

Council spending - have your say

Survey response report

21 September 2022 - 31 October 2022

Uttlesford District Council budget 2023/24



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Summary

Each year we have to prepare our budget and decide how much should be spent on the services we provide to the community.

Before we do that we ask for feedback in the form of a public survey on what our spending priorities should be in the financial year from April 2023 to March 2024.

Background

Central government funding used to be the biggest single source of money for many councils, including Uttlesford.

For the current financial year 2022/23 the council's total funding requirement is budgeted at £17,341,000. This figure is the net funding requirement after taking in to account fees for services such as Planning, Licensing, and car park income.

Government funding has reduced significantly over the years, a trend that is expected to continue. As a result, we faced significant challenges in balancing our budget. We decided to increase our revenue through a commercial investment programme – buying a portfolio of commercial property and then using the rent we receive to fund council services.

In the current year, this portfolio will generate additional net income of £5,658,000 to help us run the council. This compares with Council Tax of £6,404,000. The rest of the funding is a mixture of business rates, central government funding and use of council reserves, including those set aside in earlier years for specific purposes.

This has been successful, but even so there are continued financial pressures on us. This means that we need to ensure we remain efficient while continuing to provide the same high quality services.

The results of this consultation will help us to decide on the priorities for the budget for April 2023 to March 2024.

Consultation

The questions and format of the consultation followed a very similar format to that we used in 2021 (to inform the budget set for the year 2022-23).

The consultation concentrated on asking for respondents' views on:

- the priorities for council spending in relation to the Corporate Plan visions
- whether the Council Tax precept for Uttlesford District Council represents 'Value for money'
- the prerogatives for the future resourcing of specific service areas

To help respondents form an opinion on the future resourcing of specific service areas the survey provided them with the net cost per household of providing each service, after taking into account any income from fees and charges.

The survey also invited (but did not require) participants to provide some brief profiling details (age, gender, ethnicity disability). Participants were also asked to identify if their response was as a resident, business or on behalf of an organisation (such as major preceptors).

The online survey was run as a web form on the Uttlesford District Council “Lets talk” consultation platform. This could be accessed via a direct link or from the main website home page, directly from the platform itself or from links sent out in various promotions, publicity and newsletters.

Promotion

The survey ran from 21 September to 31 October 2022.

At the start of the consultation period emails inviting participation in the survey were sent directly to:

- Essex County Council
- Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority
- Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Essex - Policing and Community Safety
- all Uttlesford members
- all town and parish councils in the district
- businesses on the Uttlesford Economic Development team’s distribution list

The survey was widely publicised to the citizens of Uttlesford who were encouraged to take part.

A press release was distributed to all local media and newspapers on 3 October.

It was included in the *District News* e-newsletters on 30 September with a reminder on 28 October to all 9,703 subscribers.

It was also included in *Business News* e-newsletters on 26 September and 12 October to 2,269 business subscribers.

Social media promotion went on throughout the consultation period:

- Facebook - total post impressions 4,696, reach 4,208, engagement 230, shares 25
- Twitter - total impressions 1,782, retweets 15, link clicks 21
- Additionally on Instagram and LinkedIn

A reminder letter, promotional materials and paper forms were sent to all town and parish councils in early October.

Those people who do not use digital services were offered the option of requesting a paper copy of the survey and proposals to be sent out by post (details were provided on the website, in the press releases and in all publicity).

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Verified responses: 145

Summary

Response type

Online: 143

Paper: 2

Additional comments received: 2

Headline responses

Q1 Corporate priorities: Putting residents first ranked as the first priority

Q2 Council Tax value for money: Tend to agree by 36%

Service priorities

Where more than one activity was given under a service area, the priority is that identified by the largest number of respondents who rated it as very or fairly important.

For services with only one priority area the dominant view of respondents is given.

