

23rd October 2025

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

1. INTRODUCTION

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee often reviews consultation reports as part of items on the work plan and the Committee has requested a report setting out how the Council undertakes its consultation work with residents.

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee about how the council consults with residents and how the council are working to improve engagement with harder to reach groups.

2. SCOPE

The Council carries out a varying number of consultations in any year. Some of these will be delivered in house by council officers (e.g. the Community Governance Review) and others may be delivered by external companies (Hampshire Council's joint Local Government Review Survey)

The focus of this report is on the consultations that are open to the public, where demographic questions have been asked that enable us to review how representative the consultation responses are.

This report will set out:

- How we use surveys to engage the community to inform Council decision making
- How we ensure that consultations and surveys responses provide reliable and useful data
- How might we improve response rates and representation across the community

At Appendix A is list of the consultations the Council has carried out in the past year and their response rates.

3. BACKGROUND

The council consults on a wide range of issues from service delivery changes, to council structural changes (Local Government Review & Community Governance Review), to understanding residents views and priorities (annual residents surveys).

The online survey tool (SurveyMonkey) was first purchased in 2012 as a way of engaging residents with surveys via the council's website. Before the move to digital, consultations were often carried out by external companies, either by paper, face to face interviews or by telephone.

The online surveying tool was originally used as an addition to paper surveys for specific council services surveys, for example Council Tax Support surveys. In 2017 the council engaged with residents with the 'Option to convert Southwood Golf Course into new natural open parkland', this survey received 2,413 responses with 93.4% being online responses. After this survey it seemed clear that online surveys were effective and cost efficient, particularly when the subject matter was of wide interest or, as with the golf Course closure, controversial.

After this the council carried out a pilot residents survey in 2018, to see if an online based residents survey would get the responses needed to understand residents' views. The 2018 survey received 1,042 responses (with 99.6% of responses online), at the time getting over 1,000 responses with a population 95,800 (2017 ONS mid-year population estimate) fell within the range for the results being statistically significant with a low margin of error at the appropriate confidence interval.

In recent years due to budget constraints, the majority of council's surveys have been carried out in-house. This has limited consultation costs to in-house staff resources (approximately 0.2 dedicated FTE) plus input from the Communications and where appropriate the Community Development Team. In addition there is a small budget for licensing costs and printing. Having the data in house means it can easily be investigated and interrogated. Also, it can ensure a quick turnaround from when a consultation closes to when the consultation report is published.

If a project or service has a budget for a consultation they may use external companies for their surveys. Sometimes this is the most appropriate method, particularly for specialist or targeted consultation.

However, whilst the online self-selection method of engaging with the residents may often receive 1,000 plus responses, respondents may not be representative of the population of the Borough. This differs from surveys carried usually out by external companies which a quota can be specified to ensure numbers of respondents and enable sample respondents to be more representative of our borough demographic.

Note: some consultation surveys must be self-selecting (open for anyone to fill in) for legal reasons.

4. CREATION OF SURVEYS FOR CONSULTATIONS

For surveys carried out in house, services will usually contact the Communications team in the first instance. The Communications team alongside the policy and performance officer who holds Councils online surveying account, will work together with Services create the questions that will give them the information they need, in a non-bias and easy to understand way. However, some services will need to some questions written in a certain way for legal purposes.

If a project or service uses external companies, the Communications team will usually be involved to some extent. Whenever a survey issue is to impact residents, the team are generally involved at an early stage, and if not with survey creation, then in terms of review, publication of the website and promotion.

5. PROMOTING CONSULTATIONS

Generally, for self-selecting online surveys the main methods of sharing consultations include;

- Emails to all those who have signed up to receive news and consultations (6,374 people)
- Shared via social media (Facebook, X, Nextdoor, Instagram)

In addition there may also be:

- Articles in Arena
- Paper copies at the Council Offices reception and/or other locations across the Borough
- Attendance at events it details of the survey or paper copies
- 'Roadshows', drop-ins at the Council offices or other place and static displays
- Letters sent to directly those most affected
- Some surveys will be shared with/by partner organisations
- Some surveys will be shared with/by schools and colleges
- Some surveys will be shared with businesses

The extent of the methods used will be dependent on what the survey is about, the timelines of when the consultation happens and for how long they run for and the budget and resources available.

