging and attachment that individuals and communities feel toward their specific geographic, cultural, or social environment"

"...if something bad happens, the town comes together as a community and the whole town hears of it and sorrows about it"

"Having a local connection to the community"

"People who have a good knowledge of living in that area"

"Local identity means that the people that are in charge of our area have a connection to us"

"Recognising what the local people need . noticing the difference between country and city needs and also inclusiveness"

"It means living and being in part of a community"

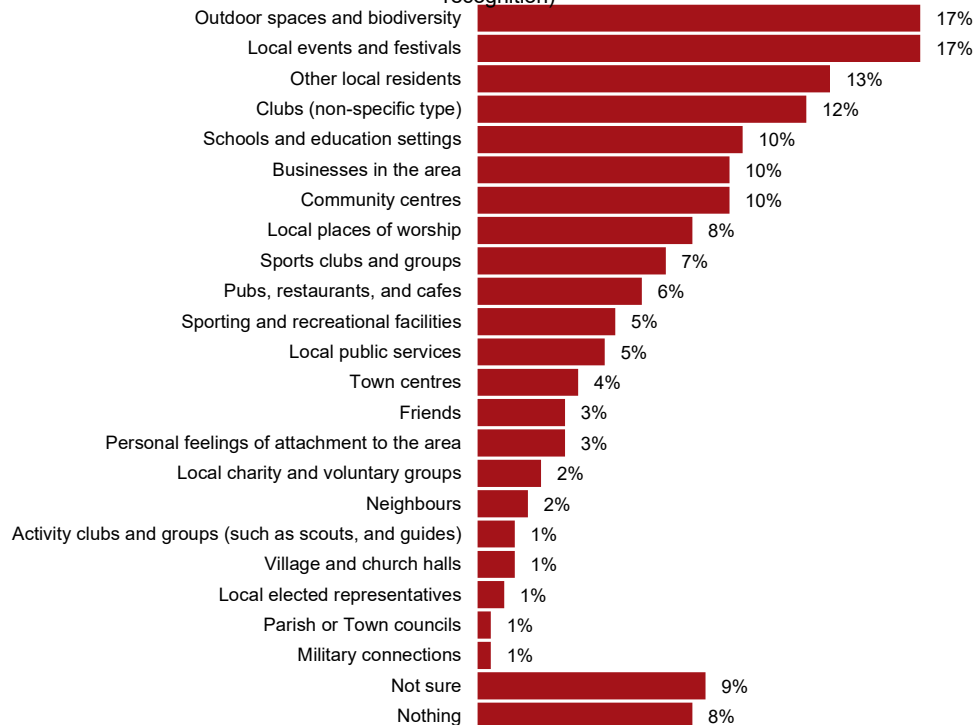
"The characteristics or sense of belonging that define a specific geographic area or community"

"Local identity means that I and my fellow people living in the area are investing and making it a comfortable and friendly place to live"

What makes young people feel part of a community

Respondents most frequently mentioned outdoor spaces, local events, and the people who live in their area

What is there in your local area that helps people feel like they are part of a community? (multi code, base: 210 comments, coded using automated text recognition)



"Forests, parks and town centres"

"local events, parks, sports clubs, and friendly neighbours help people connect"

"There is a variety of festivals and parades available to attend, especially in summer. i usually see promotions for charities through billboards, leaflets and posters aimed at helping those in our area"

"The people interact quite a lot and you really get to know people. we all help and serve each other"

"Everyone is always playing or talking to each other"

"The wildlife, community and the village"

"Parks with a lot of people in"

"Local events where everyone can get involved"

"I love the library as I am a student"

"There is a church where that is normally used to host local events and a primary school where the majority of people in the area go to"

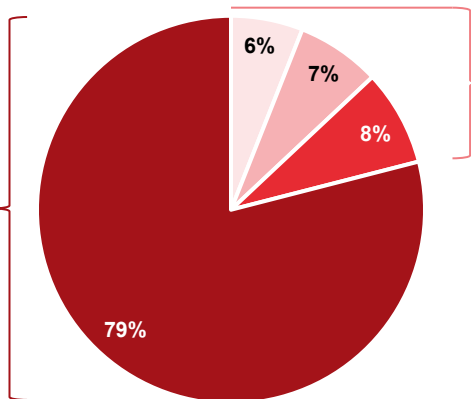
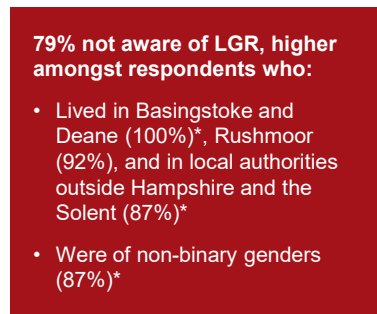
"Help for those in need, encourage people to interact with their neighbours"