Q3 Environmental Health and Licensing

Service priority 2023-24: Action to develop cleaner neighbourhoods

Q4 Housing and homelessness

Service priority 2023-24: Housing advice

Q5 Planning and Building Control

Service priority 2023-24: Planning Policy including the New Local Plan

Q6 Refuse and recycling

Service priority 2023-24: Refuse and recycling collections

Q7 Street cleansing

Service priority 2023-24: Street cleansing rated as 'very important' by 60% of respondents

Q8 Revenues and Benefits

Service priority 2023-24: Administering Council Tax and business rates

Q9 Maintaining amenity areas

Service priority 2023-24: Maintaining amenities rated as 'very important' by 46% of respondents

Q10 Community safety activities

Service priority 23-24: Community safety rated as 'very important' by 40% of respondents

Q11 Economic development

Service priority 23-24: Support for local businesses

Q12 Partnerships and communities

Service priority 23-24: Supporting community groups to deliver projects

Q13 Running Saffron Walden Museum

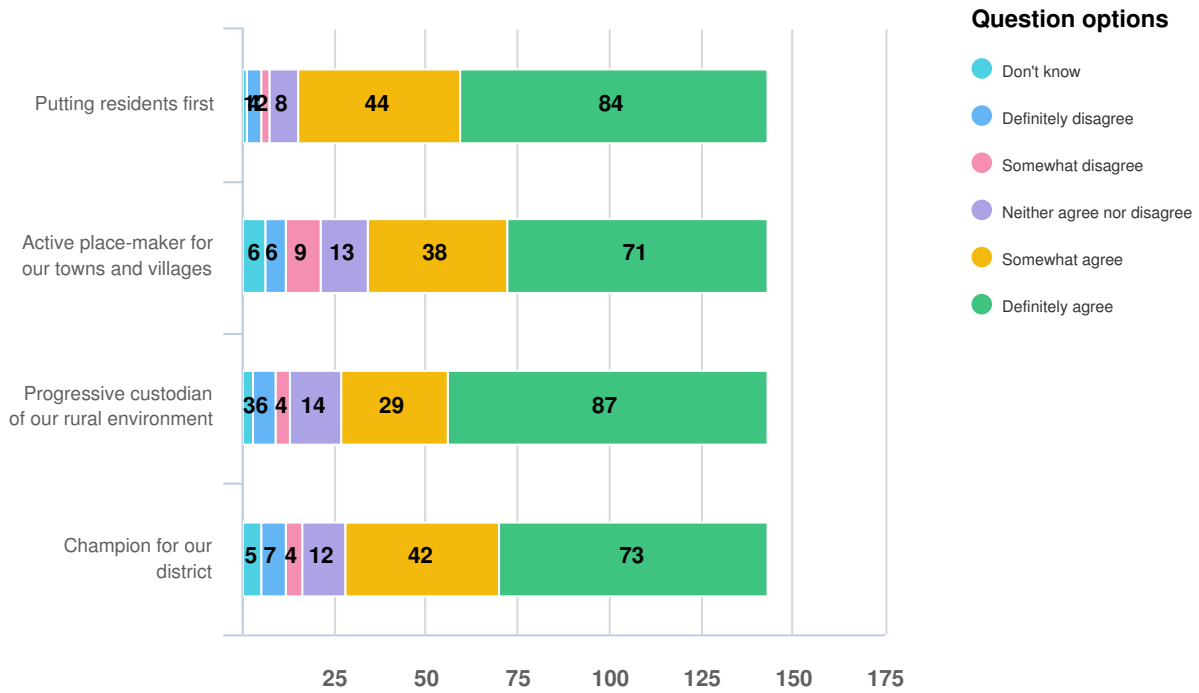
Service priority 23-24: The museum is rated as 'not so important' by 35% of respondents

Q14 Climate change activities

Service priority 23-24: Climate change activities are rated as 'very important' by 41% of respondents

