

Cabinet Meeting

3 February 2016

Report title Budget 2016/17 – Outcome of Consultation

Decision designation AMBER

Cabinet member with lead responsibility Councillor Andrew Johnson
Resources

Key decision Yes

In forward plan Yes

Wards affected All

Accountable director Keith Ireland, Managing Director

Originating service Finance

Accountable employee(s) Mark Taylor Director of Finance
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Report to be/has been considered by

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

Cabinet is recommended to consider the responses to the 2016/17 Budget Consultation as detailed in this report and take these responses into account for the 2016/17 Final Budget to be presented to Cabinet on 24 February 2016.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the consultation process undertaken to support the 2016/17 budget setting decisions, allowing for Councillors' consideration of the responses to the consultation.
- 1.2 The completed set of responses to the consultation will be taken into account in the final budget that Cabinet recommends to Council to approve on 2 March 2016.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At the time the 2015/16 budget was set (March 2015) it was projected that the Council would be faced with finding further estimated savings totalling £46.3 million by 2018/19. The budget challenge over the period 2014/15 to 2018/19 was £134 million. Savings totalling £87.7 million had been identified to date. The projected budget deficit for 2016/17 stood at £14.8 million. A £20 million savings target was set for 2016/17.
- 2.2 An additional £2.0 million savings target for Adult Services was incorporated into 2016/17 (July 2015) taking the target to £22 million. Government's Summer Budget 2015 announcement indicated there would be some additional cost pressures and likely further cuts to grant. As a result, additional pressures totalling £2.1 million were projected for 2016/17 including a cut of 15% in Revenue Support Grant for 2016/17, based on 2015/16 grant income (SIGOMA projections). If all assumptions were to be realised the budget challenge for 2016/17 was estimated to be in the region of £24.1 million.
- 2.3 On 21 October 2015, Cabinet approved that 45 Savings, Redesign and Income Generation proposals totalling to £14.1 million proceed to the formal budget consultation and scrutiny stages of the budget process, whilst 21 Financial Transactions and Base Budget Revisions totalling £7.1 million in 2016/17 be incorporated into the 2016/17 draft budget and did not form part of the public consultation.
- 2.4 Details of the Savings, Redesign and Income Generation proposals totalling £14.1 million in 2016/17 were made available on the Council's website and are the subject of this report.
- 2.5 The Council's budget consultation took place from 27 October 2015 to 18 January 2016 in order to inform the budget setting process for 2016/17. All of the consultation and analysis was conducted in-house and this was a major factor in keeping the cost of delivery to a minimum.
- 2.6 The consultation was branded as 'Building our Future: Despite the Cuts'. Details of the Savings, Redesign and Income Generation proposals were posted on the Council's website from 22 October 2015. For the purpose of the online budget consultation survey, the Savings, Redesign and Income Generation proposals were grouped, where appropriate, into themes to streamline the feedback process.

- 2.7 It is important to note that two of the 45 proposals (Restructuring of the Library Service and Children’s Services Redesign) are subject to separate reports to Cabinet and are subject to separate consultation arrangements. The 43 remaining Savings, Redesign and Income Generation proposals are the main focus of this report.
- 2.6 During the consultation period, stakeholder engagement meetings were held with Trade Unions, the local community, the Business Community and the Voluntary and Community Sector. The public and the Council’s employee’s views were also obtained through social media and by an on-line survey. A copy of the survey can be found by following this [link](#).
- 2.7 When identifying savings proposals key focus continues to be placed upon the Council’s strategic approach to addressing the projected budget deficit, which is to:
- Manage demand for core services by using early intervention to help families in trouble live unsupported and independent lives
 - Improve educational attainment and skills
 - Encourage enterprise and business and private sector employment and to stimulate economic activity through capital investment.
- 2.8 Taking this strategic approach into account, the Savings, Redesign and Income Generation proposals that have been identified at this stage are summarised by service area in the table below:

Table 1 – Savings, Redesign and Income Generation Proposal Summary

Service Area	No.	2016/17 £000
Adult Services	3	(1,355)
Children and Young People	2	(4,500)
City Assets	3	(192)
City Economy	6	(330)
City Environment	21	(1,678)
Education	1	(4,200)
Resources	7	(1,690)
Governance	2	(165)
Total	45	(14,110)

The two proposals regarding the Restructuring of the Library Service and Children’s Services Redesign, which are included in the figures above, are scheduled to be considered by Cabinet separately and are subject to separate consultation arrangements.

3.0 Key Findings

3.1 Between 27 October 2015 and 18 January 2016, the Council undertook and made available a range of consultation mechanisms to gather views on the 43 proposed Savings, Redesign and Income Generation proposals. These included both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

The following is a summary of the participants in the stakeholder and community group meetings, plus details of other groups and interested parties that provided their views and opinions, including letters from members of the community.

3.2 Stakeholder engagement meetings

- 4 Community meetings;
- 1 Trade Union meeting;
- 1 Business Community meeting;
- 1 Voluntary and Community Sector meeting; and
- 1 Wolverhampton Over 50s Forum.

3.3 67 members of the public/representatives attended the stakeholder meetings. The breakdown is:

- 1 attendee at Low Hill Community Centre;
- 0 attendees at Bob Jones Centre, Blakenhall;
- 2 attendees at Bantock Tractor Shed;
- 9 attendees at Bilston Town Hall;
- 24 attendees at a Voluntary and Community Sector meeting;
- 8 attendees at Business Breakfast;
- 6 attendees at Trade Union meeting; and
- 17 attendees at Wolverhampton Over 50s Forum.

3.4 The Council used a range of methods including face to face, online survey and written communications to gather responses during the consultation. This was publicised via a range of different medias; the Council website, the Facebook page “Wolverhampton Today”, Twitter and the Express and Star Newspaper.

3.5 In total 1,030 individuals (591 last year, an increase of 73%) took part in the budget consultation survey and offered 32,460 responses to individual concepts.

3.6 A more detailed analysis of the consultation findings can be found in Appendix A.

3.7 The themes that respondents had the opportunity to comment on were:

- Redesigning services to deliver savings;

- Generating income to help balance the books;
- Reduce funding to help balance the books;
- Supporting ideas to maintain an existing service;
- Raising Council Tax;
- Public volunteering to maintain an existing service;
- Supporting income generation ideas;
- Supporting the Council's general approach to delivering the budget; and
- How else could the Council generate income.

3.8 Within each theme, respondents were asked to provide responses to a number of concepts posed. These are shown in full in the charts at Appendix A. Responses to the themes from the budget consultation are ranked in order of support in Table 2 below:

Table 2 – Responses to Themes

Theme	Appendix A Reference	Total Overall Responses In favour		Total Overall Responses Not in favour		Total Overall Responses Undecided		Total Responses	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Supporting income generation ideas	Chart 6	1,878	72%	307	12%	408	16%	2,593	100%
Supporting ideas to maintain an existing service	Chart 4	2,565	69%	575	16%	567	15%	3,707	100%
Generating income to help balance the books	Chart 2	3,951	67%	875	15%	1,033	18%	5,859	100%
Redesigning services to deliver savings	Chart 1	5,455	54%	3,044	30%	1,626	16%	10,125	100%
Reduce funding to help balance the books	Chart 3	2,816	49%	1,947	34%	962	17%	5,725	100%
Supporting the Council's general approach to delivering the budget	Chart 10	1,257	48%	594	23%	745	29%	2,596	100%
Raising Council Tax	Chart 5	471	51%	459	49%	-	-	930	100%
Public volunteering to maintain an existing service	Chart 7	262	28%	663	72%	-	-	925	100%
Total		18,655	-	8,464	-	5,341	-	32,460	-

3.9 A high number of respondents were supportive of the income generation ideas, the proposals to maintain existing services and the importance of balancing the books.

3.10 One in three respondents were not in favour of the theme to reduce funding proposals to help balance the books (reduction in service provision).

3.11 51% (471 out of 930) of respondents were prepared to pay more than a 1.99% increase in Council Tax to reduce the level of cuts to services. Of the 471 who responded in favour:

- 65.9% would be willing to pay an extra 1% taking the increase to 2.99%
- 26.6% would be willing to pay an extra 2% taking the increase to 3.99%
- 7.5% would be willing to pay an extra 3+% taking the increase to 4.99+%.

- 3.12 71% (663 of 925 respondents) were not prepared to volunteer to maintain an existing service.
- 3.13 Greater detail of the responses received to individual questions within the themes is shown at Appendix A.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 This report summarises the headline findings from a range of consultation exercises run by the City of Wolverhampton Council on its budget proposals for 2016/17. It includes an analysis of qualitative presentations and meetings with key stakeholder and community groups designed to gather views and opinions on the 43 Savings, Redesign and Income Generation proposals. It also includes the outline findings from the survey. Stakeholder engagement meetings were held with Trade Unions, various local public communities, the Business Community and the Voluntary and Community Sector.
- 4.2 The final budget will take into account the completed set of responses to the consultation to be reported to Cabinet on 24 February 2016 before recommending to Council on 2 March 2016 to approve.

5.0 Financial implications

- 5.1 The final outcome of budget consultation will be taken into account in the Cabinet's final budget recommendations to Council on 2 March 2016.
- 5.2 Should any changes be made to the 2016/17 Draft Budget as a result of the findings of the budget consultation exercise, which results in an increased net budget requirement, new proposals of an equivalent value will have to be urgently identified to address the projected budget deficit.

[RP/25012016/V]

6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 The legal duty for a council's finances falls within S151 of the Local Government Act 1972. Arrangements for the proper administration of their affairs is secured by the S151 Officer (the Director of Finance).
- 6.2 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 placed a general duty on every local authority in England to take such steps as it considers appropriate to secure that representatives of local persons (or of local persons of a particular description) are involved in the exercise of any of its functions, among other things by being consulted about the exercise of the function. The 2010 Equality Act whilst not imposing a specific duty to consult, lays a requirement to have due regard to the equality impact when exercising its function. Failure to meet the requirements in the

Public Sector Equality Duty may result in the Council being exposed to costly, time-consuming and reputation-damaging legal challenges.

- 6.3 A detailed report on consultation feedback from all phases of consultation is, therefore, presented to Cabinet.

[RB/25012016/W]

7.0 Equalities implications

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a statutory duty to pay due regard to the impact of how it carries out its business on different groups of people. This is designed to help the Council identify the particular needs of different groups and reduce the likelihood of discrimination. The nine equality strands covered in the legislation are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (this strand only applies to employment and not to service delivery)
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

- 7.2 In relation to determining the overall revenue budget for the Council there is always a difficult balance to be struck in deciding the levels at which to invest, reduce expenditure and raise income set against the often competing needs of different groups within the Wolverhampton community.

- 7.3 In order to address these complex issues, the Council operates an open and consultative approach to budget and Council Tax determination. Year-on-year and medium term spending forecasts are provided to every household and business ratepayer within the City as part of the documentation which accompanies the Council Tax demand.

- 7.4 Budget consultation meetings have been held with the business community, the voluntary sector, communities of interest and trade unions. The Council's budget consultation approach has also included an online survey in order to gain feedback on budget and service priorities.

- 7.5 In determining the budget for 2016/17, considerable focus has been placed on the development of savings proposals. All of these proposals will be subject to an equality analysis screening and where necessary a full equality analysis will be conducted.