Awareness of LGR in Hampshire and the Solent

Around one in five young people who responded were aware of LGR, with the lowest awareness reported amongst respondents from Basingstoke and Deane, Rushmoor and areas outside Hampshire and the Solent, as well as respondents from non-binary genders

**Before receiving this survey, were you aware of plans for
Local Government Reorganisation in Hampshire and the Solent?**

(Base: 398)



21% were aware of LGR to some extent, higher amongst respondents who:

- had lived in Hampshire and the Solent for under 5 years (36%)
- Lived in Eastleigh (34%), New Forest (33%)*, Portsmouth (33%)*, and Winchester (29%)*
- were Year 12 students (29%)
- were from ethnic minority groups (26%)

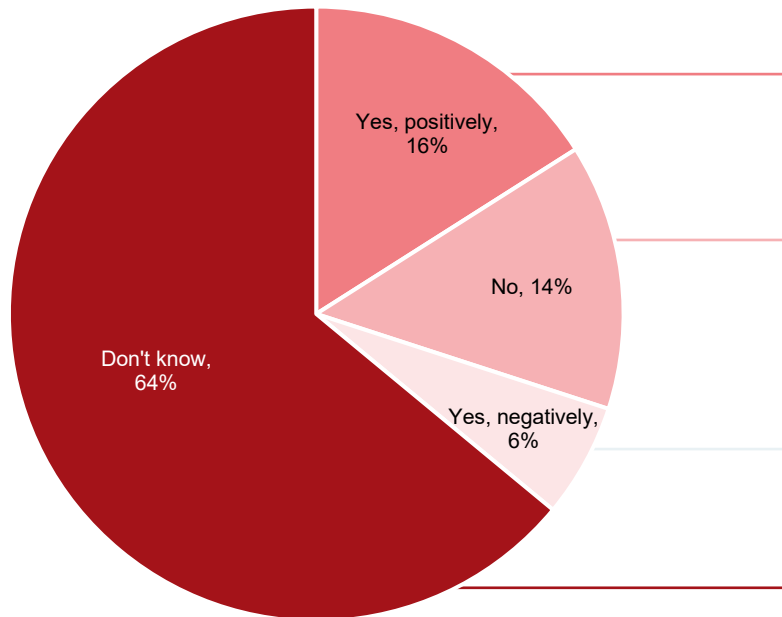
- Yes, I was aware and am confident I broadly understand what it's all about
- Yes, I was aware but don't feel I need to know more at this stage
- Yes, I was aware but feel I need more information
- No, I wasn't aware

* Sample size below 20 for this group

Expected impacts of LGR

Most young people who responded did not know how LGR may impact their feelings about their area and local community, but those with a view were more likely to expect a positive rather than negative impact. Their comments suggest that these views were often shaped by respondents' general attitudes to change

Do you feel that Local Government Reorganisation would change how you feel about your community or local area? (Base: 402)



* Sample size below 20 for this group

Why is that?

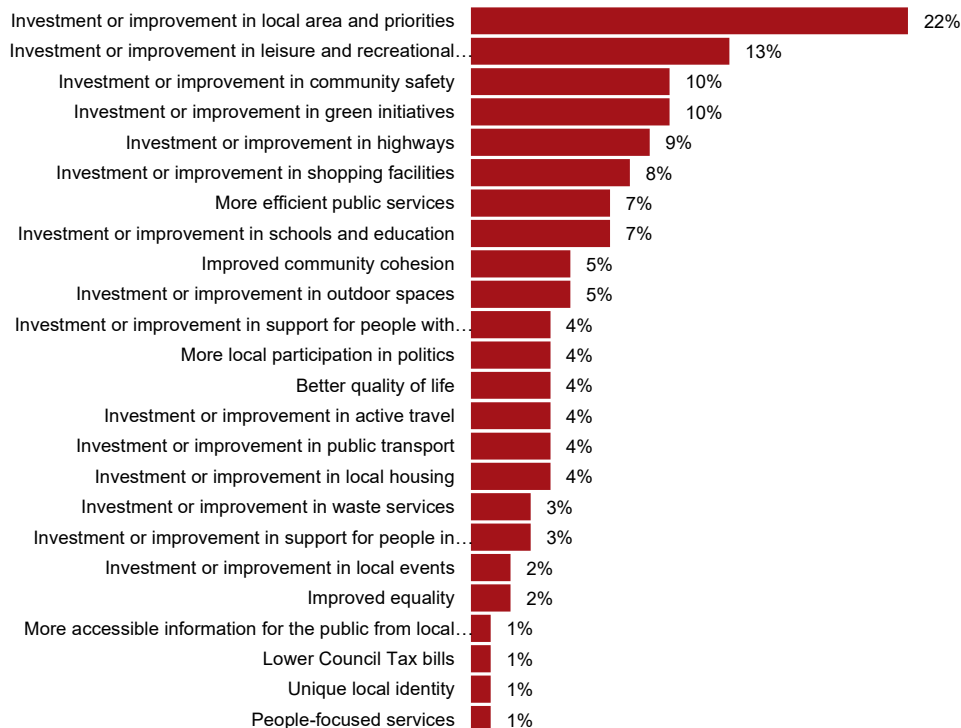
(multi code, base: 29, 19*, 11*, 98, comments coded using automated text recognition, most common themes shown)