Response detailed results

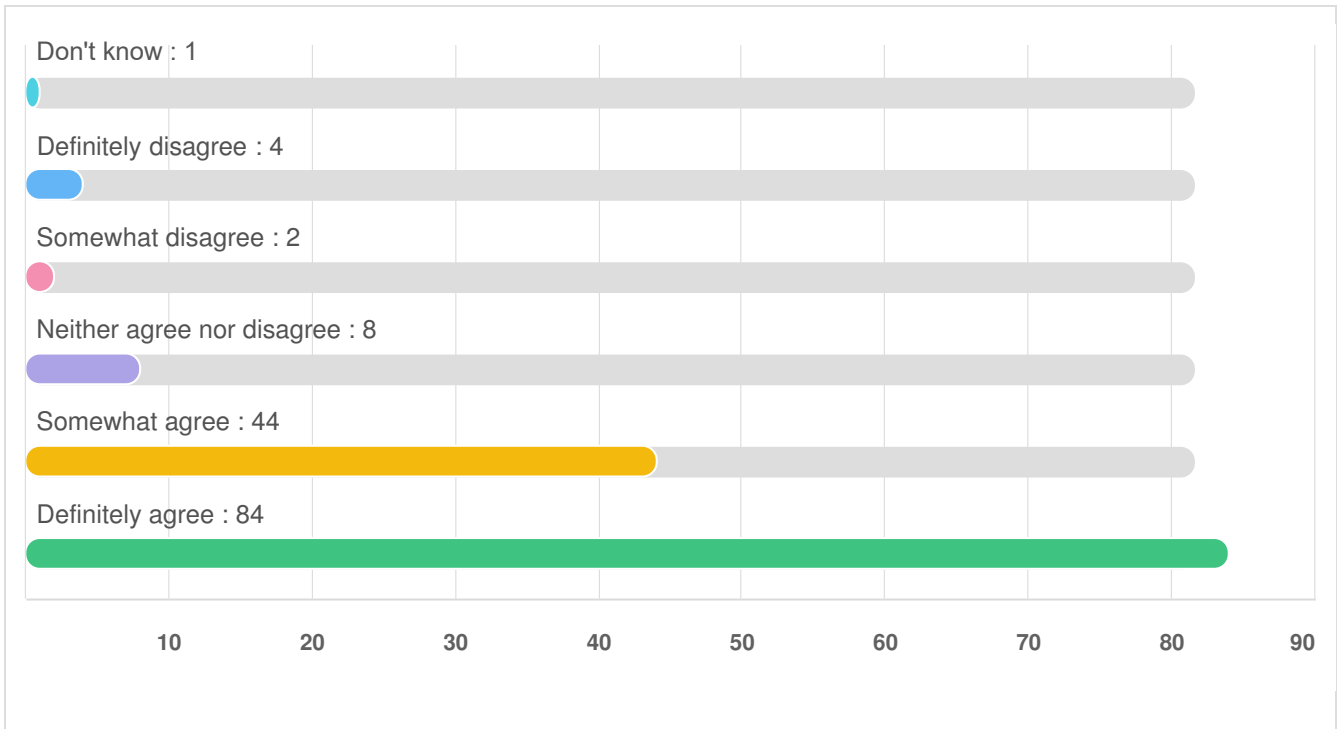
Q1 Are these priorities the right ones for 2023/24?

