

# **FINDINGS FROM THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET PROPOSALS 2025/26 CONSULTATION**

February 2025

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## Background

Between December 2024 and February 2025, the Council undertook a seven-week period of consultation on its budget proposals for 2025/26, prior to making the final decisions on its budget.

The Council reported on its priorities, the budget setting context and local financial position and gave an outline of the proposals to balance the Council's 2025/26 budget. The Council asked for views on the proposals, suggestions for how we could do things differently and prioritisation of current services.

## Consultation Methodology

The Council hosted a survey on its engagement platform Let's Talk Coventry asking for people's views on the budget proposals. This survey was publicised through the Council website, newsletters and social media.

15 social media posts were sent out and 1 paid for post running for seven days. Resulted in the content being viewed 118,000 times.

Hard copies of the survey were available in all our libraries, alongside a phone number to request more information.

Online and face to face workshops were held, these were open to all stakeholders.

An Adult Social Care Providers Forum was held.

Three petitions were received relating to specific proposals within the Budget Setting Proposals 2025/26.

## Responses

7,800 people visited the Let's Talk Coventry page, with 2,200 of them downloading a document and 716 respondents completed the survey.

16 email responses were received. Including representations from TUC and Unison.

The following sections summarise the main findings and questions that were raised through the public consultation on the Council's budget proposals. All feedback has been consolidated and included in the overall theming sections.

A full list of comments from the online survey and written feedback can be received by contacting [budgetsetting@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:budgetsetting@coventry.gov.uk)

## Feedback from the on-line survey

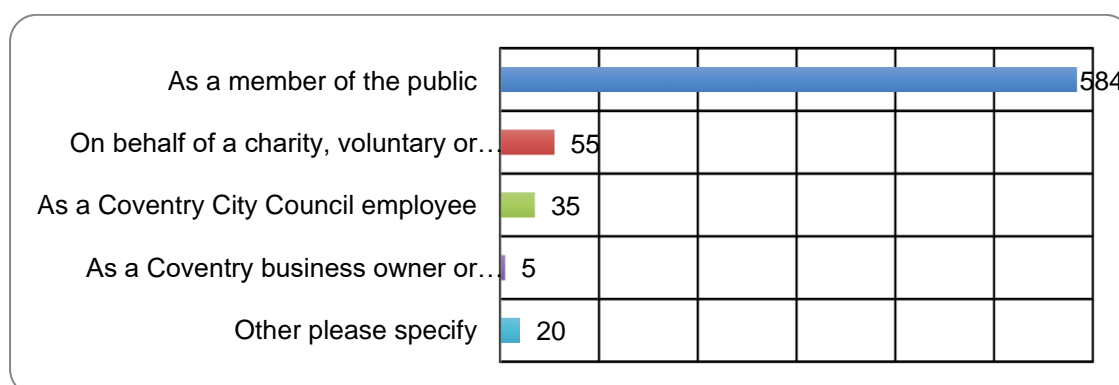
### Response Rate

716 responses were received overall. We received 44 hard copy surveys and 672 online responses.

The majority of respondents were from members of the public, 584.

Responses were received from the following organisations:

Central England Law Centre, Citizen Housing, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust, Coventry Resting Space (Grapevine), Good Neighbours, Grapevine, Hope and Open Theatre Company



### Comments on the Proposals

Respondents were asked to provide their views on the proposed cost savings.

The table below shows the comments received by proposal.

Proposals	No of Comments
25 ASC Vol Sector Review	194
35 War Memorial Park Charges	124
28 Senior Management	80
38 Street Cleaning	65
27 Childrens Social Care	40
26 ASC Service Change/Staff	33
37 Parks	31
33 Council Tax Support	28
32 Elections	25
29 City Events	17
40 City Vision	16
39 Waste Disposal	15
31 Climate Change	10
24 ASC Market Management	9
34 Discretionary Payments	7
30 Cultural Services	6
36 Bereavement Charge	2

All the comments were themed. The following shows all the proposals in order of number of comments associated.

Example comments are given with the most commented on proposals. A full list of comments is available on request, by contacting [budgetsetting@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:budgetsetting@coventry.gov.uk)

### Proposal 25 - Adult Social Care Voluntary Sector Review

This received the most comments in this consultation.

194 comments were received about this proposal

170 respondents disagreed with the proposal

5 respondents agreed with the proposal.

The most common themes expressed by those responding were that the most vulnerable and/or those most in need are most impacted by the change.

Many said that the changes would be detrimental to both those in need of services and/ or that demand elsewhere would increase. Others expressed the view that the services offer prevention and therefore they are an investment and that the voluntary sector offers value for money.

Grapevine was the most mentioned impacted service with 29 directly referencing their work.

Theme	Number of Comments
Disagree with proposal	170
Vulnerable or those most in need impacted	80
Detrimental/ will cause demand elsewhere	47
Investment/ prevention	30
Value for money	28
Agree with proposal	5
Reputational damage	3

Organisation	Number
Grapevine	29
Hope/Good Neighbours	6
Advice services	1
Carers Trust	1

- “... The people who access these services already get the minimal amount of support and you want to make that even less in a view to save money, but it's never going to save you money. It's only going to cost you more on other services. These voluntary sector services are the ones that stop respondents falling into crisis and when this happens, the support they need from social care, NHS, mental health services,*

*children and family services, fire service, ambulance (I could go on and on here) will be far greater than if you continue to invest the same amount of money into the voluntary services.”*

- *“I totally understand that cuts are necessary to save money. However, I am very concerned about the proposed cuts to the voluntary sector, who provide vital services to vulnerable people at very good value for money. There are so many vulnerable people who are desperate for support.”*
- *“I think that the proposals are absolutely barbaric. You are taking money away from people with learning disabilities and you aren't giving people a chance to understand important things in life by removing funding for charities like Grapevine (Reference number 25). Their help & connect project helps respondents like me to understand why things like connections with the outside world are important. Some people think that because they have a disability, they shouldn't go outside. It isn't fair that the money is being removed under our circumstances. We need more support than our parents/carers, and that support is crucial to us as human beings. I don't feel supported by the council's proposals and I don't feel safe with this new plan.”*

### Proposal 35 - War Memorial Park Car Park Price Increase

This proposal received the 2<sup>nd</sup> most comments.

124 Comments were received about this proposal

80 respondents disagreed with the proposal

29 agreed with the proposal.

Theme	Number of comments
Disagree with the proposal	80
Agree in part or whole	29
Concessions or alternative pricing	22
Impact elsewhere	20
Health benefits of the park	18
Visitor numbers	14
School run	13
Inequality	8

Many of those commenting on this proposal (22) suggested alternatives such as free parking for a set time. Of those responding 20 felt that there would be an impact elsewhere with parking in the surrounding areas and issues around the school, 13 quoted that the park is used by parents on the school run. Of those responding 18 link the park with healthy activities and 14 point out that the additional costs may deter visitors from the park. 8 of those responding felt that the proposal is unfair on those who do not live near the park or cannot walk.

- *“Local parks need to be accessible by car and short visits should not incur parking charges. The War memorial park is very different to a country park and people driving, often with children, should not have to pay to make short daily visits/drop-offs.”*
- *“The war memorial car park price increase proposal number 25 which will not give me the much needed couple of hours of parking for free anymore will effect my mental health negatively. Even gym members get free parking in city centre, because i cannot afford gym membership i should be penalised and pay for the parking at public park?”*
- *“ I feel incredibly strongly that short term car parking should remain free at the War Memorial Park. It isn't the same as Coombe Abbey, it's the people's park and should be accessible to all including those that don't live close by and therefore need to use a car to get there. I am someone who does visit the park for exercise, it's a safe space, away from cars. It is also somewhere that appears to be visited by a very wide range of people crossing a vast range of ages and backgrounds. Any savings to be made by attempting to charge to park will be at the detriment of the health of the cities citizens. Please keep parking free as it is now.”*

### Proposal 28 - Senior Management Review

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most responded to of the proposals.

80 comments were received about this proposal

No one stated they disagreed with the proposal

Theme	Number of comments
Too many managers/ agree with the plan	52
Staff ability/ pay/ expenses	24
Budget management	14
Director appointments	9
Coventry Council reputation	2
Bring services in-house	1

The majority of those responding to this proposal felt that a reduction in managers is needed, for many they felt that staff are overpaid in comparison to the private sector and that wages should be cut or based on ability.

9 respondents were sceptical about the appointment of 2 new directors during the previous review.