Some consultations have a statutory amount of time the consultations must run for, this could be four, six, eight weeks or even longer. Good practice would suggest four weeks would be the minimum and eight weeks maximum.

Where multiple methods are used it is difficult to determine how a respondent found out about a survey and this is not currently measured. It is possible to correlate higher numbers of on-line survey being completed with, for example, a social media post or delivery of Arena. Appendix B of this report sets out 2 examples showing responses received over a timeline of promotions of a survey.

There are other limitations to understanding the response rate including :

- Some consultations are technical and specialist, therefore do not have a board appeal
- No control of when someone might share a social media post to a large group (for example Aldershot and Farnborough social media communities)
- No control of when someone might share and email with a larger group (for example schools and colleges)
- Paper copies are not always inputted straight away (there could be a delay of a few days)
- There maybe a few surveys running at the same time risking consultation fatigue
- Not everyone will look at their emails or at Arena the moment they receive it

Note: Arena may take up to a week to be delivered to households and normally some residents will request paper copies.

6. ACCESSIBILITY OF SURVEYS

All surveys are produced with a view to enabling easy responses taking into account reading ages and to provide those with limited English the best chance of understanding. Where questions are repeated in survey year after year, to get an understanding to if views are changing, the council will consider minimal changes to the wording to make the question easier to understand but still be appropriate to be considered a comparison with previous years. to

questions asked previously. For example, changing satisfied and unsatisfied, to maybe happy and unhappy.

For the digitally excluded making paper copies of surveys available on request or at events is very important. When a survey is advertised via Arena there is always be an option to request a paper survey.

Online surveys have the ability to be read aloud by a browser or other technology and work to ensure all aspects of the survey are accessible, including images. The council may also considered larger print versions for those with eyesight issues on request.

7. SHARING RESULTS OF CONSULTATIONS WITH PUBLIC

Survey results similarly are published in an accessible format and usually on the Council's website. In some instances a consultation report will be shared as part of a decision report and will be available via the councils meeting agendas. The council is working towards sharing all results of its consultations via a single web page:

[Results from our consultations - Rushmoor Borough Council](#)

8. COLLECTING CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

As part of the Equality Act 2010, the council must make sure their services are open and accessible to everyone, and that they treat people fairly and appropriately and in consultations, and hear all views. Council surveys often include demographic/personal questions to check they are doing this and help them to understand better the answers we receive.

The council should only collect personal data when there is a reason for it to be collected and it will used for this purpose.

If the council collects demographic information from respondents, the council generally collects the following data for our residents (examples of the questions can be seen in appendix B):

- Age
- Sex
- Ethnic group
- If they have any health condition that affect their day-to-day living
- And more recently an armed forces veteran question

The questions are all voluntary and have a prefer not to say option.

The council no longer collects this data from those under 18 years of age as UK GDPR treats children as vulnerable data subject, therefore minimising data collection from those under 18 years of age reduces possible safeguarding concerns and risks.

Town and ward data is also sometimes collected to understand whether the respondent's geographic location effects their view.

Note: External companies may have their own demographic questions that they require to ask to maintain their own ethical and professional standards.

9. SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Not all surveys the Council undertakes receive a representative response or a level of response that would be considered statistically significant or could be relied upon in isolation to make a decision. Appendix D show the characteristics of the respondents to the councils most recent or larger surveys. In appendix D the only survey that is fully representative is the Local Government Review survey where an external company carried out the consultation. The other surveys had the following themes of underrepresentation:

- In Rushmoor the largest ethnic group is the Nepali community accounting 10.6% of all residents (2021 Census). In all the surveys listed in Appendix D the 'Asian other' group which includes the Nepali community is often underrepresented in responses.
- In all surveys, residents under 34 years of age are underrepresented.
- In Surveys that collect data on where people live and invite residents to select their town Aldershot residents are generally underrepresented.
- Males are also generally underrepresented. Interestingly this not the case in the Community Governance Review survey and one of the Local Government Review surveys. This may suggest the number responses from male and female respondent also depends on the topic of the survey.

