

Produced by the Cambridgeshire Research Group



Business Planning 2023/24: Summary Report of Survey Findings

V0.1

December 2022

Introduction

This consultation was for Cambridgeshire County Council to consult with the public to gain insight into residents' views on areas of investment, ways to make additional savings or generate incomes, and on options of Council Tax. The consultation survey ran from Monday 7 November 2022 until Monday 12 September. It was advertised via press release in traditional media as well as over social media. Alongside the consultation survey, the results of which are summarised in this document, a doorstep survey was conducted by MEL Research on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council.

Quality Assurance

The strategy for analysis of the consultation was as follows:

- An initial quality assurance review of the data was conducted and a review with the engagement team carried out to identify any issues or changes that occurred during the consultation process. For this consultation, there were no issues or changes.
- A set of frequencies were then produced and checks made against the total number of respondents for each question and the consultation overall. A basic sense check of the data was made at this point with issues such as checking for duplicate entries, data entry errors identified.
 - **Duplicate Entries.** Measures were in place to avoid analysing duplicated entries. The online survey software collects the timestamp and IP address of entries so patterns of deliberate duplicate entries can be spotted and countered.

For this consultation, we identified and removed 1 duplicate entry.

- **Partial Entries.** The system records all partial entries as well as those that went through to completion (respondent hit submit). These are reviewed separately and where a substantial response has been made (as opposed to someone just clicking through) then these are added to the final set for analysis.

For this consultation, we identified 87 partial entries. 3 entries were substantial responses and were added to the final set for analysis. The rest were made up from unsubstantial responses and so were removed from the analysis.

- Within the qualitative analysis a search for any unusual patterns within the responses was carried out, such as duplicate or 'cut and paste' views being expressed on proposals.

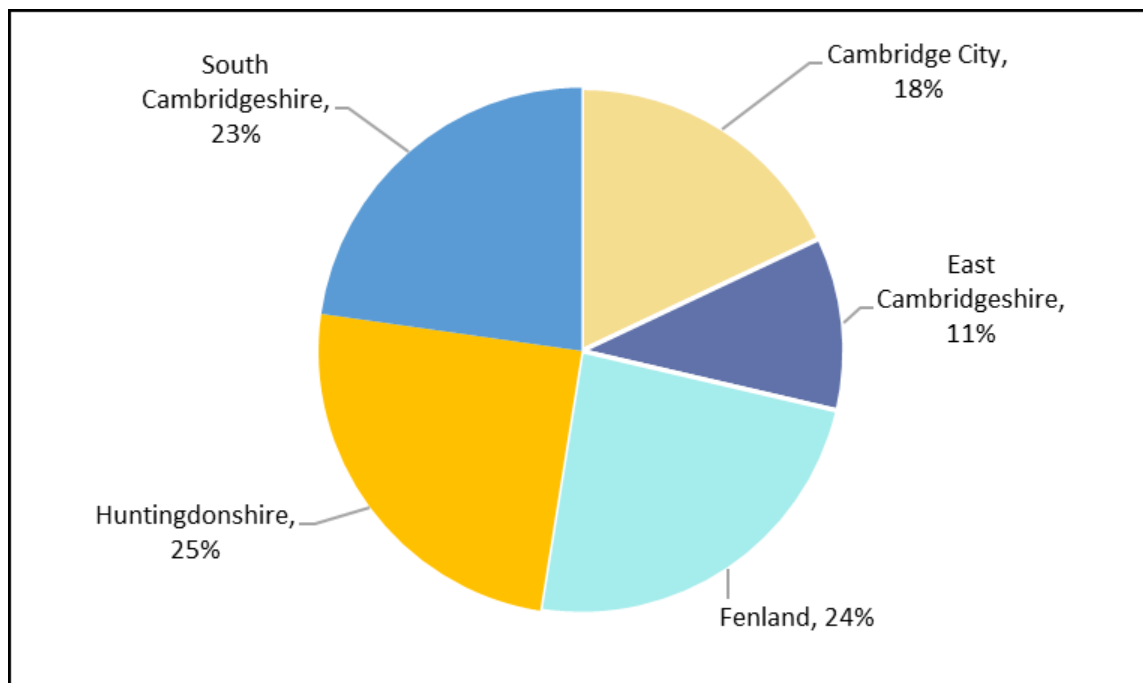
For this consultation, there were no unusual patterns identified.

- Free text questions were analysed using qualitative methods, namely through thematic analysis. These themes are identified using specialist software and then responses tagged with these themes (multiple tags can be given to the same response and the question phrasing means that responses can refer to the same theme in different ways). At this stage totals of tagged themes are created and sample quotes chosen for the final report that typify particular tagged themes. Comment themes are listed in order of the number of comments received, from most to least. In the reporting of themes 'most' represents where over 50% of respondents' comments were applicable, 'some' represents 25%-49%, and 'few' represents less than 25% of comments.
- The final report is then written to provide an objective view of the results of the consultation.