- *“I agree with the proposal to reduce senior management positions, this should be a priority and be an opportunity to streamline.”*
- *“Stop paying salary increases, reduce portacabins for elections, tighten up and reduce the amount of expenses councillors and directors can claim, they earn enough to pay for things themselves.”*
- *“I fail to understand why you can appoint 2 new directors when you are both trying to save money, and when you are about to carry out a senior manager review. If the intention is to reduce the headcount of senior managers, would none of them have*



*been appropriate for taking on these new roles, or are they not of sufficient calibre to take on these roles? If not, why were they being paid their previous salary?"*

### Proposal 38 - Streetpride

64 comments were received about this proposal

54 respondents disagree with the proposal

2 agreed with the proposal.

The majority of respondents are strongly against this proposal. Many see cleaning as impacting reputation, perception of visitors and pride in the city, many feel that litter and fly tipping is already an issue and that delays would be detrimental. Health was raised as a possible impact with rodent populations growing should this proposal go ahead. Making it easier to book into the recycle centre was raised by 4 respondents.

Theme	Number of comments
Against this proposal	54
Reputation/ visitors/ pride	37
Health	7
Use of volunteers	6
Enforcement	4
Improved ease of waste disposal	4
Agree with proposal	2

- *"...every Coventry resident deserves to live in a clean city; this impacts every single citizen not just the elderly, the disabled or children... every single resident will be impacted if you proceed with a budget cut to street services.*
- *The streets are filthy and an embarrassment to the City, how can street cleansing be further cut?"*
- *"The volunteers clear thousands of bags of litter off the streets each year, week in week out, but this is supposed to be in addition to the services the Council provide; you should not be using us to plug the increasing gaps in your services and it very much feels like you are thinking you can make these cuts because of the work we do. "*
- *"...reductions in Streetpride. I live near Ball Hill. The streets are dirty and flytipping happens a lot. Some of the shops appear to leave excessive rubbish on the street, where it gets blown around. I do not want the area to get any more littered than it already is."*
- *"Reduced standards of cleaning in the city sounds a false economy when it is already unattractive and failing to attract new shops."*

### Proposal 27 – Children's Service Review.

40 comments were received about this proposal

16 respondents disagreed with the proposal

No one agreed with the proposal.

Theme	Number of comments
Disagree with the proposal	16
Invest to save/ currently underfunded	10
Prioritise the most vulnerable	9
Efficiencies/ budgeting	6
Detrimental	5
Clear Roles and responsibilities	3
Safeguarding concerns	2
Workloads	1

### Proposal 26 - Adult Social Care Service Change, Improvement and Staffing Efficiency.

33 comments were received about this proposal

16 respondents disagreed with the proposal.

3 respondents agreed with the proposal.

Theme	Number of comments
Disagree with proposal	16
Protect the vulnerable	9
Detrimental	5
Agree with proposal	3
Collaboration	3
More information needed	1

### Proposal 37 - Parks & Open Spaces

30 comments were received about this proposal

24 respondents disagreed with the proposal

2 respondents agreed with the proposal.

Theme	Number of comments
Disagree with proposal	24
Essential service/ reduced service	8
Parks impact on health & wellbeing	6
Inequality	5
Use volunteers	3

Agree with proposal	2
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The majority of respondents disagree with this proposal, the main themes include the reduction of what is seen as essential services and the impact on health and wellbeing. The fact that green space is free to use is recognised.

### Proposal 33 - Redesign of Council Tax Support Scheme

28 comments were received about this proposal

19 respondents disagreed with the proposal

5 respondents agreed with the proposal.

Theme	Number of comments
Disagree with proposal	19
Most Vulnerable/ most in need impacted	8
Agree with proposal	5
Proposal will cause inequality	5
Increase for wealthy/ second homes	3
Detrimental impact	2

### Proposal 32 - Election Cost Efficiencies

25 comments were received about this proposal

Nobody said they disagreed with the proposal

22 respondents agreed with the proposal.

Theme	Number of comments
Agree with proposal	22
Portacabins	11
Use funding differently	3
Is there an alternative venue?	1

### Proposal 29 - City Events

17 comments were received about this proposal

3 respondents disagreed with the proposal

10 respondents agreed with the proposal.

Theme	Number of comments
Agree with proposal	10
Vital Income/ attracts visitors	3
Disagree with proposal	3
Make events self-funding	2

### Proposal 40 - Citivision

16 comments were received about this proposal

1 person disagreed with the proposal

12 respondents agreed with the proposal.

Theme	Number of comments
Agree with the proposal	12
I have never seen this magazine	1
Disagree with the proposal	1

### Proposal 39 - Waste Disposal

15 comments were received about this proposal

4 respondents disagreed with the proposal

7 respondents agreed with the proposal.

Theme	Number of comments
Agree with the proposal	7
Against the proposal	4
Look for alternatives	2
More information/ justification	2
Suggestion	1

### Proposal 31 - Sustainability and Climate Change

10 comments were received about this proposal

3 respondents disagreed with the proposal

6 respondents agreed with the proposal.

Theme	Number of comments
Support the proposal	6
Against the proposal	3
Coventry does not prioritise green agenda	2
Consequence/ short sighted	1

### Proposal 24 Adult Social Care Market Management

9 comments were received about this proposal.

4 respondents disagreed with the proposal, no one was in favour,

Theme	Number of comments
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Consequences	4
Disagree with proposal	4
Staffing	2
Fear a monopoly	1
Quality of service	1
Collaboration	1
In house service	1

#### Proposal 34 - Discretionary Payments

7 comments were received about this proposal

5 respondents disagreed with the proposal

1 respondent agreed with the proposal.

Theme	Number of comments
Against the proposal	5
In favour of the proposal	1
Will cause hardship	1
More information needed	1
No opinion	1

#### Proposal 30 - Cultural Services Internal Provision

6 comments were received about this proposal

No one said they disagreed with the proposal

4 agreed with the proposal.

Theme	Number of comments
Support cuts	4
Cultural events attract visitors	1
More information needed	1

#### Proposal 36 - Bereavement Services

2 comments were received about this proposal

Both suggesting that this should not be a money-making service for the Council and that should be at cost.

A number of comments were also made about Council Tax proposals and SEND.

## 1 Council Tax

This received 33 comments

18 of those who talked about this said Council tax is too expensive/ poor value for money, many (10) felt that it was unfair and disagree with the proposal, they point out that a household fully occupied use the services far more than a single occupant.

Theme	Number of comments
Too expensive/ poor value	18
Unfair/ disagree	10
Collect what is owed/ enforcement	6
Poor budgeting	4
Would/ wealthiest should pay more for good services	3
Transparency/ clarity	3
Agree with proposal	1

## SEND

This received 14 comments

Theme	Number of comments
Disagree with cuts	5
Apply rigorous/ stricter criteria	5
Alternative delivery	4
Parent/ carer should pay more toward cost	3
Agree with proposal	2

## General Comments that did not refer to a specific proposal

182 comments were made that did not refer to a specific proposal.

Theme	Number
Detrimental to the most vulnerable	68
Necessary	31
Clarity of Information/Communications	26
Lobby Government	20
Disagreement with all proposals/process	18
Areas to stop wasting money on	16
Potential areas to raise more money	15

31 respondents were in favour of the proposals understanding that it was necessary to make difficult decisions in order to balance the budget.

The majority of comments were against the proposals, many of them highlighting the fact that the proposals seem to be negatively impacting the most vulnerable, that we are looking to save money in the wrong places and that a number of the proposals are very short term. A number of respondents felt that the information was not presented in an easy to understand way and that the information was too high level, without any of the background as to how these proposals had been arrived at.

- *“I think in general the proposed ideas are good ones and think tough decisions have to be made”*
- *“Hitting the poor and in need more than anyone”*
- *“It seems to take a strategic balance to overall provision but plans for new or extended expenditure also need to be highlighted - at the moment, details are hidden behind overall statements making it difficult to identify real potential savings.”*
- *“Many of the changes, although appearing to give short term gain, look like they would lead to increased costs for the council in other areas in the medium to long term.”*

## Social Media Comments

Approximately 350 comments were made in response to our social media posts across all channels. The main themes were:

- Multiple members of the public suggested a sense of apathy with the consultation. Many said they were unsure the Council would listen to their views.
- The consultation was criticised for being hard to understand. Many members of the public spoke about the need for easy read versions. The cabinet documents containing the proposals were criticised for being hard to follow.
- Councillors were a source of frustration for the commenters with many comments referring to their wages, expenses and if there was a need for them.
- Outstanding Council tax payments was a common comment. The BBC news article showing the council had £30 million in arrears was widely shared.
- Not installing Cycleways was mentioned repeatedly as a way to save money.