10. BENEFITS OF USING EXTERNAL COMPANIES FOR REPRESENTATIVE SURVEY SAMPLES

The cost of using external companies for surveys varies depending on type, survey size, sample size, method and analysis. For example, a representative face to face residents survey with a sample size of 500 could cost between £15,000 and £25,000. However, the company can ensure that the survey is representative of the borough by how it collects responses and by weighting responses. As mentioned above, out the councils' recent surveys only part of the Local Government Review survey carried out by an external company is representative.

11. CURRENT IDEAS ON REACHING THOSE THAT ARE UNDERREPRESENTED

A group of Officers have been working to understand how to increase responses, and in particular from those who are underrepresented. The current ideas from this group are:

For an increase in total numbers responding:

- Where appropriate offer a prize draw (for example pantomime tickets)
- Attend more events and town centres at the weekends (these could be focused in areas of low response) – resource implications

For an increase from the Nepali community

- Have the survey in Nepali. However, this has to be paper version or possibly a PDF form. Responses to the open question will need to be translated back into English – resource implications
- Working with the *Citizens Advice* to increase survey respondents – budget implications

For an increase from male respondents and those under 34 years of age

- Ask sports and fitness groups/clubs to share surveys

- Share with colleges and possible have a stand at colleges during the day – resource implications

12. HOW DO WE KNOW IF THE COUNCIL IS DOING CONSULTATION WELL

There are no specific targets for surveys, as the range in size, scope and complexity varies. The council aims for in-house surveys to have over 1,000 responses and be as representative as possible.

The following residents survey question has been identified as a key measure in the Council's performance monitoring:

To what extent do you think the Council acts on the concerns of local residents?

This question can be used to indicate whether the residents feel like they are being listened to. This question was last asked in 2023 with 33.5% indicating that they thought the council acted on their concerns a great deal and a fair amount. The question is due to be asked again in the 2025 residents survey, due to commence in late October/November.

13. SUMMARY

Carrying out surveys in house can provide enough responses to be statistically significant. However, the respondents may not be representative of the local community. The groups that are often underrepresented are the Nepali community, those under 34 years of age, males and those from Aldershot. The type of survey also affects the response rate. The council has ideas to improve responses rates from particular groups but have not had the chance to carry these out.

Level of budget and other resources has a significant impact on the decision to undertake survey's in-house or externally.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - List all of the consultations the Council has carried out in the past year

Appendix B – Responses to sharing methods used with in-house surveys

Appendix C – Example of demographic questions

Appendix D– Survey respondents

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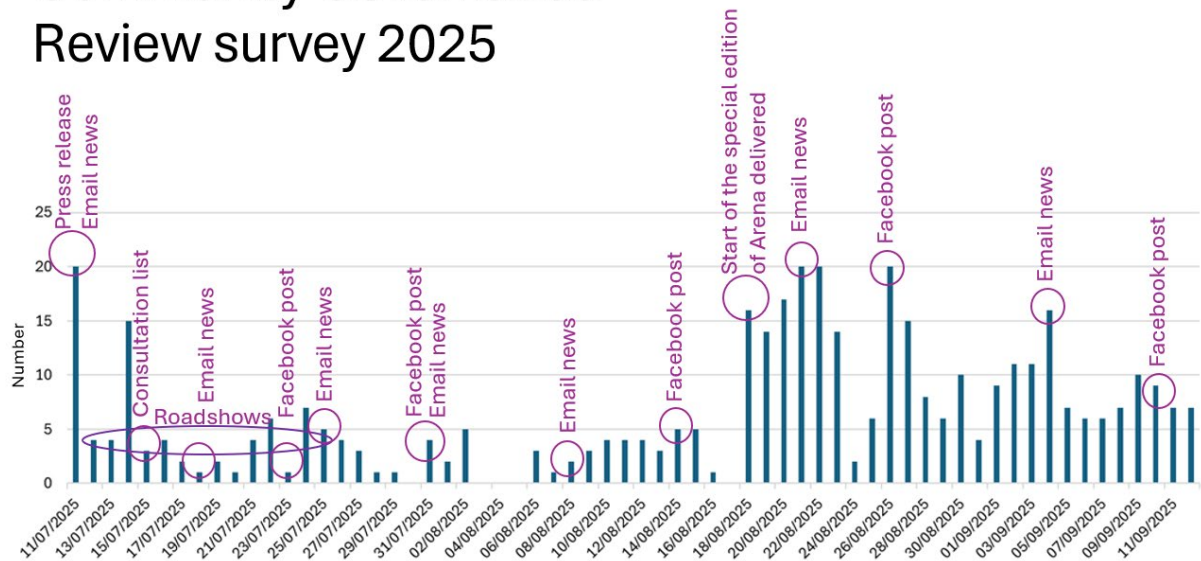
Appendix A - list all of the consultations the Council has carried out in the past year

