The future of local government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Engagement report

September 2025

LGR | Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

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Contents

The future of local government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire – Engagement report

Executive Summary

Introduction and background

1. Nottinghamshire is a two-tier area served by seven district and borough councils and a county council. The city of Nottingham is contained within the boundary of Nottinghamshire, with all council services in the area provided by Nottingham City Council, which is a unitary council. In total, nine different councils provide services across the county.
2. In February 2025, as part of the Government's local government reorganisation plans, it contacted local councils in areas such as Nottinghamshire to work together to draw up initial proposals to reduce the number of councils by replacing two-tier councils with larger unitary councils.
3. Following considering key criteria and a range of potential options, Nottinghamshire's councils submitted an interim proposal to Government in March 2025. They propose to create two new unitary councils that would be responsible for all council services in their areas and replace the existing nine councils.
4. An important part of the local government reorganisation process is engaging with residents and stakeholders. This report relates to an engagement exercise about the councils' proposals to replace the nine existing councils with new unitary councils, including different options for the configuration of the future councils. The councils have been supported to conduct the engagement process by independent organisation, Public Perspectives.
5. The results of the engagement exercise will be used to inform the development of the councils' final proposals for the future of local councils in Nottinghamshire, alongside a range of evidence. This must be submitted to Government by 28 November 2025, and feedback on how any proposal will be taken forward for Nottingham is expected in 2026, and then subject to statutory consultation by Government.

Approach to the engagement

6. The engagement exercise was conducted over a six-week period ending on Sunday 14 September 2025.
7. The main mechanism for capturing responses was an online questionnaire open to all interested parties, promoted through councils' websites, communication channels and promotional/marketing activity, including a dedicated website (lgrnotts.org), as well as outreach events and engagement with stakeholders.
8. The questionnaire was also available in alternative formats on request, such as paper copies, alongside e-mail, phone, BSL and translation support. The questionnaire is available at appendix 1.
9. Relatedly, four focus groups were conducted involving 34 local residents reflecting the diversity of Nottinghamshire and organised by urban and rural areas. These focus groups allowed the emerging findings from the engagement process to be unpacked and views about the proposals to be discussed in-depth, both adding further insight as well as

validating the findings from the engagement survey. The focus group discussion guide is available at appendix 2.

10. In total, the engagement questionnaire received 11,483 responses.

Key findings and points for consideration

Local area

11. **Sense of place and identity is layered** with respondents **anchoring their description to Nottingham City** (e.g. near Nottingham or north of Nottingham), **followed by Nottinghamshire (the county)**, and then **refined by naming specific towns** or local villages (especially for those areas further away from Nottingham City such as Mansfield, Newark and Worksop), or well-known areas/landmarks or **cultural references such as Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood.** There are also **occasional regional references** such as 'the middle of England' or the 'East Midlands'.

12. In more **rural areas**, respondents often emphasised the rurality e.g. 'a small village', 'the countryside'. In more **urban areas** they tended to reference 'the city' or the nearest town. Whilst there is a **tendency to look inwards within the county and towards Nottingham City** (especially for those areas bordering the city), some respondents in **areas that border other counties and major urban areas or landmarks will also make reference to these.** There are also tendencies to draw clear **distinctions between urban and rural areas and those that live in or near the city and those in other areas of Nottingham, while local authority names are not often used as reference points or forms of identity.**

13. Most respondents are **proud of their local area**, with respondents that live in the Rushcliffe, Gedling and Broxtowe council areas having higher levels of pride about their local area than other locations. There is a **distinction between being proud of their local areas, and satisfaction and advocacy of their local council**, regardless as to whether they hold positive perceptions or not of their council.

Effectiveness of the current council structure and services

14. **Over half of respondents said the current structure and approach to service delivery in councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is effective.** Respondents in Rushcliffe, Gedling and Broxtowe council areas have the highest ratings of effectiveness, while respondents in Nottingham City have the lowest.

15. Those rating the system **effective** tend to highlight **service reliability, local knowledge and responsiveness, local representation, and a sense that the current system is fit for purpose.** Those who said **neither effective or ineffective** often expressed **mixed experiences.** Those rating the system **ineffective** often emphasised issues related to a two-tier system such as **confusion, duplication, inefficiency, lack of joined-up/partnership working, political distrust, and inequity and inconsistency in services between different local councils**, with some advocating for change and unitary authorities.

Local Government Reorganisation in England

16. Respondents identified several **potential benefits** of the Government's proposed reorganisation of local councils, with **efficiency and cost savings being the most common,** particularly through reduced duplication and streamlined services by forming unitary councils. Other perceived advantages included greater geographic and administrative coherence, a simpler and clearer council structure, improved coordination and joined-up working, enhanced service quality and outcomes, and fairer, more consistent access to services. However, around **one in five respondents were sceptical**, seeing no real benefits or expressing doubt about whether the potential benefits could be realised in practice, with slightly higher levels of scepticism in Rushcliffe and Broxtowe council areas.
17. The main **concerns** about the Government's proposed reorganisation of local councils **centred on fears of urban–rural imbalance**, particularly that Nottingham City could dominate and rural areas would lose voice, priority, and tailored services. **Financial risks** were also a major worry, with doubts about high reorganisation costs, savings not being realised, or neighbouring areas having to cover Nottingham City's perceived financial struggles.
18. **Other key concerns included loss of local representation, accountability, and knowledge**, potential decline in service quality and disruption during transition, and **doubts about efficiency, with larger councils seen as possibly more bureaucratic.** Smaller proportions mentioned risks of job losses and staff disruption, politicisation and distrust of motives, and argued for reform within the current system or no change at all. Around 5% of respondents expressed no concerns. Concerns were broadly consistent across areas, but stronger in Rushcliffe and Broxtowe council areas, particularly regarding urban–rural imbalance and financial risks.
19. In addition, a few participants in the focus groups **questioned how the proposals align with wider reforms**, noting that the mix of regional devolution, other public bodies/offices, and new governance structures risks creating confusion rather than simplification. They felt the approach adds layers while removing others, leading to disruption, costs, and a system that remains just as complex.

Future councils

20. Respondents said that any new council should **focus on delivering good quality core and universal services/issues** such as roads and pavements, crime and anti-social behaviour, clean streets, and travel and transport, alongside **value for money and meeting local needs.**
21. Relatedly, respondents highlighted the **importance of involving residents in decision-making and local area/neighbourhood working** to ensure that future councils understand and are responsive to the needs of different communities and areas, including urban and rural (this was considered important in general and especially important in the context of larger unitary councils). Consequently, they want to see mechanisms in place to ensure this continues and thrives in future arrangements. This can include local area forums, research and consultation to identify local issues and priorities, engaging with local councillors, and working closely with town and parish councils as well as local community and voluntary groups. They also wanted engagement and consultation to be genuine and meaningful, leading to positive change.
22. Throughout the engagement results, there are differences in experience, perceptions and opinion by different demographic groups. The reasons for this are not unpicked in this report, although it highlights the **importance of understanding local issues and**

priorities and tailoring services and support to different communities (both equality groups, different localities and urban-rural communities) as part of any future arrangements.

Local Government Reorganisation across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

23. **Over half disagree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils from the existing nine to two new larger unitary councils**, with a relationship between perceived effectiveness of the current system and levels of agreement i.e. in other words, those that consider the current system ineffective are more likely to state there is a case for change. Respondents in Nottingham City are more likely to agree with the proposal to replace the nine existing councils with two than respondents in other areas. In contrast, respondents in Broxtowe, Rushcliffe and Gedling council areas are less likely to agree.
24. Those that **agreed tended to state that the proposals would reduce duplication, generate efficiencies and consequently lead to cost-savings**, while a smaller number also said that it would lead to a **simplification of the system and therefore improved accessibility.** This said, support was often conditional upon potential benefits being realised, including savings being re-invested into better services or lower council tax.
25. Those that disagreed are **concerned about fairness and equitability, especially in relation to an urban-rural imbalance.** Similarly, they are concerned about a **loss of local representation, knowledge and accountability**, and associated issues around **access to services and responsiveness to local issues.** Some respondents **oppose local government reorganisation in general**, with concerns that implementation will be disruptive, and **improvements and savings will not be achieved in practice.** There is also some **distrust about the motives** behind the proposals and **concern that neighbouring areas will inherit perceived financial and service delivery issues experienced by Nottingham City.** This said, it is **worth noting that the concerns were mainly about larger councils not necessarily moving to a unitary model.**

The Options

Option 1b

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City + Broxtowe + Gedling (known as Option 1b). This option is two new unitary councils, one covering Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Ashfield, and Rushcliffe. The second covering Gedling, Broxtowe, and Nottingham City.

26. Around half of respondents **expressed concerns about Option 1b, particularly that the proposed boundaries are illogical or unfair**, with some urban areas excluded (such as neighbouring urban areas with close links to the city, such as West Brigford) and rural areas included that lack alignment with Nottingham City (such as in some parts of Broxtowe Borough Council area). Many were also concerned about **perceived Nottingham City Council's financial and management issues**, fearing neighbouring areas could be drawn into these perceived problems, face higher council tax, or experience declining services, as well as **rural voices lost within a council dominated by Nottingham City** - concerns especially strong in Broxtowe and Gedling council areas.
27. Nonetheless, around one in ten respondents supported the option, but largely on the condition that it delivers genuine efficiencies, cost savings, and service improvements. This said, **some participants that live in Gedling Borough Council area were more agnostic**

about the option, given their proximity and relationship to Nottingham City. Participants living in other parts of Nottinghamshire had less to say about this option (or all the options) because they would not be in a council with Nottingham City. However, there were some concerns about **being in a large council covering such a large and diverse area.**

Option 1e

This option is two new unitary councils, one covering Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Ashfield, and Gedling. The second covering Broxtowe, Nottingham City, and Rushcliffe.

28. **Option 1e received more support than 1b, with around a third of respondents viewing it positively or as the better of the two, particularly for its clearer North–South split and perceived geographic logic.** Nottingham City and Gedling respondents were more supportive than other respondents, though concerns remained about boundary choices, especially the inclusion of rural areas with little connection to the city (such as in the south of Rushcliffe Borough Council area) and exclusion of closer areas that were seen as more integrated with Nottingham City, such as some parts of Gedling Borough Council and Ashfield District Council.
29. **Consistent worries included perceptions about Nottingham City's financial challenges and the risk of neighbouring areas 'bailing it out', as well as rural–urban imbalance and loss of local voice**, particularly in Broxtowe and Rushcliffe council areas. Around one-in-ten opposed the option outright, questioning the evidence base and feasibility of benefits. Some respondents also suggested alternative models, such as a single county-wide council, a smaller city-focused unitary alongside a wider county council, or a three-council structure dividing north, south, and city areas.

Other considerations

30. Respondents often said they wanted **more information** to better understand the reasons for the proposals, the evidence base, and the potential benefits and challenges, highlighting the continued importance of effective communications.
31. They also want any **changes to be conducted seamlessly and with as little disruption as possible**, so that services and outcomes are not undermined and any potential benefits realised.

The future of local government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire – Engagement report

Main report

Section 1: Introduction

Introduction and background

1.1. Nottinghamshire is a two-tier area served by seven district and borough councils and a county council. The city of Nottingham is contained within the boundary of Nottinghamshire, with all council services in the area provided by Nottingham City Council, which is a unitary council. In total, nine different councils provide services across the county.

1.2. In February 2025, as part of the Government's local government reorganisation plans, it contacted local councils in areas such as Nottinghamshire to work together to draw up initial proposals to reduce the number of councils by replacing two-tier councils with larger unitary councils.

1.3. Following considering key criteria and a range of potential options, Nottinghamshire's councils submitted an interim proposal to Government in March 2025. They propose to create two new unitary councils that would be responsible for all council services in their areas and replace the existing nine councils.

1.4. An important part of the local government reorganisation process is engaging with residents and stakeholders. This report relates to an engagement exercise about the councils' proposals to replace the nine existing councils with new unitary councils, including different options for the configuration of the future councils. The councils have been supported to conduct the engagement process by independent organisation, Public Perspectives.

1.5. The results of the engagement exercise will be used to inform the development of the councils' final proposals for the future of local councils in Nottinghamshire, alongside a range of evidence. This must be submitted to Government by 28 November 2025, and feedback on how any proposal will be taken forward for Nottingham is expected in 2026, and then subject to statutory consultation by Government.

Approach to the engagement

1.6. The engagement exercise was conducted over a six-week period ending on Sunday 14 September 2025.

1.7. The main mechanism for capturing responses was an online questionnaire open to all interested parties, promoted through councils' websites, communication channels and promotional/marketing activity, including a dedicated website (lgrnotts.org), and partner toolkits.

1.8. The questionnaire was also available in alternative formats on request, such as paper copies, alongside e-mail, phone, BSL and translation support. The questionnaire is available at appendix 1.

1.9. Local councils also supported some community outreach and engagement events, promoting the engagement exercise with residents and stakeholders, including businesses.

1.10. In addition, local councils drew-up a list of key stakeholders who were directly contacted and invited to participate in the engagement exercise. This included town and parish councils, VCSE organisations and local businesses, as well as strategic and pan-Nottinghamshire organisations.

1.11. Relatedly, four focus groups were conducted involving 34 local residents reflecting the diversity of Nottinghamshire and organised by urban and rural areas. These focus groups allowed the emerging findings from the engagement process to be unpacked and views about the proposals to be discussed in-depth, both adding further insight as well as validating the findings from the engagement survey. The focus group discussion guide is available at appendix 2.

1.12. In total, the engagement questionnaire received 11,483 responses.

1.13. The following table summarises the background of respondents:

Figure 1.1: Background of respondent*

A resident living in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire	96%
Someone who works in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire	26%
A voluntary or community organisation	1%
A Town or Parish Council	1%
A District / Borough / City / County Council employee	7%
Another public sector organisation	0%
A local councillor	1%
A business owner or business leader operating in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire	2%
Other	1%

*Respondents could select more than one answer, hence why responses add up to over 100%.

1.14. The following table shows the local council area in which respondents live and compares this to the population sizes in each local council area. As is the nature with self-selecting/open-access questionnaires, the responses are not proportional to the population sizes in each of the local council areas.[1] Consequently, the results are analysed (and in some cases presented) both as they are and also re-weighted to be in-line with the population sizes in each local council area.

Figure 1.2: Location of respondents

Location	Respondents	Population*
Ashfield District Council area	5%	11%
Bassetlaw District Council area	9%	10.3%
Broxtowe Borough Council area	22%	9.7%
Gedling Borough Council area	16%	10.2%
Mansfield District Council area	4%	9.6%
Newark and Sherwood District Council area	7%	10.7%
Nottingham City Council area	10%	28.2%
Rushcliffe Borough Council area	26%	10.4%
Outside of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	2%	N/A

*Based on Census 2021.

[1] The level of response is influenced, in part, by the degree to which the proposals and options may affect a local council area.

1.15. There is a spread of responses across different demographic groups, albeit a skew towards older and more affluent groups, which is common in self-selecting/open-access questionnaires such as this.

Figure 1.3: Demographic profile of respondents (only asked to those that live in Nottinghamshire)

Sex	
Female	49%
Male	45%
Another term	0%
Prefer not to say	5%
Age	
Under 18	0%
18-24	1%
25-34	7%
35-44	13%
45-54	18%
55-64	23%
65 and over	31%
Prefer not to say	7%
Disability	
Yes, which reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities a lot	6%
Yes, which reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities a little	10%
Yes, but they don't reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities at all	10%
No	64%
Prefer not to say	10%
Ethnicity	
White British-Irish	82%
Non-White British-Irish	7%
Prefer not to say	11%
Housing situation	
Owner-occupier	80%
Privately renting	5%
Renting from the council or housing association	4%
Other	2%
Prefer not to say	9%

Reporting

1.16. The rest of this report presents the key findings from the engagement questionnaire and focus groups. The results have been analysed against all demographic and key variables/questions to identify any important differences in opinion between different groups. In particular, the focus is on geography i.e. the local council area respondents live in.

1.17. In addition, the open-ended comments received in the questionnaire have been reviewed and key themes presented in the report.

1.18. The focus group insights are integrated alongside the engagement questionnaire findings, including exemplifying quotes.

1.19. The report is organised in-keeping with the structure of the engagement questionnaire and focus groups, as follows:

- Section 2: Your local area
- Section 3: The current way councils are organised in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
- Section 4: Local Government Reorganisation in England
- Section 5: Future councils
- Section 6: Local Government Reorganisation across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Section 2: Your local area

Introduction

2.1. This section presents findings about respondents' views on their local area, including movement across the county, sense of place and council services/priorities.

Where is your main place of work or study? by Which council area do you live in?

Respondents tend to work or study in areas closest to where they live, while notable proportions that live outside Nottingham work or study in the city, especially those council areas that border it

2.2. Respondents tend to work or study in the same council areas they live in, especially those that live in Nottingham City (69%), Bassetlaw (68%) and Newark and Sherwood (61%) council areas.