Demographics

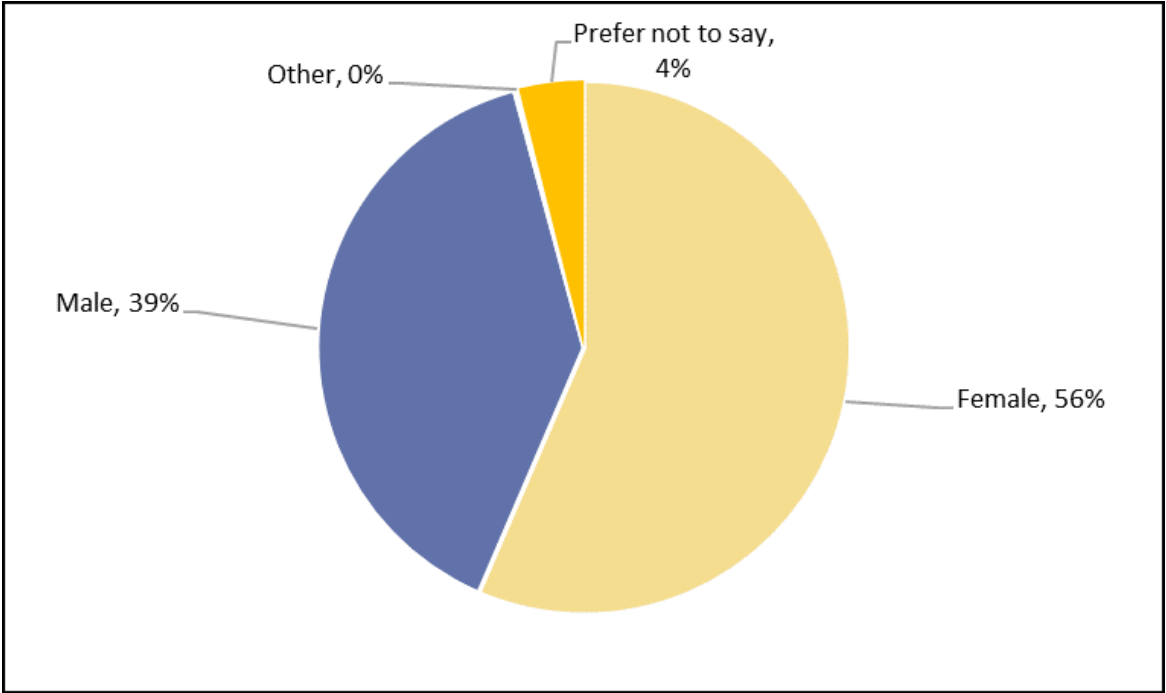
There were 356 respondents. The demographics of these respondents are as follows:

Respondent resident district

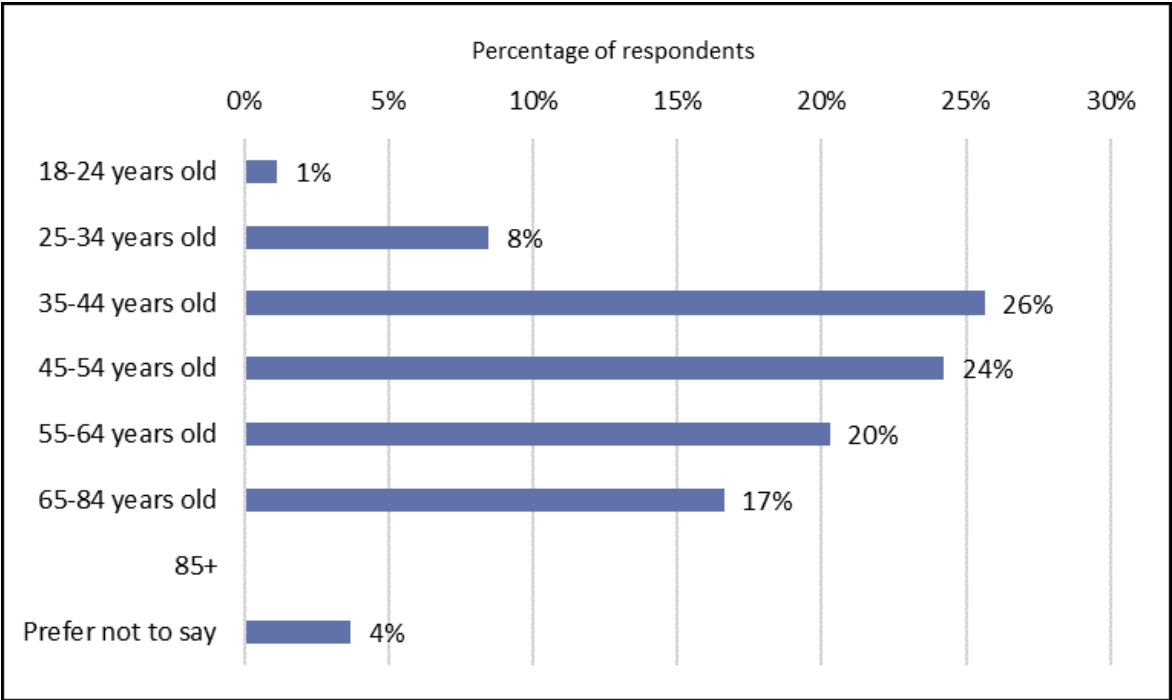


To understand the range of people the survey reached and responded, there were also two optional questions about gender and age.