A list of all public consultations and resident surveys	Date	The total number of responses	Links to any final reports or summaries produced	Details of how the findings were used in council decision-making or strategy.	The total spend on consultations, surveys.
Community Governance Review Consultation	July to September 2025	412	https://democracy.rushmoor.gov.uk/documents/s15558/Annex%20%20-%20Community%20Governance%20Review%20Update%20and%20Next%20Steps.pdf	Currently being used to make decisions about introducing Parish Councils or Neighbourhood Committees in Rushmoor	Carried out in house using SurveyMonkey. Staff time and social media promotion. Special edition of the Council Magazine to advertise the survey (printing and postage) - £5123
Basingstoke and Dene, Hart and Rushmoor Local Government Reorganisation Survey - Joint Survey	June to August 2025	507 face to face 483 self-selecting	Summary not published yet	Used to make a business case to Government around the future of Hampshire Councils	£12,175 payment to external company
Farnborough New Leisure Centre proposals - Have your say Consultation	July 2025	483	Survey Analysis: New Farnborough Leisure Centre	Results used to inform design proposals for the FLC and in the statement of community involvement for planning	Staff time, social media promotion and external contractors £2,769.13
Our Place, Our Future: Shaping council services in Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight (Local Government Reorganisation) - Joint survey	June to July 2025	All - 13334. Rushmoor - 156	lgr-appendices.pdf	Used to make a business case to Government around the future of Hampshire Councils	£6,853 payment to external company
Welfare reforms survey	May to June 2025	58	https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?AnalyzerToken=VBw5dwobxaALPUyqsEeEU6QGxrlxW5Q&id=xrIKROOSyU6L0zpYWLz9mQkQRObrVVHuzt9kk5Z2sdUMzBZSVBSOVVOQUFVNUVHTFUxUjk1MFZGTC4u	Used to respond to a governments consultation	Carried out in house using Microsoft Forms. Staff time and social media promotion