2.3. Notable proportions that live outside Nottingham work or study in the city, especially those council areas that border it (Gedling – 33%, Broxtowe – 29%, Rushcliffe – 24% and Ashfield - 23%).

2.4. In addition, there are also notable proportions that work or study across the county. Similarly, there are notable proportions that work or study outside of the county, especially those council areas that neighbour other counties or urban areas (Bassetlaw – 17%, Broxtowe – 17% and Rushcliffe – 15%).

Figure 2.1: Movement across Nottinghamshire

	Council area live in							
Main place of work or study	**Ashfield**	**Bassetlaw**	**Broxtowe**	**Gedling**	**Mansfield**	**Newark and Sherwood**	**Notting-ham**	**Rushcliffe**
Ashfield District Council area	**47%**	1%	2%	3%	9%	2%	1%	0%
Bassetlaw District Council area	1%	**68%**	0%	1%	3%	4%	0%	0%
Broxtowe Borough Council area	3%	0%	**43%**	3%	1%	1%	4%	2%
Gedling Borough Council area	3%	1%	2%	**40%**	4%	3%	3%	2%
Mansfield District Council area	9%	3%	1%	2%	**52%**	5%	1%	1%
Newark and Sherwood District Council area	2%	4%	0%	3%	6%	**61%**	1%	2%
Nottingham City Council area	**23%**	**2%**	**29%**	**33%**	**4%**	**8%**	**69%**	**24%**
Rushcliffe Borough Council area	2%	0%	3%	5%	2%	2%	7%	**48%**
Across all of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	12%	8%	10%	13%	17%	10%	9%	11%
Outside of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	9%	17%	17%	7%	10%	8%	10%	15%

Number of respondents: 7,658 (excludes respondents that do not study or work currently – 33%).

Note: Respondents could select more than one answer.

(Non-weighted results i.e. the results have not been changed to reflect the actual population sizes of a local council area. This is the case for all graphs and tables in this report. The weighted results, where presented, are referenced in separate paragraphs and clearly indicated).

How do you describe where you're from when talking to someone who doesn't live nearby? Which names or places do you mention?

Residents tend to anchor their description to Nottingham City and/or Nottinghamshire, with further mention of nearby towns or villages as well as well-known landmarks or cultural references

2.5. Respondents were asked how they describe where they are from when talking to someone who does not live nearby (only asked to respondents that live in Nottinghamshire – 10,945 responses). In summary, across Nottinghamshire **sense of place and identity is layered** with respondents **anchoring their description to Nottingham City** (e.g. near Nottingham or north of Nottingham), **followed by Nottinghamshire (the county)**, and then **refined by naming specific towns** or local villages (especially for those areas further away from Nottingham City such as Mansfield, Newark and Worksop), or well-known areas/landmarks or **cultural references such as Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood.**

2.6. There are also **occasional regional references** such as 'the middle of England' or the 'East Midlands'. In more **rural areas**, respondents often emphasis the rurality e.g. 'a small village', 'the countryside'. In more **urban areas** they will tend reference 'the city' or the nearest town. Whilst there is a **tendency to look inwards within the county and towards Nottingham City** (especially for those areas bordering the city), some respondents in **areas that border other counties and major urban areas or landmarks will also make reference to these.**

2.7. The following summarises the responses by each council area:

Ashfield District Council area

- Anchor to Nottingham plus local towns: Sutton-in-Ashfield, Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Hucknall, and also nearby Mansfield.
- Some wider mention of being part of Nottinghamshire County.
- Strong references to Robin Hood/Sherwood Forest connections.
- Directional framing ("north of Nottingham").

Bassetlaw District Council area

- Reference to key towns such as in or near Worksop or Retford.
- Occasional reference to being part of Nottinghamshire, alongside references to nearby Sheffield and Doncaster (due to proximity to South Yorkshire) (and more likely to reference these areas and look northwards than southwards to Nottingham City).
- Also mentions of Sherwood Forest as a notable local landmark.
- Some occasional mention of 'Bassetlaw' highlighting a sense of identity linked to the local council area.
- Also mentions of rurality and specific villages.

Broxtowe Borough Council area

- Nottingham City is commonly mentioned as an anchor reference point, for example ‘near Nottingham’.
- This is accompanied by local identifiers of nearby towns such as Beeston, Eastwood, Kimberley, Stapleford, as well as rural areas, suburban areas and villages such as Bramcote, Chilwell and Nuthall.
- There is also occasional reference to IKEA as a landmark.

Gedling Borough Council area

- A common anchor point is reference to Nottingham, for example ‘just north of Nottingham’, ‘just outside Nottingham’ or ‘near Nottingham’.
- Local towns and areas are also commonly reference in conjunction with reference to the city, such as Arnold, Carlton and Mapperley.

Mansfield District Council area

- Strong and primary emphasis on Mansfield as the main identifier, given its eponymous nature, history/heritage, and dominance of, and largest town within, the district.
- Some lesser references to Warsop as a smaller town in the district or Woodhouse.
- Frequent associated references to nearby Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood heritage.
- Nottingham City is also occasionally mentioned, but often in a secondary manner. For example, ‘I live in Mansfield, a few miles north of Nottingham’.

Newark and Sherwood District Council area

- Newark-on-Trent is often referenced as an anchor point given its relative size, the main town in the area and where the council offices are located.
- Southwell (and sometimes the racecourse) and Ollerton are also mentioned. Depending on location, Mansfield is also sometimes mentioned as too Nottingham City itself, often as secondary markers. There is also occasional secondary mention of ‘near Lincoln’, depending on proximity.
- Landmark and cultural references are commonly made to Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood.

Nottingham City Council area

- The core reference is unsurprisingly Nottingham itself, with follow-up reference to specific locations within the city.
- There is sometimes secondary mention of wider landmarks, regional and cultural references such as Nottinghamshire, East Midlands or Robin Hood.

Rushcliffe Borough Council area

- Nottingham City is a common anchor reference, often framed as relative to 'the south of Nottingham'.
- There is often follow-up reference to specific towns and areas as a key local identifier, especially West Bridgford as the largest town in the area.
- Other notable areas mentioned include Bingham, Cotgrave, Radcliffe-on-Trent and Ruddington.
- There are also sometimes references to 'Rushcliffe' or near the 'River Trent'.
- Further south in the district into more rural areas such as Keyworth and East Leake there is less reference to Nottingham City and more reference to the wider county and/or rurality, as well as some reference to large nearby towns outside of the county, such as Loughborough.

Focus group insight:

The focus groups validate the points raised through the engagement survey about layered identity and sense of place, with **clear distinctions between urban and rural areas and those that live in or near the city and those in other areas of Nottingham:**

"I say I'm from Nottingham first, which most people have heard about and reflects how I feel about myself. If I need to clarify even further I might say Nottinghamshire, East Midlands or just the middle of England." *Urban participant*

"I say that I live near Nottingham. I'm on the outskirts and I don't really feel like I live in the city itself, but it's a good reference point and at the end of the day I spend quite a bit of time in Nottingham and I'm happy to be associated with it." *Urban participant*

"Not everyone has heard of Newark-on-Trent, so I might say that and follow it up by saying Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood, most people have heard of those." *Urban participant*

"I live in a small village in a rural area. I'm guess I'm not a million miles away from the city, but I definitely don't feel like I come from Nottingham or an urban area. But I do feel like I'm from Nottinghamshire and that's normally what I tell people." *Rural participant*

Focus group participants tended to say that they **do not specifically identify with their local authority in itself or would not typically use it as a reference point:**

"I live near Mansfield and that's how I'd introduce myself, but I wouldn't go as far as to say I live in Mansfield District." *Urban participant*

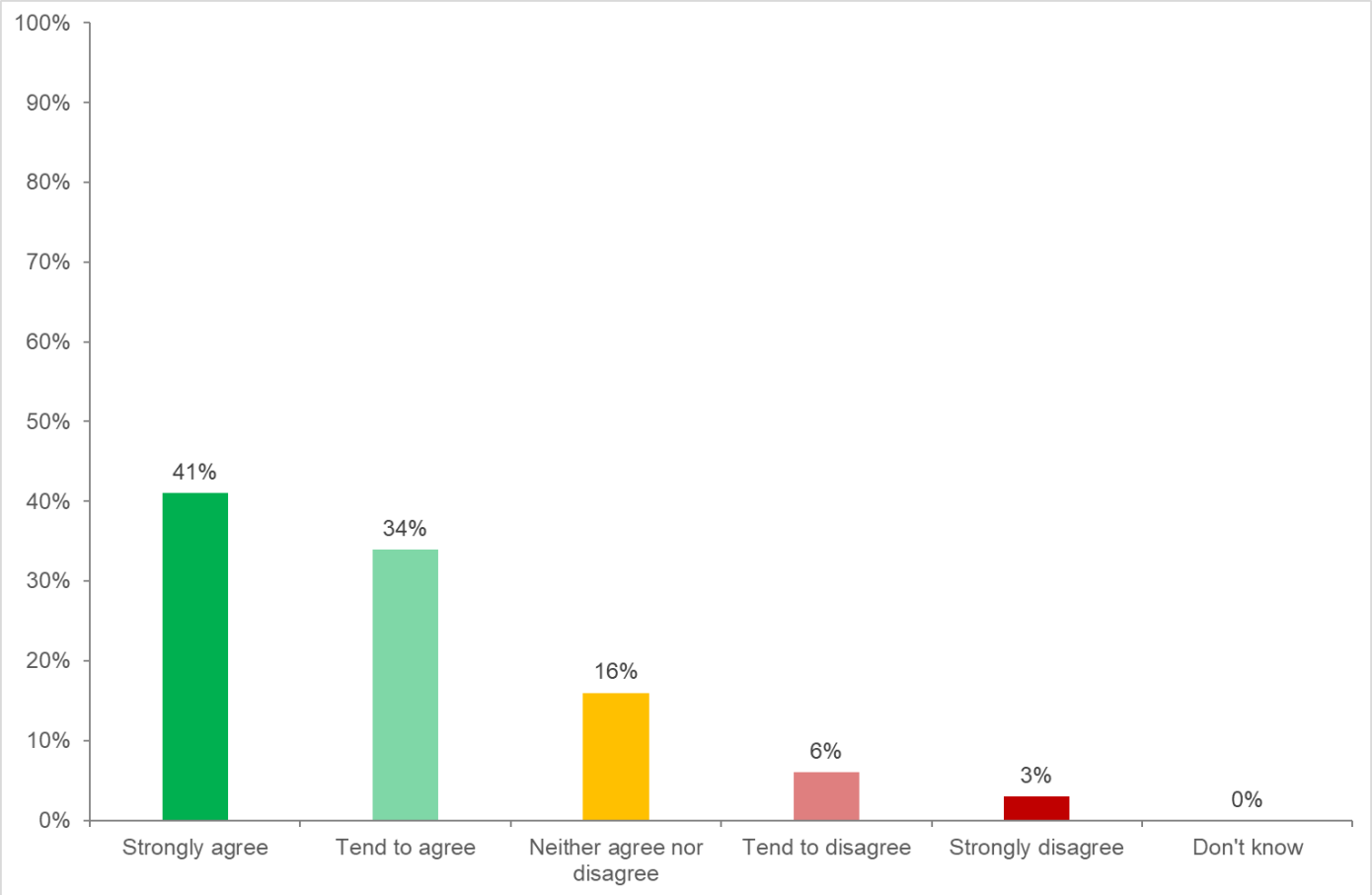
"I pay my council tax to Rushcliffe Borough Council. I'm pretty happy with them. But I don't say to people I'm from Rushcliffe or that I live in Rushcliffe Borough Council area. I only reference them if I'm talking about council stuff, like services, council tax or voting." *Rural participant*

To what extent do you agree or disagree that you are proud to live in your local area?

Three-quarters of respondents said they are proud to live in their local area with notable variation by council area

2.8. 75% of respondents are proud to live in their local area including 41% that strongly agree. Only 9% disagree.

Figure 2.2: Proud to live in local area



Number of respondents: 11,206 (only asked to respondents that live in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire).

Focus group insight:

The focus group participants highlighted a **distinction between being proud of their local areas and satisfaction and advocacy of their local council**, regardless as to whether they hold positive perceptions or not of their council:

"I like my local area, I like living here, but that's got nothing to do with whether I think my council are doing a good job or not. There's been lots of reported issues about the City Council and there's been issues that we've experienced, but I still enjoy living in the city and I'm proud to say I'm from Nottingham." *Urban participant*

"I think my council does a good job, in general. But when I think about my local area I don't really think about the council. They can affect my enjoyment of living here because if it's well looked after it improves my quality of life. But the reason I like living here is because of lots of other things specific to the area such as the location, ruralness and being close to lots of different places and attractions." *Rural participant*

2.9. Respondents that live in Rushcliffe (91% proud), Gedling (79% proud) and Broxtowe (78% proud) council areas have higher levels of pride about their local area than other locations, especially Mansfield council area (43% proud).

Figure 2.3: Proud to live in local area by council area

	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Broxtowe	Gedling	Mansfield	Newark and Sherwood	Notting-ham	Rushcliffe
Strongly agree	21%	26%	41%	40%	17%	32%	25%	63%
Tend to agree	33%	32%	37%	39%	26%	38%	35%	28%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%	24%	16%	17%	30%	20%	20%	7%
Tend to disagree	14%	10%	4%	3%	18%	7%	11%	1%
Strongly disagree	8%	8%	1%	1%	9%	3%	9%	0%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%

2.10. Consequently, when the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Nottinghamshire there is a change in the levels of pride in a downwards direction (as the locations with higher levels of pride have responded in greater numbers relative to their population size). The re-weighted data has 65% of respondents agreeing that they are proud and 15% disagreeing:

- Strongly agree: 31%
- Tend to agree: 34%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 20%
- Tend to disagree: 9%
- Strongly disagree: 6%
- Don’t know: 0%

2.11. Respondents with lower levels of pride are:

- Aged 18-25: 58% proud compared with 75% of older respondents.
- People living with a disability: 70% proud compared with 78% of other respondents.
- Private and social renters: 65% proud compared with 77% of owner-occupiers.

Thinking generally, what would you say are most important in making somewhere a good place to live? And what are your priorities for improvement in the local area?

Core and universal services/issues such as roads and pavements, crime and anti-social behaviour, clean streets, and travel and transport are key priorities

2.12. 71% of respondents said that maintaining roads and pavements are the priority for improvement (and also second top cited as making somewhere a good place to live – cited by 83%).

2.13. 64% of respondents said crime and anti-social behaviour are priorities for improvement (third top cited as making somewhere a good place to live – cited by 81%).

2.14. 57% of respondents said clean streets are a priority, which is top cited as making somewhere a good place to live by 85% of respondents.

2.15. 53% noted public transport, roads and parking as priorities for improvement (also fourth cited as making somewhere a good place to live – cited by 80% of respondents).

2.16. Other core and universal services/issues such as refuse collection and recycling (cited by 40% as a priority for improvement), parks, sports and leisure facilities (42%) and health services (46%) also standout.

Figure 2.4: Important aspects in making somewhere a good place to live and priorities for improvement

	Making somewhere a good place to live (11,173)	Priority for improvement (11,123)
Keeping the streets and public areas clean and tidy	85%	57%
Maintaining roads and pavements	83%	71%
Tackling anti-social behaviour and reducing crime	81%	64%
Public transport, roads and parking	80%	53%
Refuse collection and recycling	77%	40%
Parks, sports and leisure facilities	77%	42%
Health services such as mental health services and promoting healthy lifestyles	68%	46%
Schools and places of learning	67%	32%
Decent and affordable homes	64%	35%
Support and services for older people and vulnerable groups	62%	37%
Activities and facilities for children and young people	61%	30%
Regeneration of town centres / high streets, including shops and markets	59%	41%
Jobs and supporting people into work	58%	32%
Community events and activities and supporting local community groups	58%	25%
Arts and cultural services such as theatres and museums	44%	16%
Supporting residents to reduce their impact on the environment	37%	20%

Numbers in brackets are the number of respondents to each question (only asked to respondents that live in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire). Note: Respondents could select more than one answer.

2.17. In the ‘other’ responses, approximately 2-3% mentioned the importance of ‘sense of community’, while a similar proportion said a priority is increasing ‘community voice’ to influence decision-making and an associated improvement in governance of local councils and areas.

2.18. Whilst there are variations by council area (and also other demographics), these are not notable and the order of importance/priority is similar. Consequently, for succinctness, these are not presented in this report (although they are available in a separate document).