Respondent gender



Respondent Age

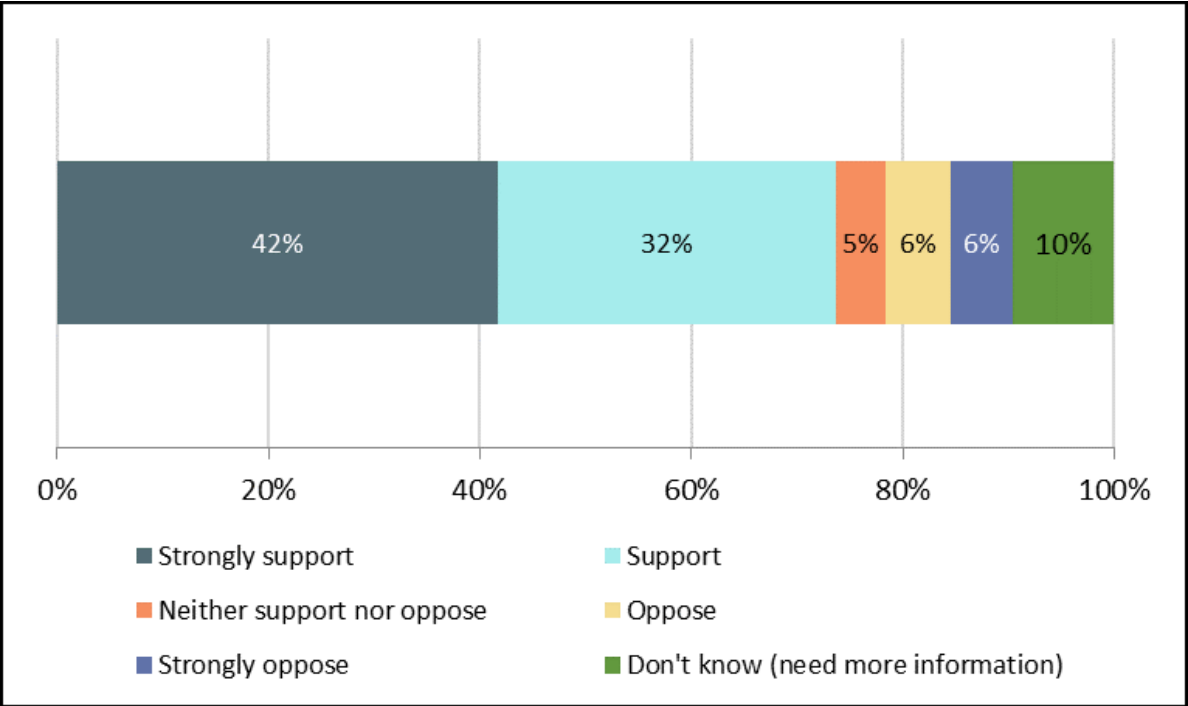


Savings and increasing income

Respondents were asked how supportive they were about options the Council could choose to balance its budget.

Streetlighting

Two thirds of the Council’s total electricity bill is spent on streetlighting. How supportive would you be of taking action to drive down this cost to save energy and reduce carbon emissions e.g., investing in all LEDs, dimming lights, or turning them off entirely in between certain hours of the night?