- 7.6 The Council is facing a particularly challenging short and medium term financial environment in which savings must be generated and a tight control on spending maintained. This means that greater focus than ever is necessary to ensure that core equalities commitments is met.
- 7.7 In summary, the Council's annual budget and medium term financial strategy supports a range of services designed to meet key equalities objectives. A cumulative equalities analysis will be conducted on the overall budget proposals, including the overall impact of job losses. This is will be made available on the Council's website.
- 7.8 Councillors should also be aware that under the Equality Act 2010, they must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) when making budget decisions. What this means in practice is that Councillors must consciously think about the three aims of the PSED as part of the decision making process. The three aims are to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
 - Advance equality of opportunity by removing or minimising disadvantages, meet differing needs and encouraging participation,
 - Foster good relations between people from different groups.
- 7.9 The Act does not require the Council to treat everyone in the same way; sometimes different treatment is required, for example, be making reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of disabled people.
- 7.10 Consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by public bodies including:
- How they act as employers,
 - How they develop, evaluate and review policy,
 - How they design, deliver and evaluate services,
 - How they commission and procure from others.
- 7.11 The Brown Principles, established as a result of a legal case concerning Post Office closures in 2008, provide an important checklist that should be considered when making decisions:
- Decision makers must be made aware of their duty to have due regard to the identified goals;
 - Due regard must be fulfilled before and at the time that a particular decision is being considered, not afterwards;
 - The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind. It is not a question of ticking boxes;

- The duty cannot be delegated; it must be fulfilled by the organisation in question rather than through the use of an external body;
- The duty is a continuing one; and
- It is good practice to keep an adequate record showing that it has considered the identified needs.

8.0 Environmental implications

8.1 Environmental implications will be addressed on a case by case basis as part of individual proposals.

9.0 Human resources implications

9.1 Any reductions in employee numbers will be achieved in line with the Council's HR voluntary redundancies in the first instance, and through access to redeployment. Given the volume and range of the proposals, there will be reductions in services and employee numbers which will require fair and due process to be followed regarding consultation, selection and implementation of any compulsory redundancies.

9.2 The Council will ensure that appropriate support is made available to employees who are at risk of and selected for redundancy, and will work with partner and external agencies to provide support. Proposals to move service delivery from direct Council management to private, community or third sector providers may have implications under the TUPE regulations.

9.3 There is on-going consultation with the trade unions on the impact of the Council's budgetary position and the proposals being made to meet the challenges posed by it.

10.0 Corporate landlord implications

10.1 Corporate landlord implications will be addressed on a case by case basis as part of individual proposals.

11.0 Schedule of background papers

11.1 Draft Budget 2016/17, reported to Cabinet on 21 October 2015.

Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 – 2018/19, reported to Cabinet on 22 July 2015.

Budget 2015/16 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 to 2018/19, reported to Cabinet on 25 February 2015

1.0 Considerations around representativeness and reporting of the data

- 1.1 In line with best practice issued by Government (The Government's Consultation Principles July 2012), the consultation particularly focused on involving the range of stakeholders affected by the proposals, as well as enabling the general public to comment through the online survey, social media and public meetings. The findings from the stakeholder meetings and other qualitative correspondence, is by its very nature, indicative only and not necessarily representative of the wider population.
- 1.2 It is recognised that the public, community groups and key stakeholders may not always be aware of the budgetary and technical financial constraints that local authorities operate under. This document does not attempt to unpick this, but simply reports the views of the various consultees in their broadest perspective
- 1.3 The qualitative findings are a source of information derived from concepts that are included in the budget proposals. These have been drawn from comments from the survey, emails received from members of the public and social media where available. It should be noted that individual views received are not necessarily representative; however, the inclusion of many of these comments forms an important part of the Council's Equality Assessment of the budget proposals – a process that is legally required.

2.0 Key Findings

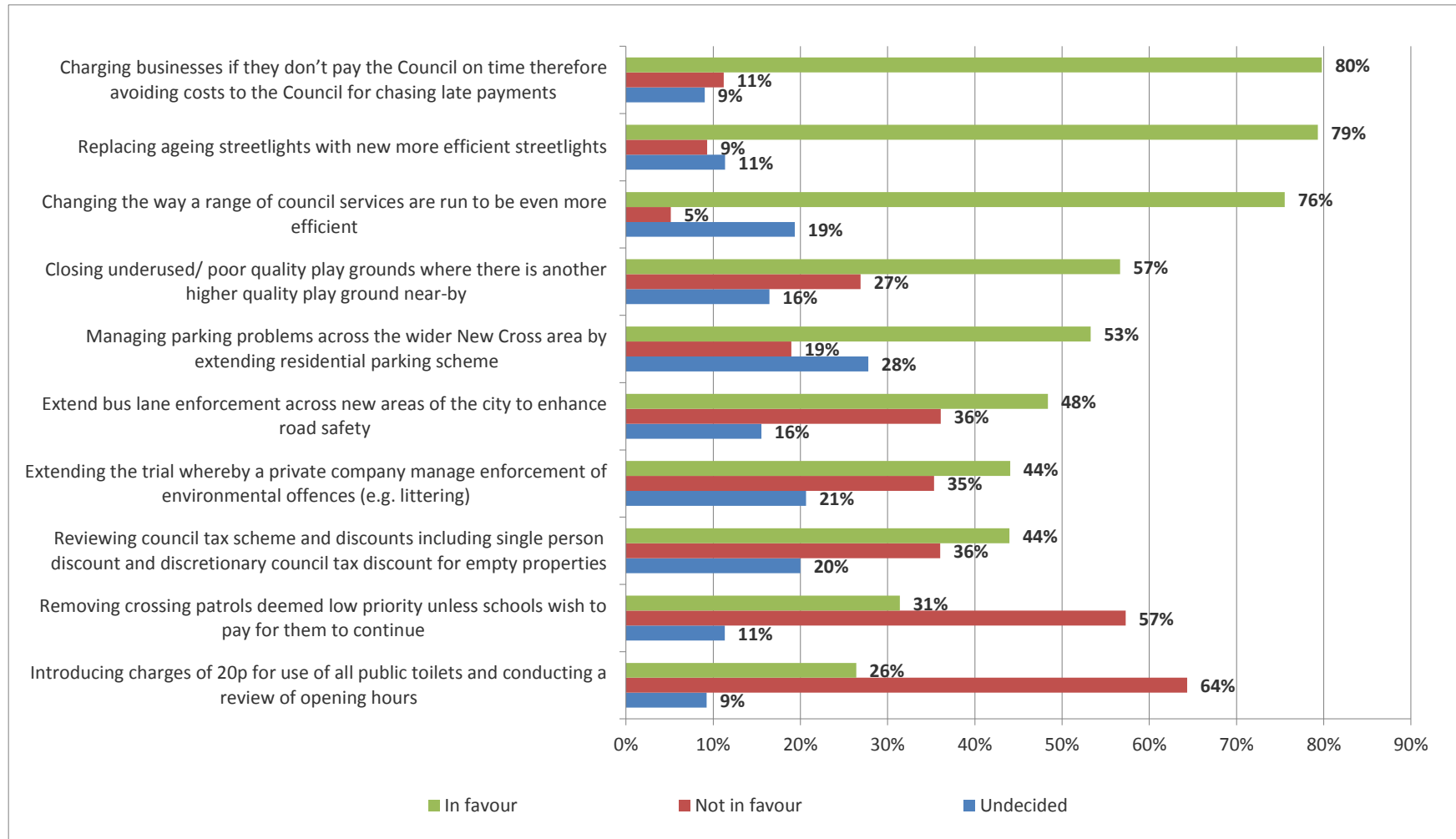
- 2.1 The main themes that respondents had the opportunity to comment on were:
- Redesigning services to deliver savings;
 - Generating income to help balance the books;
 - Reduce funding to help balance the books;

- Supporting ideas to maintain an existing service;
- Raising Council Tax;
- Public volunteering to maintain an existing service;
- Supporting income generation ideas;
- Supporting the Council's general approach to delivering the budget; and
- How else could the Council generate income.

2.2 **Redesigning services to deliver savings**

To help balance the books it is proposed to redesign certain services. Respondents were asked to choose if they were in favour, not in favour or undecided in each of the 10 savings concepts. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

Chart 1 - To help balance the books it is proposed to redesign services to deliver savings by:



The top **three** service redesign ideas respondents were **in favour** of were:

- Charging businesses if they don't pay the Council on time therefore avoiding costs to the Council for chasing late payments (80%)
- Replacing ageing streetlights with new more efficient streetlights (79%)
- Changing the way a range of council services are run to be even more efficient (76%)

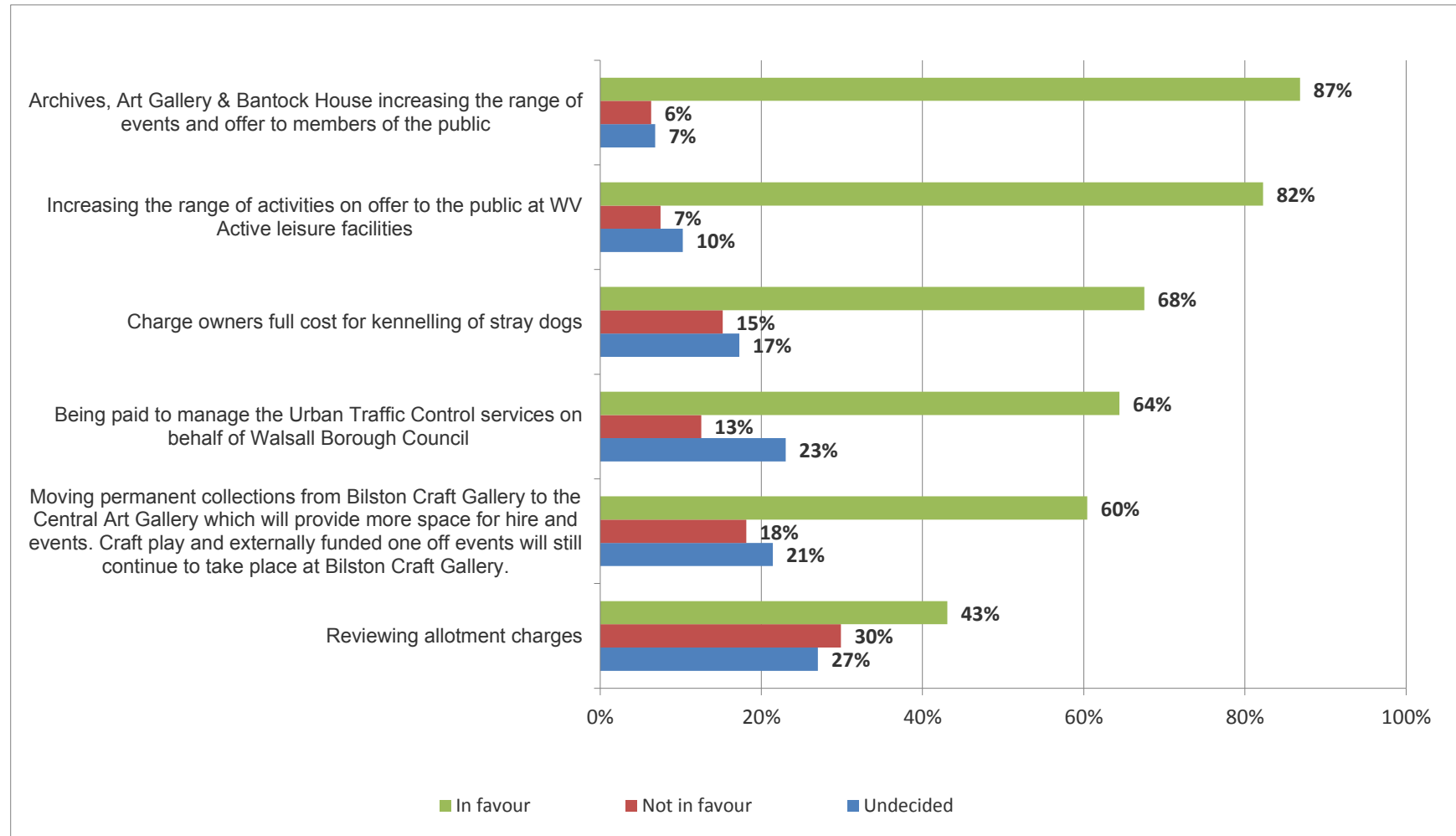
The **two** service redesign ideas respondents were **not in favour** of were:

