

# Cabinet (Resources) Panel

## 7 February 2017

<b>Report title</b>	Budget 2017/18 – Outcome of Consultation	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Andrew Johnson Resources	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Mark Taylor, Director of Finance	
<b>Originating service</b>	Strategic Finance	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Claire Nye	Chief Accountant
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<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Strategic Executive Board	24 January 2017

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### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to consider the responses to the 2017/18 Budget Consultation as detailed in this report and take these responses into account for the 2017/18 Final Budget to be presented to Cabinet on 22 February 2017.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet (Resources) Panel of the consultation process undertaken to support the 2017/18 budget setting process, 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 Full Council on 1 March 2017.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The Council continues to be faced with a challenging projected financial position over the medium term, and significant Budget Reduction and Income Generation proposals are required in order to maintain a robust financial position.
- 2.2 It is important to note that the updated projected budget deficit assumes the achievement of prior year Budget Reduction and Income Generation proposals amounting to £37.4 million over the four year period to 2019/20. In March 2016, Full Council approved that work started immediately to identify opportunities to deliver the £22.2 million projected budget deficit in 2017/18 and that the Council would be faced with finding further Budget Reduction and Income Generation proposals totalling £54.6 million over the three year period to 2019/20.
- 2.3 When identifying budget reduction and income generation proposals the Council's strategic approach to address the budget deficit continues to be to align resources to the Corporate Plan to achieve:
  - a Stronger Economy,
  - a Stronger Community,
  - a Stronger Organisation.

The Council does not want to simply manage decline, investment in the future is essential for both the Council and the City.

- 2.4 The targets have now been classified into proposals upon which the outcome of formal budget consultation is required – budget reduction and income generation proposals – and proposals which can be implemented without reliance on the outcome of formal budget consultation – Financial Transactions and Base Budget Revisions.
- 2.5 There are 32 Budget Reduction and Income Generation proposals for 2017/18 that have been identified at this stage is summarised by Cabinet Portfolio in the table below:

**Table 1 – Budget Reduction and Income Generation Proposals for 2017/18 by Cabinet Portfolio**

<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>2017/18 £000</b>
Adult Services	6	(4,835)
Children and Young People	4	(3,014)
Public Health and Wellbeing	-	-
City Housing and Assets	4	(1,200)
City Economy	1	(200)
City Environment	8	(3,250)
Resources	4	(170)
Governance	5	(870)
Education	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>(13,539)</b>

- 2.6 A report was presented to Cabinet in October 2016, which detailed the outcome of work that has been in progress across all areas of the Council to identify budget reduction and income generation targets to deliver the strategy of identifying £22.2 million for 2017/18.
- 2.7 The projected target of £22.2 million at March 2016 was revised to £23.5 million. This was due to a number of proposals being reprofiled or removed.
- 2.8 Cabinet approved that 32 Budget Reduction and Income Generation proposals totalling £13.5 million proceed to formal budget consultation and scrutiny stages of the budget process, whilst 24 Financial Transactions and Base Budget revisions totalling £10.0 million in 2017/18 be incorporated into the 2017/18 Draft Budget and did not form part of the public consultation.
- 2.9 Details of the Budget Reduction and Income Generation proposals totalling £13.5 million in 2017/18 have been made available on the Council's website since the 24 October 2016, and are the subject of this report. The consultation is branded as 'Delivering What Matters With Less'.
- 2.10 The Council's budget consultation took place from 24 October 2016 to 14 January 2017 as part of the budget setting process for 2017/18. All of the consultation and analysis is conducted in-house and is a major factor in keeping the cost of delivery to a minimum.
- 2.11 During the consultation period, there have been stakeholder engagement meetings with the local community, the Business Community, the Voluntary and Community Sector, the Older People's Forum and Trade Unions.

- 2.12 Presentations have been carried out at each of these meetings by the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Johnson, and the Director of Finance or Chief Accountant. The Cabinet Member for City Environment, Councillor Evans, participated in presentations at the local community consultations and the Cabinet Member for City Economy, Councillor Reynolds at the Business Community meeting, assisted by appropriate senior council employees. The public and Council employee's views are also being obtained through social media and by an online and booklet survey.
- 2.13 In addition to the wider budget consultation meetings, two additional meetings with representatives from the city's equalities forum and a further meeting with the city's Youth Council have been held. All three meetings were attended by the Head of Public Protection. The two meetings with Equalities Forum representatives were to ensure the equality analysis undertaken as part of the review of the service was appropriate and comprehensive. The meeting with the Youth Council was requested by them as they wanted the opportunity to discuss the proposed service changes with particular emphasis on any implications for fly-tipping and other environmental crime.

### **3.0 Key Findings**

- 3.1 To gather views on the 32 Budget Reduction and Income Generation proposals, the Council's budget consultation ran for a period of 12 weeks from 24 October 2016 and 14 January 2017 using a range of consultation mechanisms.
- 3.2 In the following paragraphs, a summary of the participants in the stakeholder and community group meetings, plus details of other groups and interested parties that have provided their views and opinions, are provided.
- 3.3 The following stakeholder engagement meetings have been held:
- 4 Community meetings;
  - 2 Equalities Forum meetings (Waste issues only)
  - 1 Voluntary and Community Sector meeting;
  - 1 Trade Union meeting;
  - 1 Business Community meeting;
  - 1 Youth Council meeting (Waste only) and
  - 1 Wolverhampton Older People's Forum.
- 3.4 137 (67 - 2016/17) members of the public/representatives have attended the stakeholder meetings. The breakdown of attendees is as follows:
- 3 (0 – 2016/17) attendees at Bob Jones Centre, Blakenhall;
  - 10 (9 – 2016/17 Bilston Town Hall) attendees at Bert Williams Leisure Centre, Bilston;
  - 24 (2 – 2016/17) attendees at Bantock Tractor Shed, Bradmore;
  - 9 (1 – 2016/17) attendees at Low Hill Community Centre, Low Hill;
  - 14 (24 – 2016/17) attendees at a Voluntary and Community Sector meeting, Council Chamber;
  - 14 (8 – 2016/17) attendees at Business Breakfast, Mayoral Chambers;
  - 16 (6 – 2016/17) attendees at Trade Union meeting; and
  - 16 (17 – 2016/17) attendees at Wolverhampton Older People's Forum

- 22 attendees at Youth Council meeting
- 9 attendees at 2 Equalities Forum meetings.

- 3.5 The Council have used a range of methods including face to face, online survey and written communications to gather responses during the consultation period. The consultation was publicised via several types of media; the Council website, the Facebook page “Wolverhampton Today”, and Twitter.
- 3.6 In total 2,458 individuals (1,030 last year, an increase of 138%) took part in the budget consultation survey.
- 3.7 A more detailed analysis of the consultation findings can be found in Appendix A.
- 3.8 Appendix B shows a heatmap of the City of Wolverhampton with the location of the respondents who provided a postcode when completing the survey. The heatmap is based on 1,731 of the 2,458 respondents residing in Wolverhampton who provided postcodes. This equates to nearly 71% of the total response rate. However, each dot represents a unique postcode rather than a person, so if more than one person at an address completed the survey that would not be represented. The heatmap should be used with caution as 29% (727 of the 2,458) of respondents are not recorded. However, it does demonstrate that responses have been received from across the City.
- 3.9 The themes that respondents have had the opportunity to comment on are:
- Redesigning services to deliver savings;
  - Generating income to help balance the books;
  - Invite public and business volunteering to help balance the books;
  - Cease funding to help balance the books;
  - Waste collection services and frequency of collection;
  - Introduce charges for the collection of garden waste, a discretionary service;
  - Introduce an enforced waiting times to free outlying car parks; and
  - Raising Council Tax.
- 3.10 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.

## **4.0 Conclusions**

- 4.1 This report summarises the headline findings from the budget consultation exercise run by the City of Wolverhampton Council on its budget proposals for 2017/18. It includes an analysis of qualitative presentations and meetings with key stakeholder and community groups designed to gather views and opinions on the 32 Budget Reduction 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 22 February 2017 before recommending to Full Council on 1 March 2017 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 recommendation to Full Council on 1 March 2017.

5.2 Should any changes be made to the 2017/18 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/27012017/Q]

## **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 are 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.

[TS/18012017/B]

## **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, representatives from the Equalities Forum (waste only), the Youth Council (waste only) 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 2017/18, considerable focus has been placed on the development of budget reduction and income generation 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 Budget 2017/18 – Consultation Update, report to Cabinet, 18 January 2017

Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 – 2019/20, report to Cabinet, 19 October 2016

Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 – 2019/20, report to Cabinet, 20 July 2016

2016/17 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 - 2019/20, report to Cabinet, 24 February 2016

### **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 2016), 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**