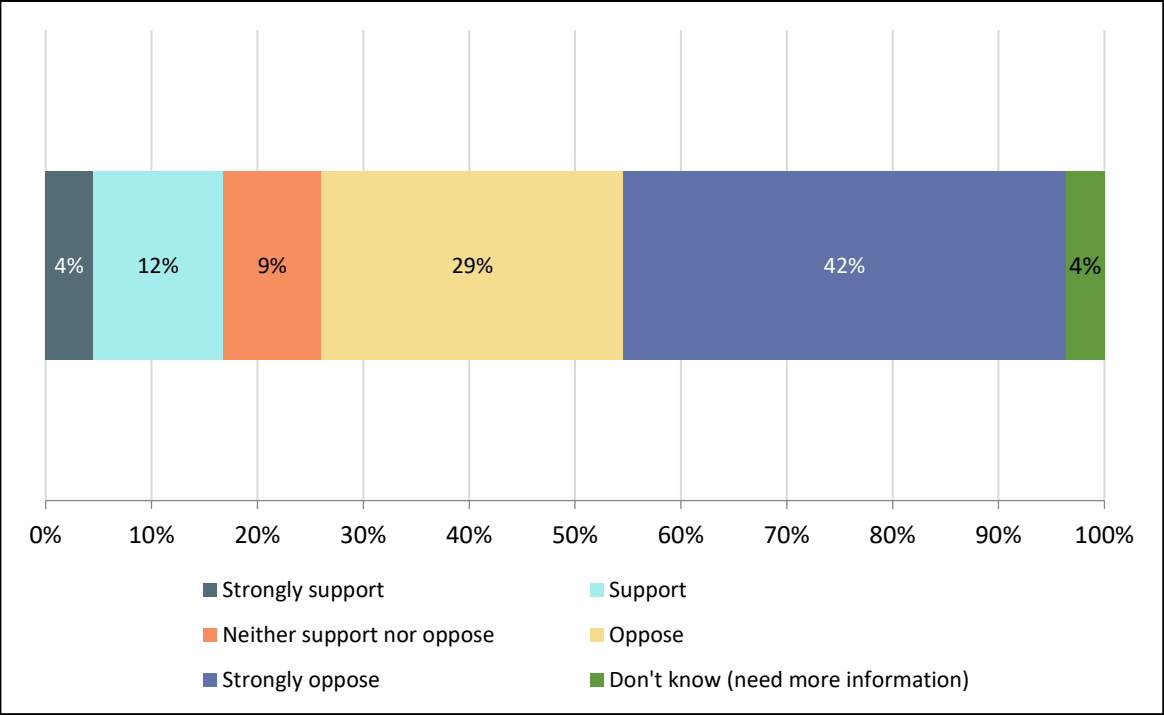


All 356 respondents answered this question.

- **The majority of respondents supported** taking action to drive down the cost of the Council’s electricity bill (74%).

Road maintenance

The Council spend £12m on the day-to-day upkeep of our roads, footways, and cycleways each year. How supportive are you of them making savings by reducing their road maintenance work in non-emergency areas such as some surface repairs, pothole prevention, verge maintenance, grass cutting and gully emptying?

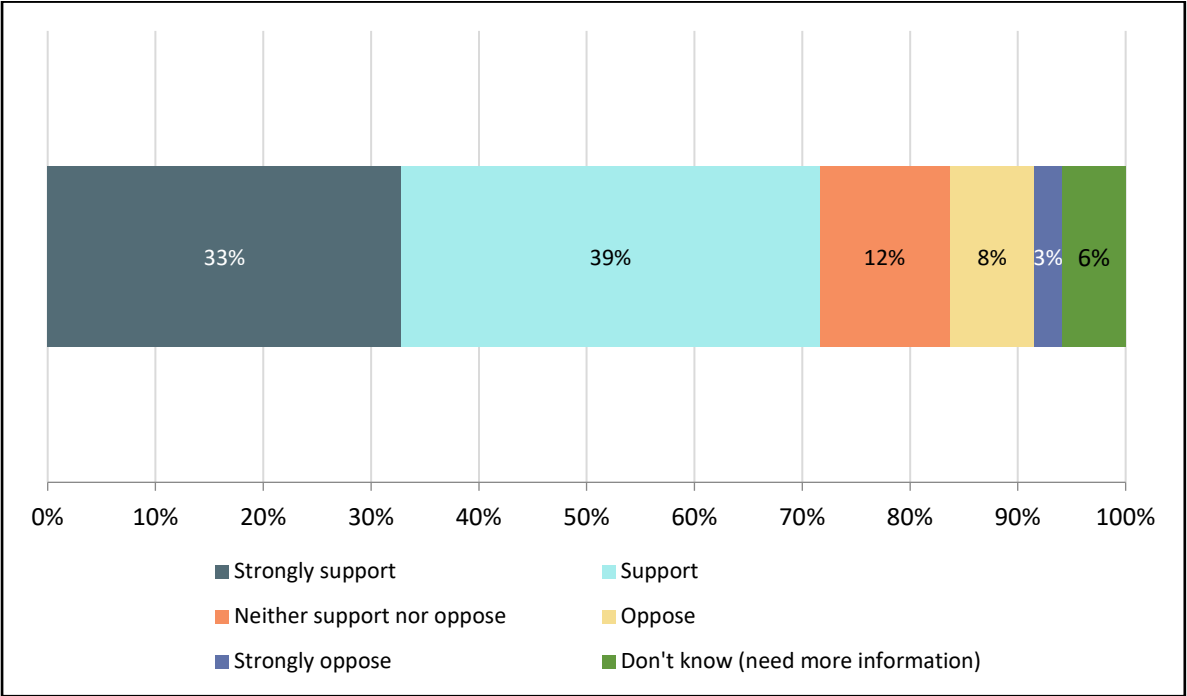


All 356 respondents answered this question.

- **The majority of respondents opposed** making savings by reducing non-emergency road maintenance (71%).