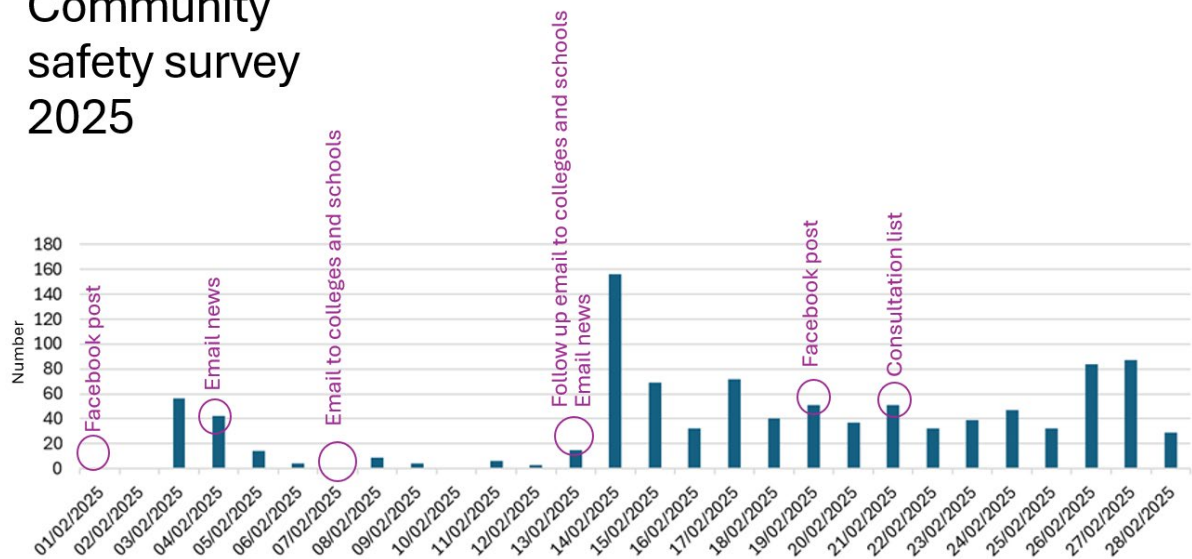
Rushmoor Physical Activity Survey 2025	April 2025 to May 2025	565	Results not published yet	This formed part of placemaking information and some of the responses were used to inform the leisure centre	£2,400 for this survey and the Rushmoor Children and Young People Health & Physical Activity Survey
Rushmoor Children and Young People Health & Physical Activity Survey	April 2025 to May 2025	3	No report from the 3 responses	Used in future Rushmoor Youth meetings.	As above
Have your say on the polling place in Fernhill FB polling district	April to May 2025	72	Summary not published yet	Results will be used to inform a decision about the polling Places in Fernhill Ward	Carried out in house using SurveyMonkey. Staff time and social media promotion
Local Validation List	February to March 2025	1187	Local validation list - Rushmoor Borough Council	Responses were used to form the published validation requirements list.	Carried out in house, using email correspondence, staff time and social media promotion.
How safe do you feel living in Aldershot and Farnborough	February 2025	1016	Community Safety Survey Results 2025	We used the survey results to inform the partnership strategic assessment, an annual document analysing local crime and antisocial behaviour data, which helps to set priorities for the next year.	Carried out in house using SurveyMonkey. Staff time and social media promotion
Aldershot West. South Farnborough, Farnborough Street and Farnborough Hill Conservation Area Adoption	December 2024 to February 2025	250	Conservation areas - Rushmoor Borough Council	Responses used to create the respective Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plans	Carried out in house, using email correspondence, staff time and social media promotion.
Open Space Survey	August to September 2024	610	Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, which is due to be adopted and published by the end of 2025	Responses will form part of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, which is due to be adopted and published by the end of 2025	Carried out in house using Microsoft Forms, staff time and social media promotion.

Appendix B – Responses received timeline and promotion method examples

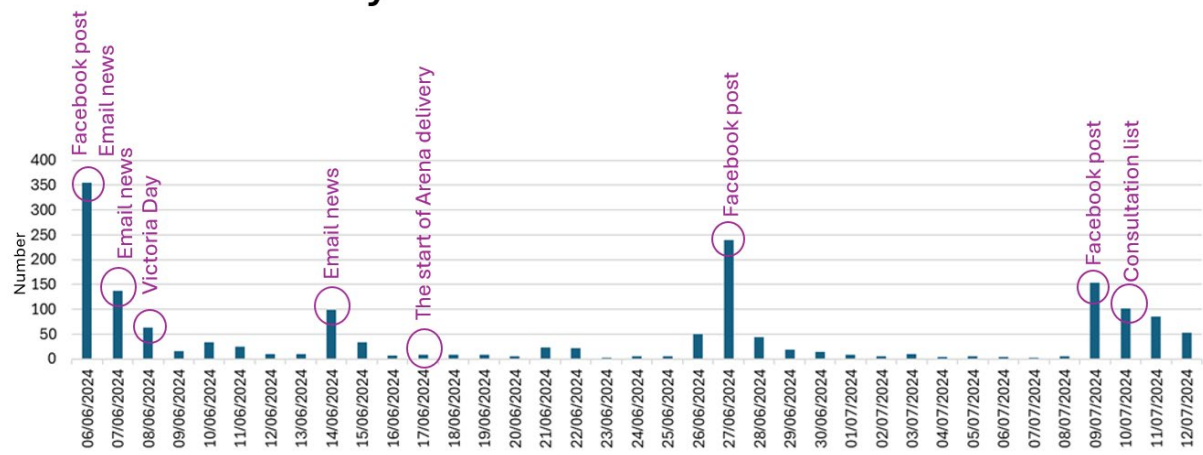
Community Governance Review survey 2025



Community safety survey 2025



Resident survey 2024



Appendix C – Example of demographic questions

What is your sex?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ I'd prefer not to say

Which one of the following age bands do you belong to?