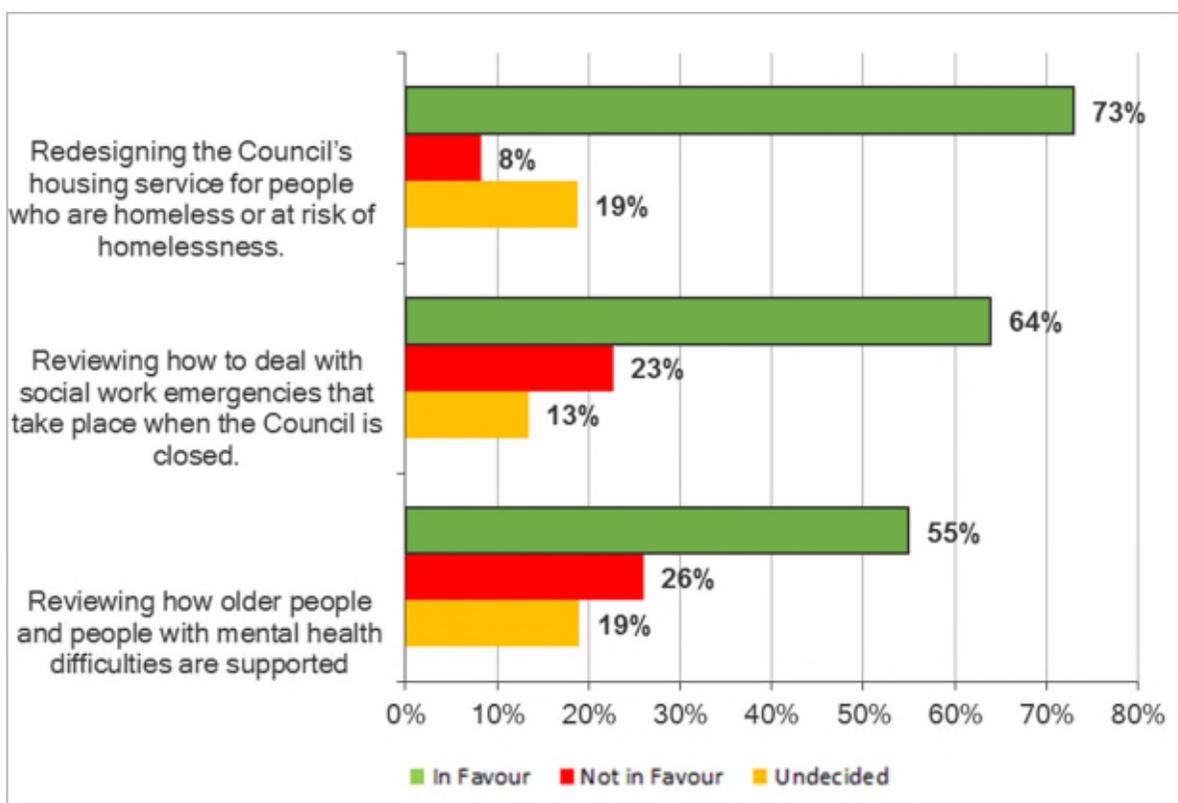
- 2.1 The main themes that respondents had the opportunity to comment on were:
  - Redesigning services to deliver savings;
  - Generating income to help balance the books;
  - Invite public or business volunteering to run a service;
  - Cease funding to help balance the books;
  - Waste collection services and frequency of collection;
  - Introduce charges for the collection of garden waste, a discretionary service;

- Introduce an enforced waiting times to free outlying car parks; and
- Raising Council Tax.

## 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 three 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:**

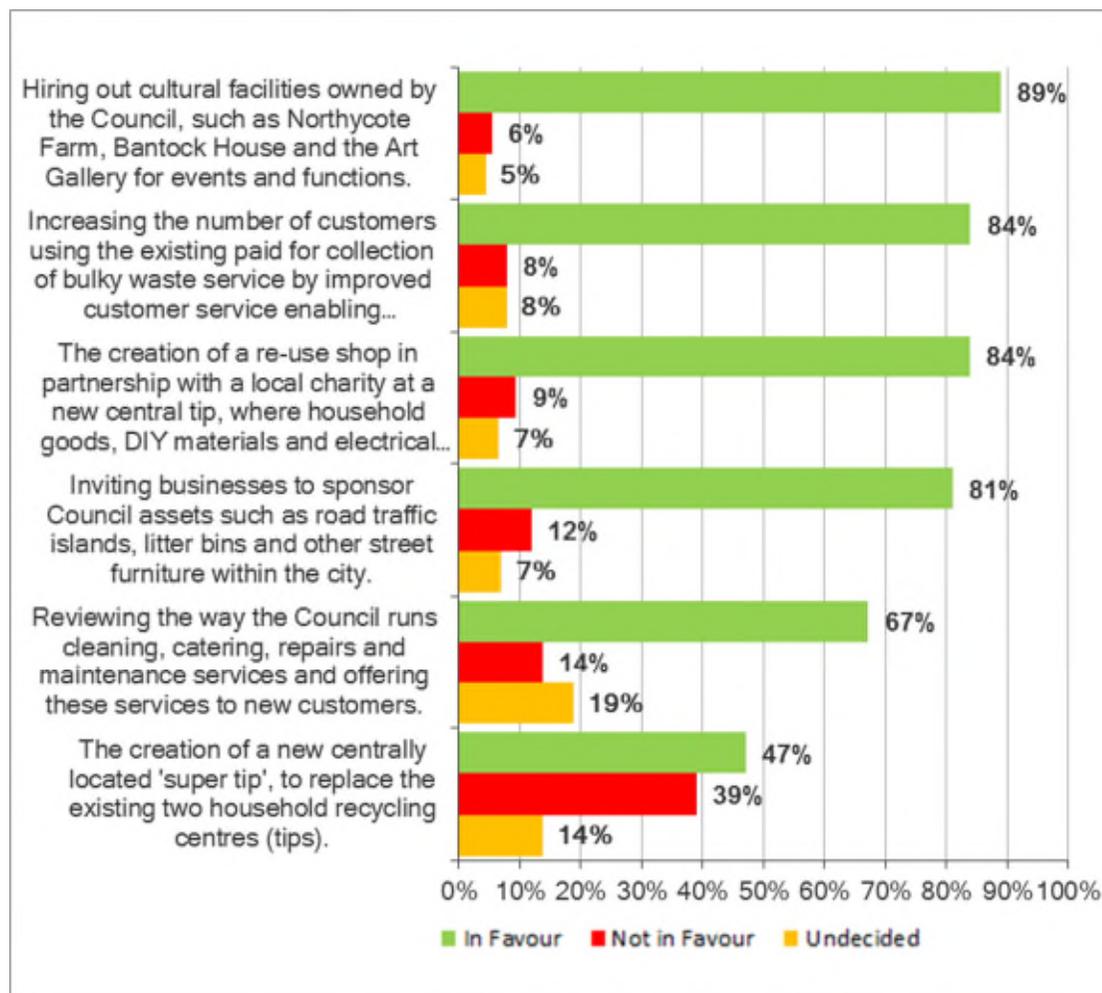


Overall, there were a total of 7,262 responses for this question. Of which 4,646 (64%) of respondents were supportive of the proposed redesign to services to deliver savings, whilst 1,377 (19%) of respondents were not in favour.

### 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:

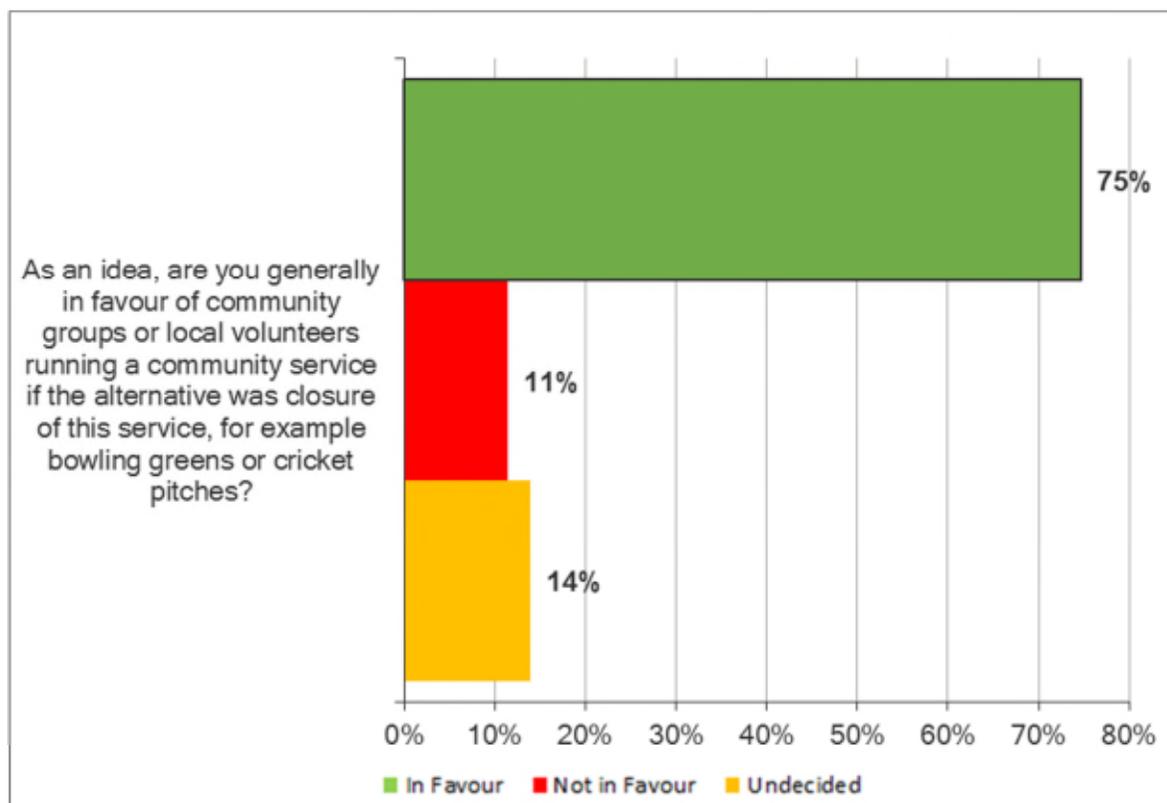
- Hiring out cultural facilities owned by the Council (89%)
- Increasing the number of customers using the existing paid for collection of bulky waste service (84%)
- The creation of a re-use shop in partnership with a local charity at a new central tip (84%)

Overall, there were a total of 13,925 responses for this question. Of which 10,536 (76%) of respondents were supportive of the proposed income generation ideas, whilst 2,025 (15%) of respondents were not in favour.