Council buildings

How supportive are you of the Council closing or disposing of some of the buildings it works from – saving running costs and potentially delivering some income, but possibly increasing journeys for residents needing services or staff getting to work?

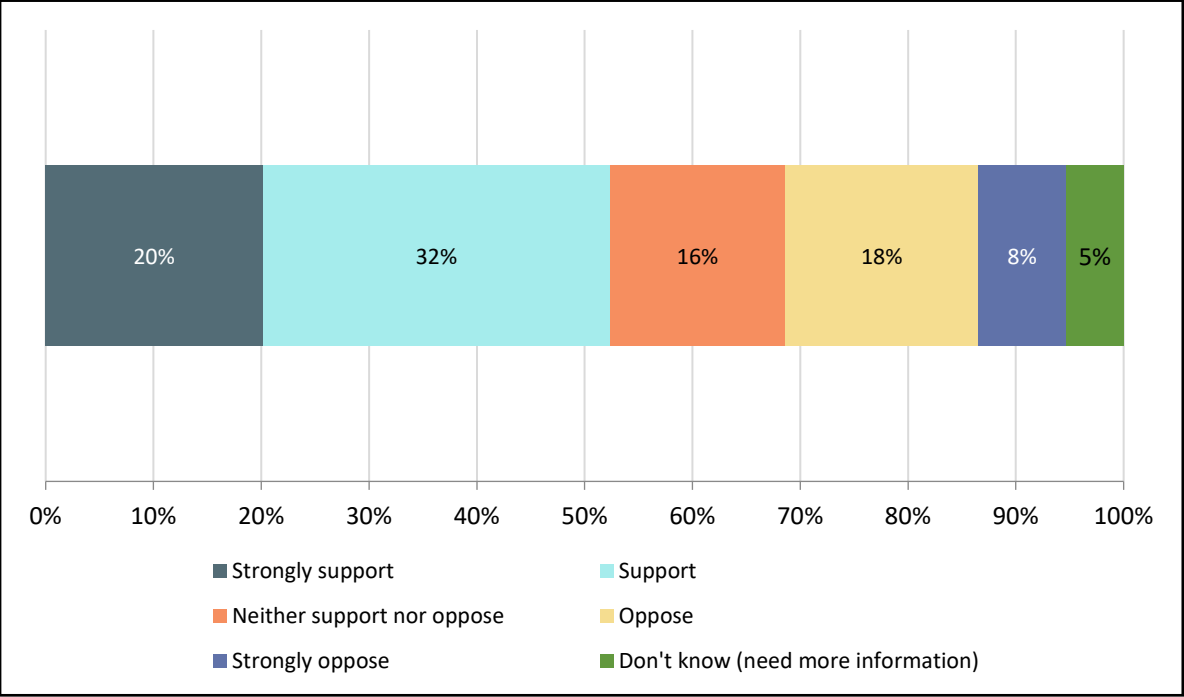


355 respondents answered this question.

- **The majority of respondents supported** closing or disposing of some of the buildings it works from (72%).

Council vacancies

The Council employs approximately 4,300 people across a wide range of services and in all parts of the county. How supportive would you be of us holding vacancies for those that chose to leave and only recruiting and replacing roles for the most vital frontline services – e.g. social care, or highways emergency teams?