## Equalities

Respondents were asked which groups they thought may be impacted and how by the proposals. The table below shows the comments received by theme.

Theme	Number of Comments
Voluntary Sector	200
SEN and disabled	194
Everyone/all	180
Isolation, Mental Health and Depression	172
Families	70
Low income-	65
Elderly	59
CCC Staff	26
Ethnic Minorities	25
Deprived Areas	23
Positive impact	5

Most comments suggested that the proposals would most negatively impact community and Voluntary groups, this was closely followed by those with a Special education need or disability. We received 180 comments suggesting that everyone regardless of protected characteristics would be negatively impacted by the proposed changes.

- *“A very negative effect on safe guarding our vulnerable older population and the good it does for the volunteers too.”*
- *“I think it will leave disabled people disadvantaged and vulnerable with lack of good support in line with all areas of the care act. I think the reduction in services will mean that people are more isolated and more susceptible to neglect and abuse.”*
- *“I have a learning disability and autism and cerebral palsy and depression I don’t think it’s right for use to cut funding on learning disability and mental health people as people need these services to help them gain independence and it helps tackle isolation and loneliness. If you took the services away people will be isolated. So I suggest you don’t take the service away.”*

Mental health, depression and isolation were key common themes found in a large number of responses.

- *“People will struggle more and get even less help. People are already in crisis!”*
- *“More suicides”*
- *“Charging for parking at parks will impact on the poor and affect mental health”*  
*“it is not right more isolation and will affect people with mental health”*



A few of the respondents stated some of the proposals were positive stressing how they are applied to ensure a positive impact and that they will result in increasing revenue.

- *“Positive impact overall. I am concerned about low income household with the CTS changes but I see that there has been much thought put into the difficult proposals”*
- *“Introduce charging at the memorial park, people never take their rubbish from the park and hopefully this will increase revenue and put those who don't look after the park from coming”*

Respondents fear reducing funding to voluntary groups will have a massive negative effect, especially in the long term.

- *“Cuts to charity funding would have a devastating impact on the most vulnerable in our communities, many of whom rely on voluntary services for essential support. These services are uniquely placed to reach people who may otherwise be overlooked, including individuals with disabilities, older people, and those from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds. Voluntary organizations often build deep, trusting relationships with the people they serve, something that cannot easily be replicated by statutory services.”*
- *“Any reduction in services will impact negatively on the most vulnerable with immediate effect. The lack of social support networks will create a vicious downward spiral - we all understand that this has been created by the disastrous policies of the previous government - which will cost twice as much if not more to resolve in future years.”*
- *“We need to ensure that funding to the voluntary sector organisations that provide through their volunteer network are supported, otherwise the council will face increased demand for services that are fully funded.”*

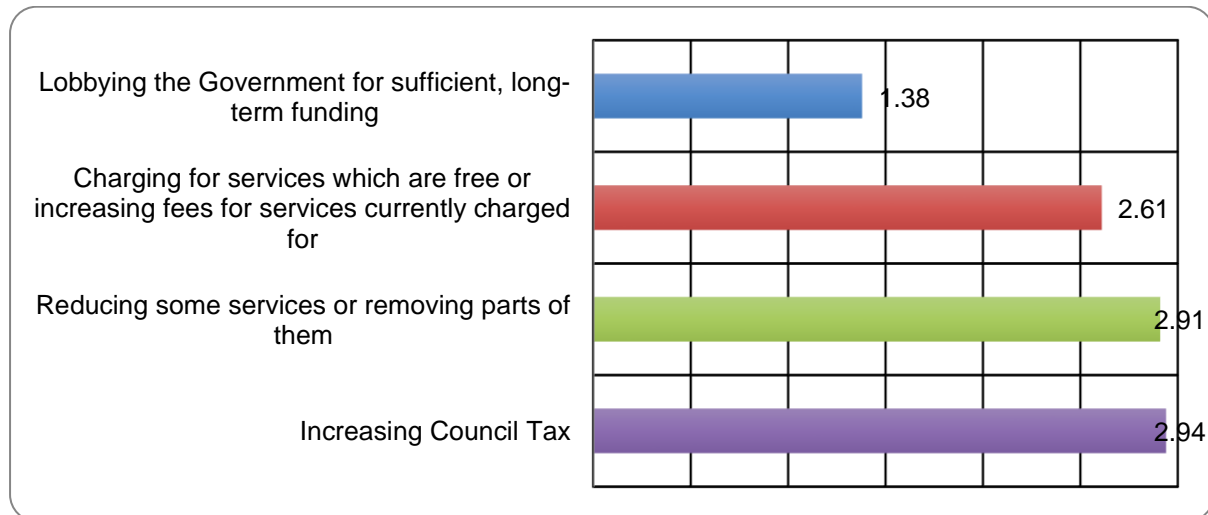
Many respondents felt that deprived areas were going to be the most impacted

- *“I think those who are currently the worst off, living in the most deprived areas of Coventry will be negatively impacted the most and conversely those who are best off and in the least deprived areas will feel the most benefit”*

## Ways to Make Savings

Respondents were asked to rank ways the Council could make savings.

They were asked to rank them with 1 being their most preferred option and 4 their least preferred option. The smaller the number shows the most preferred option.

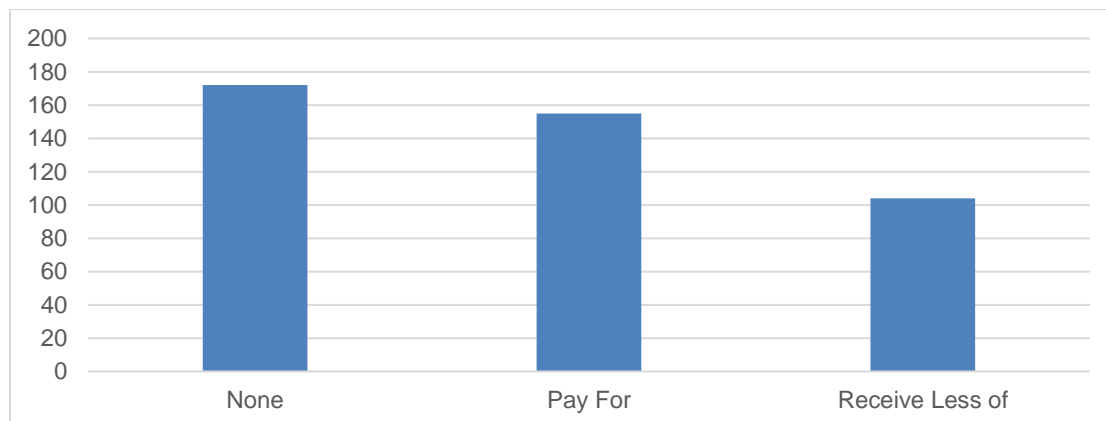


Lobbying the government was the most popular response, followed by charging for services which are free.

The least popular responses were reducing some services or removing parts of them and finally increasing council tax.

## Pay for Services

Respondents were asked if there were any Council services that respondents would be willing to pay for/pay more for. All comments have been themed manually. The graph below shows the number of comments by theme.



Most respondents opposed paying for additional services, citing already high Council Tax contributions. Many felt they either did not use the services provided or found them lacking in quality. Others stressed that the cost of living crisis made further payments unaffordable.

Respondents suggested various services they would be willing to pay for, including garden waste collection, tip visits, parking charges, and library services. Some even expressed a

willingness to pay higher council tax, provided the funds directly supported services for the most vulnerable.

Services that respondents felt that they could receive less of were reduced bin collections, less Senior Management, less events, Godiva mentioned several times, less spending on non-statutory services including migrant services and less spending on cycleway.