- Introducing charges of 20p for use of all public toilets and conducting a review of opening hours (64%)
- Removing crossing patrols deemed low priority unless schools wish to pay for them to continue (57%)

2.3 **Generating income to help balance the books**

To help balance the books it is proposed to generate additional income. Respondents were asked to choose if they were in favour, not in favour or undecided in each of the six savings concepts. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

Chart 2 - To help balance the books it is proposed to generate income by:



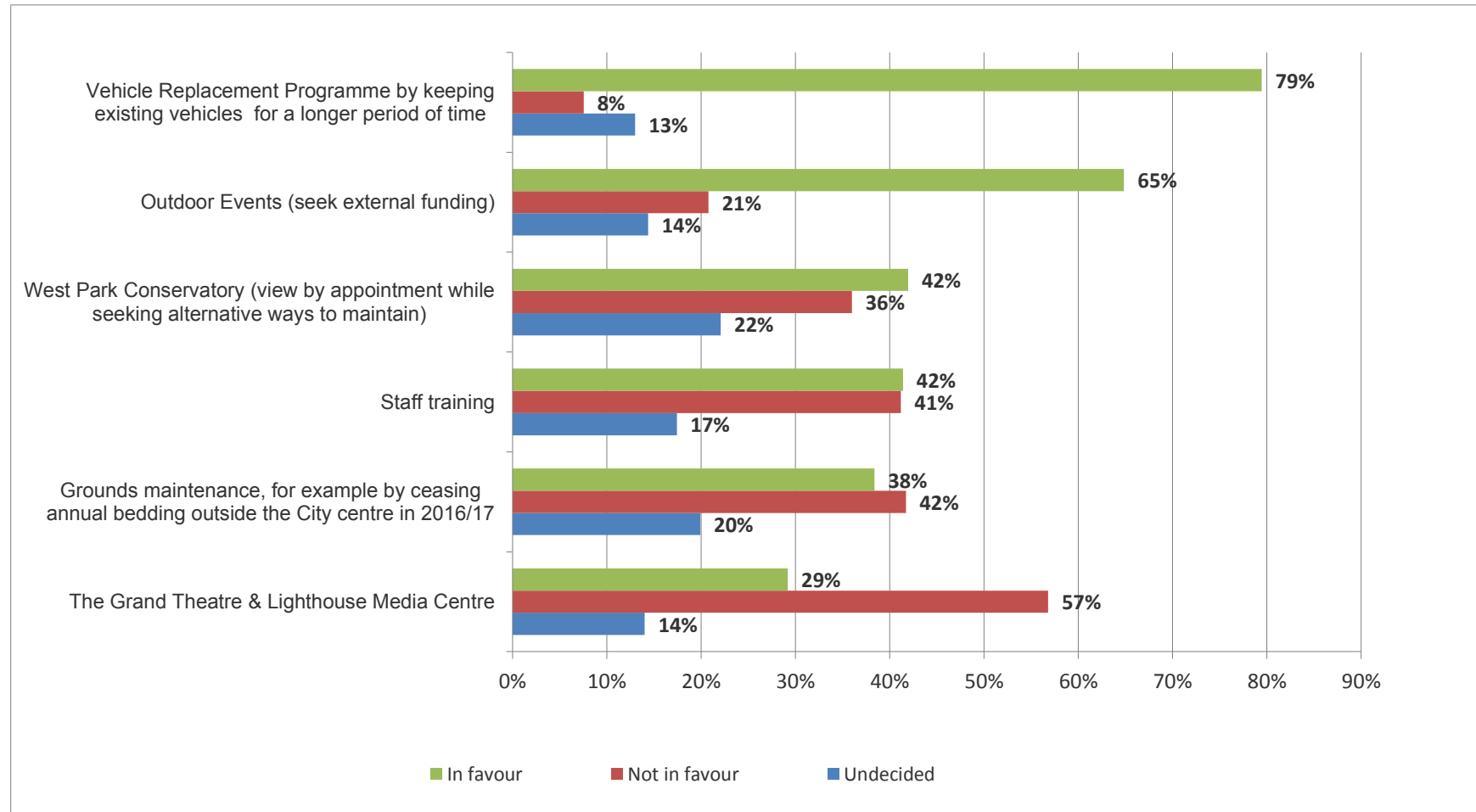
The top **three** income generation ideas respondents were **in favour** of were:

- Archives, Art Gallery & Bantock House increasing the range of events and offer to members of the public (87%)
- Increasing the range of activities on offer to the public at WV Active leisure facilities (82%)
- Charge owners full cost for kennelling of stray dogs (68%)

2.4 Reduce funding to help balance the books

To help balance the books it is proposed to reduce the funding available for certain areas. Respondents were asked to choose if they were in favour, not in favour or undecided in each of the six savings concepts. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

Chart 3 - To help balance the books it is proposed to reduce funding for:



The top **three** areas where it was proposed to reduce funding respondents were **in favour** of were:

- Vehicle Replacement Programme by keeping existing vehicles for a longer period of time (79%)
- Outdoor Events (seek external funding) (65%)
- West Park Conservatory (view by appointment while seeking alternative ways to maintain) (42%)

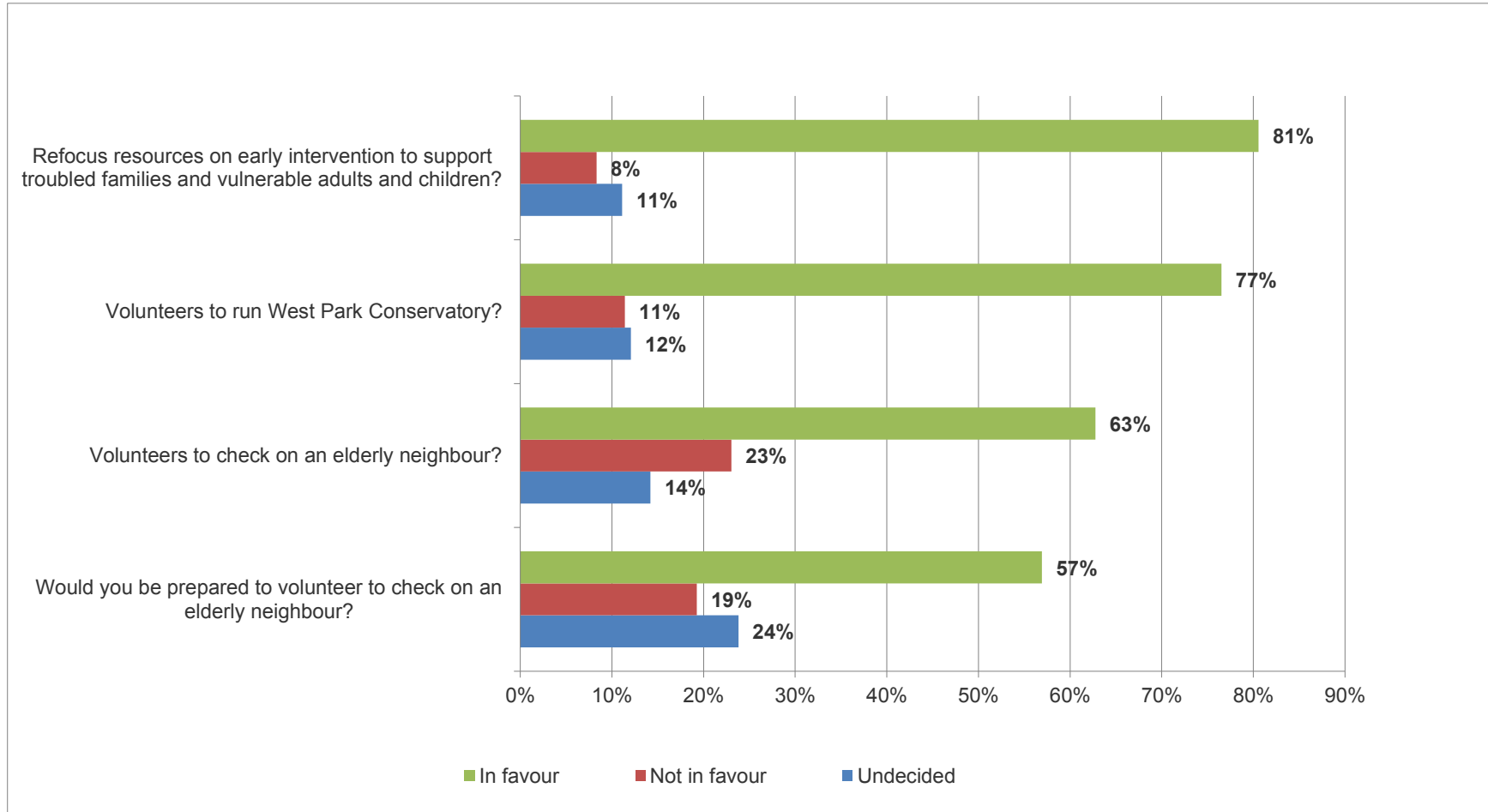
The **two** areas where it was proposed to reduce funding respondents were **not in favour** of were:

- The Grand Theatre & Lighthouse Media Centre (57%)
- Grounds maintenance, for example by ceasing annual bedding outside the City centre in 2016/17 (42%)

2.5 **Supporting ideas to maintain an existing service**

To help maintain existing services, respondents were asked to choose if they were in favour, not in favour or undecided in each of the four service areas. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

Chart 4 - Would you support the following ideas to maintain an existing service?