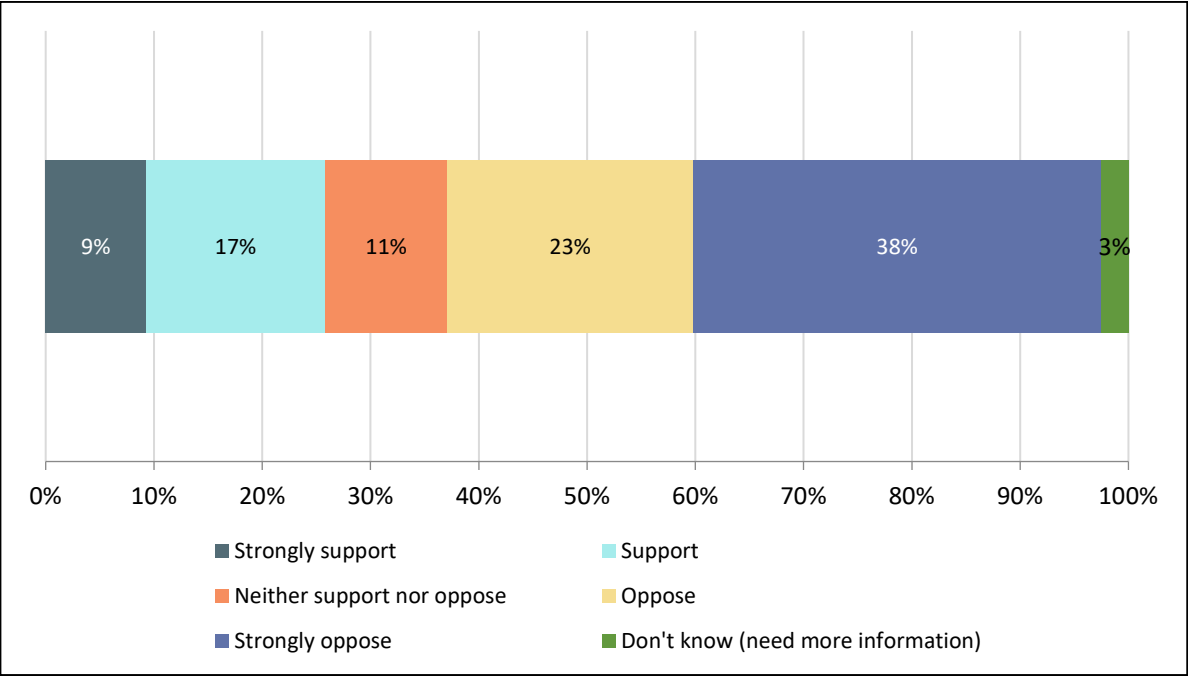


All 356 respondents answered this question.

- Over half of respondents supported holding vacancies for those that chose to leave and only recruiting and replacing roles for the most vital frontline services (52%).
 - Just over a quarter of respondents opposed this (26%).

Education

How supportive are you of reducing the amount the Council spends on the improvement of local schools and early years through non-statutory support services, this could include providing less or no transport to and from school where this is not a legal requirement?

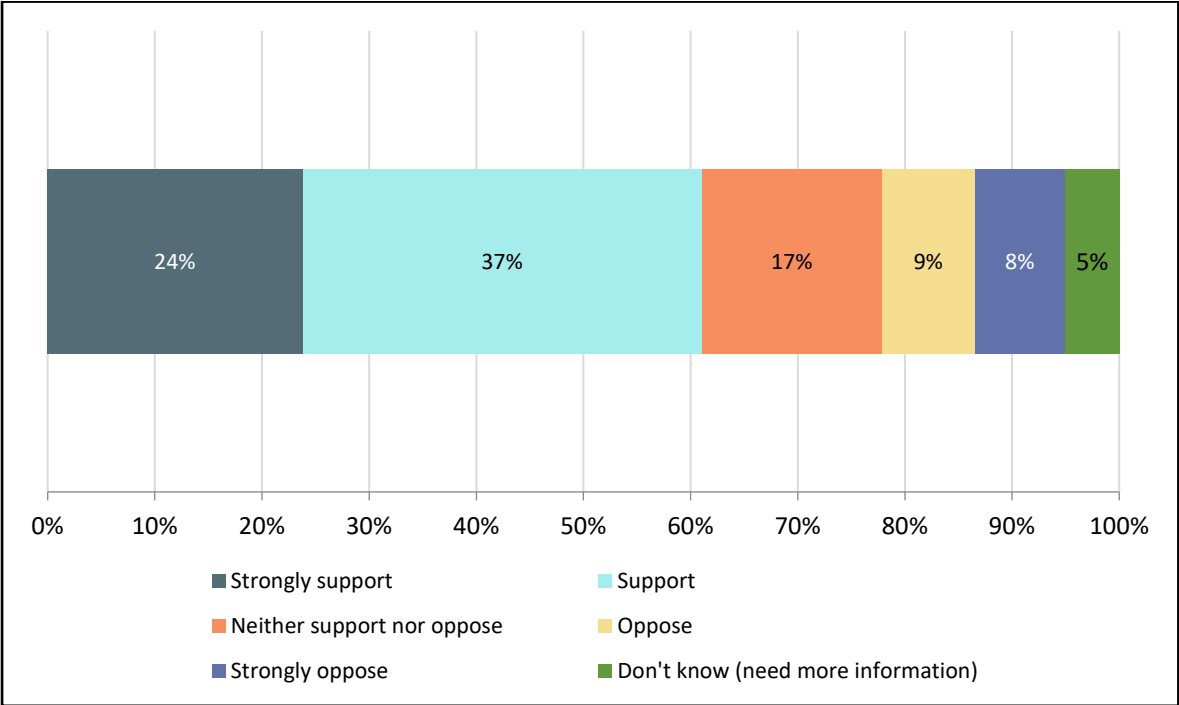


355 respondents answered this question.

- **The majority of respondents opposed** reducing the amount the Council spends on the improvement of local schools and early years through non-statutory support services (61%).

Adult social care

How supportive are you of the Council increasing its offer to older adults and people with disabilities to provide technology enabled care (such as alarms or pressure pads), which can increase independence and reduce, to some extent, longer-term hands-on support?