- General positive attitude towards change (31%)
- Level of trust in, or attitudes around, people making the changes (17%)
- Not sure (10%)
- Not sure (32%)
- General apathy around LGR (21%)
- Expectations around the impact on ability to deal with local needs (16%)
- General attitude to change not being overly positive or negative (16%)
- General negative attitude towards change (18%)
- Level of trust in, or attitudes around, people making the changes (18%)
- Anticipated impacts of merging local authorities (18%)
- Expectations of ability to have a say in local decisions (18%)
- Not sure (58%)
- Does not feel they know enough about LGR (21%)
- General attitude towards change (18%)

What young people want LGR to achieve

Respondents most commonly hoped that LGR would increase investment and improvement in the local area and local priorities, with specific mentions of recreational facilities, community safety, and environmental initiatives

Overall, what would you like Local Government Reorganisation to achieve? (multi code, base: 201 comments, coded using automated text recognition)



"Local amenities, parks, wildlife areas, upkeep of roads, more focus on developing Alton town centre to encourage more businesses to come here"

"To have people know what is really going on in the area that they live in"

"Build more parks and add bikes like Lime bikes"

"...develop my local and borough into a safer and better place"

"Building a stronger community and encouraging further development into facilities where teenagers can socialise safely"

"Be more eco friendly"

"To understand the issues that local people face and that they take on board people's complaints and try to fix them"

"More leisure for young people and a safer neighbourhood"

"I would like it to be able to look after our local area better"

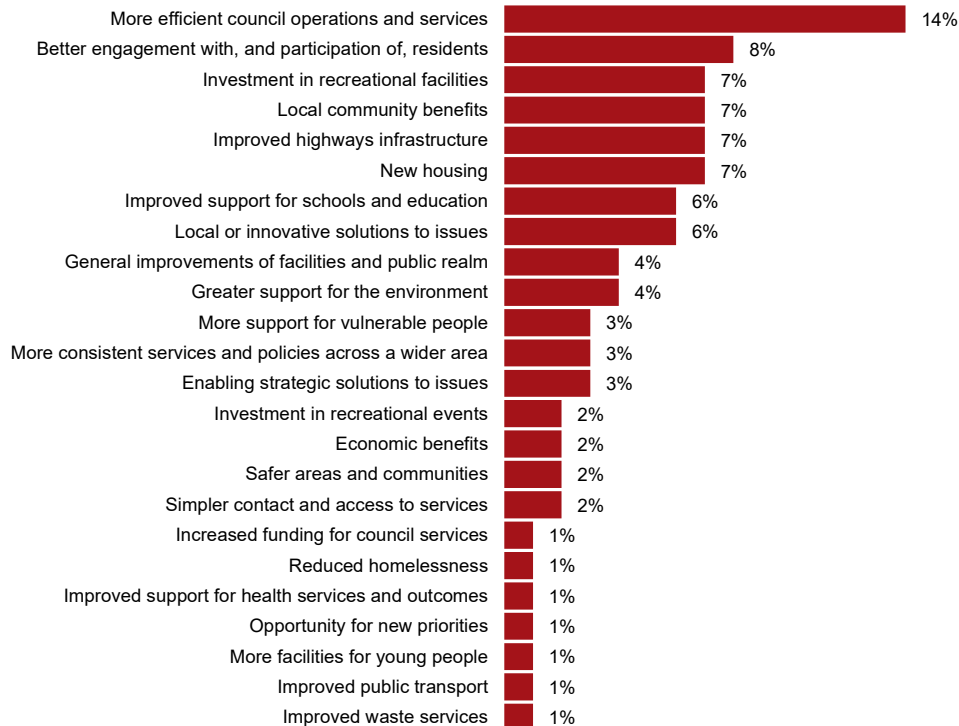
"...focusing on my area's local needs"