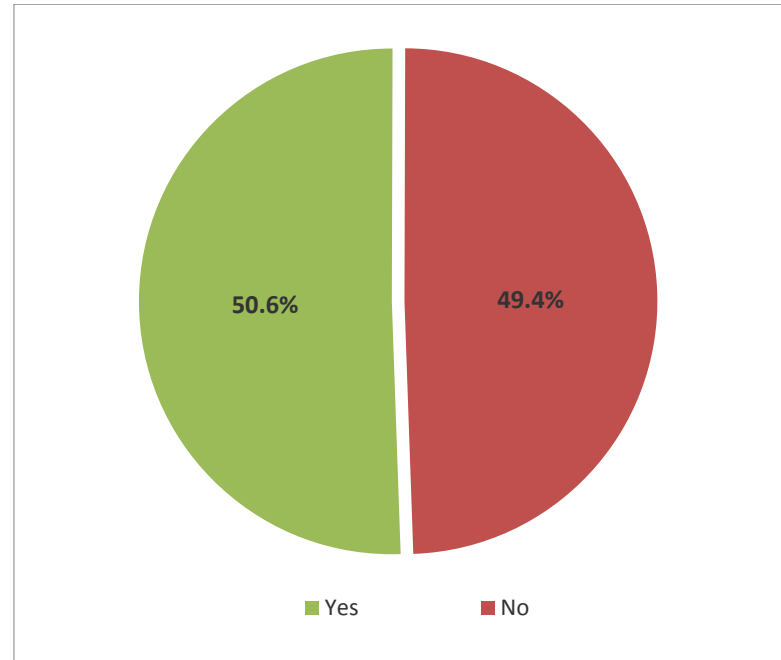
Overall, over two thirds of the respondents were **in favour** of **all four** concepts with 81% in favour of refocusing resources on early intervention to support troubled families and vulnerable adults and children.

2.6 **Raising Council Tax**

The Council is proposing a 1.99% rise in Council Tax for 2016/17; this would be an extra £21.20 per year for the average property value in Wolverhampton (Valuation Band B). Each **additional 1% increase** would be £10.65 per year based on the average property value (Band B). It should be noted that this question in the budget consultation predates the Chancellor's announcement of the 2% Social Care precept.

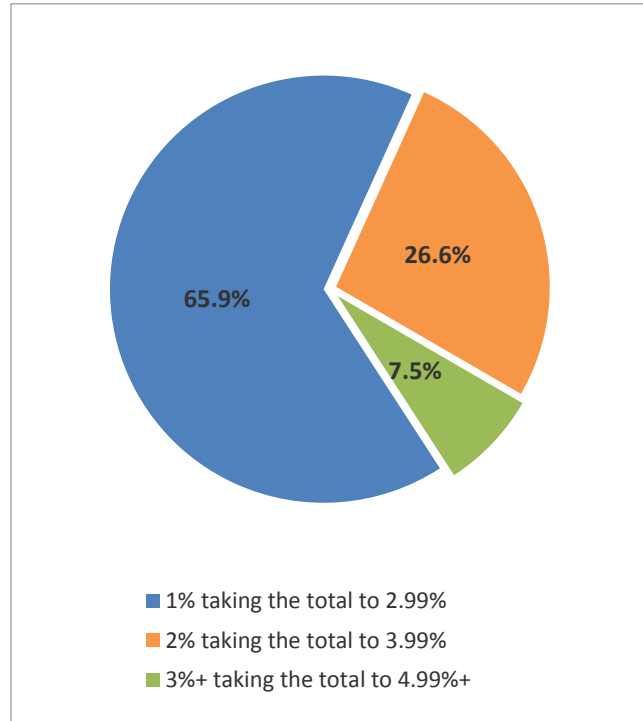
Respondents were asked if they would be prepared to pay more (than the currently proposed Council Tax increase of 1.99%) to reduce the level of cuts to services. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

Chart 5 – Would you be prepared to pay more Council Tax to reduce the level of cuts to services?



471 of 930 respondents (50.6%) stated that they would be willing to pay more than the proposed 1.99% increase in Council Tax if that rise reduced the level of cuts to services. To quantify the proposed increase, the impact of each 1% increase would be the equivalent of an additional £10.65 per year based on the average property value (Valuation Band B) in Wolverhampton. Of those 471, the following chart shows how much more the respondents would be willing to pay:

Chart 6 – If yes, how much more would you be willing to pay?



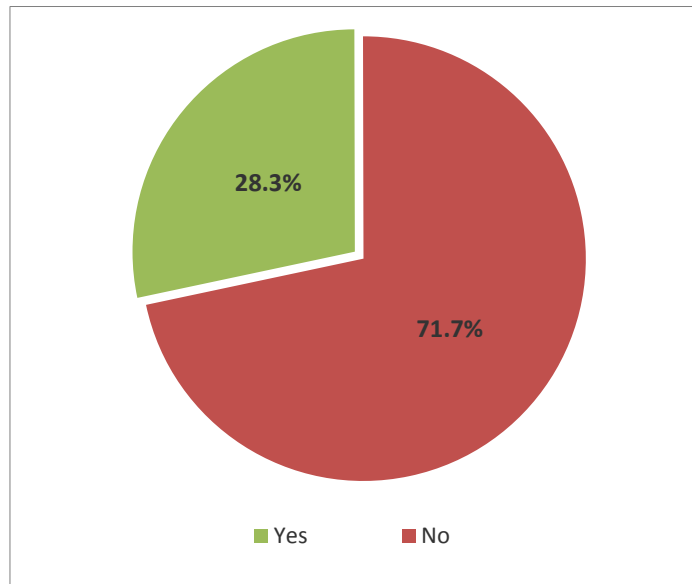
Of the 471 respondents:

- 65.9% would be willing to pay an extra 1% taking the increase to 2.99%
- 26.6% would be willing to pay an extra 2% taking the increase to 3.99%
- 7.5% would be willing to pay an extra 3+% taking the increase to 4.99+%.

2.7 Public volunteering to maintain an existing service

Respondents were asked whether they would be willing to volunteer to maintain an existing service. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

Chart 7 – Would you be prepared to volunteer to maintain an existing service?



663 of 925 respondents (72%) stated that they would **not** be willing to donate their time to help maintain an existing service, which is comparable to last year's budget survey (75%). 25-34 year olds were most likely to say they would be willing to volunteer (31%).

Appendix A

A number of respondents asked for more information about volunteering and/or made other related comments, notably:

Comments	Respondents
It would depend on what it was/ number of hours etc.	7
Already volunteering	6
Unsure	3

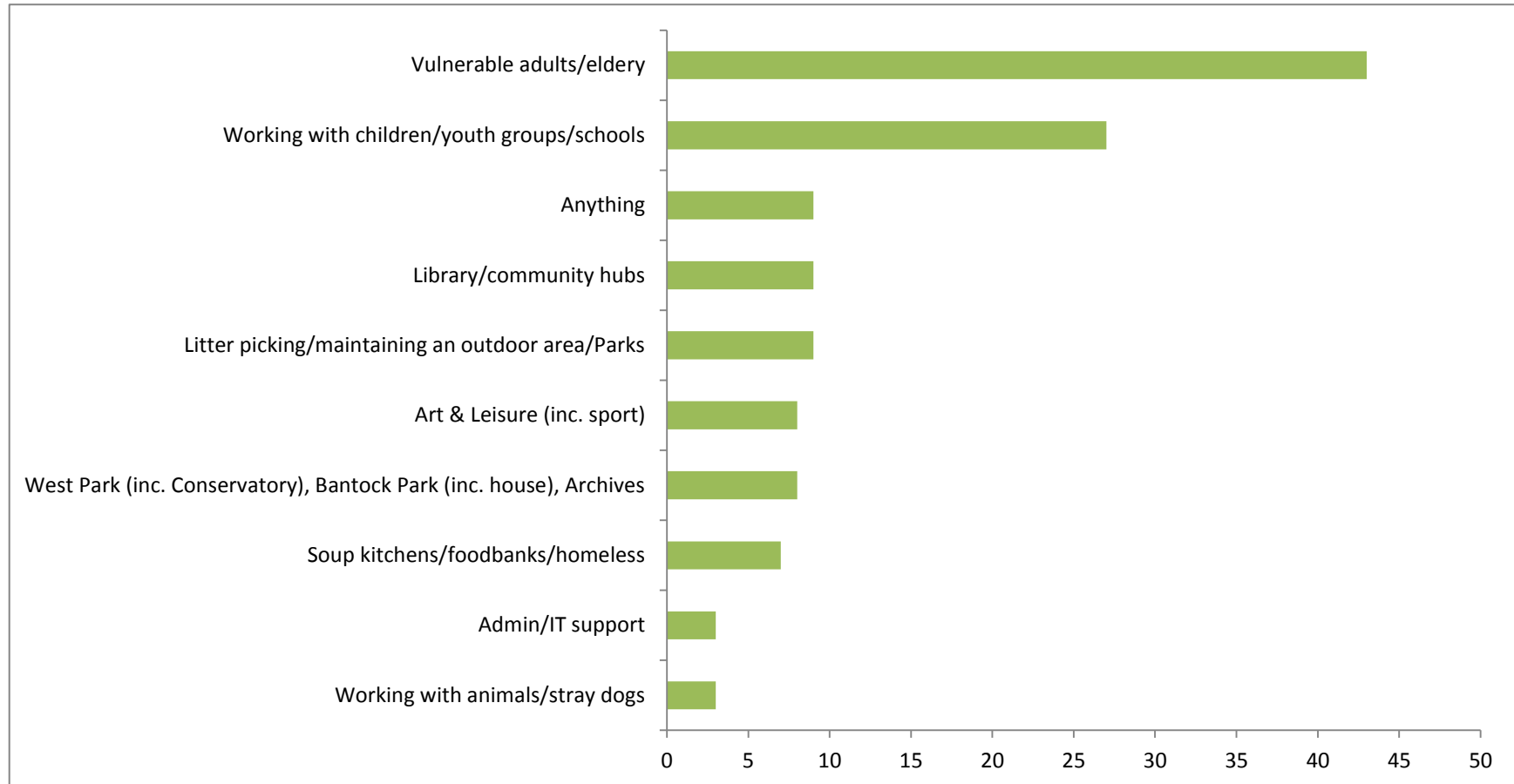
Last year's budget consultation findings included eight responses disagreeing with Council services being run by volunteers. There were no similar responses this year and of the six who stated that they were already volunteering a number were doing so at Bantock House, Ashmore Park Hub and Bilston Community Centre.

Although the numbers are too small to be conclusive this may suggest an acknowledgement of an increasing role for volunteers in order to keep valued local services running. For example one respondent commented:

"I already do [volunteer] since cuts to mental health services [have been] made"

All other comments received have been grouped thematically and are presented in the following chart:

Chart 8 – Are there any particular areas in which you would be willing to volunteer?



Appendix A

In addition, 20 respondents said they would be willing to volunteer either within their local community, an area easy to travel to or a specific geographic area. Accessibility and the ability to fit volunteering around other commitments were expressed by a number of people as being key factors as to whether they would be willing to volunteer.

“Check on an elderly neighbour (outside of full time working hours 7.30am-6pm)”

“Children's activities around my working hours and childcare arrangements”

In contrast to last year when nine people said they would be willing to volunteer with the elderly and/or vulnerable adults, 43 people indicated that they would be willing to do so this year, with 20 specifically stating that they would check on an elderly neighbour or an elderly person in their area.

This was no doubt prompted by the suggestion in question 4 (Would you support the following ideas to maintain an existing service?) of the survey, however, it may also suggest that when provided with specific examples of volunteering opportunities people make a more informed choice about what they are able to commit to or would like to do.