Focus group insight:

The focus groups reiterated the importance of **good quality core services and value for money**, and that these should be the priorities for any future council:

> “It isn’t rocket science. Councils spend lots of money on lots of things that often don’t matter to local people. All I really want my council to do is get the basics right – keep the streets clean, pick up my bins and don’t leave a mess when you do it, get rid of potholes and keep me and my family safe. Anything else on top of this is a bonus, but I’d rather pay a lower council tax than see money wasted on vanity projects.” *Urban participant*

Section 3: The current way councils are organised in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Introduction

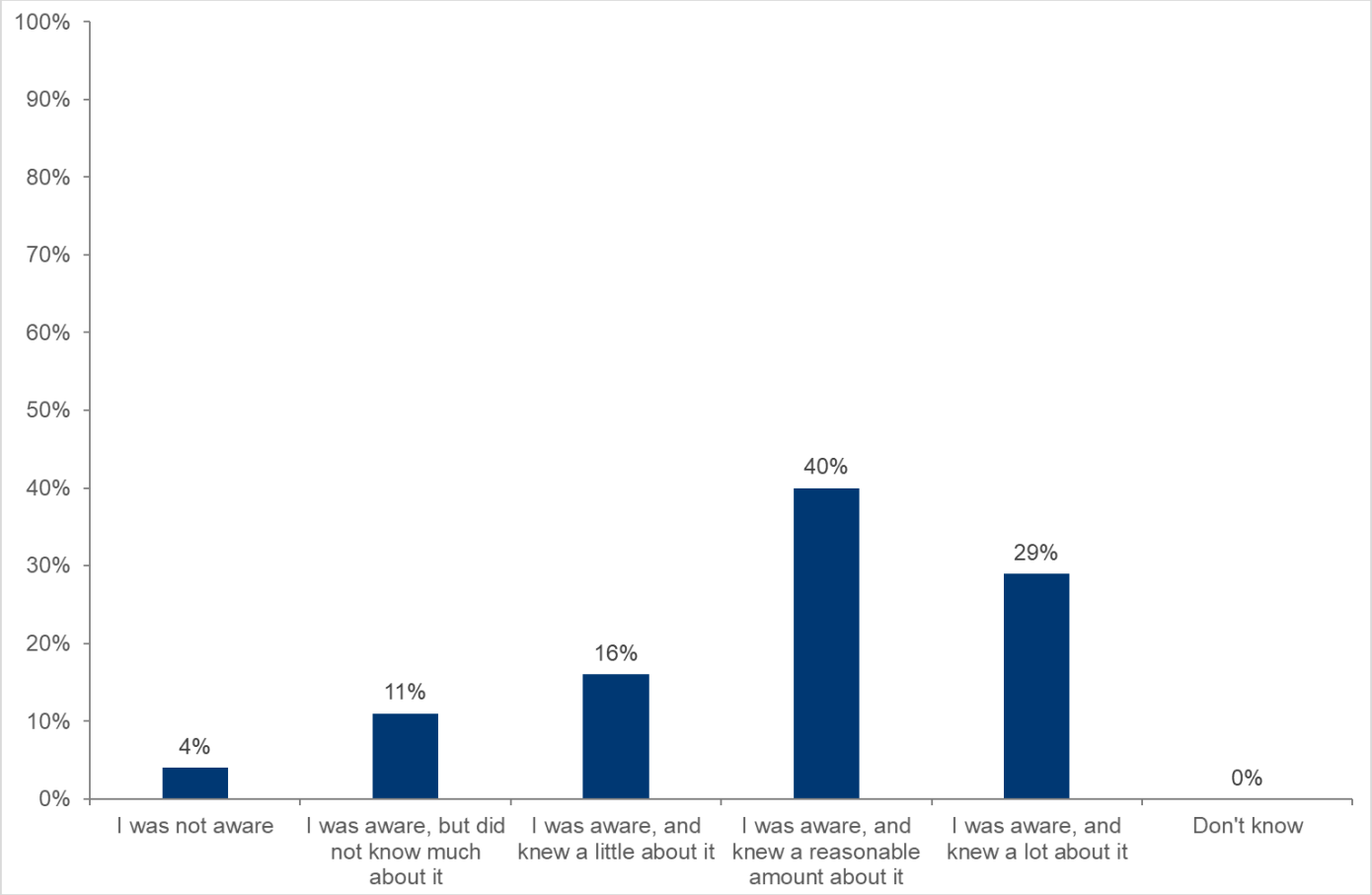
3.1. This section presents findings about the current ways councils are organised in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, including awareness and knowledge, and perceptions of effectiveness.

Before today, how aware were you of the current structure of councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, and the services each council provides?

Most respondents were aware of the current structure of councils and the different services delivered, and had varying levels of knowledge

3.2. 96% of respondents were aware of the current structure of councils, including 29% that knew a lot about it, 40% a reasonable amount, 16% a little and 11% not much about it. 4% were not aware of the current structure of councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire before responding to the engagement survey.

Figure 3.1: Awareness and knowledge of the current structure of councils



Number of respondents: 11,424.

Focus group insight:

Participants in the focus groups had **varying levels of awareness and knowledge** of the current structure of councils in their area, including the two-tier system. In several cases this was **limited to an awareness that their council tax is shared between two councils** (in the case of non-Nottingham City residents), while others said their **use of services had made them aware, albeit also often confusing:**

"I know that my council tax goes to both my District Council and the County Council. I think I know why and what each does, but don't test me. It can be a little confusing." *Rural participant*

"I've had to deal with both councils during my time for different services, including the county council for social services. I'd say I'm now quite knowledgeable about it, but that's been hard won through bitter experience of having to navigate around the system." *Rural participant*

"I know that Nottingham City delivers all services in the area, but what relationship does it have with the county and the neighbouring district and borough councils? It's always felt a bit odd. It's like the City is an island in amongst all these other councils. It doesn't feel that joined-up when you think about it." *Urban participant*

3.3. Respondents in Gedling (98% aware including 75% with at least reasonable knowledge), Rushcliffe (also 98% aware including 74% with at least reasonable knowledge) and Ashfield (96% aware including 72% with at least reasonable knowledge) are most awareness and knowledgeable. Respondents in Bassetlaw are least aware and knowledgeable (92% aware including 56% with at least reasonable knowledge).

Figure 3.2: Awareness and knowledge of the current structure of councils by council area

	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Broxtowe	Gedling	Mansfield	Newark and Sherwood	Notting-ham	Rushcliffe
I was not aware	4%	8%	5%	2%	6%	7%	5%	2%
I was aware, but did not know much about it	9%	17%	12%	7%	11%	11%	12%	9%
I was aware, and knew a little about it	14%	17%	19%	15%	15%	13%	16%	15%
I was aware, and knew a reasonable amount about it	37%	34%	41%	43%	31%	36%	37%	43%
I was aware, and knew a lot about it	35%	22%	23%	32%	36%	33%	30%	31%
Don't know	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%

3.4. There are some minor changes when the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire:

- Not aware: 5%
- Not know much: 11%
- Know a little: 16%
- Know a reasonable amount: 38%
- Know a lot: 30%
- Don’t know: 0%

3.5. Respondents with lower levels of awareness and knowledge of the current structure of councils and the different services delivered are:

- Women: 25% know a lot compared with 33% of men.
- Aged under 35: 62% know at least a reasonable amount compared with 69% of older respondents.
- Non-White British-Irish: 57% know at least a reasonable amount compared with 69% of other respondents.
- Private renters and social renters: 61% of private renters and 51% of social renters know at least a reasonable amount compared with 70% of owner-occupiers.

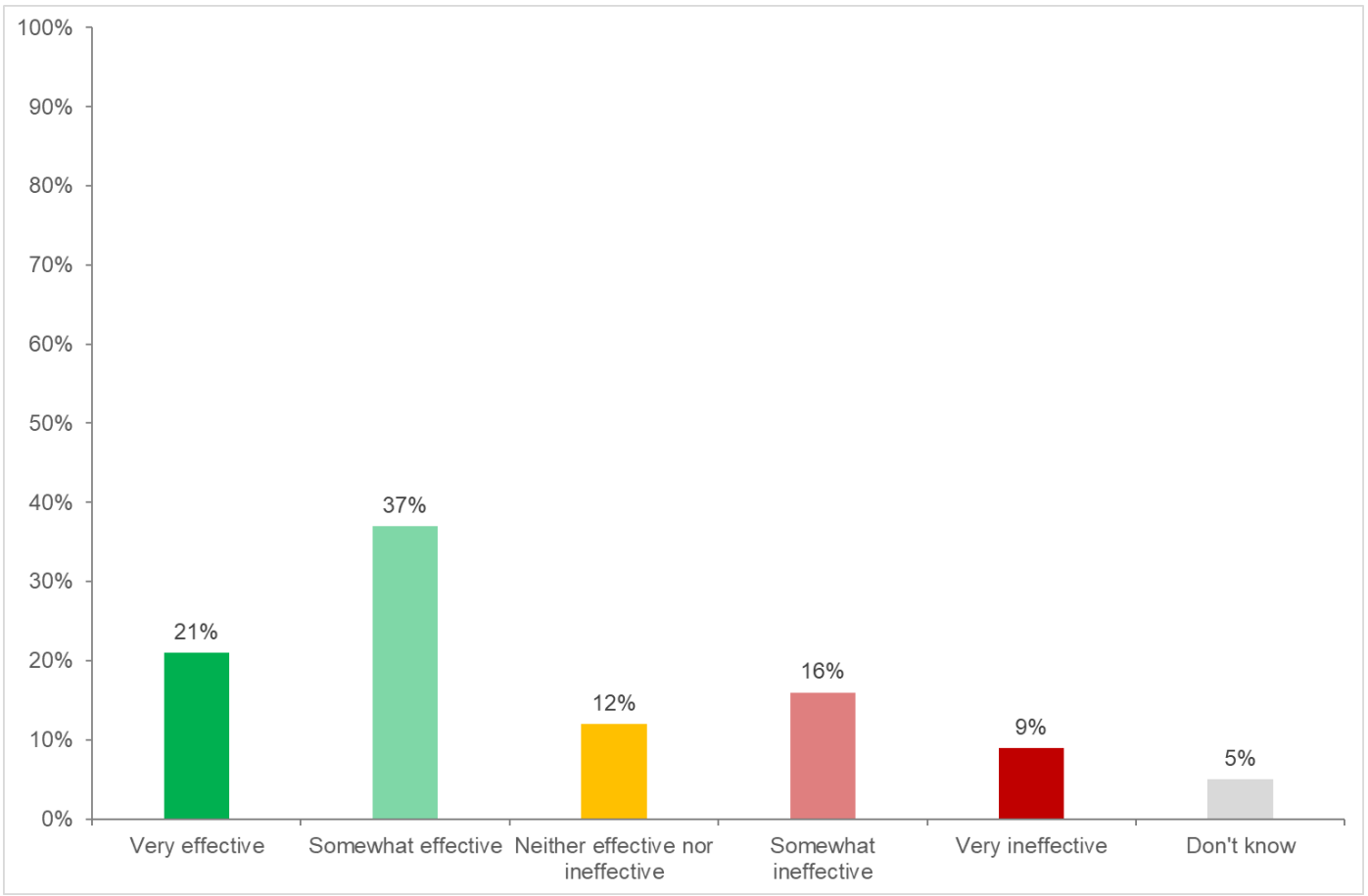
How effective is the current structure of councils and the approach to service delivery in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire?

Over half of respondents said the current structure and approach to service delivery in councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is effective with some variations by area

3.6. 58% of respondents said the current structure and approach to service delivery is at least somewhat effective, including 21% that said it is very effective. A quarter said it is at least somewhat ineffective, including 9% that said it is very ineffective.

3.7. Respondents that knew at least a reasonable amount about the current structure and approach to service delivery (63%) are more likely to say that the current system is effective compared to respondents with less awareness or knowledge (48%).

Figure 3.3: Effectiveness of the current structure and approach to service delivery



Number of respondents: 11,413.

3.8. Respondents in Rushcliffe (72% effective), Gedling (65% effective) and Broxtowe (63% effective) council areas have the highest ratings of effectiveness, while respondents in Nottingham City have the lowest (26% effective).

Figure 3.4: Effectiveness of the current structure and approach to service delivery by council area

	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Broxtowe	Gedling	Mansfield	Newark and Sherwood	Notting-ham	Rushcliffe
Very effective	14%	11%	24%	22%	10%	15%	5%	31%
Somewhat effective	40%	32%	39%	43%	34%	38%	21%	41%
Neither effective nor ineffective	14%	16%	13%	12%	17%	15%	15%	9%
Somewhat ineffective	16%	21%	12%	14%	20%	20%	33%	11%
Very ineffective	11%	14%	5%	7%	15%	8%	22%	5%
Don't know	4%	6%	6%	3%	5%	5%	5%	4%

3.9. Consequently, when the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Nottinghamshire there is a change in the results with levels of effectiveness decreasing (as the locations with higher ratings of effectiveness have responded in greater numbers relative to their population size). The re-weighted data is more polarised with 47% of respondents rating the current system as effective and 34% ineffective:

- Very effective: 14%
- Somewhat effective: 33%
- Neither effective nor ineffective: 14%
- Somewhat ineffective: 21%
- Very ineffective: 13%
- Don’t know: 5%

3.10. Respondents that rated lower the effectiveness of the current system are:

- Aged under 25: 46% rate the current system as effective compared with 58% of older respondents.
- Private and social renters: 49% rate the current system as effective compared with 59% of owner-occupiers.

3.11. Respondents were asked to explain their answers to help understand the reasons behind their perceptions about effectiveness with 59% of respondents providing further explanation. In summary, those rating the system **effective** tend to highlight **service reliability, local knowledge and responsiveness, local representation, and a sense that the current system is fit for purpose.** Those who said **neither effective or ineffective** often expressed **mixed experiences, or uncertainty/lack of clarity.** Those rating the system **ineffective** emphasised **confusion, duplication, inefficiency, lack of joined-up/partnership working, political distrust, and inequity and inconsistency in services between different local councils**, with some advocating for change and unitary authorities.

3.12. The following provides more detail on the reasons alongside volume of opinion:

Reasons for rating the current system as effective:

- **Satisfaction with services** (cited by approximately 15% of respondents): Service provision is generally considered effective and satisfactory including key services such as bin collections, highways maintenance, and schools working well.
- **Local knowledge and responsiveness** (cited by approximately 10%)**:** Smaller/more localised councils such as District/Borough councils allow services to be tailored to local need and priorities, and be more aware of, and responsive to, issues as they emerge at the neighbourhood level.
- **Representation** (cited by approximately 5%)**:** Councils are closer to their communities and there is greater local accountability and political representation, reflecting local needs/priorities.
- **Familiarity, stability and continuity** (cited by approximately 2-3%): The current approach works sufficiently well and does not need to change, just potentially improved in-situ.

Reasons for rating the current system as neither effective nor ineffective:

- **Mixed experiences and views** (cited by approximately 5% of respondents): Some services/aspects work well and others could be improved. This includes an appreciation that there is scope for change and improvement, allied with concerns that change could be disruptive or not lead to positive benefits in practice.
- **Lack of knowledge, information or understanding of the current structure or approach to services** (cited by approximately 2-3%): This meant that respondents could not form a firm or clear opinion regarding effectiveness.

Reasons for rating the current system as ineffective:

- **Service delivery issues** (cited by approximately 10% of respondents): Mixed experiences of service delivery and quality, with scope for improvement.
- **Duplication and inefficiency** (cited by approximately 5%): The two-tier structure is inefficient with resource duplication between councils, unnecessary tiers of management and staffing resulting in wasted resources, added bureaucracy and negative consequences for service delivery/quality as well as cost-effectiveness.
- **Confusion** (cited by approximately 5%): The two-tier structure makes the system difficult to navigate, as well as creating a lack of accountability between councils.
- **Joined-up/partnership working** (cited by approximately 5%): The current two-tier system makes coordination challenging between councils and partners across the different tiers of local government, with scope to improve partnership working.

- **Political concerns** (cited by approximately 2-3%): Undercurrent of distrust of politics and politicians, surfacing mainly around planning decisions, fairness of service allocation, and perceptions of political agendas overriding residents' needs.
- **Inequity and lack of consistency** (cited by approximately 2-3%): Experiences of inconsistent services depending on location and challenges accessing services in neighbouring areas, as well as some concerns around a bias to service provision in urban areas compared to more rural areas.