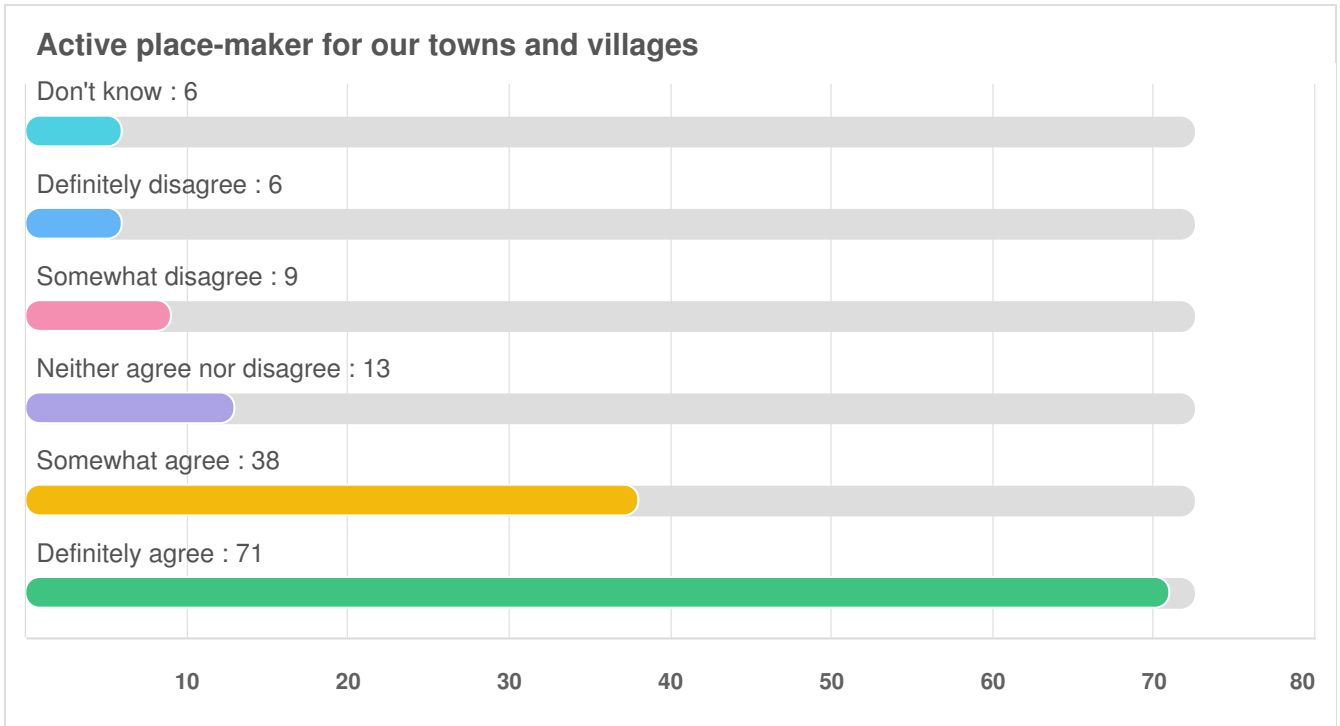


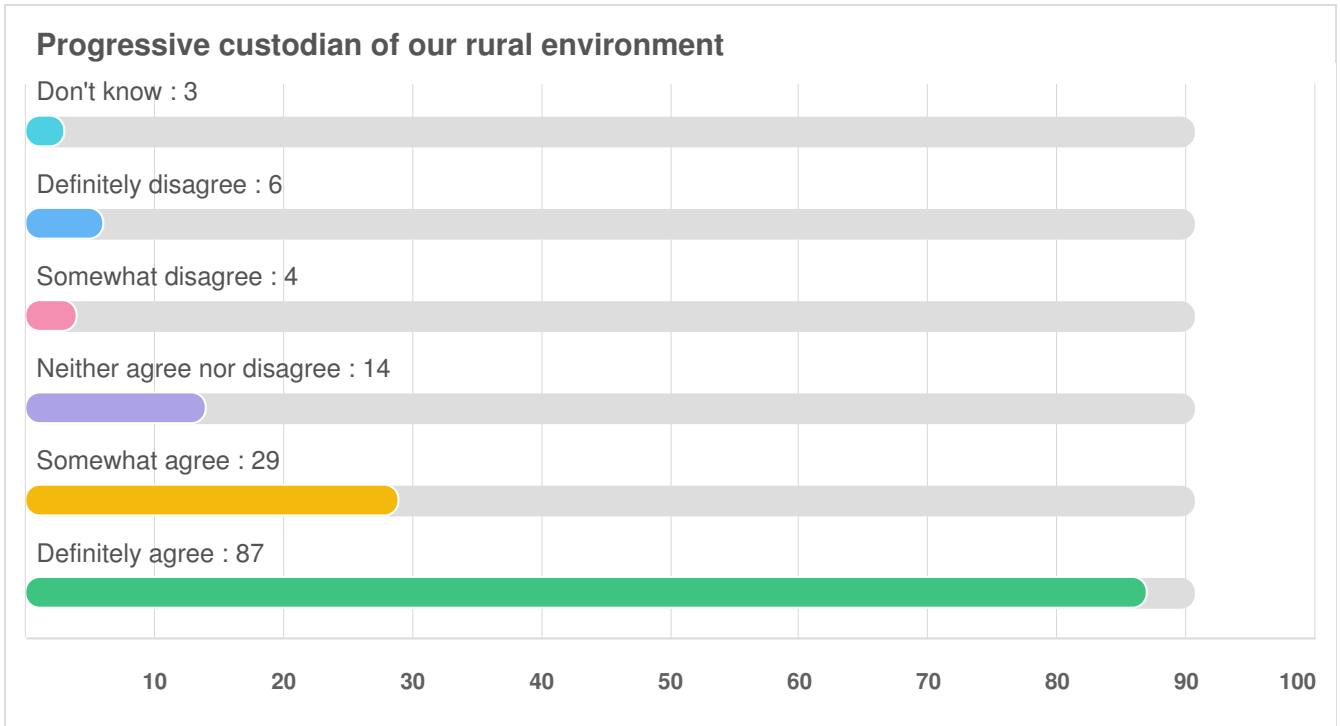
Optional question (143 response(s), 2 skipped)