Theme	Comments
<b>None</b>	<p><i>"I am not sure what services I actually receive. I pay council tax which is way too high already and if services such as street cleaning is cut will see even less for my money."</i></p> <p><i>"NO because we pay enough already for the meagre services we do get, this is not value for money."</i></p> <p><i>"No- this is what we pay our council tax for"</i></p> <p><i>"More people should be paying council tax. It is not fair that the people who pay council tax are doubly charged. Those who don't pay council tax would probably be also be excused from additional charges."</i></p> <p><i>"We are already paying lot of council tax with reduced services"</i></p> <p><i>"We as a family can't afford it due to the cost of living crisis"</i></p>
<b>Pay For</b>	<p><i>"I am in a fortunate position of having some disposable income, so would pay more if I thought that this would benefit others. Charges for parking, for example."</i></p> <p><i>"Willing to pay a bit more for garden waste disposal but there would be a point where it would work out cheaper to take the waste to the tip."</i></p> <p><i>"Road maintenance if the funding was ring fenced and some genuine improvement visible."</i></p> <p><i>"Happy to pay a small charge for a Tip Visit. &amp; would like to see an increase in Street Parking Fines to cover the cost of more wardens city wide as the problem is not just restricted to the City Centre."</i></p> <p><i>"Charge for taking out library books etc but remain free for users on benefits. Charge back the cost of removing abandoned vehicles I'd be willing to pay £10 more council tax every month to support some services if I could be sure that's where the money would be spent."</i></p> <p><i>"I would be willing to pay a nominal membership fee per year (for adults only) to access library services. £10 - £20 per year MAX"</i></p>
<b>Receive Less of</b>	<p><i>"Sell off council swimming pools, sell off library centres, cut back on bin collection days, stop subsidised activities for groups, just stop spending on non-essentials."</i></p> <p><i>"Can't name any specifically but the Council shouldn't be funding any services for which there isn't a statutory duty"</i></p>

*"We don't need any more high paid Directors. The money to pay for these people is coming from our taxes/from my hard earned pension!"*

*"Construction of cycleways isn't necessary"*

*"Spend less on events, Godiva festival etc"*

*"Dont invest in white elephant projects. We need services, not an art/ cultural centre whilst parts of the city centre is in decay."*

*"Happy to receive less frequent green bin (standard refuse) collections."*

*"Could encourage people to recycle more if these are collected less frequently."*

**Prioritisation of Services**

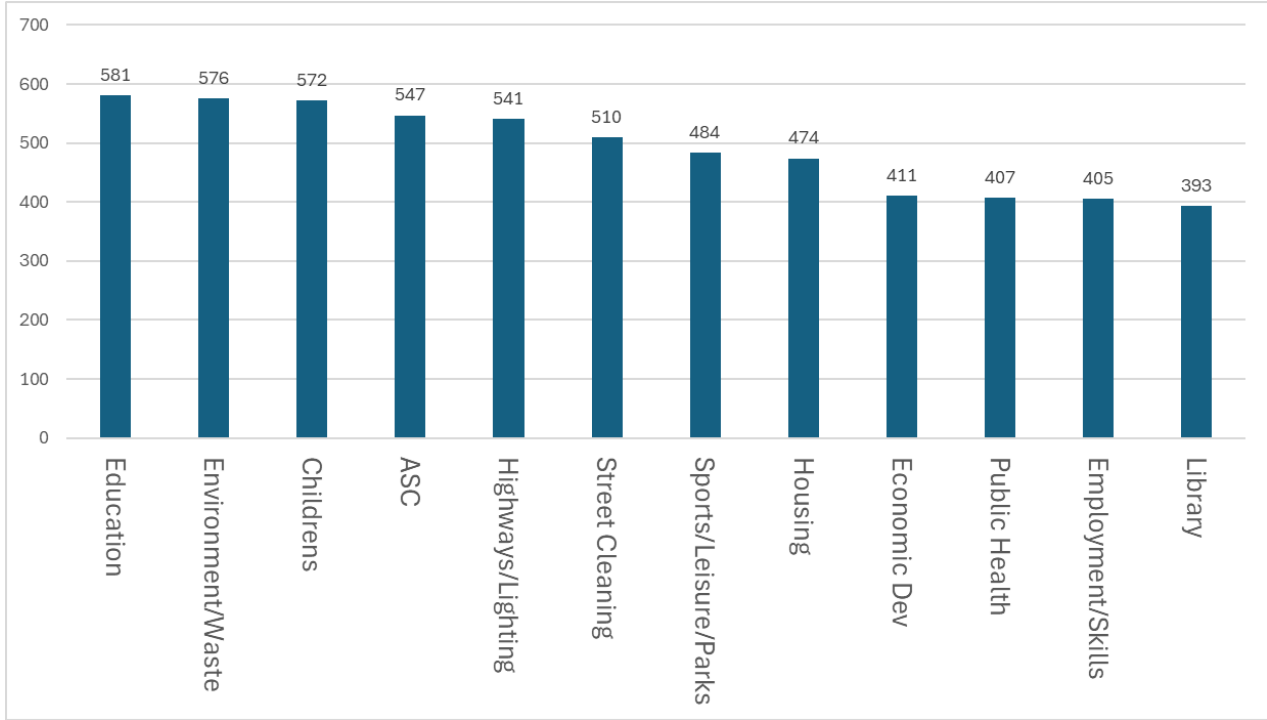
Respondents were asked how important Council services were. This was a change from last year's survey where they were asked to rank the services. The feedback suggested that this was very hard to do.

This survey also had a short description of what services did.

The graph below shows those that rated the services either very important or important.

Education, Environment and Waste and Childrens Services were the top three service areas.

Public health, Employment and Skills and Libraries were rated less important than other services we provide



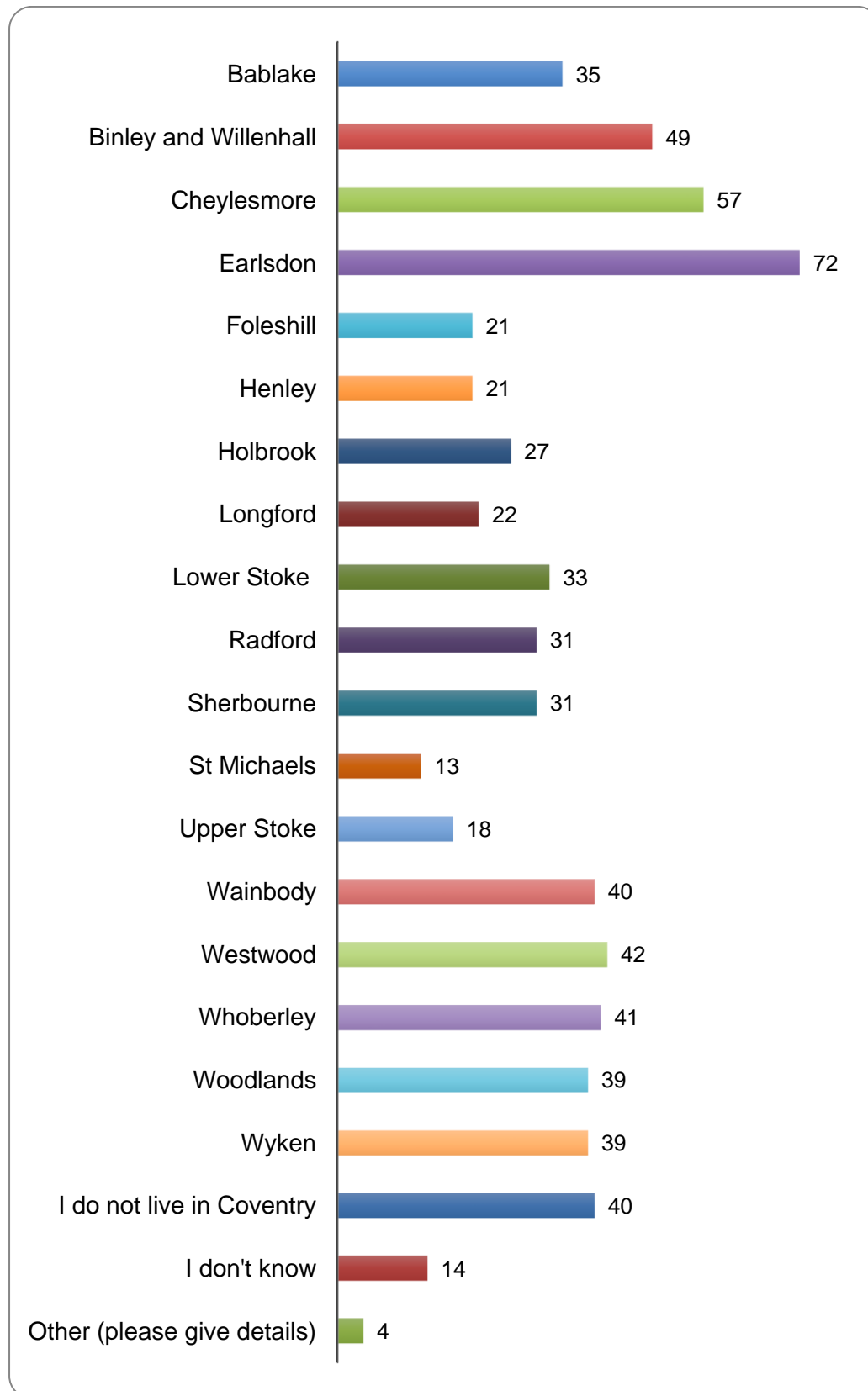
### Any other Comments

Many of the comments received reiterated the points already raised within the consultation. The short term nature of a number of the savings from the proposals was highlighted and the need for more efficiency and less duplication.