Focus group insight:

Focus group participants shared similar views about the effectiveness of the current system to those expressed by respondents in the engagement survey, **driven by their personal experience of the councils and their services.** These views tended to be **dominated by perceived concerns about Nottingham City council's finances and services** and their impact on neighbouring areas. There was also reference to **inconsistent services, parochialism and calls for more joined-up and partnership working:**

> "It is confusing about who you should speak with about any given issue, the district council, the city council or the county council or all of them. I've learnt to know who does what and navigate the system, but I think there's scope for change." *Rural participant*

> "When you think about Nottingham City Council you can't say that the current approach works. There's been mismanagement, its financially bankrupt and my fear is that there will be a ripple effect on its neighbouring areas, especially if there is local government reorganisation. It's not a good advert for a unitary council or forming a new council with Nottingham City council at its head." *Urban participant*

> "I generally feel like my council does a reasonable job, but I've seen it professionally where I've been able to get services for one client from their council, but not for someone else who lives in a neighbouring council. It's a bit like a postcode lottery, so I'd like to see more consistency in service provision and it to be easier to access those services so that you don't have to speak to lots of different people." *Urban participant*

> "The day-to-day is fine, but I do question some of the decisions that are made. On one level it is nice to have a local council that feels close to the community, but some of the decisions feel a bit parochial, and possibly even overly self-interested, especially around planning decisions or pet projects of councillors. It feels a bit inward looking and I'd like to see the council be more innovative and outward facing, working closely with other councils and partners." *Rural participant*

One point focus group participants tended to share is that they felt it **important that their council is coherent geographically and focussed on their local community:**

> "One thing I like about the current system is that it feels like your council is working for you, is focussed on your area and your issues. Mansfield council is a good example, it is a fairly small council and is focussed on those that live in Mansfield and the surrounding areas." *Urban participant*

Section 4: Local Government Reorganisation in England

Introduction

4.1. This section presents findings about the Government's plans for reorganisation of local government across the country, including awareness and knowledge, and perceptions about these plans.

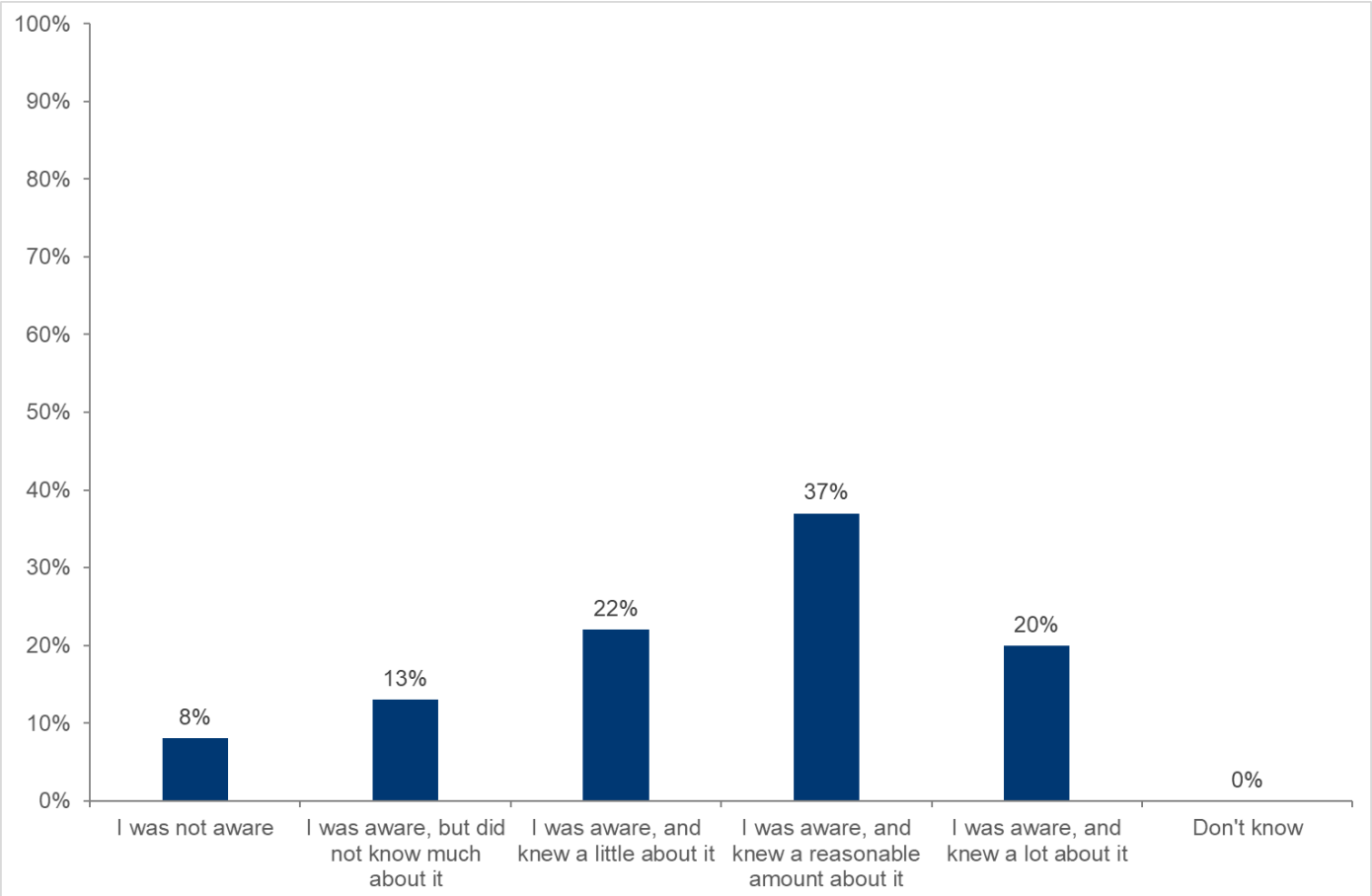
Before today, how aware were you about the Government's plans to reorganise local councils across England?

Most respondents are aware of the reorganisation of councils across England, including over half that have at least reasonable knowledge about it

4.2. 92% of respondents are aware of the reorganisation of councils across England, including 20% that knew a lot about it, 37% a reasonable amount, 22% a little and 13% not much about it. 8% were not aware at all before responding to the engagement survey.

4.3. There is a close relationship between awareness and knowledge of the current structure of councils and that of the reorganisation of councils across England. For example, 50% that were not aware of the current structure of councils are also not aware of the reorganisation of councils. Similarly, 54% that were aware and know a lot about the current structure of local councils are also equally aware and knowledgeable about the reorganisation of councils across England.

Figure 4.1: Awareness and knowledge of local government reorganisation across England



Number of respondents: 11,429.

Focus group insight:

The focus group participants had **mixed levels of awareness and knowledge about local government reorganisation in England**, with most awareness and knowledge generated through this engagement process and associated communications. Awareness and knowledge tended to be **greatest amongst participants in areas that are perhaps most affected by the proposals.** Prior awareness was also linked with the wider devolution agenda, including the formation of the East Midlands Combined County Authority:

> "I wasn't aware about any of this until you invited me to attend the focus group." *Urban participant*

> "I had some awareness, but only really vaguely. I'd seen something on social media about it." *Urban participant*

> "I'd heard of devolution and all that previously, but only really found out about local government reorganisation when I heard more about it from my council. Once I heard that we may be joining Nottingham I spent some time getting familiar with the issues as they directly affect me and my family." *Rural participant*

> "There was that consultation around the East Midlands regional authority a few years ago, so I was aware of what's going on in general, but I can't say I knew much about these specific plans until just recently." *Rural participant*

4.4. Respondents in Rushcliffe (96% aware including 64% with at least reasonable knowledge) and Gedling (96% aware including 62% with at least reasonable knowledge) are most aware and knowledgeable. Respondents in Bassetlaw are least aware and knowledgeable (78% aware including 37% with at least reasonable knowledge).

Figure 4.2: Awareness and knowledge of local government reorganisation across England by council area

	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Broxtowe	Gedling	Mansfield	Newark and Sherwood	Notting-ham	Rushcliffe
I was not aware	8%	22%	8%	4%	14%	9%	9%	4%
I was aware, but did not know much about it	15%	19%	15%	12%	13%	16%	14%	10%
I was aware, and knew a little about it	19%	21%	24%	22%	22%	21%	22%	22%
I was aware, and knew a reasonable amount about it	37%	25%	36%	40%	28%	34%	37%	42%
I was aware, and knew a lot about it	20%	12%	17%	22%	22%	21%	18%	22%
Don't know	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

4.5. There are some minor changes when the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire:

- Not aware: 9%
- Not know much: 14%
- Know a little: 22%
- Know a reasonable amount: 35%
- Know a lot: 19%
- Don’t know: 0%

4.6. Respondents with lower levels of awareness and knowledge of local government reorganisation across England are:

- Women: 51% know at least a reasonable amount compared with 62% of men.
- Aged under 25: 79% are aware compared with 92% of older respondents.
- Non-White British-Irish: 49% know at least a reasonable amount compared with 56% of other respondents.
- People living with a disability that affects their day-to-day activities a lot or a little: 49% know at least a reasonable amount compared with 57% of other respondents.
- Private renters and social renters: 49% of private renters and 39% of social renters know at least a reasonable amount compared with 57% of owner-occupiers.

What do you think are the main potential benefits, if any, of the Government's proposed reorganisation of local councils?

Potential benefits include efficiency and cost savings, geographic coherence, a simpler and clearer system and more joined-up working

4.7. Reduced duplication, efficiency and cost savings are the dominant perceived benefits, while scepticism/no benefits form the second largest cluster. Other themes like geographical coherence, simplification, joined-up working, improved services and fairness also stand-out, albeit in lesser numbers:

- **Efficiency and cost savings** (cited by approximately 35% of respondents): Respondents frequently highlighted the potential for reducing duplication, achieving greater efficiencies and consequently saving money by moving to larger unitary councils (although some also questioned whether these savings would be reinvested into local areas, public services or reduced council tax).
- **Geographic / administrative coherence** (cited by approximately 15%): Some respondents noted the opportunity to bring areas under a clearer, more consistent administrative structure, which reflects the way people live and move across the county, by bringing council areas together into larger bodies.
- **Simplification / clarity of councils and access to services** (cited by approximately 10%): These respondents consider benefits in having a single unitary council to contact, resulting in improved access to services, ease of navigation around the council system, and consequently also clearer accountability.
- **Better coordination, joined-up services and partnership working** (cited by approximately 10%): Some see value in larger councils promoting better coordination of services and joined-up decision making and working in areas managed by a single council. Relatedly, some also consider this could lead to better partnership working between the larger unitary councils and other public bodies.
- **Improved services and outcomes** (cited by approximately 5%): A smaller, albeit notable, proportion of respondents felt these changes would lead to improved service quality and delivery, and better social outcomes because of the above noted potential for efficiencies and joined-up decision-making and services, and partnership working, as well as scope for further investment in local areas and services due to cost savings.
- **Fairness and equitability** (cited by approximately 2-3%): A smaller group of respondents suggested that the proposals could lead to a fairer and more equitable system as a single, larger unitary council could result in more consistency around access to, and quality of, services and support. Relatedly, some also said it could result in a more considered and cohesive approach to tackling inequalities across a larger area.

4.8. However, approximately 20% of respondents were **sceptical about the proposals** for local government reorganisation stating they could see **no real benefits, expressing doubt or outright opposition.**

4.9. The findings are broadly **consistent across different areas and demographics**, albeit with slightly greater scepticism amongst respondents in Rushcliffe and Broxtowe council areas.

What concerns, if any, do you have about the Government's proposed reorganisation of local councils?

Respondents are concerned about urban-rural imbalance and the financial risks of local government reorganisation, as well as loss of local representation, accountability and knowledge

4.10. Urban–rural imbalance was the biggest single concern amongst respondents with costs/financial risks and loss of representation also consistently high mentions. These issues feed into concerns about service disruption and decline:

- **Geographic / urban–rural imbalance** (cited by approximately 35% of respondents): Strong concerns about Nottingham City in particular as the major urban centre in the county dominating rural locations in neighbouring council areas. This includes a concern that larger councils will not be able to tailor services to suit rural areas and that rural areas will receive inconsistent service provision or be deprioritised (loss of rural voice) compared to urban areas, as well as suffer from some of the challenges in urban areas and councils currently serving those areas. This view is heightened in areas surrounding Nottingham City, especially Broxtowe and Rushcliffe. Relatedly, some respondents suggested that Nottingham City could be a separate council in its own right to avoid some of these concerns and provide services specific to an urban area.
- **Financial risks** (cited by approximately 25%): Worries that reorganisation would be expensive and potentially not achieve the projected savings in the longer-term. Similarly, there are concerns that reorganisation could be used to bail out councils that are perceived to be struggling financially, especially Nottingham City, which in turn could lead to increased council tax and/or worse services in neighbouring areas.
- **Concerns over efficiency and complexity** (cited by approximately 10%): Related, there is scepticism that larger councils will be more efficient, simpler to navigate and improve access to services but rather in practice would add complexity and bureaucracy (and costs due to inefficiencies and waste).
- **Loss of local representation, accountability and knowledge** (cited by approximately 20%): Merging councils could increase the distance between decision-makers and communities, diluting residents' voices and reducing accountability and local connections. This could result in less responsive and tailored services to meet local needs and priorities, as well as a system and services that will be harder to navigate and access.
- **Service quality decline** (cited by approximately 15%): Linked to the above points, specific concerns that bigger councils would stretch services, reduce responsiveness, and worsen frontline delivery. Similarly, some respondents are concerned about the complexity of merging councils, which could lead to confusion and disruption, affecting service quality in the short-term.
- **Job losses / staffing concerns** (cited by approximately 5%): Relatedly, some respondents noted risks of redundancies, loss of experienced staff, and disruption to council workforces, in turn affecting services. This concern was shared between both residents and staff currently working in local councils with the latter explicitly concerned about their own jobs.

- **Politicisation** (cited by approximately 5%): A few respondents questioned whether these proposals are about political parties using reorganisation to consolidate power, or about democracy being weakened.
- **Preference for reform within existing structure** (cited by approximately 2-3%): As a result of the above concerns, some respondents said existing councils should be improved rather than replaced.
- **No need for change** (cited by approximately 2-3%): The system is not broken, so there is not a need to fix it, especially with risk that any changes could lead to less effective councils and services.

4.11. Approximately 5% of respondents said they did **not have any concerns about local government reorganisation and/or saw the risks as minimal.**

4.12. The findings are broadly **consistent across different areas and demographics**, albeit with greater concern amongst respondents in Rushcliffe and Broxtowe council areas especially related to Nottingham City and concerns around urban-rural imbalance and financial risks/costs.

Focus group insight:

Participants in the focus groups echoed the potential benefits and concerns around local government reorganisation, albeit with a **skew towards concerns over benefits.** Most participants could **appreciate the potential efficiencies and cost-savings, although they questioned whether in practice these would be achieved and moreover where they would be invested.** They also could see that there may be opportunities for more joined-up decision-making, working and services, although they also felt these could be **achieved within the current structure:**

> "It's all well and good saying there will be these savings and I can see on paper how they may think that's the case, but I'm not entirely convinced. I'd like to see the evidence and calculations because in my experience these things are a lot harder to achieve in practice." *Rural participant*

> "Cost-savings are fine, but how will they benefit me? Will I get a lower council tax? Will they be re-invested in services? Or will they just be a way of balancing the books and in effect we're just bailing out the government or failing councils?" *Rural participant*

> "I can see that there's room for improvement in the way things are currently. Services could be improved, there could be opportunities to work more strategically and regionally. I guess what I don't fully get is why this can't happen as things are now. Why do we have to rip up everything and start again. It's costly and time consuming to do that and it's not guaranteed to get results. It does feel a bit like a cost-cutting exercise dressed up." *Urban participant*

The two biggest concerns cited by focus group participants (mainly from rural areas) were around the **urban-rural imbalance and associated dominance of Nottingham City, and the loss of local representation and knowledge:**

> "The benefit of the current system is that you've got a council focussed on the needs of Nottingham City and another focussed on an area with a completely different set of issues and characteristics, a much more rural area. So you'd be losing that focus by creating larger councils and you risk creating councils that end up having different divisions in them, one to deal with rural issues and one to deal with urban issues because some of the challenges and priorities in these areas will be vastly different, so in the end you're not making any savings. Or what's more likely is that everything will be configured to suit the city because it will dominate any future larger council. It just feels like my voice and that of my community would be lost within the thousands more voices of those that live in the city." *Rural participant*

A few participants also questioned how **local government reorganisation fits with regional devolution and other public bodies and reforms:**

> "The whole agenda and governance in local government feels a bit muddled to me. They created the East Midlands regional council, which I felt like was adding an extra tier and now they're saying they want to reduce the tiers. Then you've also got things like the Police and Crime Commissioner who is meant to reflect local issues. You've got all these layers already, so they take some away and then add some more in, and in the end it's no more or less complex, confusing or cost-effective, and in the process you've incurred costs, time and disruption. It just feels messy and like an exercise in job creation and constant unnecessary change." *Urban participant*

Section 5: Future councils

Introduction

5.1. This section presents findings about the design of the potential future councils, including the most important principles and features of a new council and the best ways for the new councils to involve people in local decisions.