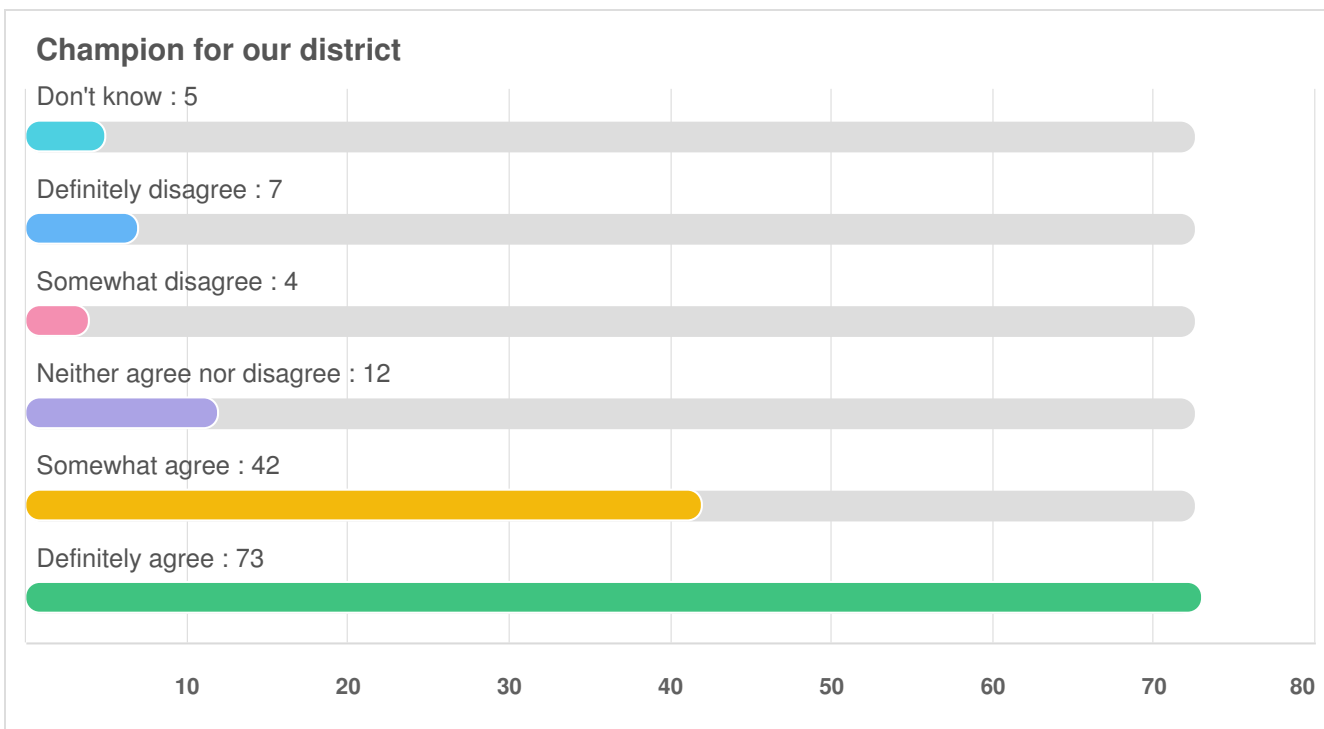
Q1 | Are these priorities the right ones for 2023/24?