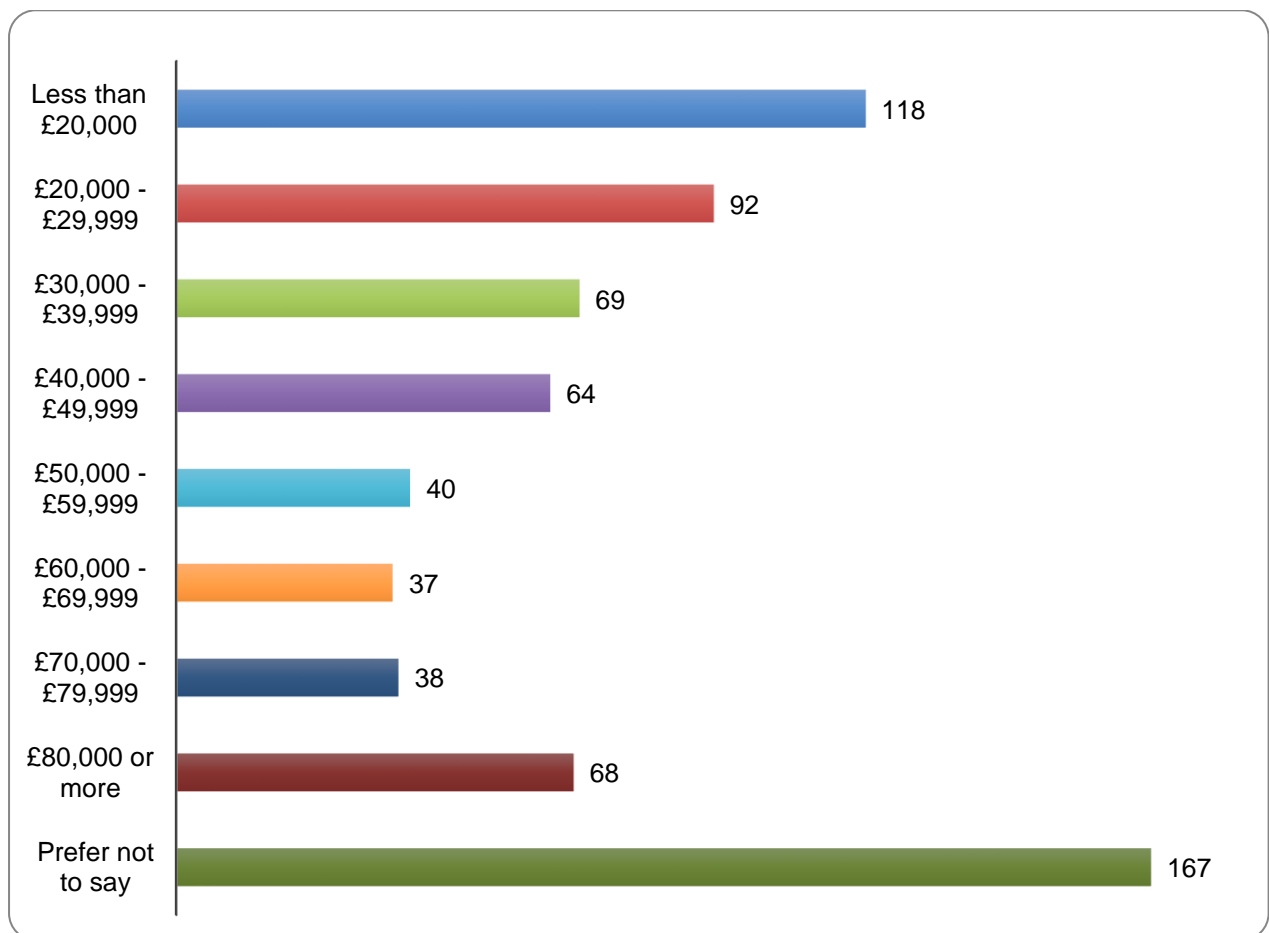
The political landscape was raised throughout the survey, as was the cost of living. The fact that a number of these proposals would have a cumulative impact on the most vulnerable was stressed and so the Council should not implement many of the proposals.

## Profile of Survey Respondents

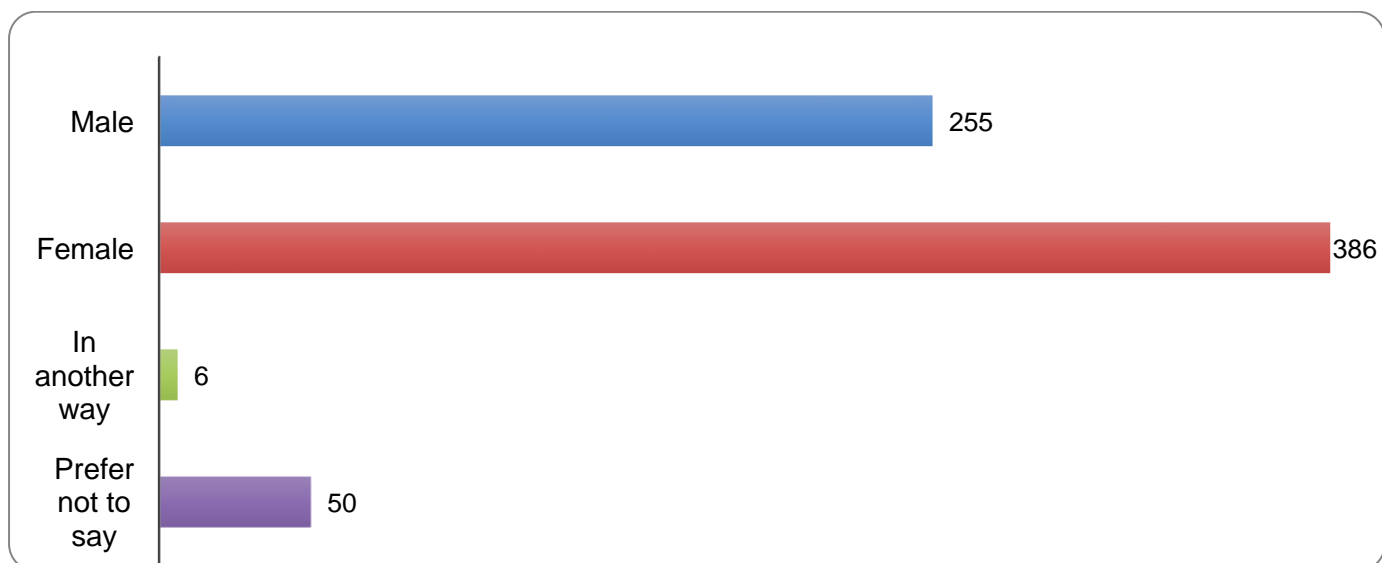
Which area of Coventry are you from?



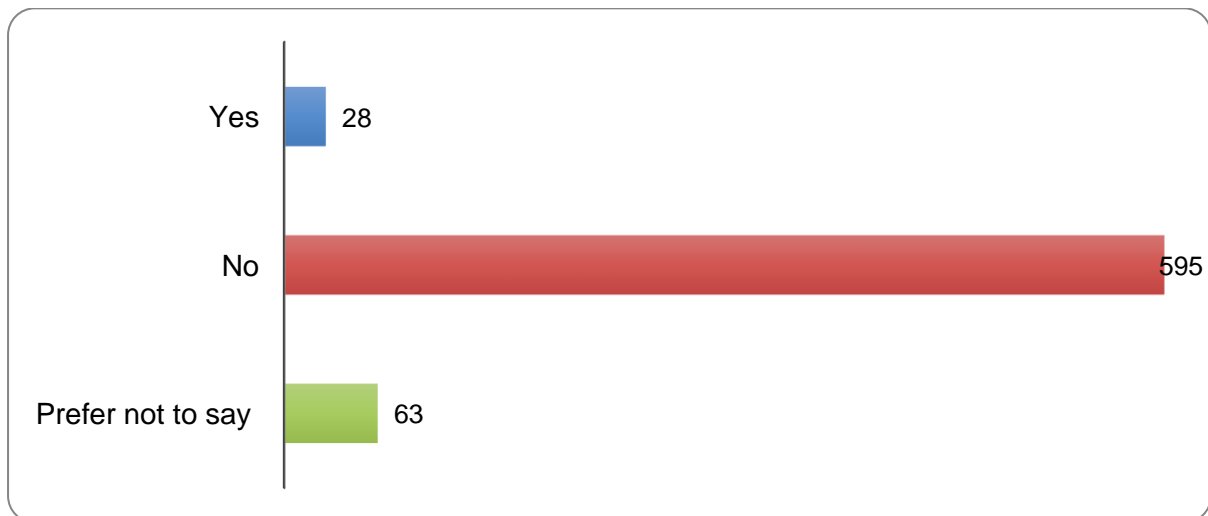
What is your household income?