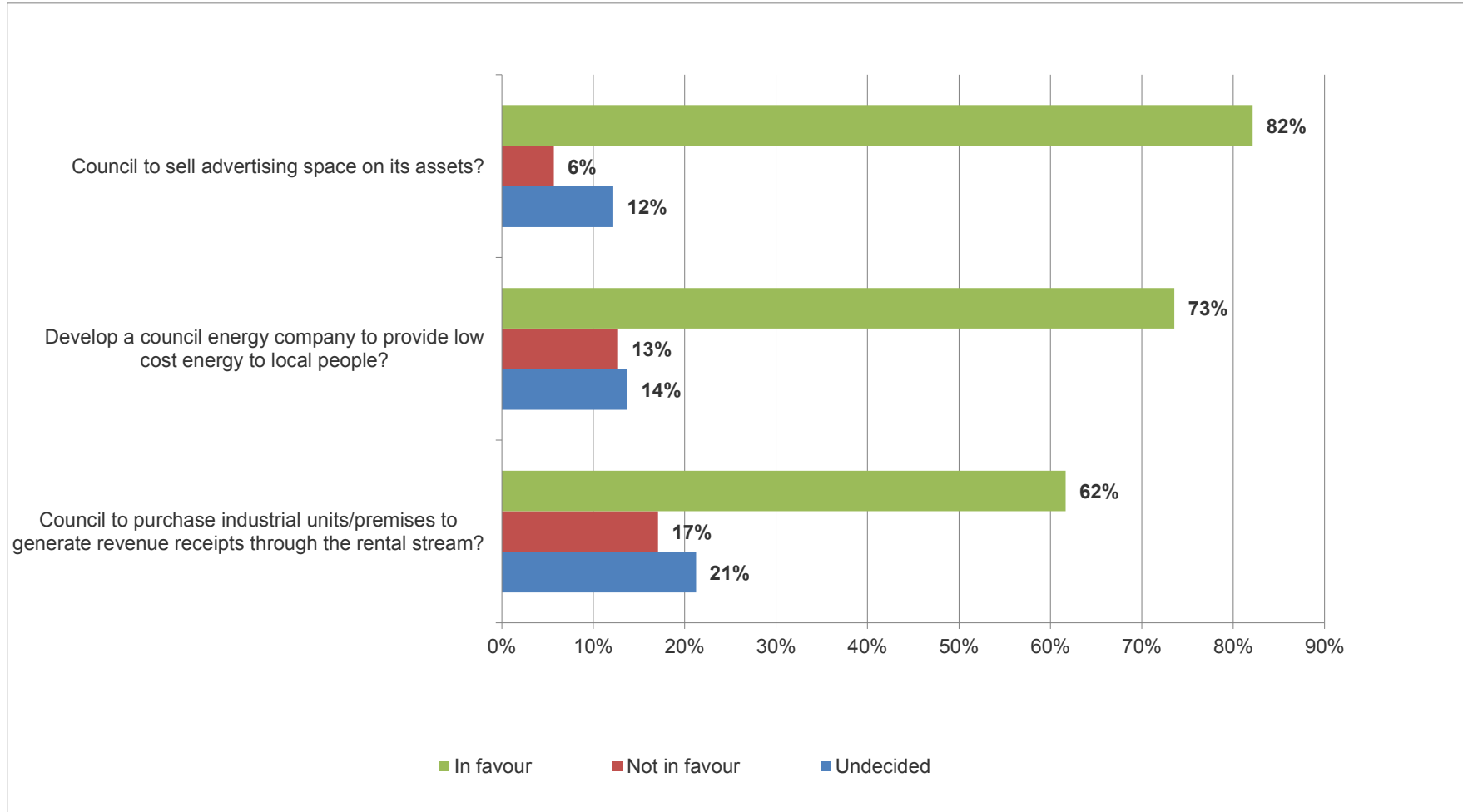
Question 4 of the survey also asked respondents if they thought volunteers should run West Park conservatory of which 77% were in favour, despite this only two people specifically said they would like to volunteer at West Park conservatory.

Working with ‘young people/ children/ schools’ had a much higher level of response than last year, whereas fewer people stated that they would be willing to volunteer at a library/community hub or litter pick/ keep an area clean than last year.

2.8 Supporting income generation ideas

Respondents were asked whether they would support three specific income generation ideas. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

Chart 9 - Would you support the following income generation ideas?

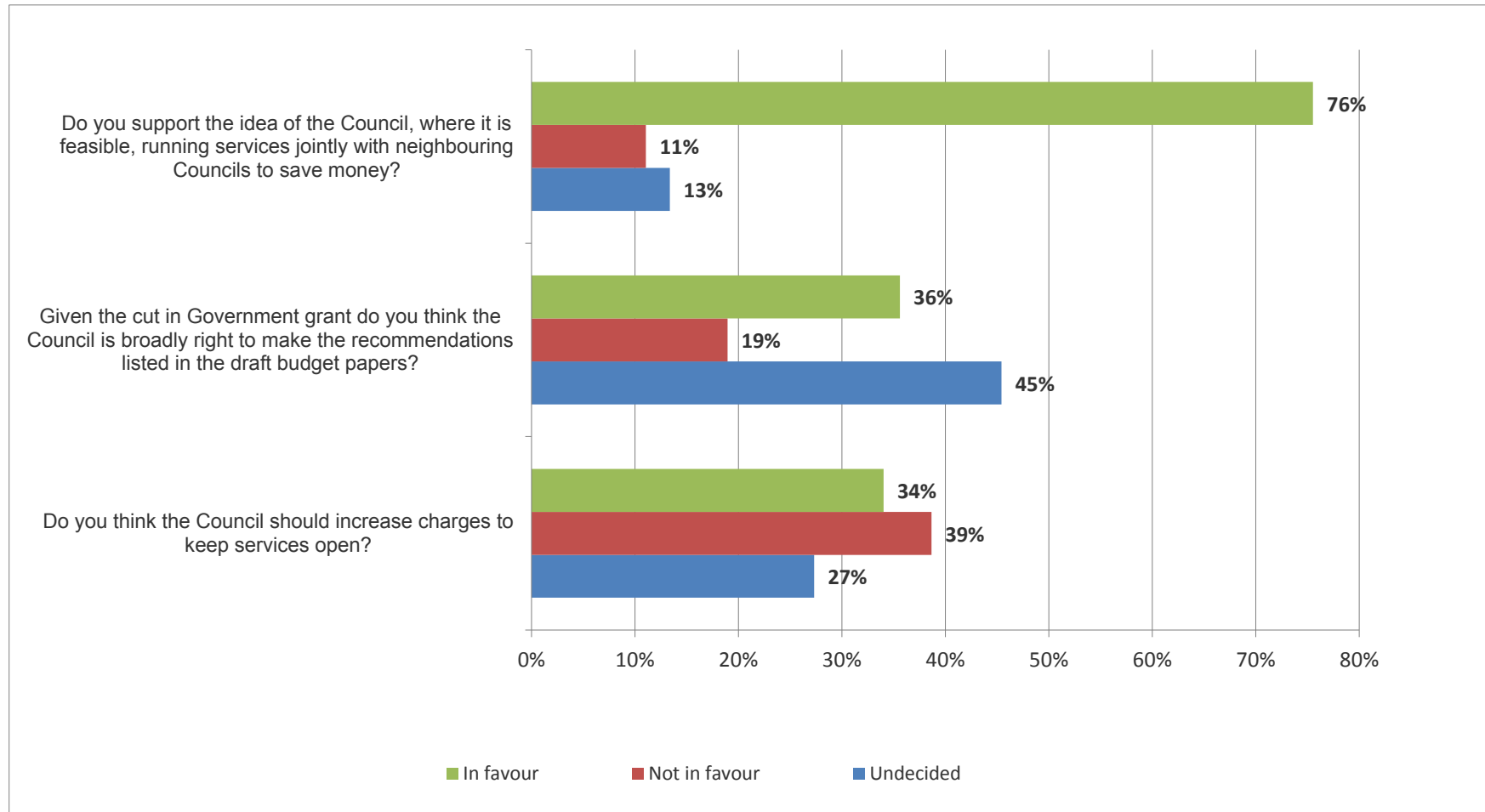


Overall, the income generation ideas were supported with over 70% of respondents indicating that they would support the specific income generation ideas.

2.9 Supporting the Council's general approach to delivering the budget

Respondents were asked whether they supported the Council's general approach to delivering the budget across three specific areas. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

Chart 10 - Do you support the Council's general approach to delivering the budget?



Over 76% of respondents were **supportive** of the idea the Council, where feasible, to run services jointly with neighbouring Councils to save money.

2.10 How else could the Council generate income?

321 people responded to the invitation to suggest how the Council could generate income. Comments such as “*undecided*” and “*more information required*” could not be considered as a full response, and have therefore been removed from consideration, as were those that fall outside of the Council’s remit, e.g. “*cut MPs wages*” and “*cut benefits*”.

A number of comments related to efficiency savings rather than income generation, such as “*stopping waste*”, “*reducing bureaucracy or cutting senior manger’s salaries/ councillor’s allowances*”. These have been considered as part of the overall budget consultation and not specific to this question.

There were also a number of suggestions that the council already implements, for example, “*A small charge for removing items from domestic properties, Fridges, beds etc*”. and “*make employees pay for car parking*”.

All other comments have been grouped thematically.

Car parking

Respondents fell into two groups - those advocating reduced or free car parking to attract people into the city centre (9), and those advocating an increase or extension of car parking charges in the city centre, around West Park and at cultural venues such as Bantock House (7).

There was also the suggestion that people should pay to park bicycles and that there should be an increase in parking available in the city centre.

City centre

A minority of respondents felt money was wasted when spent on the city centre (4); the majority, however, advocated further investment including work to promote the city (19). This was seen as a way to enhance prosperity generally, not just generate income for the council.

“Provide modern city centre based facilities for national conferences, events and exhibitions. ..”

“Develop places of interest to bring in tourism ...”

“Promote and upgrade city centre hotels to offer theatre packages to get people to stay over and spend in the centre, create an eating/drinking/entertainment quarter next to canal near the lock keepers cottage, create a town centre park round the Cleveland Street area where we've emptied buildings - get families into the centre to play and spend!”

A number of respondents also suggested cutting business rates or lowering rents for shops in the city centre and undertaking specific work to tackle empty shops (12). There was one suggestion that the market should be moved closer to the city centre.

Events

22 respondents suggested income could be generated by holding more events, particularly for families. Suggestions included:

Make better use of the market space it could be used on a Sunday for a car boot all the money could then go to the Council.

“A sponsored activity such as a track and field event at West Park where locals can test their athletic skills”

“Competitions with people who grow in allotments”

Appendix A

“Events at places like the rec. on Bushbury lane, it's such a big space and could be used to its full potential!”

It was also suggested that charges could be introduced at some cultural venues, Art Gallery, Bantock House etc. (3) or funding should be stopped altogether for certain events (2).

11 respondents suggested creating a revenue stream by hiring out council facilities for venues:

“Hosting private functions at some of our venues - Birthday parties, receptions, civil marriage ceremonies, naming ceremonies at Bantock, Art gallery, Archives, West Park, Grand theatre?”