## 2.4 Invite public or business volunteering to run a service

To help balance the books it is proposed to invite volunteers or businesses to run a service. Respondents were asked to choose if they were in favour, not in favour or undecided. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

**Chart 3 – To help balance the books it is proposed to invite volunteers or business to run a service:**

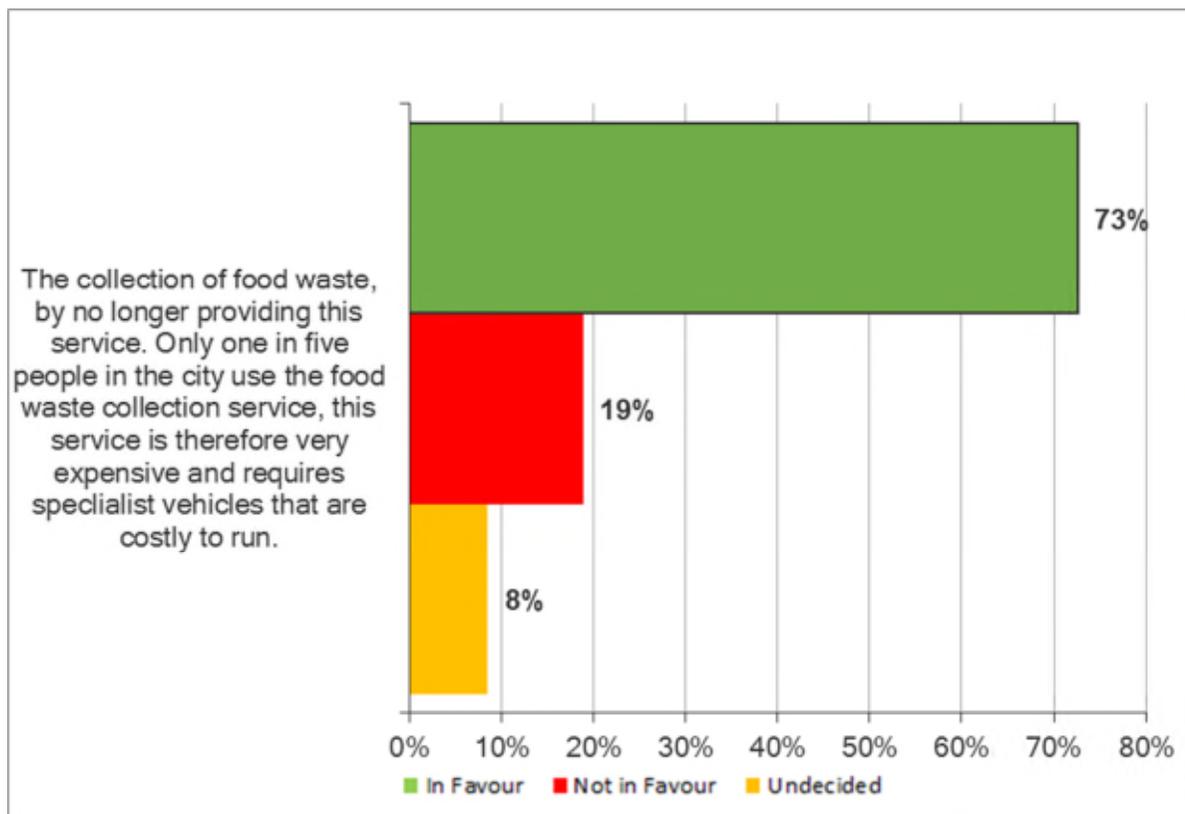


Overall, there were a total of 2,306 responses to this question. Of which 1,722 (75%) of respondents were supportive of the idea to invite volunteers or businesses to run a service, whilst 263 (11%) of respondents were not in favour.

2.5 Cease funding to help balance the books

To help balance the books it is proposed to cease funding for the collection of food waste, by no longer providing this service. Respondents were asked to choose if they were in favour, not in favour or undecided. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

**Chart 4 – To help balance the books it is proposed to cease funding for:**

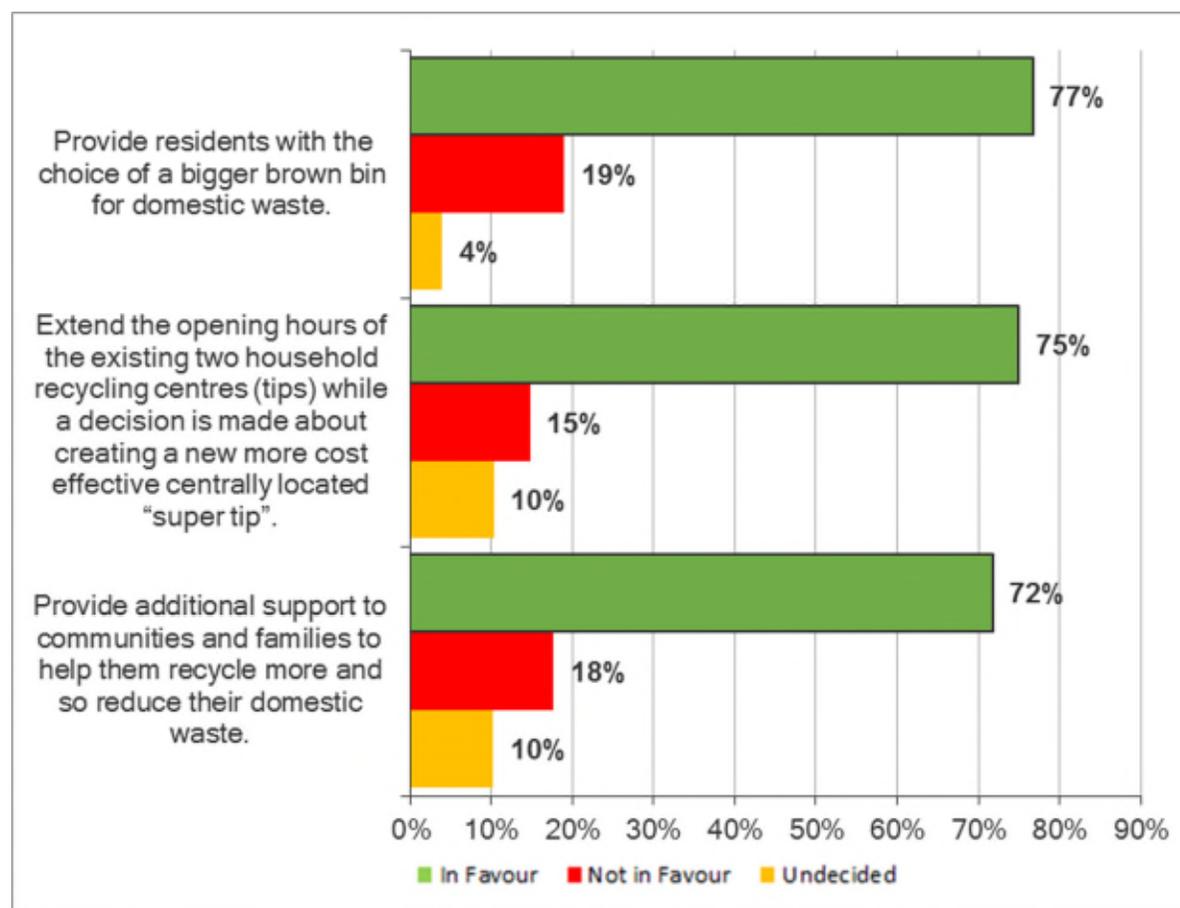


Overall, there were a total of 2,260 responses to this question. Of which 1,641 (73%) of respondents were supportive of the idea to cease funding for the collection of food waste, whilst 427 (19%) of respondents were not in favour.

## 2.6 Waste collection services

Following the end of a Government grant for keeping the domestic waste (brown bin) collection weekly the Council proposed to move to a fortnightly collection for domestic waste as this costs less. In order to manage this change, respondents were asked to choose if they were in favour, not in favour or undecided in each of the three savings concepts. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

**Chart 5 – In order to manage this change the Council proposes to:**

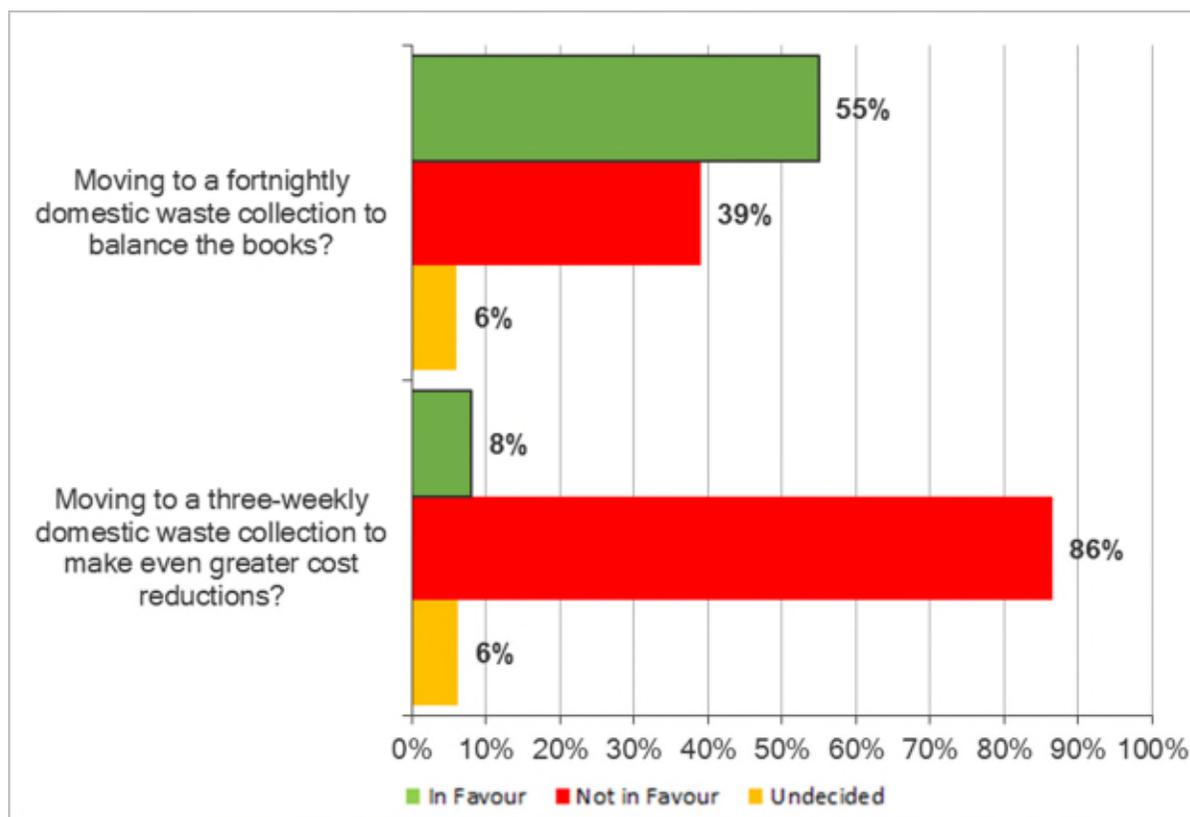


Overall, there were a total of 6,805 responses to this question. Of which 5,066 (74%) of respondents were supportive of the idea to manage this change, whilst 1,166 (17%) of respondents were not in favour.