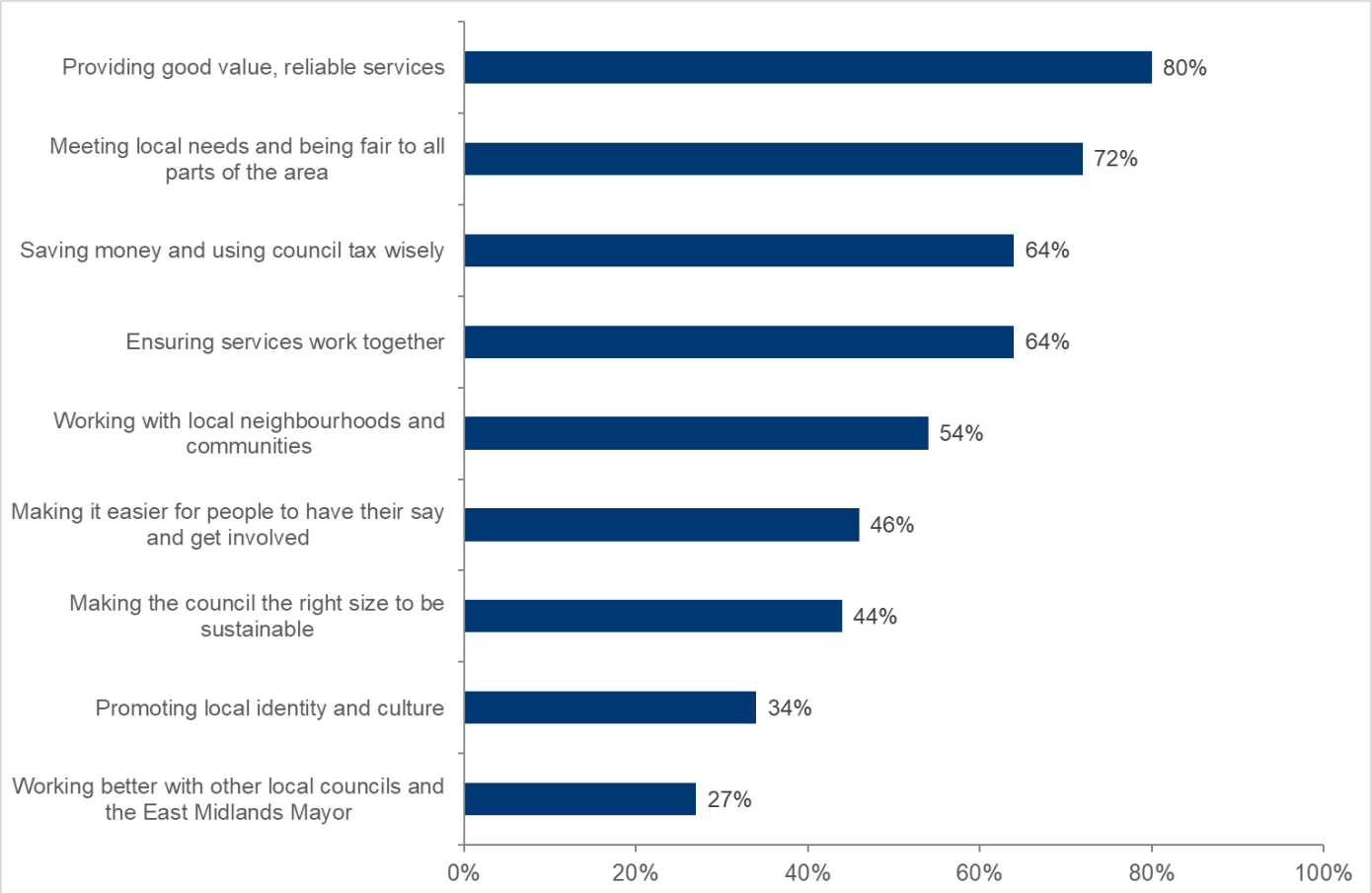
What should be most important when designing a new council?

Quality services, value for money and meeting local needs are the priorities for a future council

5.2. 80% of respondents cited providing good value, reliable services, following by 72% noting meeting local needs and being fair to all parts of the area.

5.3. 64% said saving money and using council tax wisely and the same proportion mentioned ensuring services work together, while 54% said working with local neighbourhoods and communities.

Figure 5.1: Most important for a new council



Number of respondents: 11,335.

Note: Respondents could select more than one answer.

5.4. In the ‘other’ responses, approximately 5% of respondents said that new councils should engage effectively and meaningfully with local residents, respond to local concerns and issues and consequently provide representation and accountability.

5.5. Whilst there are variations by council area (and also other demographics), these are not notable and the order is similar. Consequently, for succinctness, these are not presented in this report (although they are available in a separate document).

Focus group insight:

Discussions in the focus groups reflected the results in the engagement survey with an emphasis on **effective delivery of core services, value for money, competent management and meeting the needs of local residents**, including those in rural and urban areas**:**

“Keep it simple really – good quality services, keep council tax low and manage the council and it services effectively.” *Urban participant*

“The role of local councils, local government is to reflect the priorities of local people and meet their needs. Local councillors have an important role in this, as too does effective engagement with local people, communities and neighbourhoods. So any future council needs to preserve this approach, which I think is more difficult to do in a larger council.” *Urban participant*

“I’m worried a larger council will be more detached from local people and local areas. How will they make sure that they understand and respond to the specific local concerns, especially of rural areas compared to somewhere like the city? That’s something they really need to bottom-out in a new council.” *Rural participant*

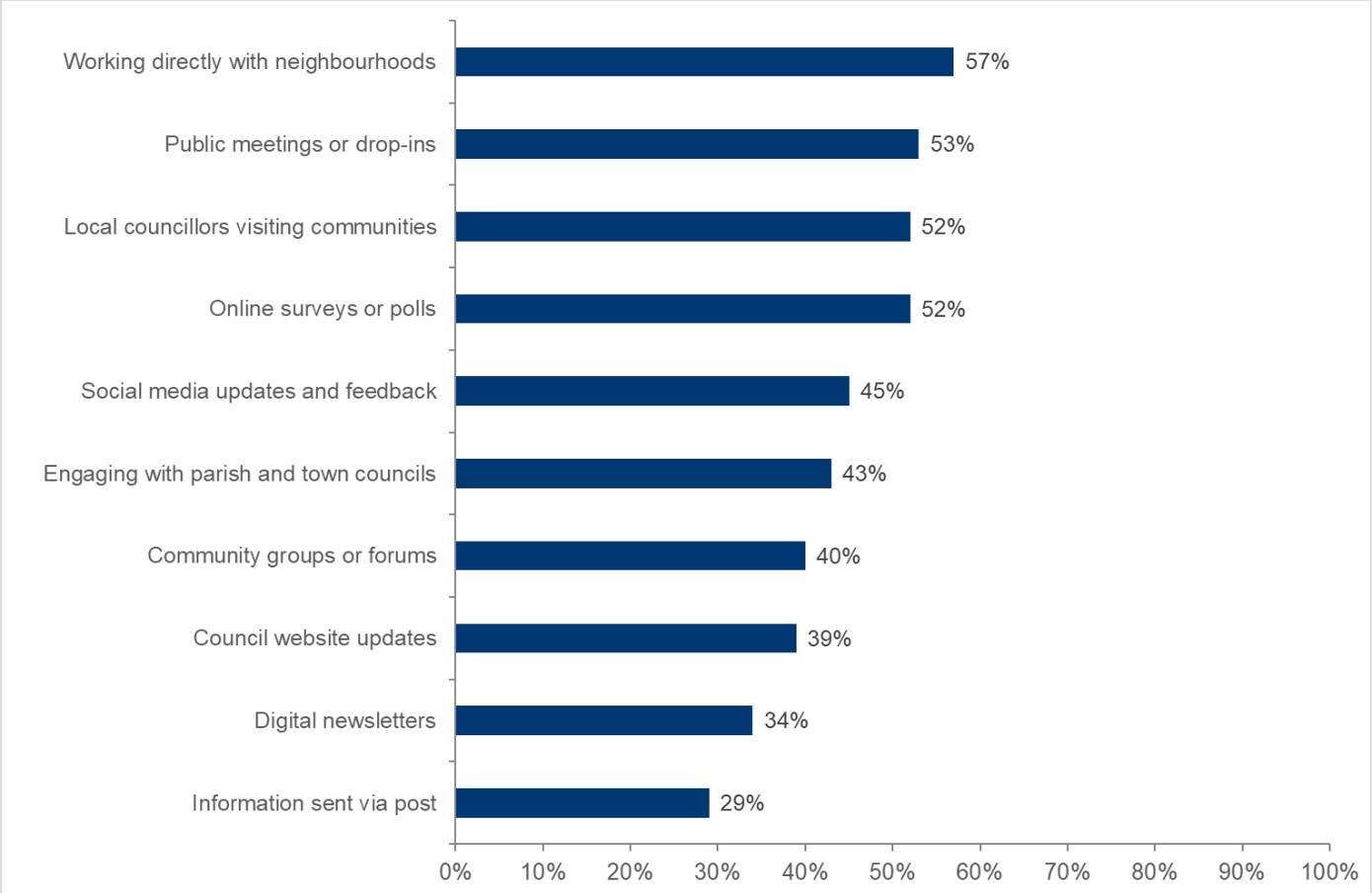
What are the best ways for the new councils to involve people in local decisions?

Neighbourhood working, direct resident engagement, and local councillors along with parish and town councils and community groups are the best way to involve people in local decisions

5.6. 57% of respondents said working directly with neighbourhoods, while several respondents mentioned engaging with local residents through public meetings (53%), online surveys (52%) and social media (45%).

5.7. 52% mentioned local councillors visiting communities, 43% said engaging with parish and town councils, and 40% mentioned community groups or forums.

Figure 5.2: Best ways to involve people in local decisions



Number of respondents: 11,262.

Note: Respondents could select more than one answer.

5.8. In the 'other' responses, approximately 2-3% of respondents highlighted the importance of engaging with local residents prior to decisions being made and avoiding decisions being 'imposed' on residents. Relatedly, some of these respondents raised concerns that their voices are not heard and will not make a difference. Similarly, some said they are concerned that new and larger councils will lead to less representation and undermine resident voices and democracy as there will be a greater distance between local people and issues, and their decision-makers.

5.9. Whilst there are variations by council area (and also other demographics), these are not notable and the order is similar. Consequently, for succinctness, these are not presented in this report (although they are available in a separate document).

Focus group insight:

Focus group participants said it is **important that local people are involved in decision-making**, both in principle and especially given the potential changes with concerns that larger councils may be more detached from local people and diverse local areas. They felt that **local councillors, parish councils, community groups and working closely in local neighbourhoods/communities** would be most important. They also wanted **engagement and consultation to be genuine and meaningful:**

"It's really important anyway, in principle, to involve local people, but even more so if these changes go ahead. I've engaged with my local councillor on a few things, so I'd be worried that the changes will take that away. Local councillors, if you get a good one, can be really important. And what is happening with the parish councils? They play an important role on the ground in rural areas like mine." *Rural participant*

"I don't think it really matters how big the council is, they're already quite big now covering lots of people and areas. It's more about how well they know their communities and how well they respond to those issues. You want to see them getting involved at the grassroots level, out and about in their neighbourhoods and communities and delivering services at that more local level to meet specific needs. Council staff and councillors have a role in this, but so too do local community groups and charities because they know their areas and often work at a more individual or local level." *Urban participant*

"You can run as many surveys and focus groups as you want, but it's not worth much if it doesn't change things. I'm worried that this process is a done deal, that these changes we're discussing will happen regardless of what we say. So my main point is that any involvement of local people needs to be done earnestly and with integrity." *Urban participant*

Section 6: Local Government Reorganisation across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Introduction

6.1. This section presents the proposals for reorganisation of local government across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, including the proposal to replace the nine existing councils with two councils and different options for the proposed new councils.

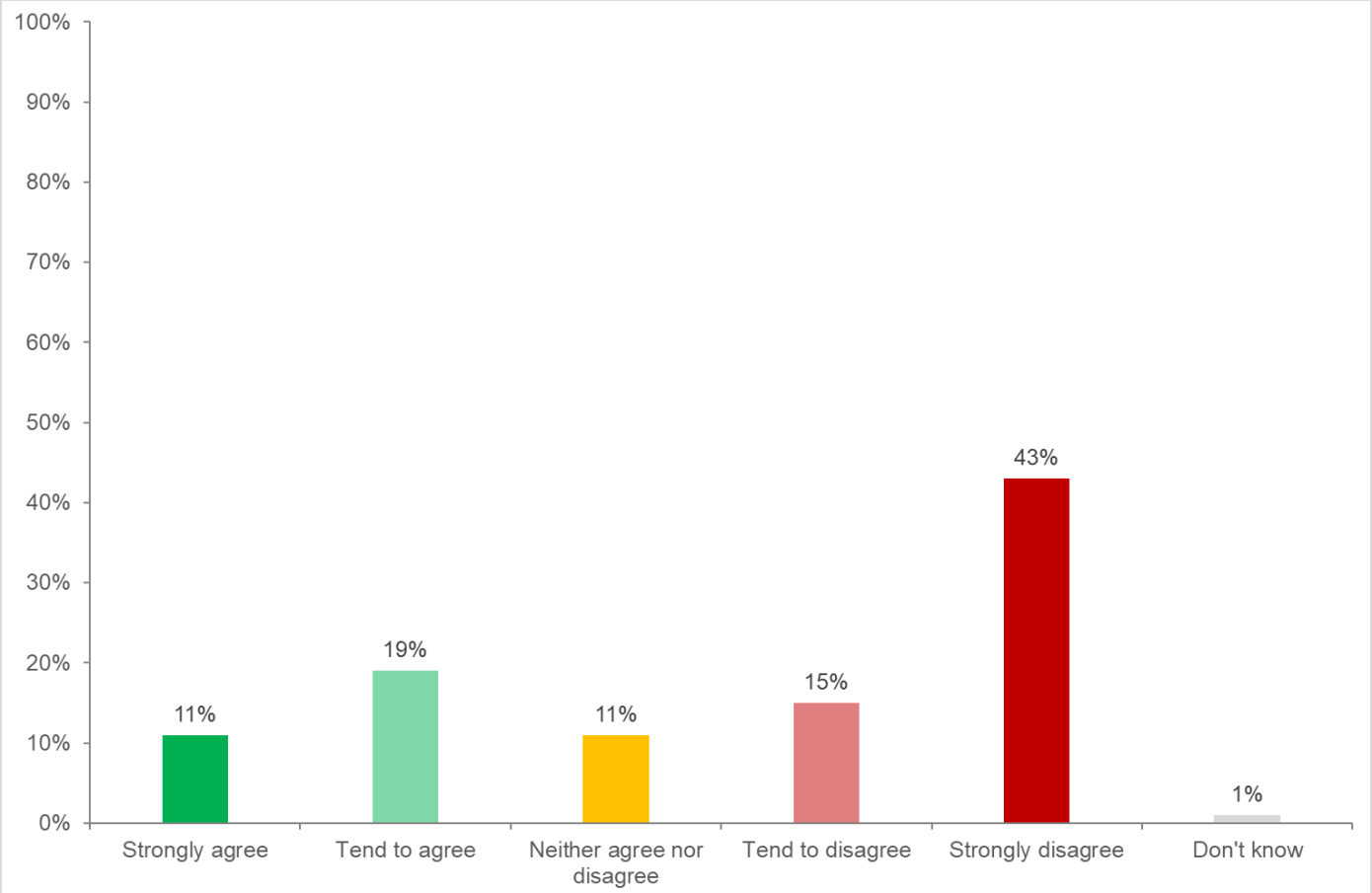
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to replace the nine existing councils with two councils to run local government across the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire area?

Over half disagree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils, with a relationship between perceived effectiveness of the current system and levels of agreement, as well as variations by area

6.2. 30% of respondents agree with the proposal, including 11% that strongly agree. In contrast, 58% of respondents disagree with the proposal, including 43% that strongly disagree.

6.3. There is a relationship between perceptions of the effectiveness of the current system and levels of agreement with the proposal. For example, 16% of those that said the current structure of local councils is effective agree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils compared with 60% of those that said the current system is ineffective. i.e. in other words, those that consider the current system ineffective are more likely to state there is a case for change.

Figure 6.1: Level of agreement with proposal to replace nine existing councils with two across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire



Number of respondents: 11,427.

6.4. Respondents in Nottingham City are more likely to agree with the proposal to replace the nine existing councils with two (63% agree) than respondents in other areas. In contrast, respondents in Broxtowe (20% agree), Rushcliffe (22% agree) and Gedling (27% agree) council areas are less likely to agree.