"Need more activities for teenagers and young children and sort out paths for when children have to walk home so they don't come home muddy from walking in the mud and rain"

Perceived benefits of LGR

Respondents most frequently suggested that LGR could make councils and their services more efficient, improve engagement with local residents, and improve local recreational facilities, as well as improving the community and providing improvements to highways

What, if any, good things do you think could happen because of Local Government Reorganisation? (multi code, base: 154 comments, coded using automated text recognition)



"It could mean that local people will be listened to more about what they want changed about their local area and what they want done for it to become better and be fixed"

"People know who to contact for local issues, instead of having to research between different councils/government and have issues "bounced around" different departments instead of getting solved"

"More bike parks"

"cost savings, better efficiency for residents"

"It could lead to more efficient services and better use of public funds. Having fewer layers of government might make decision-making quicker and more consistent across the region. It might also improve accountability and make it easier for residents to understand who is responsible for what"

"Council reorganisation could, if done well, lead to a more streamlined one, hopefully leading to economic growth"

"It could allow for increased unity as more people get a say in how things are run in their areas"

"Better public transport and better path maintenance, local libraries being kept open, more police and services, better road maintenance"

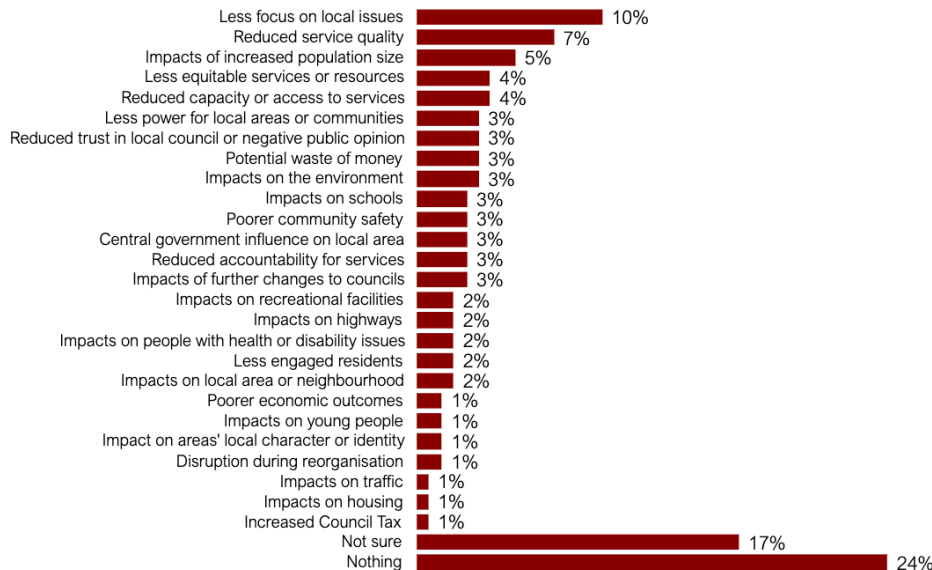
"Different perspectives to benefit the community"

Perceived risks of LGR

While around a quarter felt that the changes would not have a negative impact, there were some concerns that changes could lead to reduced focus on local issues and reductions in service quality, and that the larger populations of unitaries (compared with existing district or borough councils) could impact on councils and their services

What, if anything, worries you about Local Government Reorganisation?

(multi code, base: 156 comments, coded using automated text recognition)



"Lack of local nuance and focus on smaller issues within communities"

"Less care for individuals, people get lost in the system, service quality decreases as there is a larger area to put schemes into place"

"Perhaps too many people covered under one council"

"Areas with less people might receive less aid or might be forgotten"

"Less actions will be taken to look after an area that has more specific needs as it will be more general. For example, some smaller areas are more at risk of unemployment and with local government reorganisation, these areas may struggle more if the majority of the area does not suffer with unemployment"

"I worry that some local areas could lose their voice if decision-making becomes more centralised"

"It causes everything to be messed up"

"Might not always be effective and costs more"

"Looking after a greater number of people means less attentiveness. A larger number = decline in quality of care for the geographical area, not to mention complaints being overlooked, 'smaller' issues not being responded to as they have, quite literally, 'bigger' things to worry about"