## 2.7 Frequency of collection

Respondents were asked to choose that if the measures described in 2.6 above were in place, would they be in favour, not in favour or undecided of moving to a fortnightly or three-weekly domestic waste collection. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

**Chart 6 – Frequency of collection:**



Out of 2,269 responses, 1,246 (55%) of respondents were supportive of the idea of moving to a fortnightly domestic waste collection, whilst 884 (39%) of respondents were not in favour.

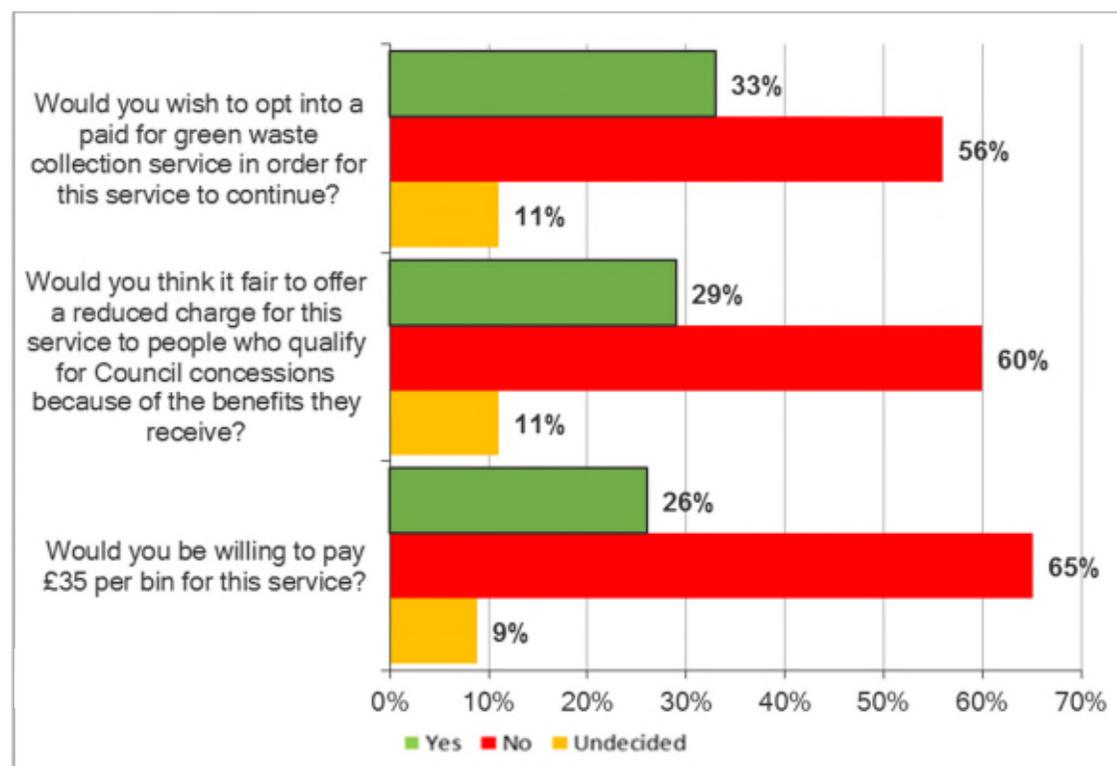
Out of 2,272 responses, 1,965 (86%) of respondents were not supportive of the idea of moving to a three-weekly domestic waste collection, whilst 182 (8%) of respondents were in favour.

## 2.8 Introduce charges for the collection of garden waste, a discretionary service

The collection of garden waste is a discretionary service and many residents are unable to use this service, for example, those without a garden and many choose not to do so. The Council proposes to make the collection of green waste an optional service only for those who want it.

Many Councils already charge between £35 and £60 for this service, the City of Wolverhampton Council is proposing to introduce an annual charge of £35 per bin, with an introductory offer of £35 per bin for the first year and a half. Respondents were asked to choose if they were in favour, not in favour or undecided around three questions. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

**Chart 7 – Collection of garden waste:**

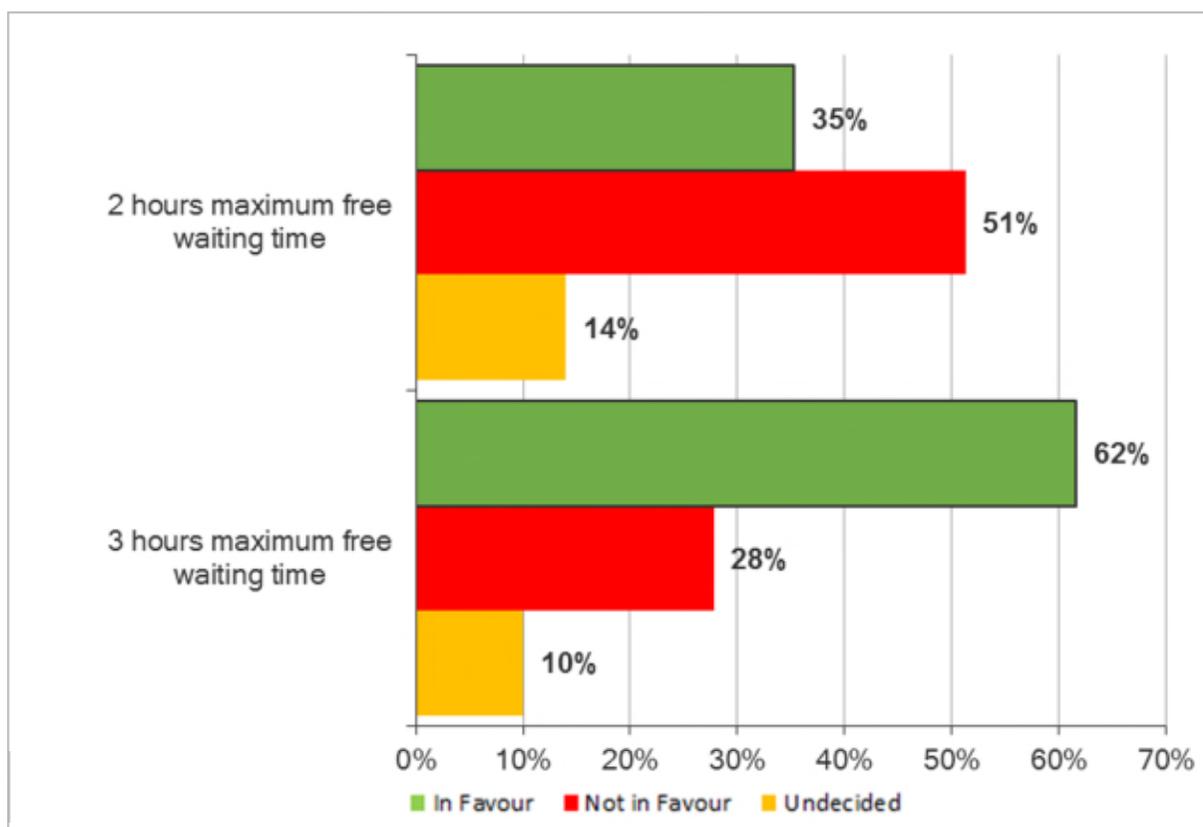


Overall, there were a total of 6,567 responses to this question. Of which 3,969 (60%) of respondents were not in favour of paying for the service or willing to pay £35 per bin and thought it was not fair to offer a reduced charge, whilst 1,937 (29%) of respondents were in favour.

