

# Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING	Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel		
MEETING	14 May 2024	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:	
		E	9999
TITLE:	Findings from 2023 Voicebox Resident's Survey		
WARD:	All		
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>			
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Appendix 1 – Voicebox 2023 results summary			

## 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report presents summary findings of the 2023 Bath and North East Somerset resident's survey, known locally as Voicebox.
- 1.2 This report outlines key findings from the survey for review.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

**The Panel is asked to:**

- 2.1 Review the findings of the survey.**

## 3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 Voicebox is a random probability sampled survey, which means it gives a broadly representative picture of the views and opinions of residents. More detail on methodology and detailed figures are available in the summary report (Appendix 1 attached);
- 3.2 Please note that headline figures will also be reported in the Councils 2023/24 Annual Performance Plan, which is being reported to Cabinet at its June meeting.
- 3.3 Key findings are summarised below:
- 3.4 Satisfaction with how the Council runs things and provides value for money remain lower than national benchmarks and have reduced.**
  - (1) Changes in levels of satisfaction have largely followed national patterns although they have both been consistently lower than the national levels.

- (2) Greater levels of dissatisfaction reported by older working age adults. This cohort of the population also report generally [lower life satisfaction](#).
- (3) Despite this, satisfaction with recent customer experience is notably higher (67% compared to 47%). Respondents satisfied with customer experience but dissatisfied with how the Council runs things are also more likely to be aged 45-64.
- (4) Comparative council tax data demonstrates [that residents pay less than the regional average in Council tax](#) per head of population

### **3.5 11% of respondents feel they can influence decisions, a reduction of 9% points from 2022**

- (1) No benchmarking data is available for this information.
- (2) Fieldwork took place when decisions about bus provision were causing significant debate, and when difficulties with local government finance were also in the national and regional news
- (3) Giving people a say is a key strategic priority for the organisation.

### **3.6 There are lower levels of satisfaction with the Council website than for customer contacts overall. Figure given for those expressing an opinion. Note that nearly 30% of respondents had never used the website.**

- (1) These findings should be considered in terms of a high level of respondents having no stated opinion of the website and the fact that a high proportion of respondents stated that they have never used the website
- (2) The Council's Digital strategy provides strategic alignment for this issue.

### **3.7 Perceptions of safety notably lower for children and during the night and worsening over time (from 23% to 34%). (Note level of crime and anti-social behaviour as a priority (Appendix 1, section 1).**

- (1) These findings can be read in the context of several high-profile serious violence incidents, both in B&NES and neighbouring local authorities.
- (2) Whilst the Avon & Somerset Violence Reduction Profile notes that the age of violent offenders is getting younger, comparative rates of violent crime in B&NES remain lower than both [national](#) and [regional](#) figures
- (3) A multi-agency response to community safety and violence reduction form part of the agenda of the Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership.

### **3.8 There is broad support for renewable energy generation, particularly domestic and commercial solar.**

- (1) All areas of renewable energy generation experience popular support, aside from ground mounted solar.
- (2) Improving renewable energy infrastructure is part of the Council's response to the Climate and Ecological Emergency.

### **3.9 Positive responses to more sustainable travel activities have reduced, but in terms of more sustainable transport choices, walking more is both most popular and seen to be most achievable.**

- (1) There remains a disparity between people supporting more sustainable transport routes and feeling that they can achieve them within their lifestyle.
- (2) The reduction is particularly marked regarding public transport, which can be seen in context of recent changes to local provision.

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 None

## **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

5.1 None

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

## **7 EQUALITIES**

7.1 The Voicebox survey captures respondent demographics. These are used to weight the results to ensure that they are representative of the population. In addition, where relevant to the analysis, questions are available broken down by demographic characteristics. This can, however, be limited by small numbers in many cases and may not be able to be provided.

## **8 CLIMATE CHANGE**

8.1 The Voicebox survey tracks public opinion on a range of measures which can help reduce carbon emissions.

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

9.1 None

## **10 CONSULTATION**

10.1 S151 and Monitoring Officer have been consulted.

<b>Contact person</b>	Jon Poole, Business Intelligence Manager
<b>Background papers</b>	Voicebox 32 – Full Report will be available on the Strategic Evidence Base Library.
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	