- ☐ 18 - 24 years
- ☐ 25 – 34 years
- ☐ 35 – 44 years
- ☐ 45 – 54 years
- ☐ 55 – 64 years
- ☐ 65 - 74 years
- ☐ 75 - 84 years
- ☐ 85+ years
- ☐ I'd prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to have any health conditions or disabilities, which limit your daily activities?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I'd prefer not to say

Are you currently serving in the UK Armed Forces or have you previously served in the UK Armed Forces?

- ☐ Yes, I am currently serving in the UK Armed Forces
- ☐ Yes, I previously served in the UK Armed Forces
- ☐ No
- ☐ I'd prefer not to say

What is your ethnic group?

- ☐ White - British
- ☐ White – Irish
- ☐ White – Gypsy/Traveller
- ☐ White – other
- ☐ Mixed - white and black Caribbean
- ☐ Mixed - white and black African
- ☐ Mixed - White and Asian
- ☐ Mixed – other
- ☐ Asian or British Asian – Nepali
- ☐ Asian or British Asian – Indian
- ☐ Asian or British Asian – Pakistani
- ☐ Asian or British Asian – Bangladeshi
- ☐ Asian or British Asian – Chinese
- ☐ Asian – other
- ☐ Black or British black – Caribbean
- ☐ Black or British black – African
- ☐ Black – other
- ☐ Arab
- ☐ I'd prefer not to say
- ☐ Any other background (Please specify)

Appendix D – Survey respondents

Key

Overrepresented in survey respondents	Underrepresented in survey respondents
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Rushmoor residents' surveys 2023 and 2024

- Self-selecting survey
- In-house surveys shared via social media and email news
- Article in Arena
- Shared at some events (including Victoria Day)

Residents Surveys	Rushmoor 18+ from 2021 Census	2023 Survey 18+	2024 Survey 18+
Aldershot	40.7%	35.3%	39.2%
Farnborough	59.3%	34.7%	60.8%
Female	50.5%	58.0%	67.8%
Male	49.5%	42.0%	32.2%
Health/disability	16.5%	18.2%	20.8%
Previously served in UK armed forces	6.7%	N/A	4.6%
Age 18 -24	9.5%	0.7%	0.9%
Age 25 - 34	20.8%	8.5%	9.0%
Age 35 - 44	18.6%	22.2%	21.9%
Age 45 - 54	17.1%	28.1%	21.7%
Age 55 - 64	14.8%	27.4%	22.3%
Age 65 - 74	10.5%	11.9%	18.0%
Age 75 - 84	6.5%	1.2%	5.6%
Age 85+	2.2%	0.0%	0.5%
White British	71.3%	86.9%	85.6%
Other Asian including Nepali	11.2%	1.0%	2.2%
Total number of respondents		1,509	1,686
Link to published results		Resident Survey Report 2023	Living in Rushmoor 2024 – Tell us what you think

Survey respondent figures calculated excluding the prefer not to says and respondents under 18

Community Safety Survey 2025

- Self-selecting survey
- In-house survey shared via social media and email news
- Shared with local schools and colleges (most of these are based in Farnborough)

Note: over 45% of all respondents to this survey were under 18 years of age as we were keen to get views of young people.