## 2.9 Introduce an enforced waiting times to free outlying car parks

In order to maintain sufficient parking for shoppers and other people conducting local business, respondents were asked whether they were in favour, not in favour or undecided of introducing an enforced waiting time for these car parks after which customers must move on or be subject to a fine. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

**Chart 8 – Introducing an enforced waiting time to our free outlying car parks:**



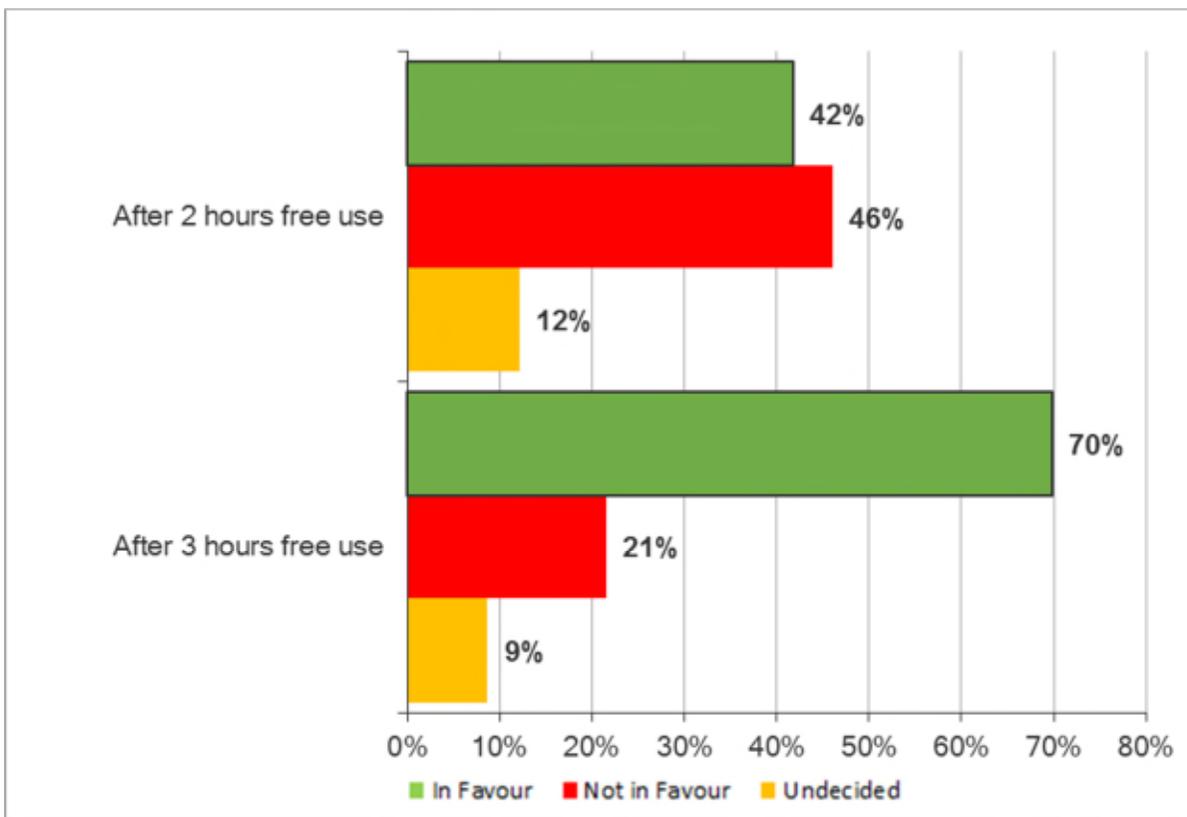
Out of 2,051 responses, 725 (35%) of respondents were in favour of allowing 2 hours maximum free waiting time, whilst 1,052 (51%) of respondents were not in favour.

Out of 2,163 responses, 1,333 (62%) of respondents were in favour of allowing 3 hours maximum free waiting time, whilst 602 (28%) of respondents were not in favour.

2.10 Introduce a charge after a period of free use to allow for longer stays to free outlying car parks

Respondents were asked whether they would be in favour, not in favour or undecided of an approach which does allow for longer stays by introducing a charge after a period of free use. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

**Chart 9 – Introducing a charge to allow for longer stays to our free outlying car parks:**



Out of 1,977 responses, 826 (42%) of respondents were in favour of charging after 2 hours of free use, whilst 910 (46%) of respondents were not in favour.

Out of 2,140 responses, 1,494 (70%) of respondents were in favour of charging after 3 hours of free use, whilst 460 (21%) of respondents were not in favour.

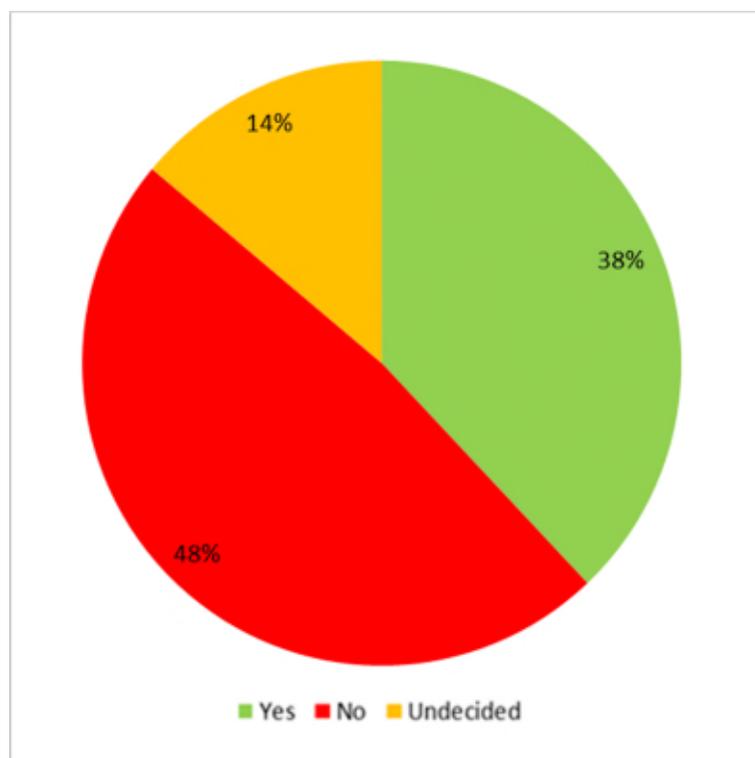
## 2.11 Raising Council Tax

The Council is proposing a 1.99% increase in Council Tax for 2017/18 and in line with Government policy introduced in 2016/17 proposes to levy an additional 2% Adult Social Care charge.

The proposed total 3.99% increase would be an extra £37.89 per year (73 pence per week) for the majority of properties in Wolverhampton (Valuation Band A) or if a single person discount is applicable for the property the increase for 2017/18 would be an extra £28.42 per year (55 pence per week).

Respondents were asked if they would be prepared to pay more Council Tax (than the currently proposed Council Tax increase of 3.99%) to protect key services from further cuts, noting that any increase in Council Tax over 1.99% would be subject by law to a local referendum. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

**Chart 10 – Would you be prepared to pay more Council Tax to protect key services from further cuts?**



851 of 2,227 respondents (38%) stated that they would be willing to pay more than the proposed 3.99% increase in Council Tax to protect key services from further cuts. 1,079 respondents (48%) stated that they would not be willing to pay more Council Tax.

### **3.0 Feedback from Wolverhampton Over 50s Consultation**

The Wolverhampton Over 50s Forum was invited to attend an event at the Civic Centre on 16 November 2016. At this event, City of Wolverhampton Council Councillors and Officers presented the Council's 2017/18 budget plans and discussed a number of themes arising as a result.

#### 3.1 Amongst the themes discussed were:

- The main concerns for this group were about reductions in budgets for Adult Social Care, especially in light of the Adult Social Care Precept and in light of an aging population and increased demand for services.
- They believe there should be more of a focus on reducing older people's need for social care through prevention and rehabilitation by investments in services and that the impact of the ageing population could affect the Council's ambition to develop a buoyant and resilient economy and a vibrant voluntary sector.

### **4.0 Feedback from Trade Union (Joint Consultative Panel) Consultation**

City of Wolverhampton Council Councillors and Officers presented the Council's 2017/18 budget proposals to the Joint Consultative Panel on 30 November 2016 and discussed a number of themes.

#### 4.1 Amongst the themes discussed were:

- The main concerns for this group were around the impact of Waste Services budget cuts on the workforce through possible job losses, as well as issues concerning increased pension costs.
- They reiterated their view about bringing jobs back in house rather than outsourcing, which they believe would save money.
- They were in favour of levels of investment in the City continuing to encourage businesses into the City.
- A further issue was that fly tipping could increase in light of cuts, especially in some areas and those furthest away from the tip.

### 5.0 Feedback from Business Consultation

Local business representatives/champions were invited to attend an event at the Civic Centre on 10 November 2016. At this event, City of Wolverhampton Council Councillors and Officers presented the Council's 2017/18 budget plans and discussed a number of themes arising as a result.

#### 5.1 Amongst the themes discussed were:

- Businesses are concerned about levels of business rates and that the Council needs to recognise how important this is for City Centre development and to attract people and more businesses.
- Businesses need more key information and would like the Council to engage more to enable the business community to plan ahead. They would also like more support and a partnership approach, in particular for smaller and city centre businesses (not just big companies). The Council has a vital role to play in enhancing businesses.
- They also recognised that the Council needs to work to improve the reputation and image of the City to attract people and more businesses in.
- Other issues centred on car parking access and provision and the need for more attractive work space.

### 6.0 Feedback from Voluntary and Community Sector Consultation

Local voluntary and community sector organisations were invited to attend an event at the Civic Centre on 1 November 2016. At this event, City of Wolverhampton Council Councillors and Officers presented the Council's 2017/18 budget plans and discussed a number of themes arising as a result.

#### 6.1 Amongst the themes discussed were:

- A major concern for this group was the level of cuts in Adult Services which as a percentage of the budget appears disproportionate to other service areas and that this could impact on unpaid carers.
- There was a desire to see more detail around the investment in prevention and early intervention.
- They were also concerned about if the council had quantified the cost of regeneration and was able to demonstrate that the benefits outweigh the costs. How does the council balance investment priorities, for example the Youth Zone compared with the Market?
- A further issue was what the council is doing to reduce the number of interim staff and costs.

- The group want the council to share information about the level of service provided across the City and how outcomes are designed as well as identifying if the council is committed to working with partners to tackle the challenges together and how the council invests in the transition for children into adulthood. They are interested to know if the council is open to a tripartite agreement with the voluntary, public and private sector, recognising that this could create an opportunity to support quality assurance.
- Concerns were also raised about the impact of charging for green waste on the working poor.

### 7.0 Feedback from the four Public Meeting Consultations

Members of the public were invited to attend four public meetings held around the City of Wolverhampton in November and December 2016 to have their say in the consultation. At these meetings, City of Wolverhampton Council Councillors and Officers presented the Council's 2017/18 budget plans and discussed a number of themes arising as a result.