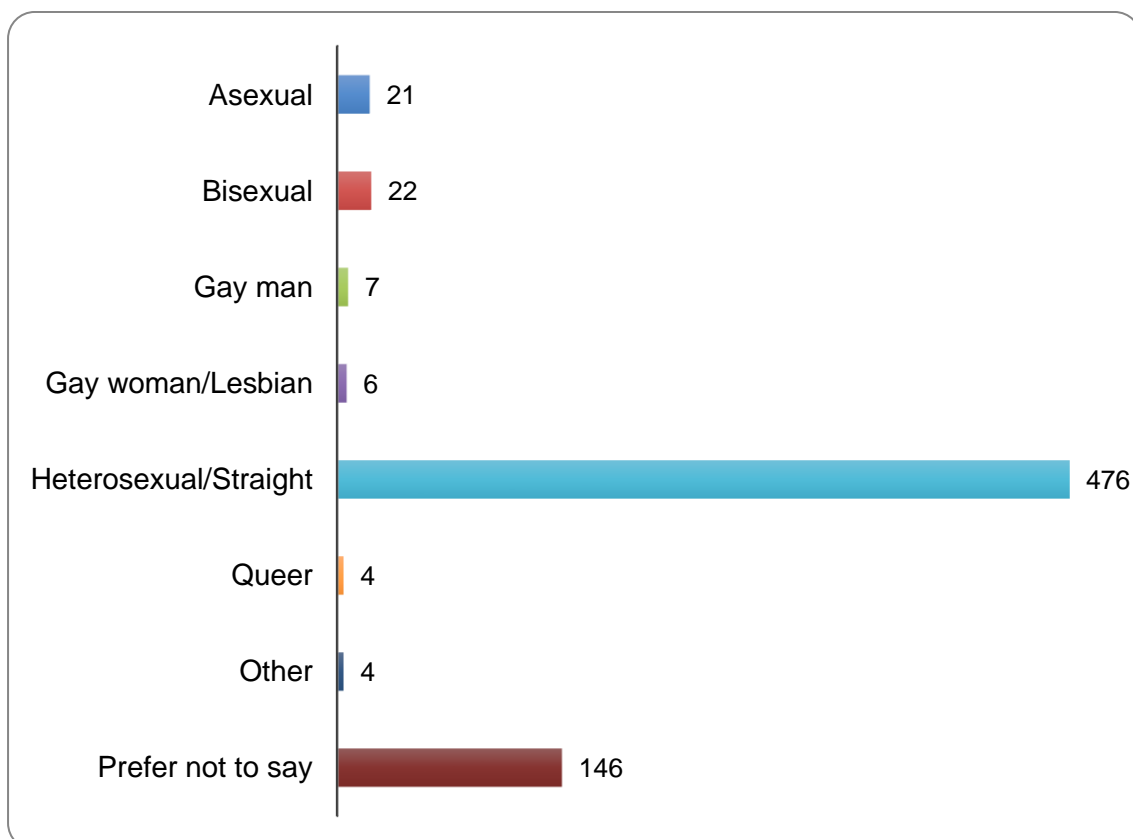
How would you describe yourself?



Is your gender different from the gender you were assigned at birth, or do you prefer not to say?

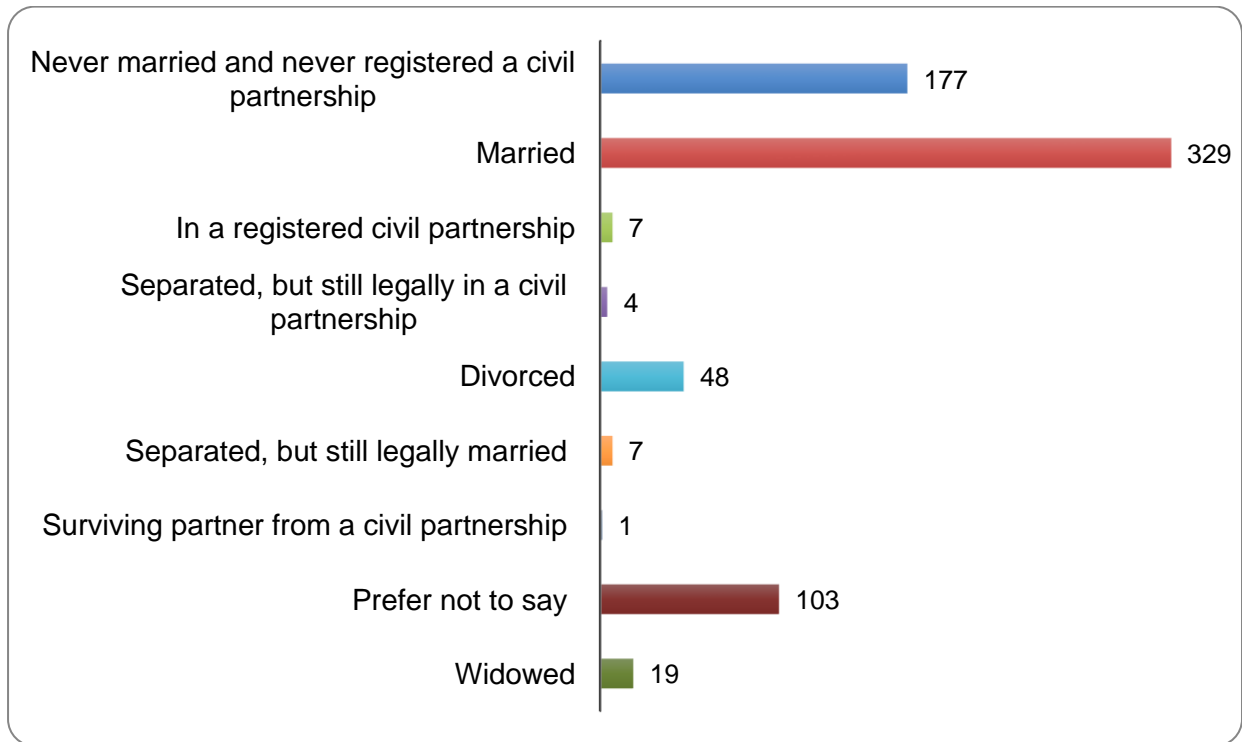


What is your sexuality?