Nine respondents suggested events and council services more generally should be promoted/ advertised more widely, for example on council assets, council uniforms and the council website. It was suggested this could also be extended to selling advertising. Four respondents also suggested getting private business to sponsor cultural venues, events or planting on traffic islands etc.

Improving the cultural offer and number of events offered was also regarded as a way to promote the city and increase footfall to the city centre.

Selling council expertise, selling council assets and outsourcing

11 respondents saw income opportunities for the council by selling expertise:

“Sell our expertise wherever possible e.g. legal services, training skills etc. This could be done by hosting workshops and training events for external companies.”

Three respondents specifically mentioned extending the handyman scheme or deriving income by the council endorsing local trusted work people:

Appendix A

“Extend the handyman service so that anyone can use it but have a different rate for different criteria. We have jobs that we would like doing by a trustworthy affordable professional but they are hard to find these days so if the Council could offer this to more people then it could also avoid people getting hoodwinked.”

Alternatively, outsourcing services (9) or sharing services with other councils (3) was suggested, as was more co-working with the NHS. Four respondents also thought more money could be saved by keeping or bringing services back in-house.

18 respondents thought the council should sell assets to raise income, mainly through building rationalisation but also ideas like house clearances and reclamation.

Five respondents suggested ideas for setting up companies:

“Set up its own private sector lettings agency to manage good quality private stock, raise landlord standards, and generate revenue.”

“Set up a training company similar to Yoo Recruit. Reduce outgoings paid to external companies and income generate by charging other LA's/business etc. for training. I would also purchase premises to conduct training in and also rent out the facility as an income stream.”

“Sell the furniture recovered via Voids. This would work well with Council House Removal service.”

It was also suggested that setting up a charity may give access to additional funding streams; setting up a social enterprise was also suggested and two respondents suggested more should be done to try and secure external grants.

Increasing or introducing fines

26 respondents felt that the council should be tougher at chasing debt, detecting and punishing fraud and issuing fines for poor parking, fly-tipping, dog-fouling, bus lane infringements, late payment of council tax etc.

Two respondents thought there should be no council tax reduction scheme and four thought council tenants should pay full market rent.

Charges were also suggested for taking out library books and one respondent suggested libraries should be closed, while two respondents suggested that the council should offer fewer services.

Waste, recycling and energy

Measures to promote recycling and/ or reduce bin collections were suggested (8), including fines for non-recycling of food waste and weighing bins. Turning off street-lights was also suggested (2) as was an increased use of solar panels (2).

Other comments

Four respondents thought the council should be more active in seeking volunteers to run council services and three respondents suggested more use of community payback.

Improving procurement was suggested by two respondents.

There were two suggestions that the council should organise specific fundraising events and one suggestion that the council should set up a local council weekly lottery with half of the profits going to winners and half to the council.

Other comments include:

“Use our soon to be empty old people homes e.g. Nelson Mandela/ Merry Hill House to offer low cost single rooms for those 18-25 who need housing but cannot afford standard rents. Once they have shown they can look after to room etc. they are renting and keep their rent account up to date they can join our main housing register.”

“Create mobile applications and games that generate income through advertisements or in-app purchases.”

“Reduce the levy paid to Centro.”

Appendix A

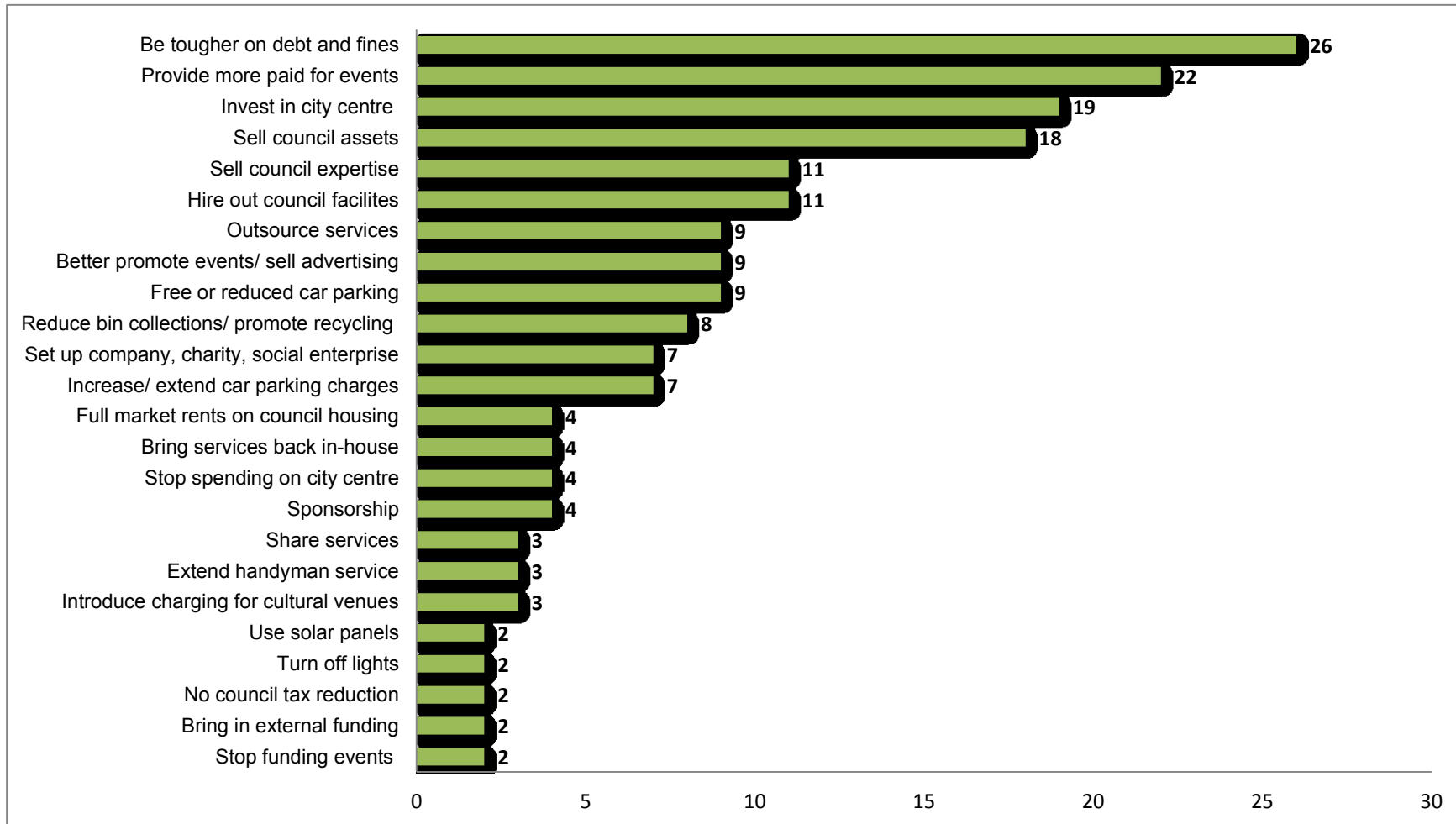
“Taking back garages and renting out. Lots lie empty. Households now have several car owners and limited spaces to park so renting out the garages would generate income stop fly tipping in the shut off ones (make them gated) and only rent to those who live with-in the immediate area.”

“Take a long term view with social care budgets.”

“Hire out transport e.g. minibuses.”

The chart below summarises the responses received regarding income generation:

Chart 11 – How else could the council generate income?



3.0 Feedback from Wolverhampton Over 50s Consultation

The Wolverhampton Over 50s Forum was invited to attend an event at the Civic Centre on 20 January 2016. At this event, City of Wolverhampton Council Councillors and Officers presented the Council's 2016/17 budget plans and discussed a number of themes arising as a result.

Amongst the themes discussed were:

- The Council's investment in the i10 building.
- Future funding settlements for the Council.
- The new West Midlands Combined Authority.
- The reason for and impact of cuts to Council funding.
- The ratio of Councillors to Wards
- Safety in the City.
- The use of grants to fund expenditure.
- City Centre development, private sector investment in the area and the Mander Centre.
- Preventative services for older people and support for Carers.
- Use of technology to support independent living, use of Telecare and Carelink.
- Far less resources for Adult Care and other services so have to spend even more effectively and efficiently.
- Effective citizen led procurement.

4.0 Feedback from Trade Union (Joint Consultative Panel) Consultation

City of Wolverhampton Council Councillors and Officers presented the Council's 2016/17 budget proposals to the Joint Consultative Panel on 13 January 2016 and discussed a number of themes.

Amongst the themes discussed were:

- The new West Midlands Combined Authority.
- The impact of Looked After Children on the Council's budget.
- The Council's investment in the i10 building and the transport interchange.
- Council Tax for 2016/17.
- Adult and Social Care expenditure.
- Education Services grant.
- Social housing provision and demand.

Councillor Johnson asked all members for any further feedback in reference to the budget. Queries can be put in writing to Councillor Johnson or Councillor Sweet.

5.0 Feedback from Business Consultation

Local business representatives/champions were invited to attend an event at the Civic Centre on 7 January 2016. At this event, City of Wolverhampton Council Councillors and Officers presented the Council's 2016/17 budget plans and discussed a number of themes arising as a result.

Amongst the themes discussed were:

- The impact of non-domestic rates on businesses.
- Joint Council working and the new West Midlands Combined Authority.
- City Council working with business to promote economic development.
- Releasing land for housing development.
- Helping businesses to apply for European funding and other loans.
- City Centre investment, maintenance and car parking.
- Council strategy for the retention and attraction of businesses to the area.