7.1 Amongst the themes discussed were:

#### Domestic Waste

- There were concerns about smells from bins and rats if they are only emptied fortnightly. People with babies may struggle to get rid of nappies and there will be health issues. However, the suggestion for larger brown bin was welcomed to alleviate this although larger bins will be more difficult to move and pedestrians may not be able to get by on pavements with larger bins being put out.
- It was felt that the Council is currently good at dealing with fly tipping but it may increase as a result of cuts and had the Council considered the costs of this.
- A further concern was the cost of waste arising from travellers' sites as this has to be paid for.
- It was acknowledged that the waste leaflet about recycling is very good and clear and people are impressed with recycling levels. They felt that the Council is listening to people. Waste is an example to the rest of the Council about how to communicate with people. However, some people pointed out that the Council could communicate better about composting, costs of recycling and the re-use shop.
- There were issues raised about less vehicles and rounds and had the Council consulted with Dudley
- Questions were raised about commercial waste and how this is dealt with to avoid costs.

### Garden waste

- A number of concerns were raised about paying for bins and the same people always being charged. Why should people have to pay for bins when other services are not charged for and how would it be monitored so that the Council would know who had paid? Issues were raised about problems with road sweeping not being done which means residents would have to collect leaves and put them in bins, if they have to pay for bins they may be just be left. There was also felt to be a risk people will use brown bins for garden waste and that changes could lead to bonfires, pollution and accidents.
- However, it was recognised that other Council's had been spoken to learn from their experience and that and environmental impact assessment would be undertaken.

### Super tip

- There were major concerns about the cost of creating a super tip, the proposed location and that there had been little visibility about assumptions and figures. Questions were raised about the need for this and why the current ones couldn't just be extended.
- It was also felt that any super tips could lead to congestion in town as well as queuing at the tip and there would be problems if people did not have cars.
- However, it was recognised that recycling is an important issue and that people should be fined if they don't recycle.

### Food waste

- There was widespread appreciation that food waste canisters are being phased out but one person asked if the Council had considered the cost of waste disposal units you can put in your sink.
- There was some concern that food caddy waste may end up in brown bins.

### **Social care**

- There was concern about reduced funding for social care and being made to feel guilty for getting old. Some thought that family breakdowns will increase due to poverty.
- However, there was praise for the reduction in numbers of children in care.

### **Other**

- There were concerns that planned routes for street sweeping aren't done correctly.
- People pointed out that when making any changes the Council needs to consider that not everyone is fit and that there are needs around agility, health and ICT abilities.
- There were general concerns about much could be saved if the Council was better at collecting the income it is owed, the costs of refurbishing the civic centre, Councillor allowances and how much is being spent on consultants, as well as the need to do more for carers as they need more support.
- Some raised why there was a need to extend the metro to the station and the reason for the coach stop by the metro as well as any proposed changes to street lighting.
- However, there was wide recognition that problems are not from local labour council but from central government and that the cuts in funding come from government.

### **General consultation process**

- There was some concern that this is not a consultation as decisions have already been made and that if people oppose the proposals will it make any difference.
- The consultation questionnaire does not contain any financial information and that it is too ambiguous and there is no chance to comment.
- Some people pointed out they do not have access to the internet so links to further information are not helpful.

### 8.0 Feedback from the Youth Council Meeting

Members of the Youth Council were invited to attend a meeting on 9 January 2017 to have their say in the consultation. At this meeting, the Head of Public Protection presented the Council's proposals to review the waste collection service and discussed a number of themes arising as a result.

#### 8.1 Amongst the themes discussed were:-

##### **Domestic Waste**

- Some concerns about smells from bins and rats if bins are only emptied fortnightly. However, the suggestion for larger brown bin was welcomed for larger families. It was queried whether a charge could be made for bigger bins.
- It was felt that fly tipping may increase and the costs of this may outweigh the savings.
- The waste leaflet about recycling was felt to be very good and clear by those who had seen it but not all knew about it. Representatives were impressed with recycling levels but wanted more to be done to engage with young people. Some representatives felt the Council could provide more information about composting.
- It was mentioned that the Council should consider additional collections around all religious festivals.

##### **Garden waste**

- A number of concerns were raised about the proposed charge when other services are free.

##### **Food waste**

- There was understanding of the need that food waste canisters are being phased out.
- There was some concern that food caddy waste may end up in brown bins and attract more pests / foxes etc.

### 9.0 Feedback from the Equalities Forum meetings:

Representatives from the City's Equalities Forum were invited to attend meetings on 21 November 2016 and 5 December 2016 to have their say in the consultation. At these meetings, the Head of Public Protection presented the Council's

proposals to review the waste collection service and discussed a number of themes arising as a result. The first meeting was attended by the Cabinet Member for City Environment.

9.1 Amongst the themes discussed were:-

### **Domestic Waste**

- There was concern that the proposed changes would lead to an increase in fly-tipping.
- Concerns were raised over smells and health issues arising over the summer when people miss collections, for example if on holiday.
- Concerns over hygiene when disabled residents have to put pads etc. in their domestic bin and these will not be collected for a fortnight.
- Concerns over needs for larger bins to manage two weeks' worth of rubbish will make it difficult for some disabled people to manage the weight of a larger bin, or manoeuvre a larger bin if in a wheelchair. Suggested that this will increase the need for assisted collections.
- Suggestion made that if residents miss their fortnightly collection due to impairment as a result of their disability the council should offer a one off collection when this is reported as a reasonable adjustment under the Equalities Act.
- Overall there was support and understanding for the need to move to fortnightly collections.
- A suggestion was made that weekly collections could be available for people who chose to pay for additional collections, or alternatively a "pay on demand" service for a one off collection could be considered.
- A suggestion was made that a sticker with pictures showing what can and can't go in each bin could be put on the bins.

### **Garden waste**

- A number of individuals raised concerns that if this free service stopped then the waste would either go in the residual waste bin or be fly tipped.
- Agreement that concessions should be offered a free service.

### Super tip

- There was concern that a supersite won't address access for disabled people who can't drive and who therefore cannot use the facility.
- Concerns raised over congestion, and parking layouts within a supersite.
- Preference raised for extending existing facilities, rather than creating a single super site.
- Support was expressed for the incorporation of a reuse facility.

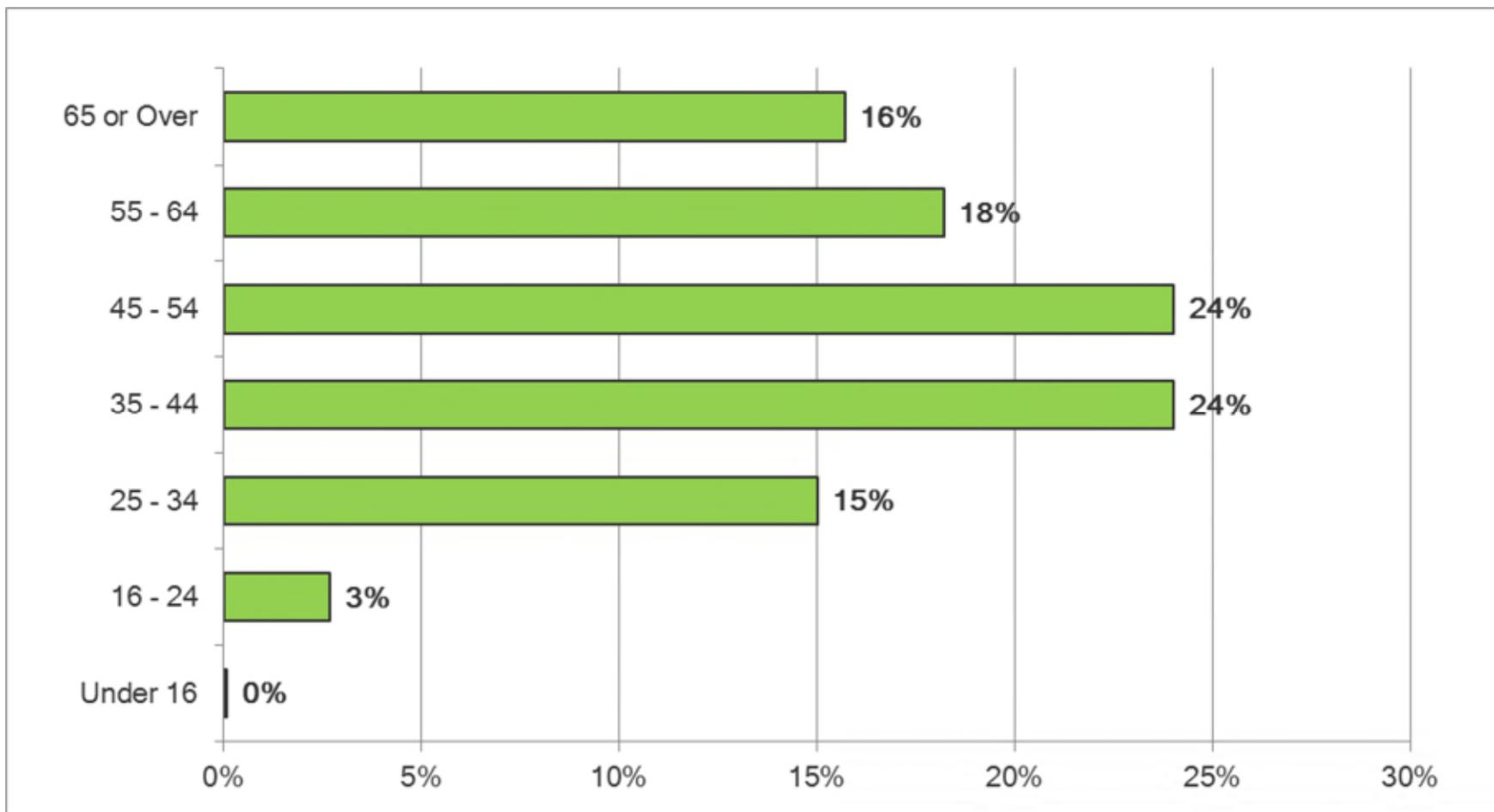
### Food waste

- There was concern that food waste would end up in the brown residual waste bins if the service was stopped.
- There was support to stop a service that very few people are currently using.