Figure 6.2: Level of agreement with proposal to replace nine existing councils with two across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire by council area

	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Broxtowe	Gedling	Mansfield	Newark and Sherwood	Notting-ham	Rushcliffe
Strongly agree	11%	10%	7%	9%	14%	12%	31%	8%
Tend to agree	21%	21%	13%	18%	23%	24%	32%	14%
Neither agree nor disagree	16%	18%	8%	11%	16%	17%	15%	7%
Tend to disagree	14%	21%	13%	15%	15%	17%	8%	15%
Strongly disagree	36%	28%	58%	46%	31%	28%	11%	55%
Don't know	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%

6.5. Consequently, when the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Nottinghamshire there is a change in the results with levels of agreement increasing (as the locations with lower levels of agreement have responded in greater numbers relative to their population size). The re-weighted data is more polarised with 39% of respondents agreeing compared with 46% that disagree:

- Strongly agree: 16%
- Tend to agree: 23%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 14%
- Tend to disagree: 14%
- Strongly disagree: 32%
- Don't know: 2%

6.6. Respondents that are less likely to agree with the proposal to replace nine existing councils with two are:

- Women: 26% agree compared with 35% of women.
- Aged under 35: 37% agree compared with 30% of older respondents.
- People living with a disability that affects their lives a lot: 25% compared with 32% other respondents.

6.7. Respondents were asked to explain their answers to help understand the levels of agreement for the proposal to replace the nine existing councils with two across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire with 70% of respondents providing further explanation. Many of these comments reflect the benefits and concerns raised earlier about local government reorganisation in England in general. In summary, those that **agreed tended to state that the proposals would reduce duplication, generate efficiencies and consequently lead to cost-savings**, while a smaller number also said that it would lead to a **simplification of the system and therefore improved accessibility.**

6.8. Those that disagreed are **concerned about fairness and equitability, especially in relation to an urban-rural imbalance.** Similarly, they are concerned about a **loss of local representation, knowledge and accountability**, and associated issues around **access to services and responsiveness to local issues.** Some respondents **oppose local government reorganisation in general and in principle**, with concerns that implementation will be disruptive, and **improvements and savings will not be achieved in practice.** There is also some **distrust about the motives** behind the proposals and at a local level **concern that neighbouring areas will inherit the issues experienced by Nottingham City.**

6.9. The following provides more detail on the reasons alongside volume of opinion:

Reasons for agreement:

- **Efficiencies, streamlining and cost-savings** (cited by approximately 15% of respondents): Fewer councils would reduce duplication and bureaucracy with less waste and administrative layers resulting in cost-savings and potentially improved services.
- **Simplification of system and services** (cited by approximately 5%): Related to the above, a single layer/simplified structure and larger/fewer councils could be easier for residents to navigate and access services, as well as partners to engage with (resulting in more joined-up/partnership working, including between the two new councils).

Reasons for neutrality:

- **Balanced views** (cited by approximately 5% of respondents): Whilst there is an appreciation that changes may have a positive impact, there is also scepticism that these will be realised in practice. Similarly, some respondents said that the current system works satisfactorily and that change is not essential, even if it leads to improvements.
- **Lack of knowledge, information or understanding of the proposals or certainty about the outcomes** (cited by approximately 5%): This meant that respondents could not form a firm or clear opinion regarding agreement with the proposals or were uncertain in practice what the changes would entail and the potential benefits, as well as whether any benefits would be achieved in practice.

Reasons for disagreement:

- **Rural inequality and urban-rural divide** (cited by approximately 25% of respondents): Concern that larger councils will not be able to tailor services to suit rural areas and that rural and smaller areas will lose their voice and receive inconsistent or unfair service provision, resource allocation or be deprioritised compared to urban areas, as well as suffer from some of the challenges in urban areas and councils currently serving those areas. This view is heightened in areas surrounding Nottingham City where a relatively large urban area will be at the centre of the new council, and where some respondents in these areas do not want to take on the problems and challenges experienced by Nottingham City. Relatedly, some respondents suggested that Nottingham City could be a separate council in its own right to avoid some of these concerns and provide services specific to an urban area.
- **Loss of local representation, knowledge and accountability** (cited by approximately 20%): Concern that two councils would be more detached from local communities and not responsive to local issues, needs and priorities. This includes less access to councillors and decision-makers, loss of local identity and diminishing the ability of smaller communities to influence decision, with the concern heightened in more rural areas located away from urban centres.
- **Impact on services and outcomes** (cited by approximately 10%): Related to the above there is a concern that larger, potentially more centralised, councils will become more complex and difficult to navigate, as well as less in touch with local issues and priorities. Consequently, this will undermine access to service, negatively impact on quality and responsiveness of services and lead to reduced social outcomes, especially in rural areas away from the urban centres that may dominate the proposed new larger councils.
- **Concerns about implementation** (cited by approximately 5%): Scepticism that proposed benefits may not be realised and concern that disruption and confusion in making changes may outweigh benefits, at least in the short-term. This includes not realising the potential financial benefits and making it harder to navigate councils and access services.

- **Opposed to local government reorganisation in principle and specifically a two-council model (cited by approximately 5%):** Related to many of the above points, some respondents said they do not agree with local government reorganisation in principle. They either said that changes are not needed as the system is not broken, that improvements should be made to the existing councils in situ or that alternative approaches should be considered such as a whole county model and/or a Nottingham City specific model.
- **Distrust about motives** (cited by approximately 2-3%): A smaller proportion of respondents raised concerns that the proposals are about politicians and political parties seeking to strengthen their positions and power, and/or that it is about neighbouring councils and residents bailing out Nottingham City council for its perceived financial and delivery challenges.

Focus group insight:

Participants in the focus groups shared **similar viewpoints to those in the engagement survey and expressed earlier about Government's local government reorganisation across England.** The main points made were that a **two-council solution and associated larger councils would distance decision-makers from local issues and their communities**, including urban and rural areas, which in turn would lead to less responsive services. Consequently, they tended to feel that any potential efficiency, cost-saving and service improvement benefits would be undermined. This said, it is **worth noting that the concerns were mainly about larger councils not necessarily moving to a unitary model:**

> "Big isn't necessarily better. I think it's difficult enough already for councils to engage with their residents and really know the issues in each area, each neighbourhood. This is only going to be more difficult now if they're larger and more distanced from the people they're meant to serve, especially if they have lots of areas within their council that are different, from large cities to small towns and villages." *Rural participant*

> "I don't necessarily disagree with the idea of moving to a unitary model. The two-tier system is confusing, complex and bureaucratic. But I think two large councils may not be the answer, especially with one of them having Nottingham City at its heart. Big can sometimes mean that things are more cumbersome and more complex, which means it may make things worse. Have they considered any other solutions, like 3 or 4 councils? Or a city council on its own, with then a larger county one around it. That way at least you avoid the city being mixed in with villages and rural areas." *Urban participant*

The core options

Do you have any comments, concerns or suggestions about this option (Option 1b)?

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City + Broxtowe + Gedling (known as Option 1b). This option is two new unitary councils, one covering Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Ashfield, and Rushcliffe. The second covering Gedling, Broxtowe, and Nottingham City.

There is concern that the proposed boundaries, especially around Nottingham City, are illogical or unfair, excluding some relevant areas close to the city while including outlining rural areas that do not have much in common with Nottingham City

6.10. Approximately half of respondents raised **concerns about the way the boundaries are drawn and the associated geography in the proposed new councils.** There is strong concern that the proposed boundaries are illogical or unfair with many respondents highlighting the exclusion of some neighbouring areas such as West Bridgford in Rushcliffe Borough Council and some areas close to the city in Ashfield District Council, which are seen as integral to Nottingham's urban area. At the same time, the **council covering Nottingham City is considered two large in scope, bringing in areas that do not align in terms of identity, characteristics, and access to services with the City**, while under-representing the city compared to its surrounding districts.

6.11. Relatedly, approximately 20% of respondents are critical of Nottingham City Council, which they perceive to be struggling financially. Consequently, they are **worried that neighbouring areas will be pulled into the city's problems and essentially 'bailing it out'.** In turn, they are concerned that they will have worse services and higher council tax. Respondents in Broxtowe and also some in Gedling particularly expressed these views. In contrast, some respondents that live in Nottingham were concerned that they may be forced to subsidise more rural areas.

6.12. Similarly, approximately 10% of respondents raised **concerns that rural areas in neighbouring councils will lose their voice within a council dominated by Nottingham City** (this is a particular concern of respondents living in Broxtowe). They said this could lead to less suitable services and/or loss of resources and services in rural areas, the new council not meeting the needs and priorities of rural areas, and rural areas subsidising the city.

6.13. Approximately 10% of respondents **explicitly supported the option, albeit conditionally.** This was often tied to an acceptance that local government has funding issues and that compromises are necessary if savings are to be made. That said, these respondents tended to say that they only support this option if in practice is leads to efficiencies and cost-reductions, as well as improved services and outcomes.

Focus group insight:

Focus group participants tended to have **negative views about Option 1b**, reflecting those in the engagement survey. Firstly, they were **concerned about Nottingham City dominating the new council** and the neighbouring areas being used to resolve its perceived financial issues, while receiving services that do not suit their local areas. The second reason related to the **exclusion of certain areas that neighbour the city**, such as West Brigford (and also Hucknall in Ashfield District Council area).

> "I'm against it. I feel like residents living in Broxtowe are going to have to pay for all the financial mismanagement of Nottingham City Council and subsidise the city and take on its problems. I don't see any benefits to anyone outside the city. Broxtowe is a very different area to the city, with different identity, heritage, character and issues. Are we now going to be treated the same way as those that live in Nottingham and receive the same types of services?" *Rural participant*

> "How did they draw up these boundaries. Why do they have Broxtowe and not say West Bridgford which is in Rushcliffe. There are definitely some places that are more like suburbs of Nottingham that you could argue for inclusion, but not some of the more rural areas in Broxtowe. Some of them are just a few miles away, but they feel a world away from the city." *Urban participant*

This said, some participants that **live in Gedling Borough Council area were more agnostic about the option, given their proximity and relationship to Nottingham:**

> "I'm fairly relaxed about it to be honest. I do feel like I live in a suburb of Nottingham – that's where I tell people I'm from. I work in Nottingham and we socialise and recreate in Nottingham. I appreciate some of the concerns around finances and management, but changes can be made to improve that. If this is all going ahead, then I can see the benefits of being part of a larger city council than with say the rest of Nottinghamshire that I have a bit less to do with." *Urban participant*

Participants living in other parts of Nottinghamshire had less to say about this option (or all the options) because they would not be in a council with Nottingham City. However, there were **concerns about being in a large council covering such a large area:**

> "On one level it doesn't really affect me that much, I'd be more worried if I was in one of the areas proposed for inclusion with Nottingham City. But on another level, this option geographically just doesn't sit well with me. The county-wide council is just so large. I live at the top of it and I'm wondering what I've got in common with areas and communities right at the bottom of it in Rushcliffe. It just feels like there should be three or four councils, not just two – it all fills a bit simplistic, which makes you worry about the thinking and evidence behind it all." *Rural participant*

Do you have any comments, concerns or suggestions about this option (Option 1e)?

This option is two new unitary councils, one covering Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Ashfield, and Gedling. The second covering Broxtowe, Nottingham City, and Rushcliffe.

Whilst there is more positivity towards this option, notable concerns remain including around the proposed boundaries and inclusion or exclusion of certain areas

6.14. There is **more positivity/support towards this option compared to 1b** with approximately a third of respondents supporting it or at least state that it is the best of two options. This in part is because some respondents say it **makes more sense geographically and/or is a cleaner North-South split** with a better division of populations and resources. Nottingham City respondents are most supportive, although question marks remain about the boundaries not being wholly logical and linked to the urban-suburban connections between the city and areas in its immediate vicinity and the way local residents live and connect with the city. Respondents living in Gedling are also more supportive about option 1e compared to 1b, although some that live closer to the city felt that it is more appropriate that they are part of a city/south council rather than one orientated towards the north.

6.15. This said, many respondents re-assert concerns about the option **joining outlying rural and other areas to the city that have little to no relationship with it, while excluding other areas** that are much closer geographically and more connected to the city (cited by approximately 25% of respondents). These concerns were particularly made by respondents living in Broxtowe and Rushcliffe Council areas.

6.16. Similarly, **concerns about bailing out Nottingham City Council** and inheriting its issues (cited by approximately 20% of respondents) and **rural-urban differences and associated concerns** (cited by approximately 20%) in relation to the city continued to be noted with this option, especially amongst respondents living in Broxtowe and Rushcliffe Council areas that are worried about being 'over-shadowed' or their voice lost with local identity, decision-making and priorities absorbed into the urban and city areas. Some respondents from Broxtowe and Rushcliffe Council areas said that if such an option were to go ahead those councils should take over the running of the new council.

6.17. Approximately 10% of respondents **outright oppose the option**, often citing issues raised earlier about local government reorganisation in general. Some of these respondents also **request more information and question the evidence base**, including around identifying the options and the practical reality of the potential benefits and savings.

6.18. Across both options, some respondents **suggested alternatives** including a one county option, a two-council option involving the city and immediate surrounding areas (but not to the current extent of proposed options) and then a wider county council, or a three-council solution – one in the north, one in the south and then one based around the city and its immediate vicinity.

Focus group insight:

Much of the discussion in the focus groups about Option 1e **reiterated points made about Option 1b, and the results of the engagement survey.** Participants said that whilst they felt **Option 1e was more logical, they also questioned the exclusion of some neighbouring areas to the north of the city and the inclusion of areas at the bottom** of Rushcliffe Borough Council in the option involving the city.

> "On the face of it this seems like a more logical and fair option, a more natural split between the north and the south of the county." *Urban participant*

> "This options resolves some of the issues we discussed about the other option like including West Bridgford, but you've now got an option that excludes some areas in Gedling Borough that are on the doorstep of Nottingham and instead includes some areas that are miles away from the city in really rural areas. I don't see how this can work as a coherent council." *Urban participant*

> "I live right at the bottom of Rushcliffe Borough in a small village. It's as rural as you can get. I try to avoid going into Nottingham and if I do, it's only to the outskirts. I have very little to do with it. So it feels strange that I'd then be in a council with Nottingham at its centre. I can't see how that would benefit me or my area in any way." *Rural participant*

Do you have any comments, concerns or suggestions about the development of this option (Nottingham City specific option)?

Nottingham City Council boundary review option that could include parts of Rushcliffe, Broxtowe, and Gedling as one of the unitary councils. The second council would cover the rest of Nottinghamshire – **only asked to respondents that live or work in Nottingham City.**

This is considered a sensible and logical solution by *Nottingham City respondents*, although concerns remain around fairness, urban-rural imbalance and that this may not resolve perceived deep-seated financial and service issues, while in practice it may be difficult to identify appropriate boundaries

6.19. This approach was often described as the **"most sensible and logical" solution** (cited by approximately half of respondents to this question) by Nottingham City respondents. Respondents that supported it said it is fairer with suburban residents who use city services paying city council tax and having voting rights, essentially creating a **better alignment between service use, taxation, and representation.** Some respondents also perceived it as potentially a **less disruptive and preferable alternative to wider structural reorganisation.** There was also support for the **concept of a city-specific solution and relatedly a strong city at the heart of the county.**

6.20. However, **concerns remain about fairness of boundaries and urban-rural divides**, potentially dragging rural areas into an urban focussed council and an urban area having to deliver and potentially subsidise services to a rural area (cited by approximately 20%). There is also **scepticism as to whether a larger council with new boundaries will solve financial pressures and service delivery issues** with some believing these are deep-seated and underlying in nature (cited by approximately 15%).

6.21. There are also **concerns and debate about the drawing up of new boundaries** – their appropriateness and the areas that would be included/excluded, which is not considered clear-cut or straight-forward (cited by approximately 10%). Relatedly, some respondents said that there is a **risk of disruption or disputes over boundaries, with concern that some of this could be politically motivated** (cited by approximately 5%).

6.22. Some respondents said that a boundary review, whilst potentially sensible, could be **more challenging to deliver as it involved breaking-up existing local councils**, which could undermine some of the potential cost-savings and service improvements (cited by approximately 5%). Similarly, a few respondents said that **existing council boundaries reflected local community connections, heritage and identity and breaking-up these council areas could be divisive**, especially if the boundaries are not identified appropriately (cited by approximately 5%). This was **especially cited in the case of West Bridgford, which is considered linked to the city but also an integral part of the Rushcliffe Borough Council area** and therefore risked undermining ties between the town and neighbouring villages and leaving the rest of the council area 'adrift' (cited by approximately 15%).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Engagement survey

Note: This is an export from an online version of the survey.

Give your views on the future of Local Government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Introduction

The way local councils in England are organised is being fundamentally changed for the first time in 50 years.

All nine local councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are working together to gather views on how local government should work in the future. This includes the city, county, and all district and borough councils. The survey is open to everyone who lives, works, or has an interest in the area. Your feedback will help shape proposals that reflect the needs and priorities of local communities.

The changes being considered are significant. If approved, all nine existing councils would be abolished and replaced with two new, larger councils. These new councils would each be responsible for delivering all local services in their area, bringing everything from housing and social care to waste collection and road maintenance under one organisation.