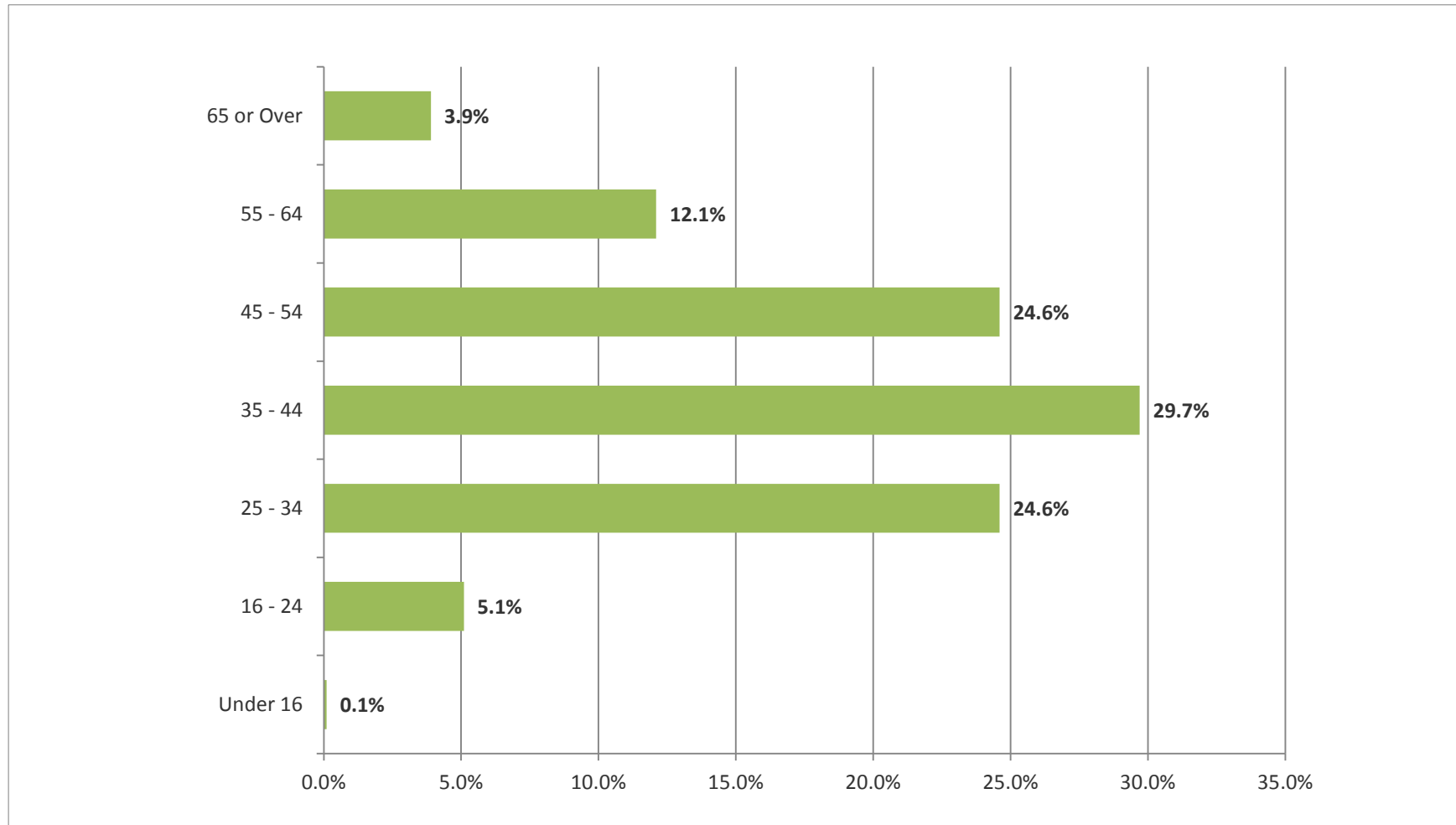
- Skills availability within the area.
- Developing the 'confidence' of the City.
- Ensuring that budget cuts do not impact on favourable perceptions of the City to potential investors (e.g. street scene)
- Business community are part of the solution and the budget consultation and resulting discussions are welcomed.

There was a general recognition that the Council has improved and is more proactive than ever, but also there is still much work to do.

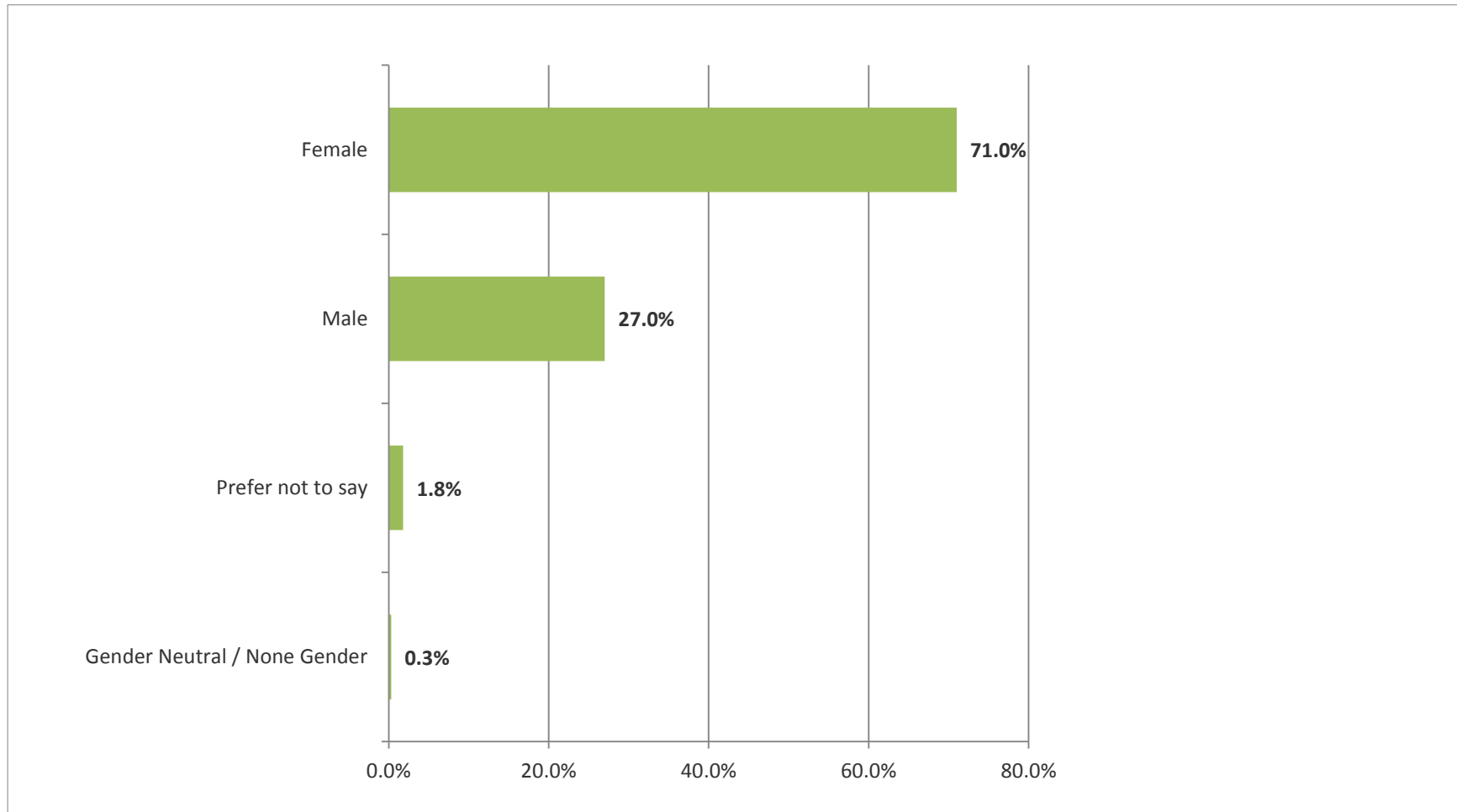
6.0 General comments unrelated to specific Savings, Redesign and Income Generation proposals

- 6.1 To help the Council assess how its Equal Opportunities policy is working, we asked respondents, under no obligation, to provide information about themselves when completing the budget consultation booklet 'Building our future: despite the cuts' and the online survey. For illustrative statistical purposes only this information is shown graphically below.