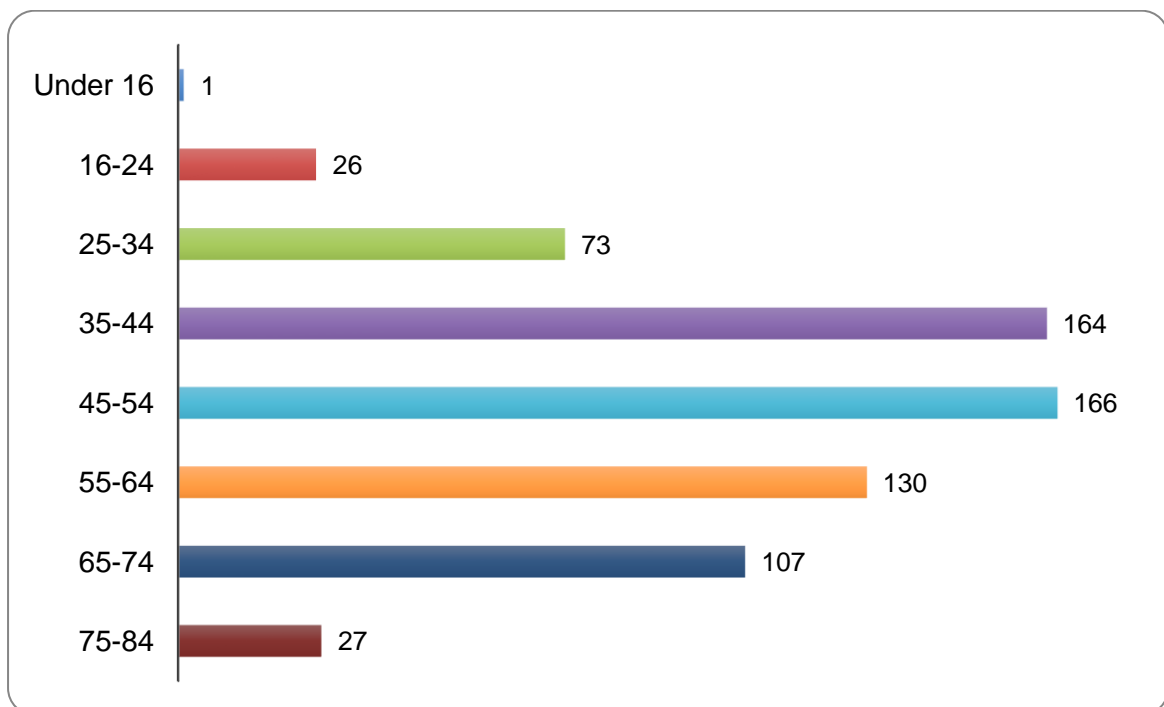




What is your legal marital or civil partnership status?



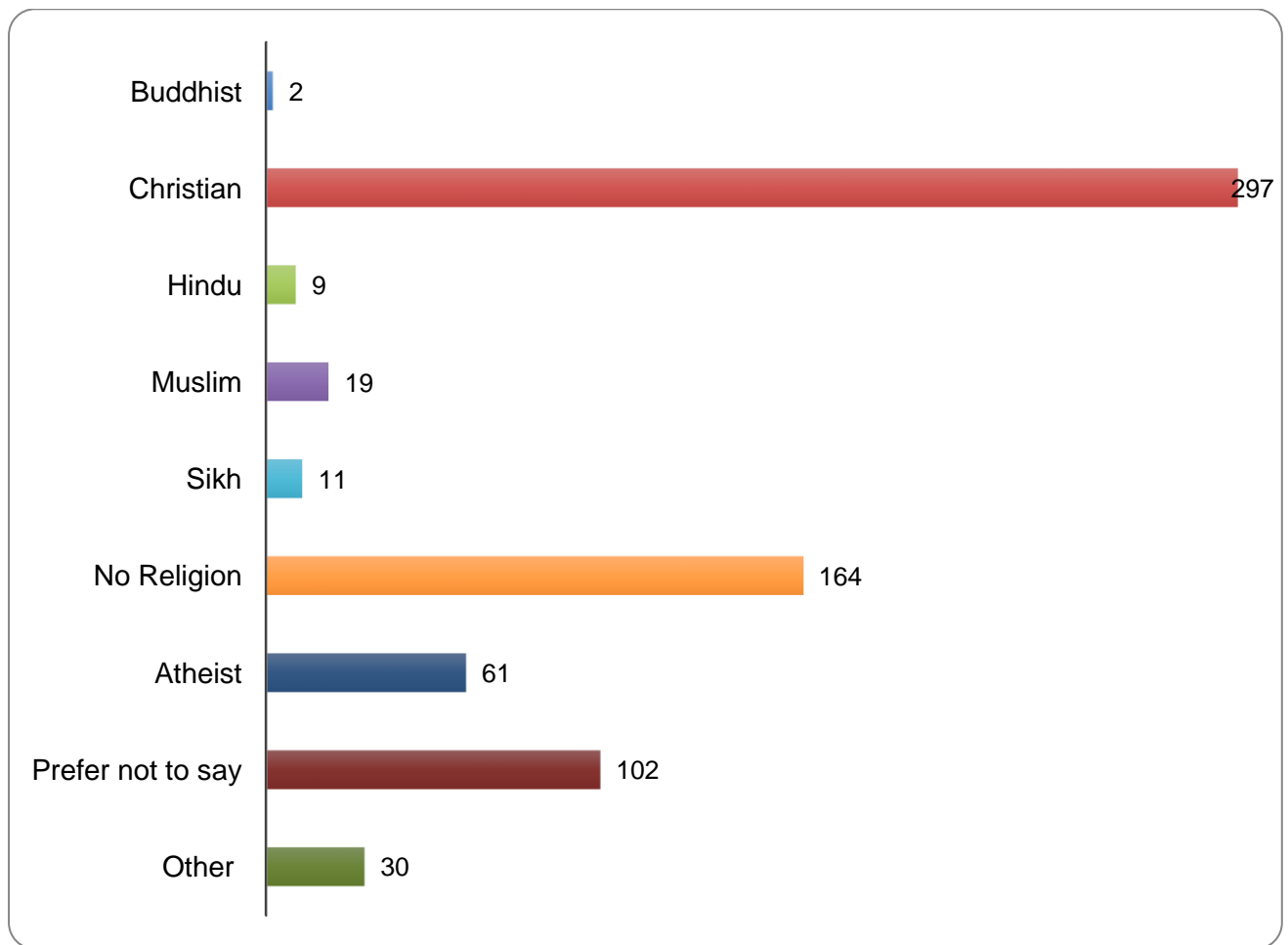
What age group are you in?



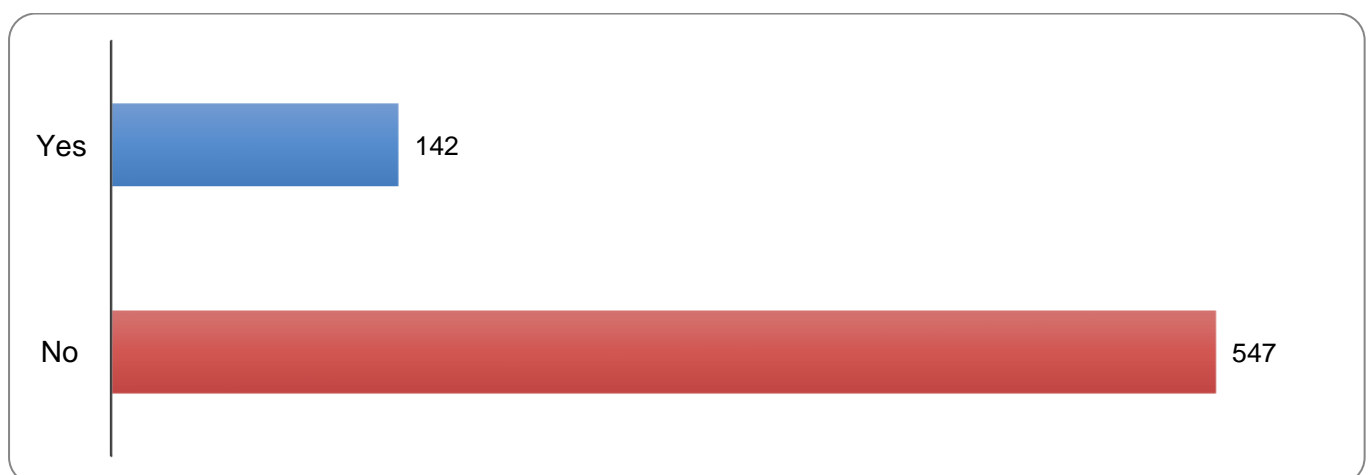
Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?