This would be a major shift from the current system, where responsibilities are split between different councils. The aim is to make services more joined-up, easier to access, and more responsive to local needs. It could also reduce duplication and overheads, helping to save money and make local government more efficient.

The feedback from this survey will help shape the final proposals, which must be submitted to Government by November 2025. The Government will then decide how and when the new arrangements will be introduced.

This questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete. **Please complete it by Sunday 14 September 2025.**

The survey is being conducted with support from Public Perspectives, an independent organisation that works with local councils and communities.

Your personal details are managed securely and within data protection laws. Your responses are anonymous and confidential. This means that we will not report your answers alongside your personal details in such a way that you can be identified. Each of the partner council privacy notices will apply and anonymised data will be shared between councils. Please visit the following to read Public Perspectives' privacy notice:

www.publicperspectives.co.uk/data-security-and-privacy/

Information in a different format:
If you need help or support to respond to this questionnaire, or would like it in an alternative format (large print, British Sign Language etc.) or language, please contact Public Perspectives via e-mail on: Nottinghamshire@publicperspectives.co.uk or Freephone: 0800 533 5386 (please leave a message and we will call you back).

Please read the background information before responding: Read background information

Click 'Next' below to begin responding to the questionnaire.

Living, working and studying in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Q1a.Are you responding as . . .?

Please select all relevant answers. These questions help us understand who is responding to the survey.

- ❑ A resident living in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire
- ❑ Someone who works in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire
- ❑ A voluntary or community organisation
- ❑ A Town or Parish Council
- ❑ A District / Borough / City / County Council employee
- ❑ Another public sector organisation
- ❑ A local councillor
- ❑ A business owner or business leader operating in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire
- ❑ Other

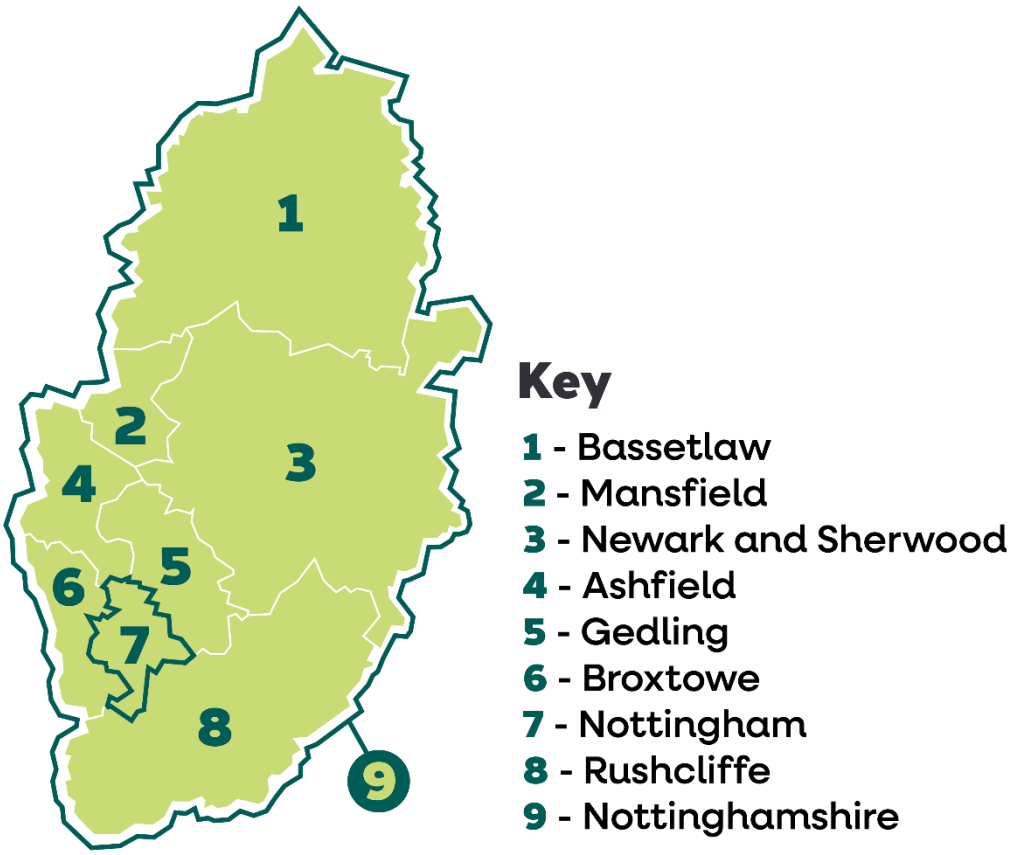
If 'Other', please state:

_____

Please state the name of the organisation or business you represent:

_____

To help you answer the following questions, this map shows the boundaries of the local councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire:



Q1b. Which council area does your organisation mainly operate in?

Please select all relevant answers.

- ❑Ashfield District Council area
- ❑Bassetlaw District Council area
- ❑Broxtowe Borough Council area
- ❑Gedling Borough Council area
- ❑Mansfield District Council area
- ❑Newark and Sherwood District Council area
- ❑Nottingham City Council area
- ❑Nottinghamshire County Council area
- ❑Rushcliffe Borough Council area
- ❑Across all of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
- ❑Outside of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
- ❑Don't know

Q2a. Which council area do you live in?

If you are uncertain which council covers your area, visit the following website and enter your postcode: **www.gov.uk/find-local-council**

Please select one answer only.

- ❑ Ashfield District Council area
- ❑ Bassetlaw District Council area
- ❑ Broxtowe Borough Council area
- ❑ Gedling Borough Council area
- ❑ Mansfield District Council area
- ❑ Newark and Sherwood District Council area
- ❑ Nottingham City Council area
- ❑ Rushcliffe Borough Council area
- ❑ Outside of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
- ❑ Don't know

Q2b. What is your postcode? (This is asked so we can analyse the results by different areas. We will not be able to identify you personally)

_____

Q3. Where is your main place of work or study?

Please select all relevant answers.

- ❑ Ashfield District Council area
- ❑ Bassetlaw District Council area
- ❑ Broxtowe Borough Council area
- ❑ Gedling Borough Council area
- ❑ Mansfield District Council area
- ❑ Newark and Sherwood District Council area
- ❑ Nottingham City Council area
- ❑ Nottinghamshire County Council area
- ❑ Rushcliffe Borough Council area
- ❑ Across all of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
- ❑ Outside of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
- ❑ Don't know
- ❑ Not applicable - not currently in work / education

If 'Outside of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire', where is your main place of work or study?

_____

Your local area

Q3a. How do you describe where you're from when talking to someone who doesn't live nearby? Which names or places do you mention?

Please list below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q3b. To what extent do you agree or disagree that you are proud to live in your local area?

Please select one answer only.

- ❑Strongly agree
- ❑Tend to agree
- ❑Neither agree nor disagree
- ❑Tend to disagree
- ❑Strongly disagree
- ❑Don't know

Q3c. Thinking generally, what would you say are most important in making somewhere a good place to live?

Please select all relevant answers.

- ❑Arts and cultural services such as theatres and museums
- ❑Activities and facilities for children and young people
- ❑Community events and activities and supporting local community groups
- ❑Decent and affordable homes
- ❑Health services such as mental health services and promoting healthy lifestyles
- ❑Jobs and supporting people into work
- ❑Keeping the streets and public areas clean and tidy
- ❑Maintaining roads and pavements
- ❑Parks, sports and leisure facilities
- ❑Public transport, roads and parking
- ❑Refuse collection and recycling
- ❑Regeneration of town centres / high streets, including shops and markets
- ❑Schools and places of learning
- ❑Support and services for older people and vulnerable groups
- ❑Supporting residents to reduce their impact on the environment
- ❑Tackling anti-social behaviour and reducing crime
- ❑Other
- ❑Don't know

If 'Other', please state:

_____

Q3d. And what are your priorities for improvement in the local area?

Please select all relevant answers.

- ❑ Arts and cultural services such as theatres and museums
- ❑ Activities and facilities for children and young people
- ❑ Community events and activities and supporting local community groups
- ❑ Decent and affordable homes
- ❑ Health services such as mental health services and promoting healthy lifestyles
- ❑ Jobs and supporting people into work
- ❑ Keeping the streets and public areas clean and tidy
- ❑ Maintaining roads and pavements
- ❑ Parks, sports and leisure facilities
- ❑ Public transport, roads and parking
- ❑ Refuse collection and recycling
- ❑ Regeneration of town centres / high streets, including shops and markets
- ❑ Schools and places of learning
- ❑ Support and services for older people and vulnerable groups
- ❑ Supporting residents to reduce their impact on the environment
- ❑ Tackling anti-social behaviour and reducing crime
- ❑ Nothing
- ❑ Other
- ❑ Don't know

If 'Other', please state:

_____

The current way councils are organised in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Currently, council services in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are delivered differently, depending on where you live.

In Nottinghamshire, local services are currently delivered under what is known as a 'two-tier' council structure. For example, your local borough or district council will collect your waste, but the county council will dispose of it. You will also be represented by two sets of councillors, borough or district councillors and county councillors.

Nottinghamshire County Council oversees county-wide services such as social care, education, and road maintenance. While several district and borough councils are responsible for services, including waste collection, housing and leisure centres.

Nottingham City Council operates as a 'unitary authority', meaning it provides all council services within the city of Nottingham.

In total, nine different councils provide services across the county (not including town and parish councils and these councils are not included in the reorganisation).

Q4. Before today, how aware were you of the current structure of councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, and the services each council provides?

Please select one answer only.

- ❑ I was not aware
- ❑ I was aware, but did not know much about it
- ❑ I was aware, and knew a little about it
- ❑ I was aware, and knew a reasonable amount about it
- ❑ I was aware, and knew a lot about it
- ❑ Don't know

Q5. How effective is the current structure of councils and the approach to service delivery in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire?

Please select one answer only.

- ❑ Very effective
- ❑ Somewhat effective
- ❑ Neither effective nor ineffective
- ❑ Somewhat ineffective
- ❑ Very ineffective
- ❑ Don't know

Why have you answered in this way?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Local Government Reorganisation

For the first time in 50 years the way local councils are set up in parts of England is being reviewed and modernised. In areas like Nottinghamshire, where there are currently two layers of local government (such as county and district councils), the Government is encouraging a move to a simpler system.

This change, called Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), would replace the current two-tier structure with a single council, known as a unitary authority. Instead of having separate councils responsible for different services, one council would take care of everything from roads and rubbish collection to housing and social care.

The goal is to bring services that are currently split across different councils into one place, with the aim of making them easier to access and more joined-up for residents. It also means fewer councils overall, which could lead to savings by cutting duplication and reducing overheads.

Local councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire have been asked to work together on proposals for how this new system could work best in their area. These proposals, which will include evidence and public feedback, need to be submitted by November 2025. The Government will then decide on the final arrangements.

Q6. Before today, how aware were you about the Government's plans to reorganise local councils across England?

Please select one answer only.

- ❑ I was not aware
- ❑ I was aware, but did not know much about it
- ❑ I was aware, and knew a little about it
- ❑ I was aware, and knew a reasonable amount about it
- ❑ I was aware, and knew a lot about it
- ❑ Don't know

Q7. What do you think are the main potential benefits, if any, of the Government's proposed reorganisation of local councils?

Please make comments below:

Q8. What concerns, if any, do you have about the Government's proposed reorganisation of local councils?

Please make comments below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Future councils

Q9. What should be most important when designing a new council?

Please select all relevant answers.

- ❑Ensuring services work together
- ❑Making the council the right size to be sustainable
- ❑Providing good value, reliable services
- ❑Saving money and using council tax wisely
- ❑Working better with other local councils and the East Midlands Mayor
- ❑Making it easier for people to have their say and get involved
- ❑Working with local neighbourhoods and communities
- ❑Meeting local needs and being fair to all parts of the area
- ❑Promoting local identity and culture
- ❑Other
- ❑Don't know

If 'Other', please state:

_____

Q10. What are the best ways for the new councils to involve people in local decisions?

Please select all relevant answers.

- ❑Working directly with neighbourhoods
- ❑Public meetings or drop-ins
- ❑Online surveys or polls
- ❑Local councillors visiting communities
- ❑Community groups or forums
- ❑Social media updates and feedback
- ❑Council website updates
- ❑Digital newsletters
- ❑Information sent via post
- ❑Engaging with parish and town councils
- ❑Other
- ❑Don't know

If 'Other', please state:

_____

Local Government Reorganisation across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

All councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire have been working together on a proposal to restructure how local government services are delivered in the area. An initial proposal was submitted to the Government in March 2025.

Since then, further work has been carried out to explore options in greater detail and gather supporting evidence. In line with government guidance to use existing district areas as the basis for reorganisation, two core options are being proposed. No final decision has been made by all councils on a single option, and some councils could still explore additional proposals alongside the two core options currently being proposed.

Under these proposals, the nine existing councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire would be replaced by two new unitary councils. Each new council would be responsible for delivering all local government services in its area.

You can see a map showing the geography of the two proposals later in this questionnaire.

Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to replace the nine existing councils with two councils to run local government across the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire area?

Please select one answer only.

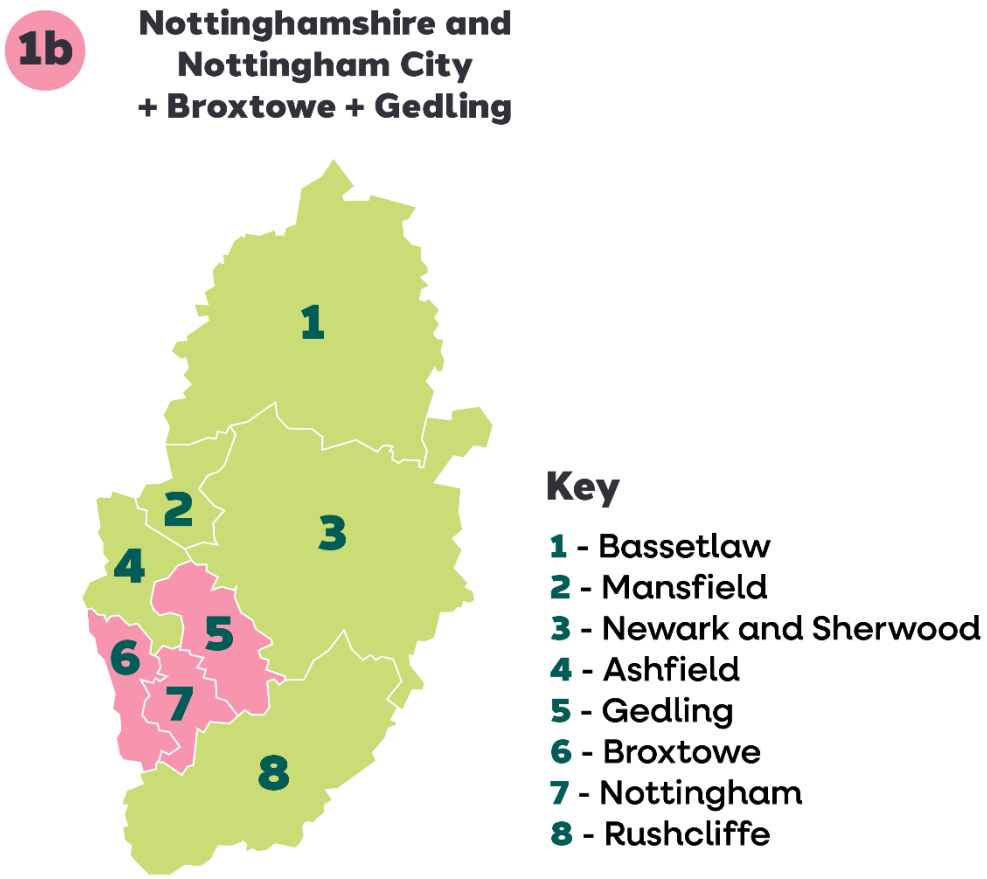
- ❑ Strongly agree
- ❑ Tend to agree
- ❑ Neither agree nor disagree
- ❑ Tend to disagree
- ❑ Strongly disagree
- ❑ Don't know

Why have you answered in this way?

The core options

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City + Broxtowe + Gedling (known as Option 1b)

This option is two new unitary councils, one covering Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Ashfield, and Rushcliffe. The second covering Gedling, Broxtowe, and Nottingham City.