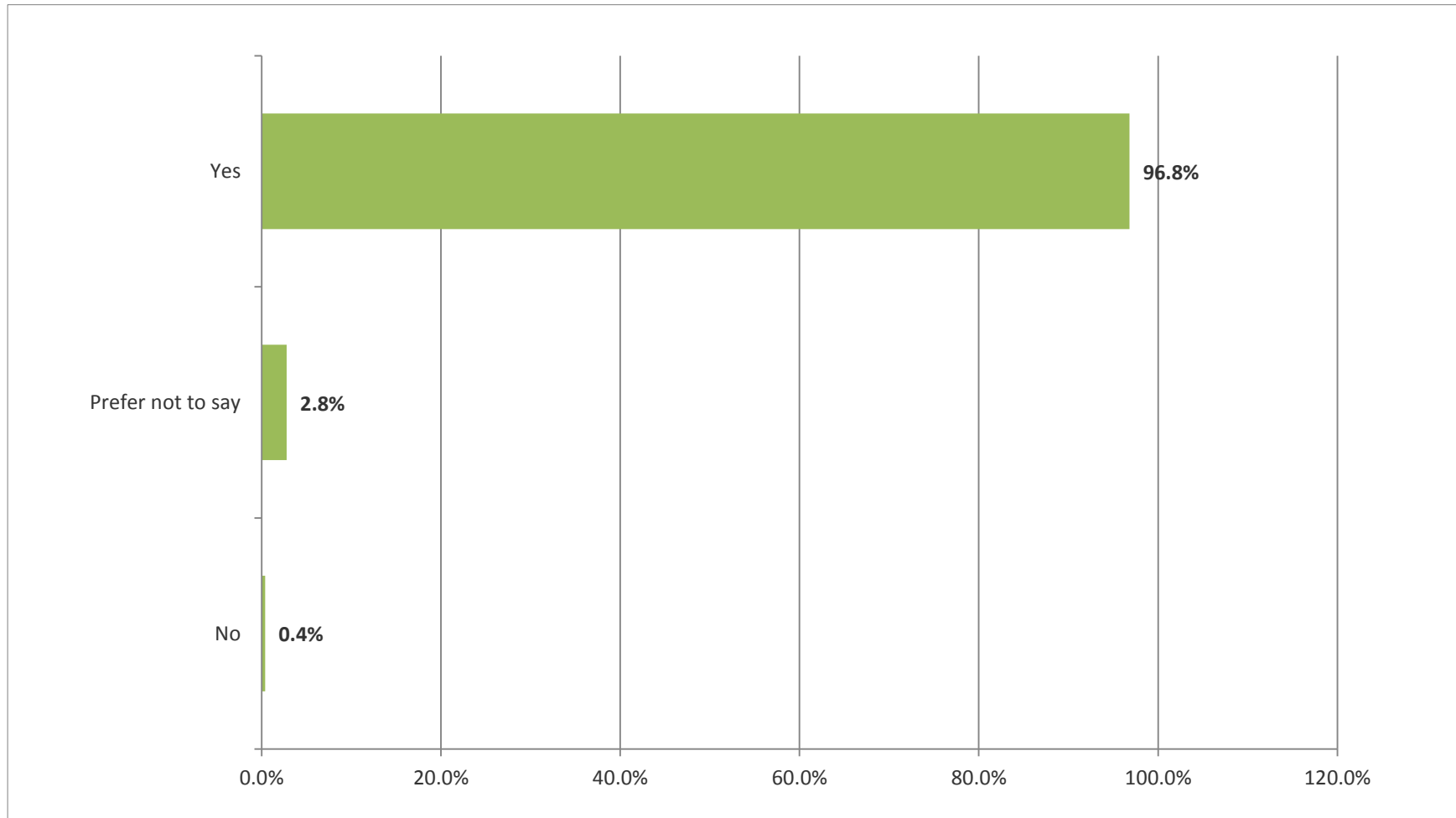
6.2 Respondents Age Group



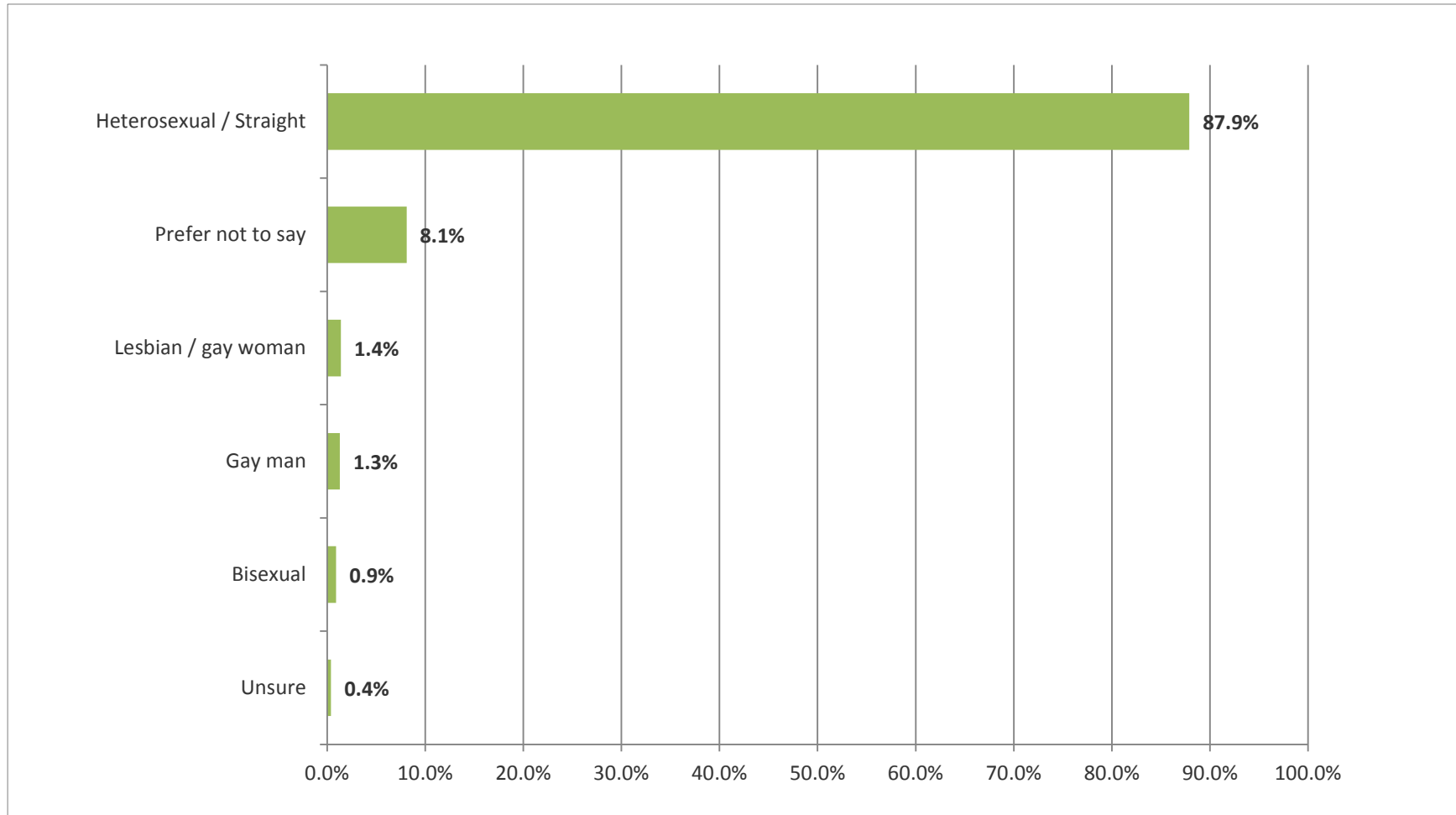
6.3 Respondents gender



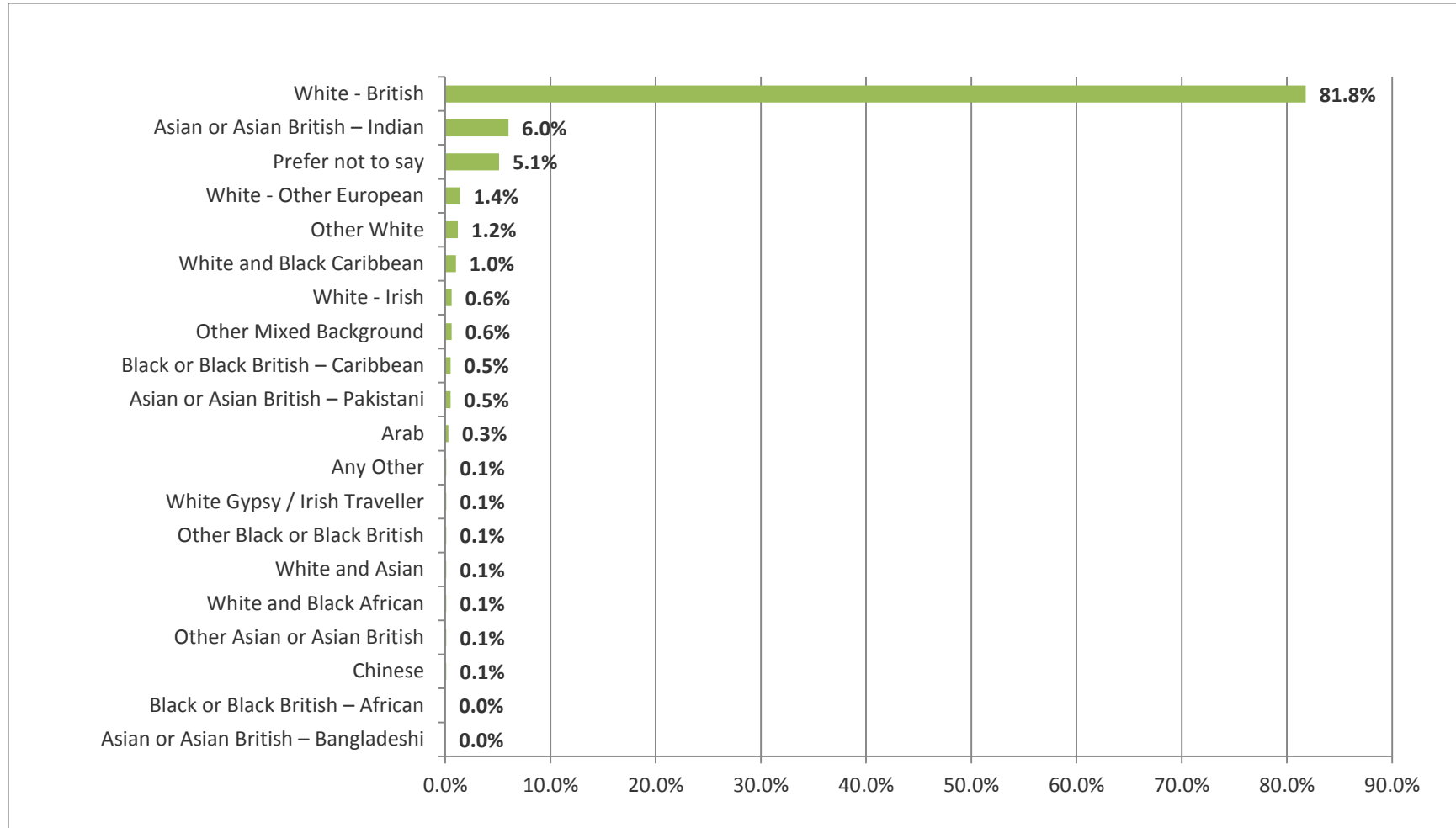
6.4 Is respondents gender identity the same as the gender they were assigned at birth?



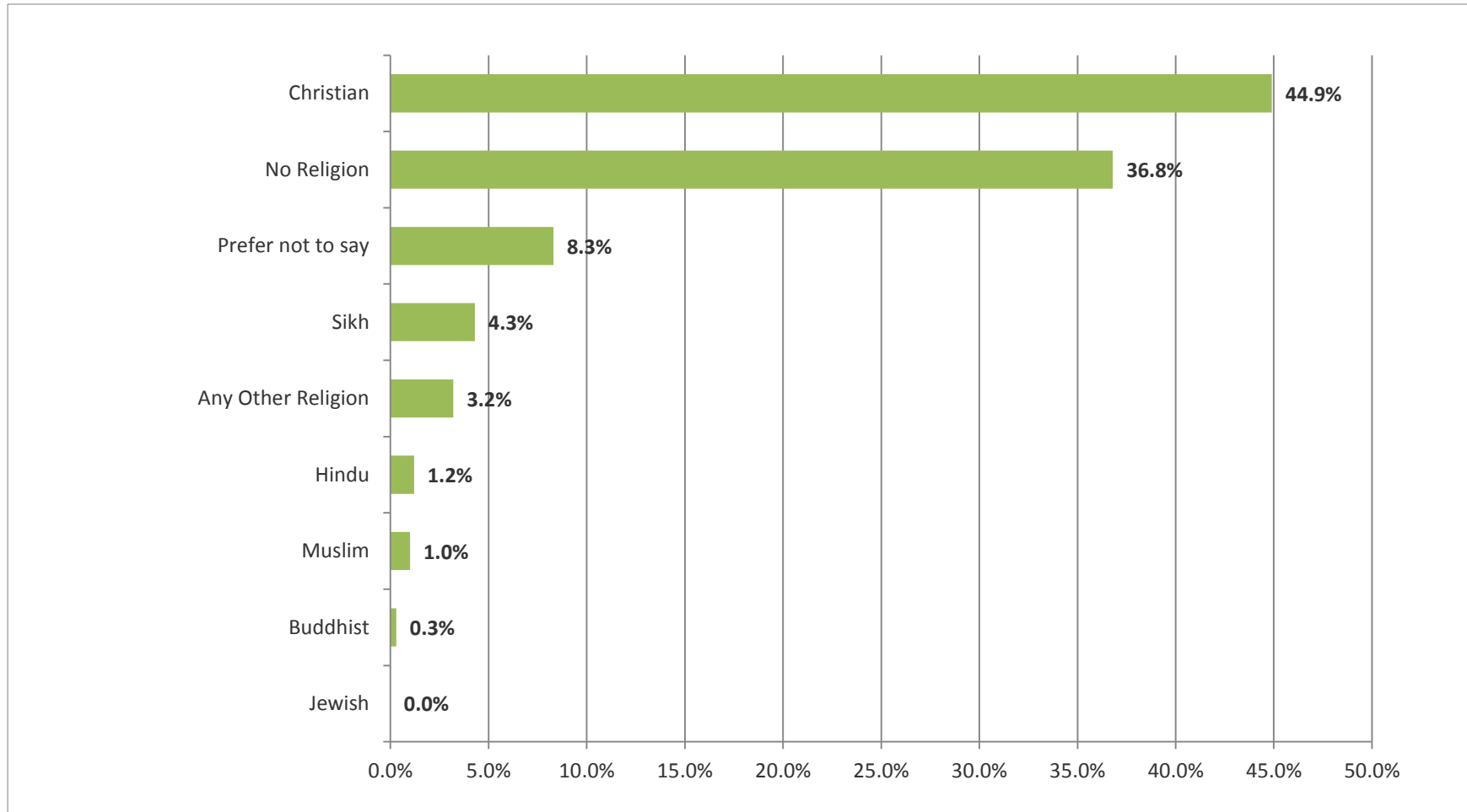
6.5 Respondents sexual orientation?



6.6 Respondents ethnic origin?



6.7 Respondents religion



6.8 Do you have a disability which affects your day to day activities, which has lasted, or you expect to last, at least a year?