2025	Rushmoor 18+ from 2021 Census	Survey 18+	All survey respondents
Aldershot	40.7%	42.2%	32.4%
Farnborough	59.3%	57.8%	67.6%
Female	50.5%	63.2%	59.7%
Male	49.5%	36.8%	40.3%
Health/disability	16.5%	21.1%	15.9%
Age 18 -24	9.5%	2.6%	N/A
Age 25 - 34	20.8%	10.8%	N/A
Age 35 - 44	18.6%	20.1%	N/A
Age 45 - 54	17.1%	18.9%	N/A
Age 55 - 64	14.8%	22.5%	N/A
Age 65 - 74	10.5%	18.2%	N/A
Age 75 - 84	6.5%	5.7%	N/A
Age 85+	2.2%	1.2%	N/A
White British	71.3%	88.6%	75.7%
Other Asian including Nepali	11.2%	0.7%	4.0%
Total number of respondents		418	1,016
Link to published results		Community Safety Survey Results 2025	

Survey respondent figures calculated excluding the prefer not to says

Community Governance Review

- Self-selecting survey
- Survey shared via social media and email news
- Special edition of Arena
- Shared at some events and roadshows

2025	Rushmoor 18+ from 2021 Census	Survey 18+
Aldershot	40.7%	35.9%
Farnborough	59.3%	64.1%
Female	50.5%	48.5%
Male	49.5%	51.5%
Health/disability	16.5%	18.8%
Previously served in UK armed forces	6.7%	10.1%
Age 18 -24	9.5%	1.1%
Age 25 - 34	20.8%	3.0%
Age 35 - 44	18.6%	14.2%
Age 45 - 54	17.1%	16.9%
Age 55 - 64	14.8%	25.5%
Age 65 - 74	10.5%	25.8%
Age 75 - 84	6.5%	11.8%
Age 85+	2.2%	1.6%
White British	71.3%	93.4%
Other Asian including Nepali	11.2%	0%
Total number of respondents	412	

Link to published results	Cabinet report template
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Survey respondent figures calculated excluding the prefer not to says

Local Government Reorganisation Survey - North Hampshire Survey

- A Self-selecting survey running on the three council websites conducted by Lake Market Research.
- A research company running interviews with residents.
- Workshops with businesses, public sector partners and service providers, voluntary and community groups and parish & town councils.
- In Rushmoor a series of roadshows over a two-week period engaged directly with 980 residents

North Hampshire Survey 2025	Rushmoor 18+ from 2021 Census	Sampled survey	Self selecting online
Female	50.5%	50%	52%
Male	49.5%	50%	44%
Age 18 -34	30.3%	30%	4%
Age 35 - 54	35.7%	36%	35%
Age 55+	34.0%	34%	57%
White	77%	77%	95%
Ethnic minority groups	23%	23%	5%
Total number of respondents		507	483
Link to published results		Results not published yet	

Local Government Reorganisation Surveys – KPMG Hampshire wide

- The survey and information about LGR and the engagement were hosted on specialist engagement platform Commonplace (not by Rushmoor)
- The survey was disseminated via social media channels, email, and out-of-home advertising (e.g. posters, flyers, paper tags on domestic waste bins) including QR links

All 2025	Hampshire 16+ (including Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight)	Survey all respondents
Female	51.4	46%
Male	48.6	50%
Age 16-24	12.7%	1%
Age 25 - 34	15.3%	5%
Age 35 - 44	15.1%	10%
Age 45 - 54	16.1%	15%
Age 55 - 64	15.9%	24%
Age 65 - 74	13.0%	26%
Age 75+	11.9%	17%
All White	91.6%	95%
All Asian	4.6%	1%
Total number of respondents		All – 13,334
Link to published results		lgr-appendices.pdf

Rushmoor Physical Activity Survey 2025

- Self-selecting survey
- Carried out by an external company
- Survey shared via the council's social media and email news

2025	Rushmoor 18+ from 2021 Census	Survey all responses
Aldershot	40.7%	21%
Farnborough	59.3%	72%
Female	50.5%	65%
Male	49.5%	31%
Age 18 -24	9.5%	0.4% (16-24)
Age 25 - 34	20.8%	4%
Age 35 - 44	18.6%	15%
Age 45 - 54	17.1%	23%
Age 55 - 64	14.8%	27%
Age 65 - 74	10.5%	19%
Age 75 +	8.7%	12%
White British	71.3%	83%
Other Asian including Nepali	11.2%	2.4%
Total number of respondents		565
Link to published results		Results not published yet