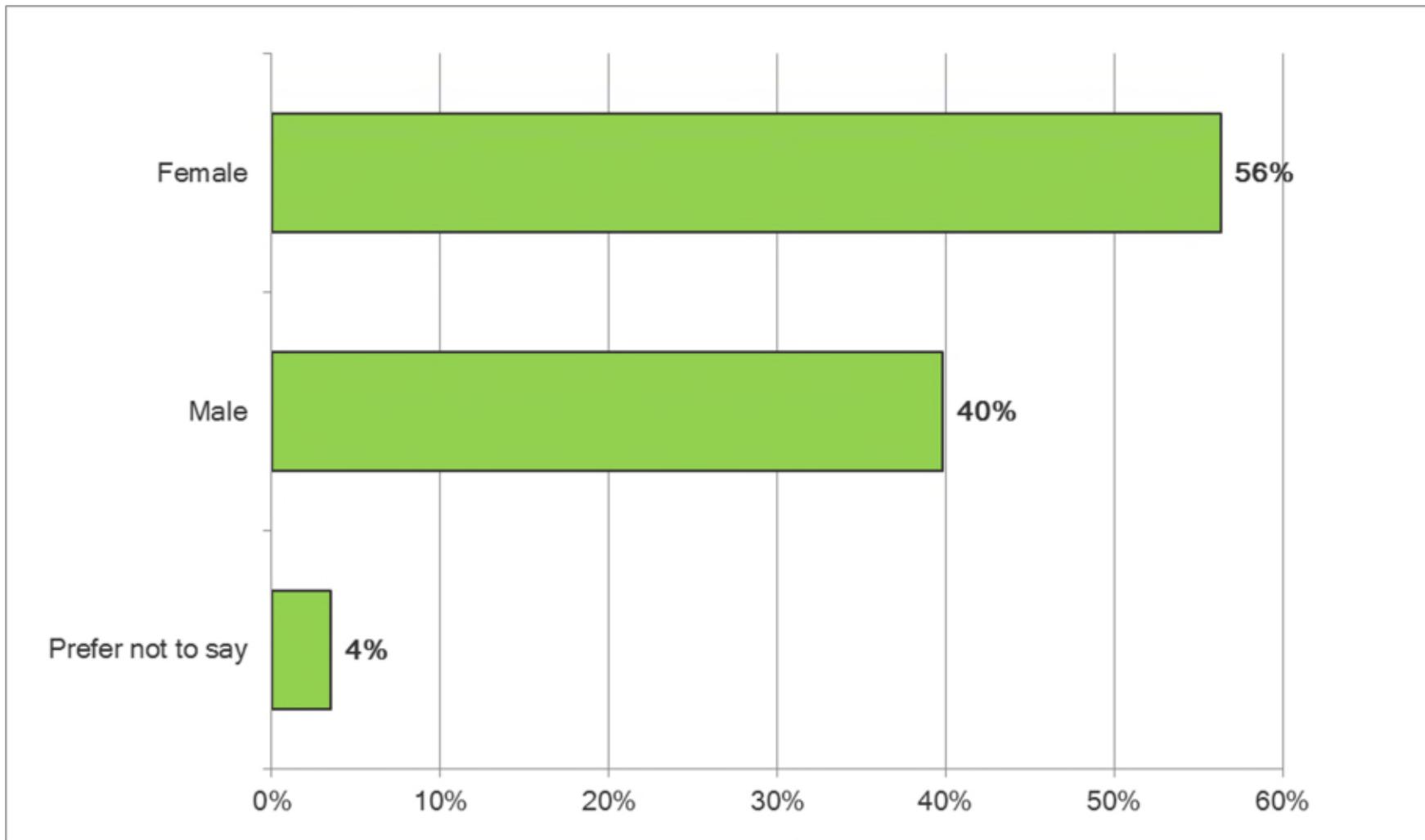
## 10.0 General comments unrelated to specific Budget Reductions and Income Generation proposals

- 10.1 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 'Delivering what matters with less' and the online survey. For illustrative statistical purposes only this information is shown graphically below.

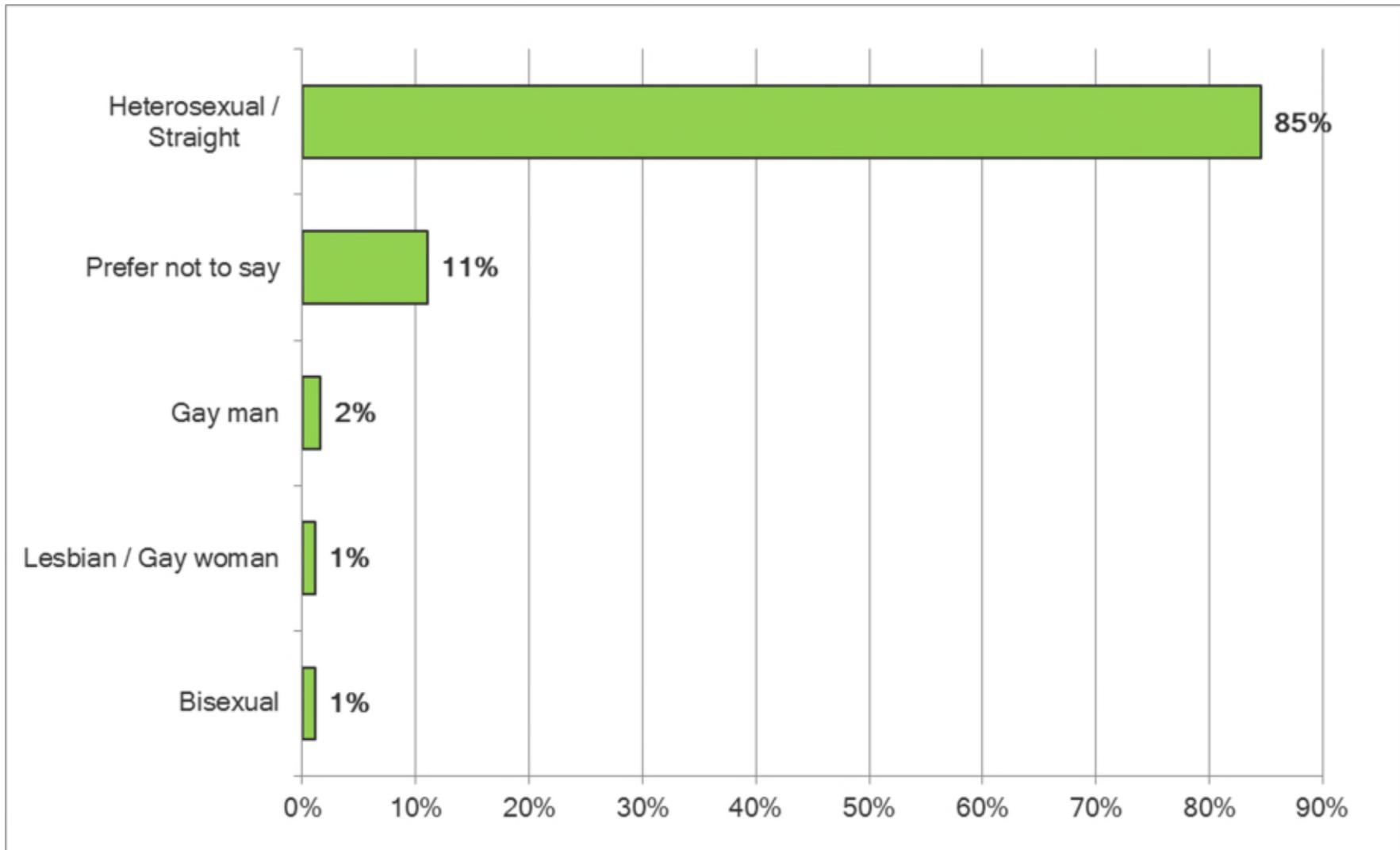
10.2 Respondents Age Group?