"My borough council has been, in my experience, a good one. i worry that in restructuring, a new local council may become overloaded and therefore worse"

Importance of different features and duties of a council

Respondents tended to feel that service quality and awareness of local needs were the most important responsibilities for a council, with engagement opportunities and locations of services and offices seen as less important

On a scale of 0 (least) to 10 (most) how important is it to you that: (Mean average scores shown)		Higher amongst	Lower amongst
Council services are run well (Base: 400)	7.0	New Forest residents (9.0)* Year 12 students (8.7)	Non-binary gender respondents (4.0)* Portsmouth residents (4.9)*
Your council understands local problems and needs (Base: 400)	6.9	Year 12 students (8.6) New Forest residents (8.6)*	Non-binary gender respondents (4.9)* Portsmouth residents (5.6)*
Councillors provide a strong voice for your community (Base: 398)	6.3	Year 12 students (7.6) New Forest residents (7.4)* Hart residents (7.2)*	Non-binary gender respondents (4.4)* Portsmouth residents (5.2)*
Council services are available near to where you live (Base: 396)	5.8	New Forest residents (8.7)* Year 12 students (7.0)	Portsmouth residents (4.6)* Basingstoke & Deane residents (5.0)* Non-binary gender respondents (5.0)*
You can have your say on council decisions (Base: 399)	5.7	New Forest residents (7.9)* Year 12 students (7.5)	Non-binary gender respondents (3.6)* Respondents living outside Hampshire and the Solent (3.9)*
Council offices are near to where you live (Base: 396)	4.7	Eastleigh residents (5.3) Respondents who had lived under five years in Hampshire and the Solent (5.1)	Hart residents (3.8)* Non-binary gender respondents (3.8)*

Most important aspects when designing a new council

Although the spread of average scores was relatively small, it appears that respondents felt the new councils should be set up with a focus on joint working and delivering services to those who most need them

On a scale of 0 (least) to 10 (most) how important do you feel each of the following are when making a new local council? (Mean average scores shown)		Higher amongst	Lower amongst
That it works effectively with other organisations (such as police, NHS, other councils etc) in the local area (base: 398)	7.6	Basingstoke and Deane residents (8.7)* Year 12 students (8.6)	Non-binary gender respondents (5.4)* Respondents who had lived under five years in Hampshire and the Solent (6.2)
That it gives good services to the people who need them most (base: 399)	7.3	New Forest residents (8.7)* Basingstoke and Deane residents (8.6)* Year 12 students (8.6)	Non-binary gender respondents (5.7)* Respondents who had lived under five years in Hampshire and the Solent (6.4)
That it has enough money and uses it well (base: 399)	7.0	Hart residents (8.6)* Fareham residents (8.4)*	Non-binary gender respondents (5.1)* Winchester residents (5.9)*
That there is minimal disruption to essential services while the new council is being created (base: 398)	6.7	New Forest residents (8.0)* Year 12 students (8.0)	Non-binary gender respondents (4.7)* Portsmouth residents (5.9)*
That it has a clear sense of identity and connection to the area it covers (base: 398)	6.3	Year 12 students (7.2) Fareham residents (7.1)*	Non-binary gender respondents (4.4)* Respondents living outside Hampshire and the Solent (4.9)*

How the views of participants who were not Year 10 or Year 12 students differed from the survey's target sample

In addition, to the 406 responses from Year 10 and Year 12 students, 132 responses were received from other individuals, who were largely from older age groups.

The views of this cohort (described here as 'additional respondents') were similar to the target group (Year 10 and Year 12 students), with the following notable exceptions:

- Additional participants were more likely to 'very strongly' or 'quite strongly' identify with their local neighbourhood (79% vs 73%), but less likely to 'very strongly' or 'quite strongly' identify with their closest large town or city (53% vs 62%) neighbourhood
- They were more likely to be aware of LGR (34% vs 21%)
- While Year 10 and 12 students were more likely to anticipate LGR having a positive impact than a negative impact on how they feel about their community or local area, the opposite was true to a small extent for the additional respondents (11% anticipated a positive impact, compared with 14% who anticipated a negative impact)
- Additional respondents were more likely to see council and service efficiency improvements as a benefit of LGR (44% vs 14%). However, they were also more likely to see a loss of local focus as a risk of the changes (23% vs 10%), and be more concerned about the changes being a waste of money (13% vs 3%)
- Local engagement was seen as a more important council duty by additional respondents, when rated out of ten (7.0 vs 5.7)