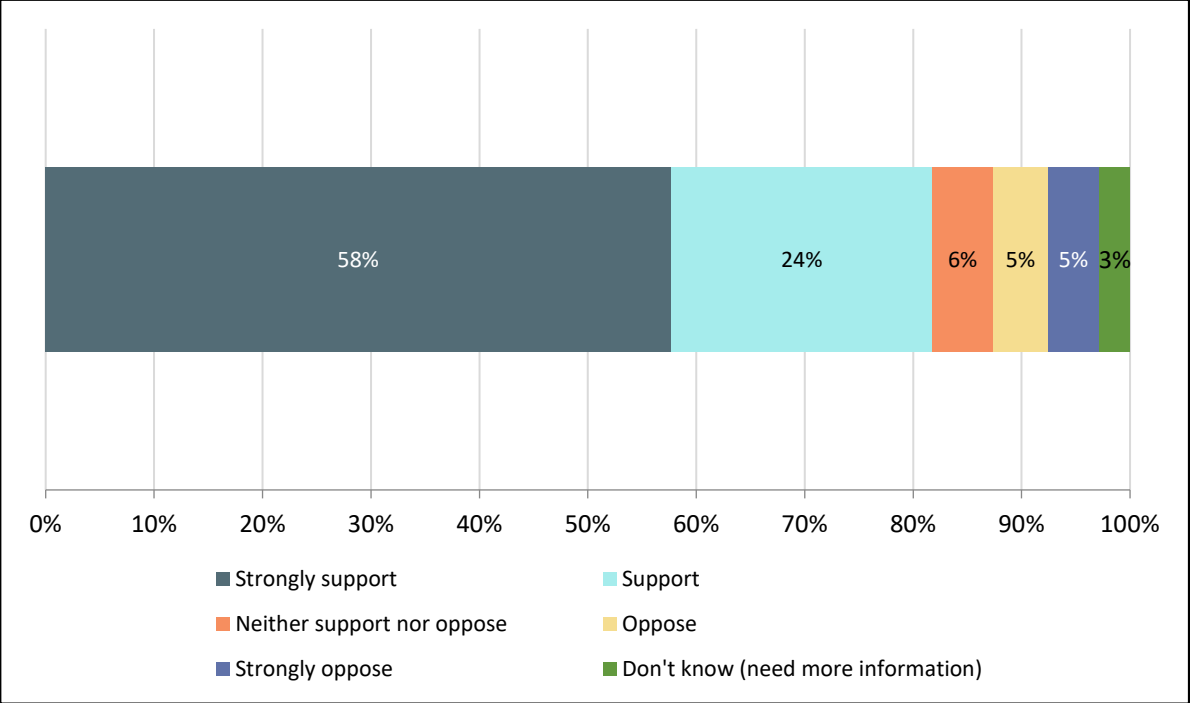


All 356 respondents answered this question.

- **The majority of respondents supported** the Council increasing its offer to older adults and people with disabilities to provide technology enabled care (61%).

Renewable energy

How supportive are you of the Council looking at opportunities to generate more renewable energy i.e., wind or solar, to help tackle climate change and build greater energy security for its communities?

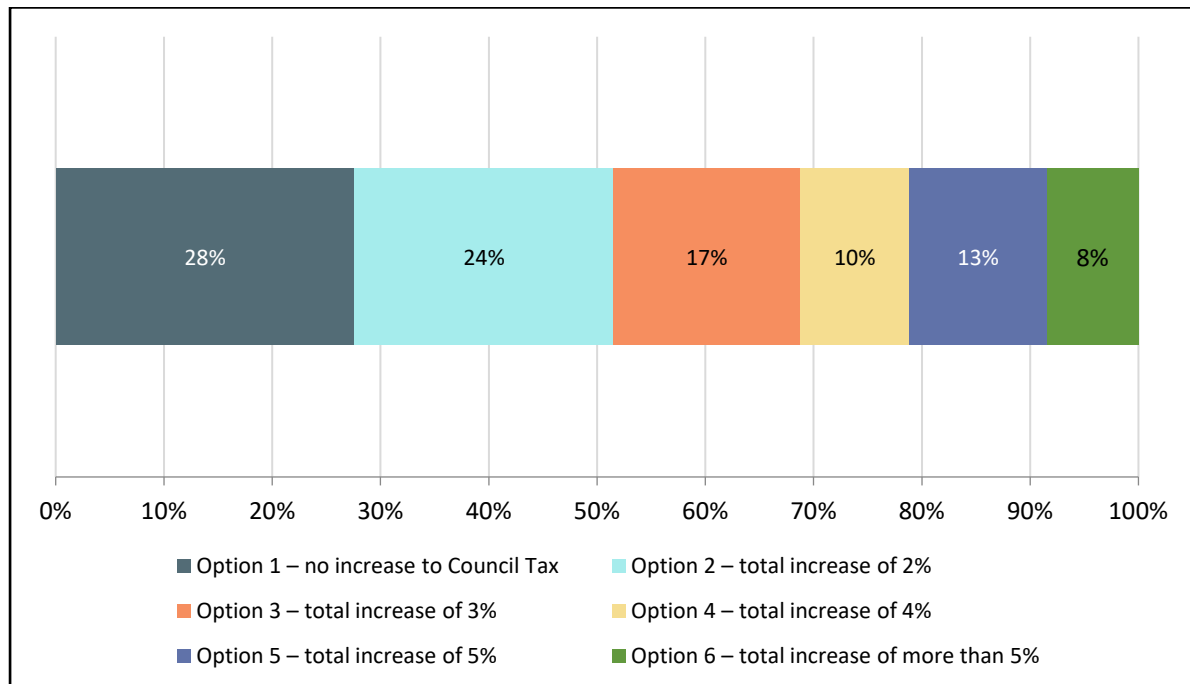


All 356 respondents answered this question.