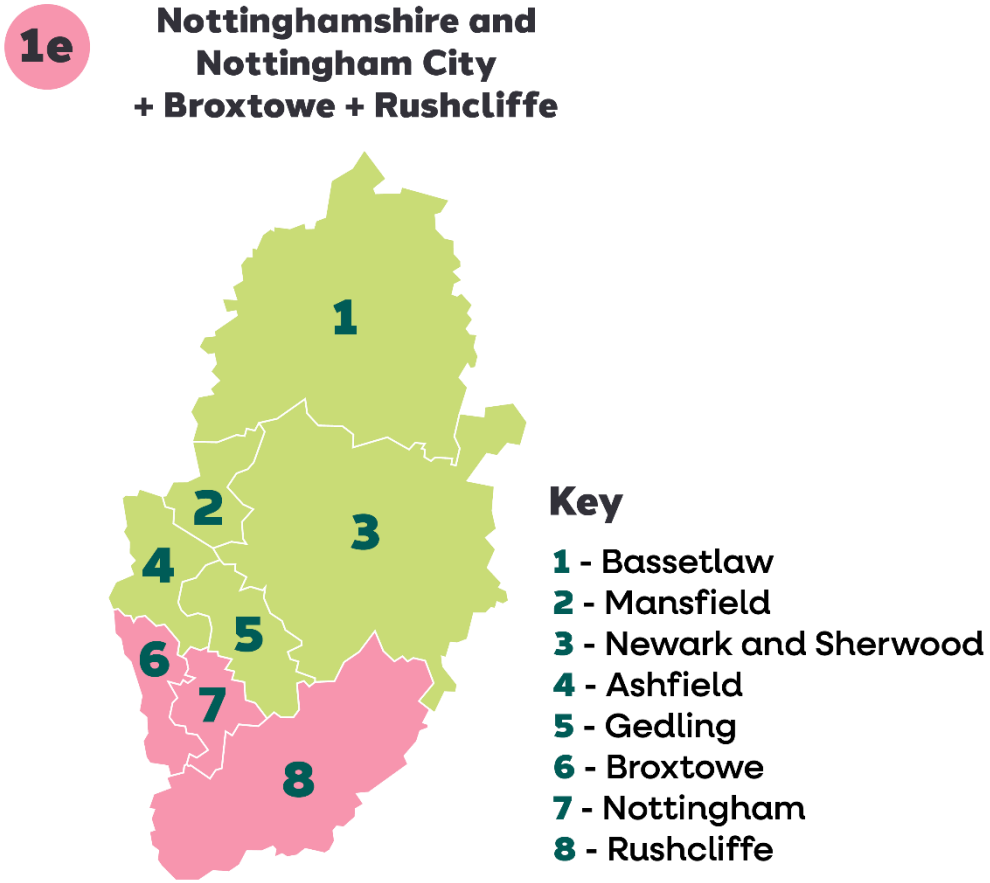


Q12. Do you have any comments, concerns or suggestions about this option?

Please make comments below:

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City + Broxtowe + Rushcliffe (known as Option 1e)

This option is two new unitary councils, one covering Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Ashfield, and Gedling. The second covering Broxtowe, Nottingham City, and Rushcliffe.



Q13. Do you have any comments, concerns or suggestions about this option?

Please make comments below:

Nottingham City Council boundary review option

This option is being presented to anyone living or working in the Nottingham City Council area.

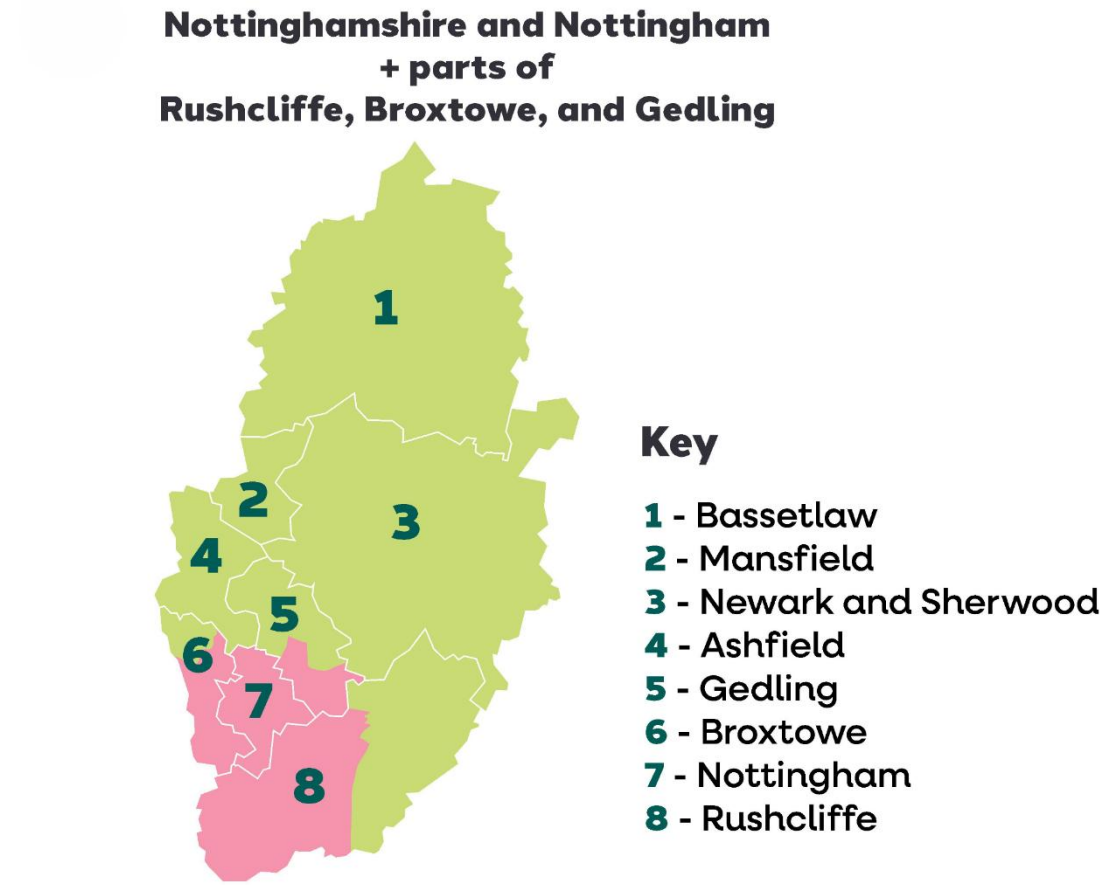
The Government has suggested that there may be an opportunity for a boundary review, where strong justification exists. A boundary review looks at the current local council boundaries, the communities within them and the services they access to see if they work well or whether new boundaries may work better. A boundary review could allow councils to look at options outside of their existing boundaries.

Nottingham City Council is currently exploring a boundary review option that may include parts of Rushcliffe, Broxtowe, and Gedling as one of the unitary councils. The second council would cover the rest of Nottinghamshire.

The rationale is that while the official population of Nottingham is 328,000, the built-up area of the city is much greater, and there are people who live in the suburbs, work in the city, and use Nottingham City services, but who can't vote in city elections and don't contribute to city council tax because of the current council boundaries.

A map is included below to indicate what this could look like, however Nottingham City Council would like to understand people's views in order to develop the option further.

Example of city's boundary review option



Q13a. Do you have any comments, concerns or suggestions about the development of this option?

Please make comments below:

Other comments

Q14. Do you have any other comments, concerns or suggestions about the proposals for the reorganisation of local government across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire?

Please make comments below:

Q15. How did you hear about this survey?

Please select all relevant answers.

- ❑Council website
- ❑Council e-mail or newsletter
- ❑Other council communication or event
- ❑Council social media
- ❑Other social media
- ❑Via a local councillor
- ❑Via a local organisation
- ❑Poster or flyer
- ❑Direct e-mail or letter
- ❑An advert in a local newspaper
- ❑A relative or a friend
- ❑Other
- ❑Don't know

If 'Other', please state:

About you

We would like to ask you some questions about yourself and your household. This will help councils understand the opinions and impact of the proposals on different groups of people that live or work in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Please be assured that your answers are confidential and will be treated anonymously. This means that we will not report your answers alongside your personal details in such a way that you can be identified. All your answers and personal information will be managed securely and in accordance with data protection laws.

This information is **optional**. If you do not wish to complete this section, you can skip these questions and then submit your responses.

Q16. Are you . . .?

Please select one answer only.
- ❑Female
- ❑Male
- ❑Another term
- ❑Prefer not to say

Q17. What is your age group?

Please select one answer only.
- ❑Under 18
- ❑18-24
- ❑25-34
- ❑35-44
- ❑45-54
- ❑55-64
- ❑65 and over
- ❑Prefer not to say

Q18. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

Please select one answer only.
- ❑Yes, which reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities a lot
- ❑Yes, which reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities a little
- ❑Yes, but they don't reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities at all
- ❑No
- ❑Prefer not to say

Q19. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group or background?

Please select one answer only.
- ❑White British or Irish
- ❑Central or Eastern European
- ❑Other White background
- ❑Asian or Asian British
- ❑Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
- ❑Mixed background
- ❑Other ethnic group
- ❑Prefer not to say

Q20. Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?

Please select one answer only.

- ❑Owner-occupier
- ❑Privately renting
- ❑Renting from the council or housing association
- ❑Other
- ❑Prefer not to say

Next steps

You're nearly finished – thank you for taking part so far.

Before you submit your response, please take a moment to read the information below about what happens next.

Following the close of the survey on Sunday 14 September 2025, we will be collating and analysing all of the responses received from across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to understand the views of everyone who has taken part.

The views of people shared in this survey will feed into the development of final proposals, which must be submitted to government by 28 November 2025. Your local council will keep you updated as things progress.

Click 'Submit' below to send us your responses.

Once submitted, you will be redirected to the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Government Reorganisation website.

Appendix 2: Stakeholder in-depth interview discussion guide

Key aims and approach

Four on-line focus groups are being conducted with residents to provide further insight, complementing the findings from the questionnaire. The aims of these are:

- Opportunity for an informed and in-depth discussion with residents about living in the county and future local government proposals. These discussions will explicitly explore:
    - Sense of place and identity
    - Understanding of local government reorganisation and high-level perceptions about change, including potential benefits, concerns and mitigations
    - Future local council priorities and design
    - Views on changing from nine councils to two, including opportunities, concerns and mitigations
    - Views on each of the specific core options, including opportunities, concerns and mitigations

In essence, the focus groups will explore in-depth the ground covered in the questionnaire, and consequently the discussion guide is built around this.

9 participants will be recruited for each group (with 6-8 participating in practice per group because there will always be one to two drop-outs, despite best efforts to maximise participation – 6 or 7 participants tends to be the optimum number for an on-line discussion allowing sufficient opportunity for each participant to share their views).

As discussed, two groups will be with residents living in urban areas and two living in rural areas (these will be both self-defined and also validated against their postcode). This approach both allows us to explore the differences and similarities in perception between residents living in these different types of locations as well as reach a broad diversity of residents across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Each group will include a mix of key demographics such as location, sex, age and ethnicity so that the groups broadly reflect the profile of residents living in urban and rural areas.

The groups will take place on-line, via Zoom, on Thursday 4th September and Monday 8th September (these are provisional dates currently, and all groups will be completed by the close of the engagement exercise):

- 5.50pm to 7.30pm
- 7.50pm to 9.30pm

Participants will be offered a £50 thank you gift (incentive) for taking part and to maximise participation.

In advance of the discussions, the link to the engagement website will be shared and participants will be asked to review, although we will not rely on this and will be feeding participants with information throughout the discussions.

Discussion Guide

Please note: This is a discussion guide and will be used flexibly depending on the flow of discussion. This means that not every question will necessarily be asked in the way or order outlined below. However, we will make sure that all the key issues are explored fully.

On log-in:

- Participants will be held in a virtual waiting room and invited into the main forum at the start of the discussion.
- On joining the main room, participants will be asked to check that their audio and visual works and name labels changed to first names only (for ease and anonymity).

Introduction (c2-3 mins)

Key points to note:

- Background – why we're here and some of the things we plan to discuss [i.e. living in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and proposed changes to local councils in the area].
- Introduce facilitator.
- Introduce observers (if present).
- Ask to record the interview.
- Stress anonymity and confidentiality.
- Set ground rules – no right or wrong answers, honest and open, range of views encouraged.
- Respect different opinions.
- Encourage disagreement, agreement and debate – do it politely.
- One voice at a time.
- Allow others the space and time to share their views.
- Introduce key features of Zoom such as chat function and emoticons, and encourage use.
- Stress important that patient and flexible given challenges of technology and conducting on-line discussions.
- Stress that important people participate and input as much as they might in a face-to-face group – we can be relaxed and informal, but we want to make sure we cover the ground and use the time as effectively as possible.
- What happens to the information? [i.e. feed into decision-making process, along with a range of other information and evidence].
- Any questions?

Key lines of questioning

Warm-up, context and headline perceptions (c10 mins)

- Just so we can get to know each other a little bit, can I ask each of you to say briefly:
  - Your name?
  - Roughly, where you live?
  - What do you think about the area you live in? Why – what's good and what could be improved?

Your local area – sense of place and local identity (c15 mins)

- How do you describe where you're from when talking to someone who doesn't live nearby? Which names or places do you mention? Why do you use those names or places?

  Prompt/probe:
  - Do you see yourself as living in an urban, suburban, semi-rural or rural area – why?
  - Do you consider yourself as living in Nottinghamshire? Why?
  - What do you consider you nearest town? Why?
  - What is your association or link with Nottingham? Why?
  - Do you feel like you are part of your local authority area? Why?

Local government reorganisation (c20 mins)

[Note: Facilitator to share screen and read out information about the way councils are currently organised as per the questionnaire]

- What do you think about the current structure of councils and the approach to service delivery in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire? Why?

  Prompt/probe:
  - Before today, how aware were you of the current structure?
  - What's good about it/what works well? Why?
  - What's not good about it/could be improved? Why?
  - How well do the current arrangements suit an area such as yours (i.e. urban/rural)? Why?

[Note: Facilitator to share screen and read out information about local government reorganisation as per the questionnaire]

- What do you think about the Government's plans to reorganise local councils across England? Why?

  Prompt/probe:
  - Before today, how aware were you of these plans?
  - What do you think are the potential benefits of this, if any? Why?
  - What concerns, if any, do you have about the plans to reorganise local councils? Why?

Future local council design and priorities (c20 mins)

- What should be most important when designing a new council (e.g. what should be the key principles that it adopts or it is built around or tries to achieve)? Why?

  Prompt/probe:

  - Ensuring services work together
  - Making the council the right size to be sustainable
  - Providing good value, reliable services
  - Saving money and using council tax wisely
  - Working better with other local councils and the East Midlands Mayor
  - Making it easier for people to have their say and get involved
  - Working with local neighbourhoods and communities
  - Meeting local needs and being fair to all parts of the area
  - Promoting local identity and culture
  - Other

- What are the best ways for the new councils to involve people in local decisions? Why?
- How well is this done now? Why?
- And does this matter to you? Why?

  Prompt/probe:

  - Working directly with neighbourhoods
  - Public meetings or drop-ins
  - Online surveys or polls
  - Local councillors visiting communities
  - Community groups or forums
  - Social media updates and feedback
  - Council website updates
  - Digital newsletters
  - Information sent via post
  - Engaging with parish and town councils
  - Other

- What do you think should be the priorities for any new council to improve your local area? Why?

  Prompt/probe:

  - What's important to you? Why?
  - What's currently working well, and that you would like to continue working well? Why?
  - What's not working well and is important to change/improve? Why?

Local Government Reorganisation across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, including core options (c20-25 mins)

[Note: Facilitator to share screen and read out information about the proposal to move from 9 to 2 councils as per the questionnaire]

- What do you think about the proposal to replace the nine existing councils with two councils to run local government across the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire area?

  Prompt/probe:
  - What do you think are the potential benefits of this, if any? Why?
  - What concerns, if any, do you have about this proposal? Why?
  - How may it impact you and your family? Why?
  - How may it impact your area? Why?
  - Is there anything you would like considered to help promote any potential benefits and/or mitigate/reduce any potential negative impacts?

[Note: Facilitator to share screen and read out information about the core option 1b as per the questionnaire]

- What do you think about this option? Why?

  Prompt/probe:
  - What do you think are the potential benefits of this, if any? Why?
  - What concerns, if any, do you have about this option? Why?
  - How may it impact you and your family? Why?
  - How may it impact your area? Why?
  - Is there anything you would like considered to help promote any potential benefits and/or mitigate/reduce any potential negative impacts?

[Note: Facilitator to share screen and read out information about the core option 1e as per the questionnaire]

- What do you think about this option? Why?

  Prompt/probe:
  - What do you think are the potential benefits of this, if any? Why?
  - What concerns, if any, do you have about this option? Why?
  - How may it impact you and your family? Why?
  - How may it impact your area? Why?
  - Is there anything you would like considered to help promote any potential benefits and/or mitigate/reduce any potential negative impacts?

Summing up (c5 mins)

- Overall, what do you think about the proposals and options?
- Are there any alternatives you would like considered?
- Is there anything else you would like to say this subject?
- Facilitator to sum up the key messages identified from the discussion to sense check that understood correctly.

- Facilitator to outline next steps – what will happen to the information.
- Sign-post to on-line consultation, if not already participated.
- Any final points or questions?
- Outline how thank you gifts will be provided.
- Thank and close.

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