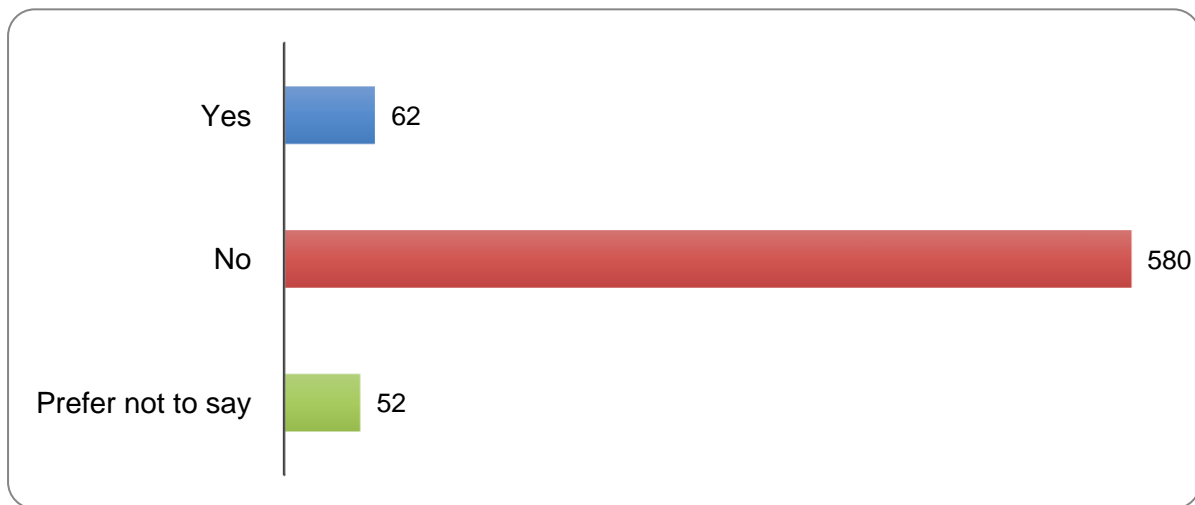
What religion do you consider yourself to be?



Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?



Do you, or a member of your immediate family, currently serve, or have previously served, in the armed forces?



### Email Responses

16 responses were received, the majority of which were relating to the Adult Social Care Voluntary Sector Review.

Coventry TUC opposes Coventry City Council's 2025/26 budget cuts, which reduce funding for services and voluntary organisations while increasing Council Tax by 5%. They argue austerity continues under Labour, with the Chancellor demanding 5% efficiency savings. Key cuts include:

- Adult Social Care: £560,000 in 2025/26 and £1.5m over two years, plus £3m from Learning Disability Services.
- Children's Social Care: £2m in 2025/26 and £8m over two years.
- Council Tax Support: £850,000 cut annually, affecting 15,336 families.
- Community Support Fund: £494,000 cut, impacting vulnerable households.
- Other Cuts: Parks jobs, street cleaning, cultural events, and climate initiatives.

Despite these reductions, the Council faces an £18m deficit in 2026 and £21m in 2027. Coventry TUC urges using reserves (£118m) and borrowing to maintain services and calls for a campaign to demand fair funding from Westminster.

UNISON questions what representations councillors and MPs are making to the Chancellor to secure improved funding for councils in the Spring Spending Review, arguing that better funding is essential for achieving the Government's five key missions. They highlight concerns over the council's claim of prioritising vulnerable citizens while simultaneously cutting services.

UNISON suggests reconsidering mayoral costs and asks how much has been saved due to unfilled vacancies and whether these savings are being factored into proposed cuts. They challenge the Labour council on its stance regarding cuts, questioning if they now feel compelled to implement reductions under a Labour government, as they previously claimed

under a Conservative one. Finally, they demand an urgent update from the council following the final Local Government Settlement expected on December 18.

## Feedback from Online Consultation Session 15 January 2025

32 members of the public attended the session alongside 7 Council representatives.

Questions asked covered the following areas of concern:

- **Impact on Vulnerable Groups:** Cuts to preventative support grants could lead to higher demand for Adult Social Care services, especially as the population ages. The risk is that fewer people will receive early intervention, leading to higher costs later due to crisis situations.
- **Budget Cuts and Service Reductions:** There is concern about cuts to services like Streetpride (street cleaning and fly-tipping removal) and the reduction in funding to voluntary organisations like Grapevine, which provide essential support for individuals with learning disabilities and other needs.
- **Preventative Support and Long-Term Costs:** Several comments emphasise that cutting preventative services now could result in greater long-term costs due to more people needing crisis intervention. Preventative services, including those provided by the voluntary sector, have been seen as a cost-effective way to reduce the strain on statutory services.
- **Public Services and Council Management:** Concerns about inefficiencies in local government were raised, such as the number of senior management positions, the overpayment into pension funds, and the potential waste in areas like abandoned signage. Some suggested combining roles and reviewing unnecessary spending.
- **Increased Costs and Taxation:** The proposed 5% increase in council tax, alongside the cuts, has led to questions about how this impacts residents already facing cost-of-living pressures. Some also questioned whether the council was doing enough to "level up" and ensure equal funding compared to other areas.
- **Access to Services:** The consultation process itself was criticised for being inaccessible to certain groups, particularly people with learning disabilities and those needing carer support, due to lack of accessible formats and inconvenient timing.
- **Public Reaction and Next Steps:** Many people expressed concern that these cuts could create more long-term challenges for the council and its residents. They called for more consultation with voluntary organisations and transparency in how responses would inform final decisions.
- **Transportation and Accessibility Issues:** Specific concerns were raised about the accessibility of car parks, particularly for blue badge holders, and whether there would be adequate provision for those affected by closures like Barratts car park.

Overall, there is a strong feeling that cutting preventative support now could create much bigger problems in the future, potentially leading to higher costs and strain on other services. People are urging the council to reconsider these cuts and explore other ways to reduce spending without impacting vulnerable groups.

## Feedback from Face to Face Session 23 January 2025

29 people attended alongside 8 Council representatives.

Questions asked covered the following areas of concern.

The planning application for new flats near Radford fire station has been proposed, with hopes that more housing projects could increase council tax revenue. A push for a local plan consultation is underway, with discussions highlighting concerns over rising living costs and inflation, suggesting a significant council tax increase. There's a debate on whether to release assets or find savings, raising questions on where additional funds would be allocated.

The meeting recognised that council tax affects everyone, though not all residents utilise all services. Concerns were raised about the budget allocation, particularly regarding the protection of financial reserves and whether part of the budget is being used for this purpose.

Some members questioned the council's priorities, especially in light of a recent Labour government election, advocating for more investment in local authorities. Emphasis was placed on the responsibility to support the most vulnerable, with members urging the council to spend money on local community support.

Criticism was directed at council officers, accused of being out of touch with community needs and implementing unpopular changes like one-way systems and LED streetlights. The proposed increase in council tax, calculated based on population and income, was a major point of contention.

The introduction of waste charges for charitable organisations, expected to raise £350,000, was criticised for potentially harming groups supporting vulnerable individuals. Suggestions were made to delay this initiative to better prepare for its impact.

There were warnings that short-term financial savings from service consolidations could lead to higher long-term costs, especially for marginalised groups like the homeless. Concerns were also raised about the potential loss of vital voluntary organisations, which provide cost-effective services compared to council-run programs.

There was a call to redefine statutory services, emphasising the importance of preventative measures over acute interventions. A mother shared her struggles with inadequate support for children with special needs, highlighting the invaluable role of organisations, like Grapevine, which offer essential services for young adults. Her son Robbie, also spoke

**DO NOT CUT MY GRAPEVINE – EVERY TIME I GO I ENJOY MYSELF**

Frustration was expressed over the council's investments in failing businesses, questioning why funds were diverted from community services to ventures like Tom Whites and Coombe. Attendees also raised concerns about the cleanliness of the city, youth services funding, and the potential reduction of the winter fuel allowance.

In summary there was frustration with the direction of some policies and a call for more consideration of the needs of vulnerable groups and young people in the city. The need for long-term investment in preventative services rather than reactive spending.

### Adult Social Care Providers Forum 27 January 2025

A forum was held with adult social care providers to present CCC proposed fee inflation uplifts for 2025/26 (subject to cabinet sign off 2025/26), linked to the pre-budget proposals.

- Residential and nursing care – proposed 5.55% uplift
- Home Support, supported living, day opportunities – proposed 6.14% uplift (£1.31 per hour)

Feedback included:

- There could be consequences for providers and future sustainability, which would impact on people receiving care
- The proposed increase will not cover increasing costs for providers such as, national insurance, energy, building, maintenance, food, staffing, insurance and transport
- Some providers stating they pay above NLW, the proposed increase does not reflect this
- General comments around funding inequality between health and social care (health being on the higher side)
- Possible negative impact on international recruitment and retention of staff

There was also some general reflection on the position of the Council and funding from central government for adult social care and request that the Council should be lobbying central government.

### Petitions

On 27 January 2025, the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources heard three petitions that had been submitted in relation to the budget setting proposals for 2025/26. In line with the Council's Petition Scheme, the Petition Organisers and Councillor Sponsor had been invited to attend the meeting to outline their concerns to the Cabinet Member. The comments and issues raised would be considered as part of the consultation process for the Budget Setting proposals for 2025/26 which would be considered by Cabinet and Council at their meetings on 25 February 2025.

Details of the three petitions and the issues raised are presented within Appendix 9 to the 2025/26 Budget Report.