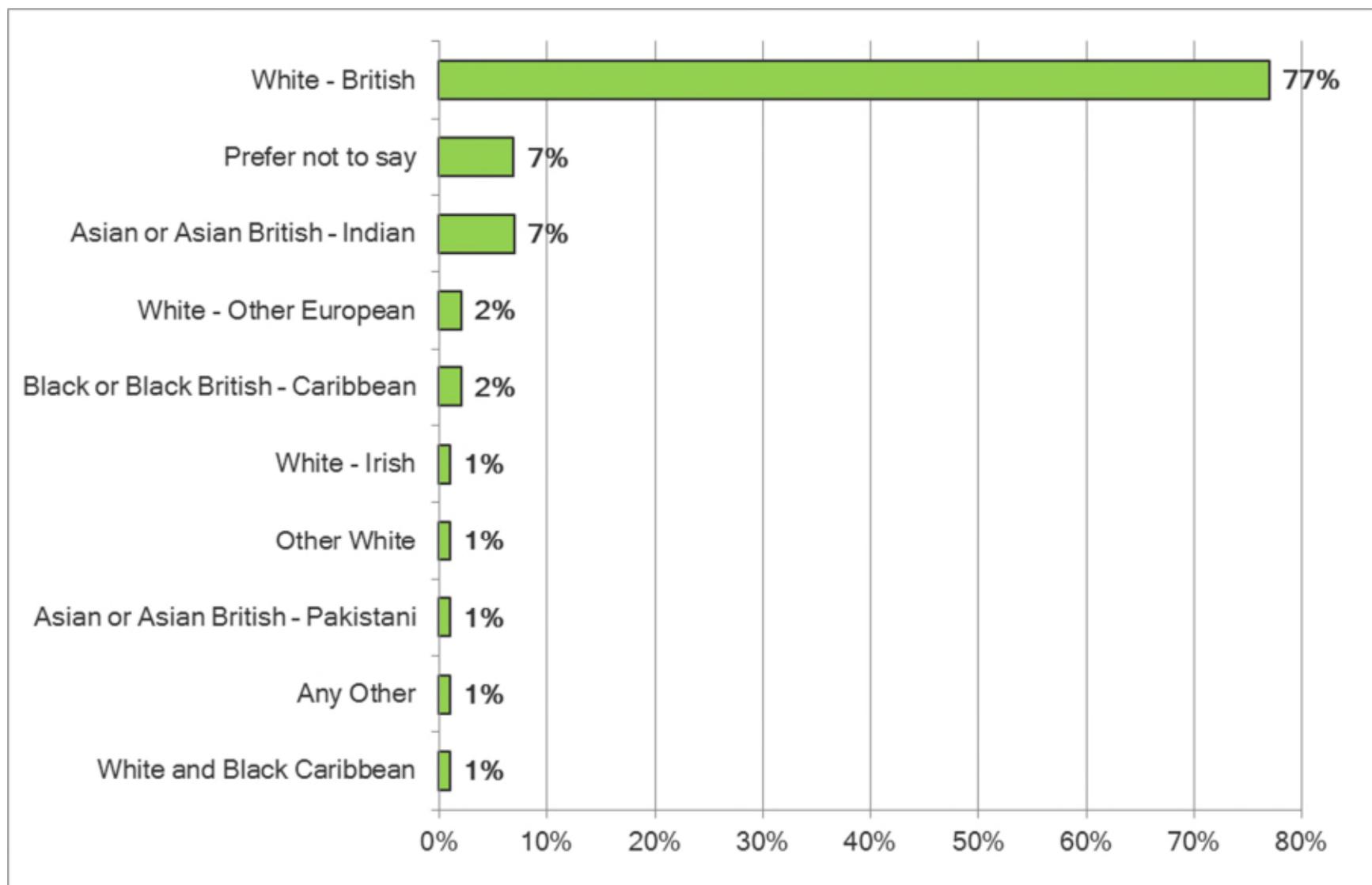
10.3 Respondents Gender?



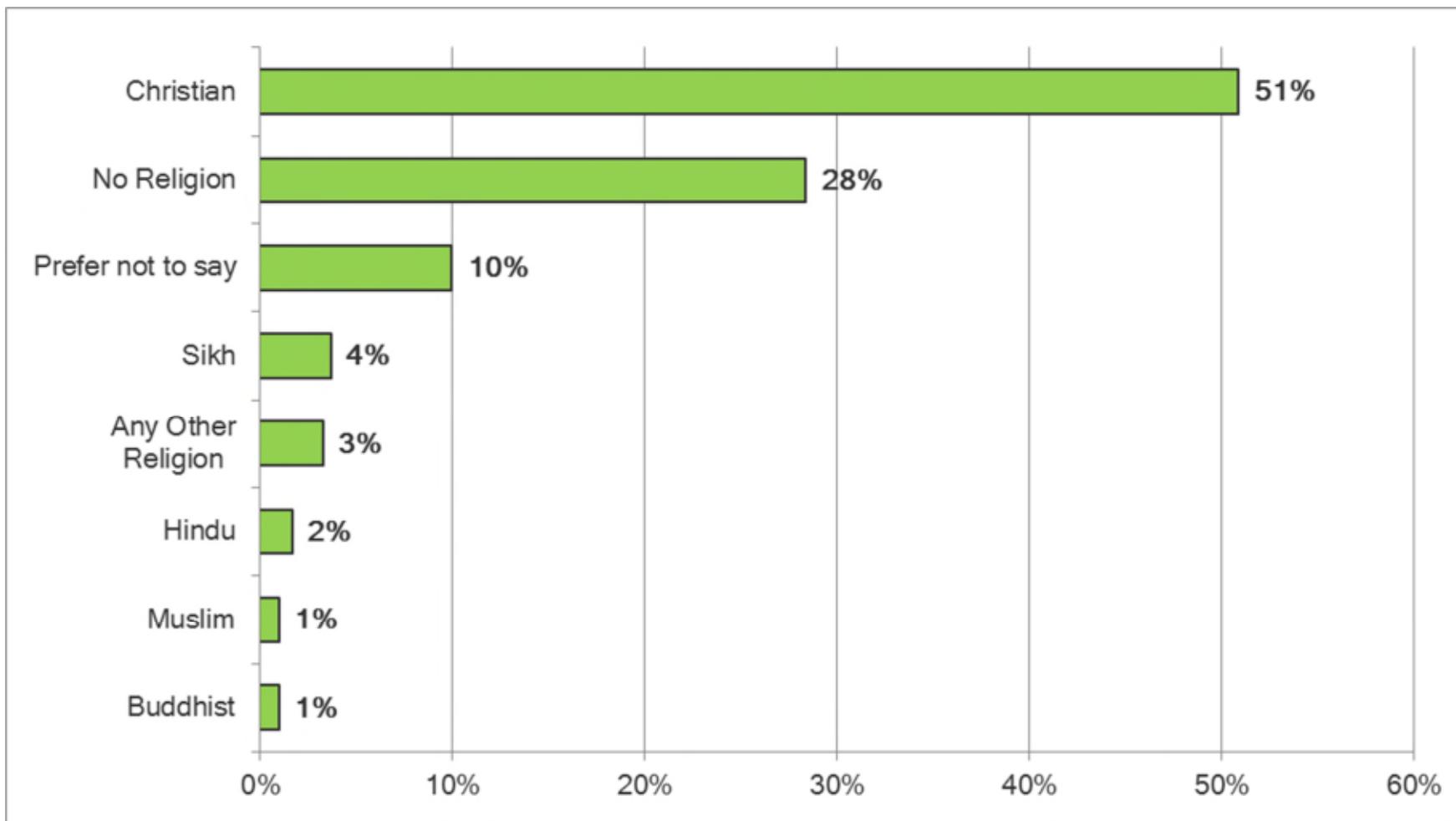
10.4 Respondents sexual orientation?



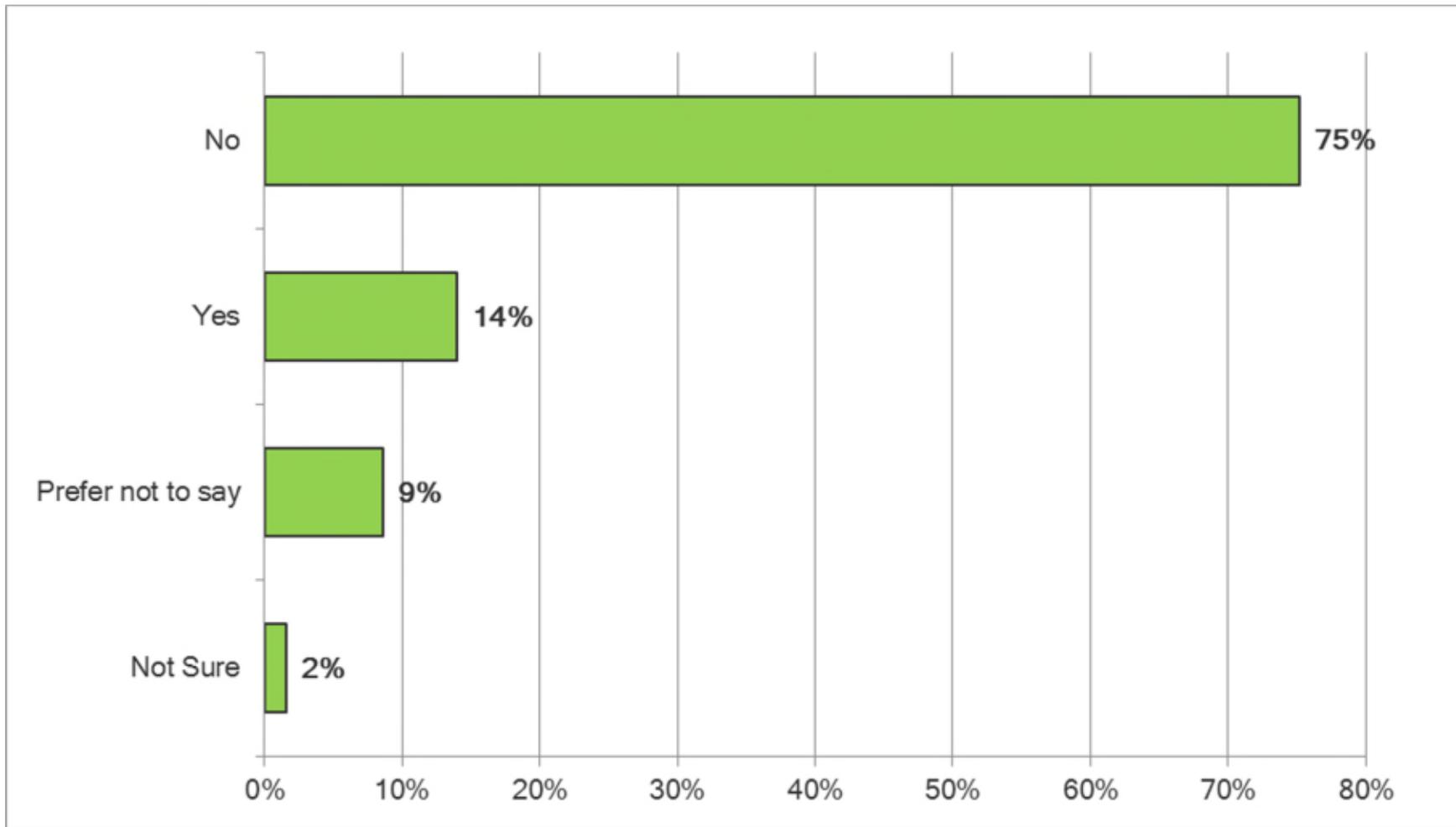
## 10.5 Respondents ethnic origin?



10.6 Respondents religion?



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



### Location of Budget Consultation Respondents by Postcode