- **The majority of respondents supported** the Council looking at opportunities to generate more renewable energy (82%).

Changes to Council Tax

Which of the above options do you support?



354 respondents answered this question.

- The majority of respondents indicated they supported an increase of at least 2% (72%).
 - Over a quarter of respondents indicated they supported “Option 1 – no increase to Council Tax” (28%).
 - Just under a quarter of respondents indicated they supported “Option 2 – total increase of 2% (1% ASCP and 1% General Council Tax)” (24%).
 - Less than a fifth of respondents indicated they supported “Option 3 – total increase of 3% (1% ASCP and 2% General Council Tax)” (17%).

Respondents were also asked why they chose the option they did and were given a free text space to enter an answer.

Of those who answered “Option 1”, 68 respondents left comments. The main themes were:

Comment Theme	Respondent comments
Cost to individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents who discussed this theme felt that an increase in Council Tax would be unaffordable to many and unreasonable given rising costs of living.
Poor value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents who discussed this theme felt that the rising cost of Council Tax in recent years was not also matched with equal or improved services, with respondents feeling services were poor. Most of these respondents felt spending needed to be made more efficient.

Council should make savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt the Council should be making savings in staff costs and service efficiencies.
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Of those who answered “Option 2”, 46 respondents left comments. The main themes were:

Comment Theme	Respondent comments
Minimise impact on individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that any larger an increase in Council Tax would be unaffordable to many and unreasonable given rising costs of living. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Most of these respondents felt that some increase was needed as the Council was also facing increased costs.
Council should make savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt the Council should be making savings in staff costs and service efficiencies.
Poor value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that the rising cost of Council Tax in recent years was not also matched with equal or improved services, with respondents feeling services were poor. Most of these respondents felt spending needed to be made more efficient.
Changes to Council Tax bands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt there needed to be changes to the way Council Tax bands worked, with suggestions including proportional increases to each tax band, a review of individual housing band categorisation (to compensate for house extensions, etc), and tax bands functioning on household income rather than size.

Of those who answered “Option 3”, 36 respondents left comments. The main themes were:

Comment Theme	Respondent comments
Balance between minimising impact on individuals and ensuring council services are funded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that any larger an increase in Council Tax would be unaffordable to many and unreasonable given rising costs of living but that some increase was needed as the Council was also facing increased costs and services were needed.

Of those who answered “Option 4”, 20 respondents left comments. The main themes were:

Comment Theme	Respondent comments
Affordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that “Option 4” would be an affordable increase to most given that some increase was needed as the Council was also facing increased costs and services were needed, but any larger an increase in Council Tax would be unaffordable to many and unreasonable given rising costs of living. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A few of these respondents felt that funding should focus on ASCP as it was most needed here.

Of those who answered “Option 5”, 22 respondents left comments. The main themes were:

Comment Theme	Respondent comments
Need for services to be funded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that the increase was needed as the Council was facing increased costs, services were needed and had already faced significant cuts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of these respondents felt this would be an affordable increase to most. ○ A few of these respondents felt that the Council should still be looking to make savings by making services/running costs (like the running of buildings) more efficient.

Of those who answered “Option 6”, 23 respondents left comments. The main themes were:

Comment Theme	Respondent comments
Need for services to be funded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that the increase was needed as the Council was facing increased costs, services were needed and had already faced significant cuts.

Some respondent themes although weren't present when looking at responses to specific options to Question 10, were apparent across these responses.

Comment Theme	Respondent comments
Funding from Central Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents who discussed this theme highlighted that Central Government funding had been cut so locally derived funding needed to be sought. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of these respondents felt that Central Government should be doing more to fund local councils.
Transparency on council spending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents who discussed this theme felt that there should be more transparency to Council spending and assurances funding would be spent efficiently and "in the places needed".
Concerns about the congestion charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents who discussed this theme were concerned about the impact from the possible implementation of a congestion charge alongside an increased Council Tax bill, particularly for those on lower incomes.
Changes to Council Tax bands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents who discussed this theme felt there needed to be changes to the way Council Tax bands worked, with suggestions including proportional increases to each tax band, a review of individual housing band categorisation (to compensate for house extensions, etc), and tax bands functioning on household income rather than size.