Putting residents first

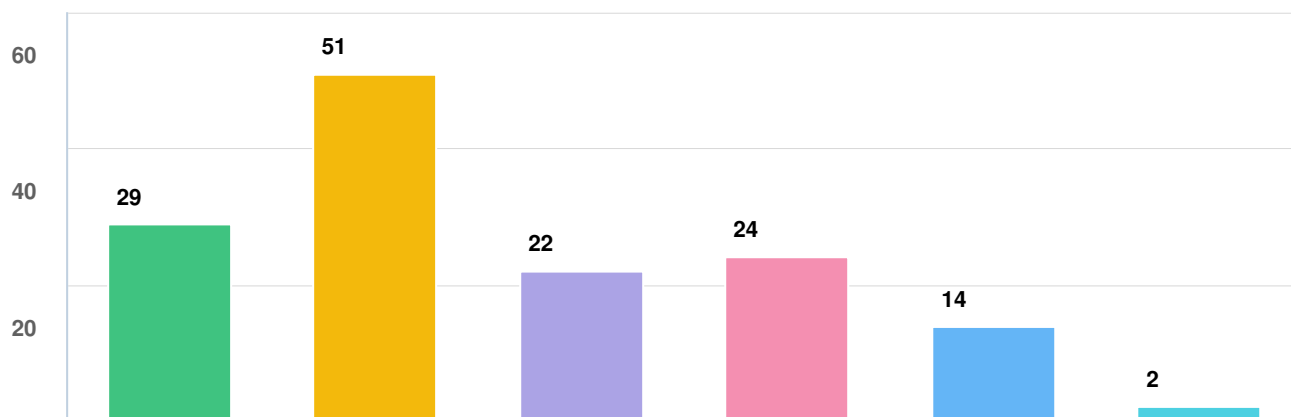








Q2 Bearing in mind Uttlesford householders only pay £166.61 per year for services provided by the council (based on average Band D Council Tax 2022/23), to what extent do you disagree that Uttlesford District Council provides value for money?



Question options

- Don't know
- Strongly disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to agree
- Strongly agree

Optional question (142 response(s), 3 skipped)

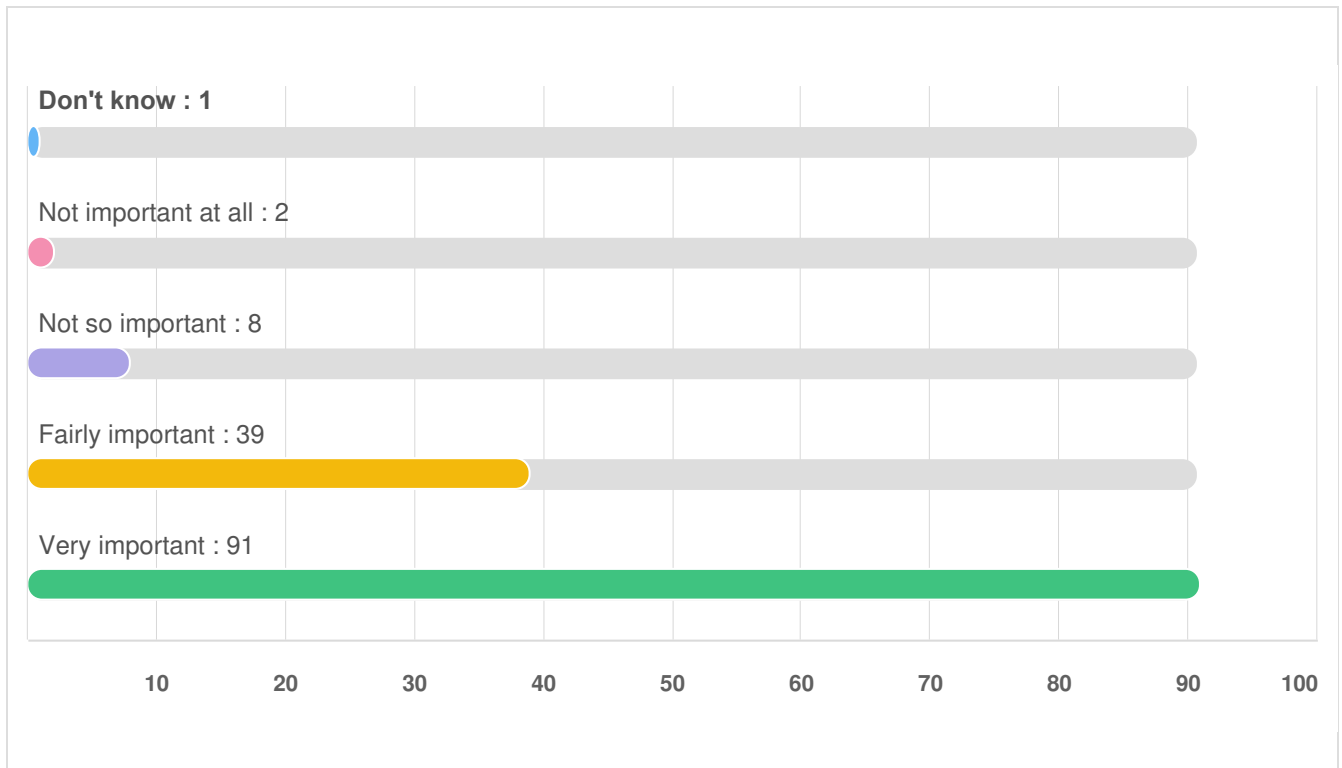
Q3 Environmental Health and Licensing costs about £25.74 per household per year and includes:

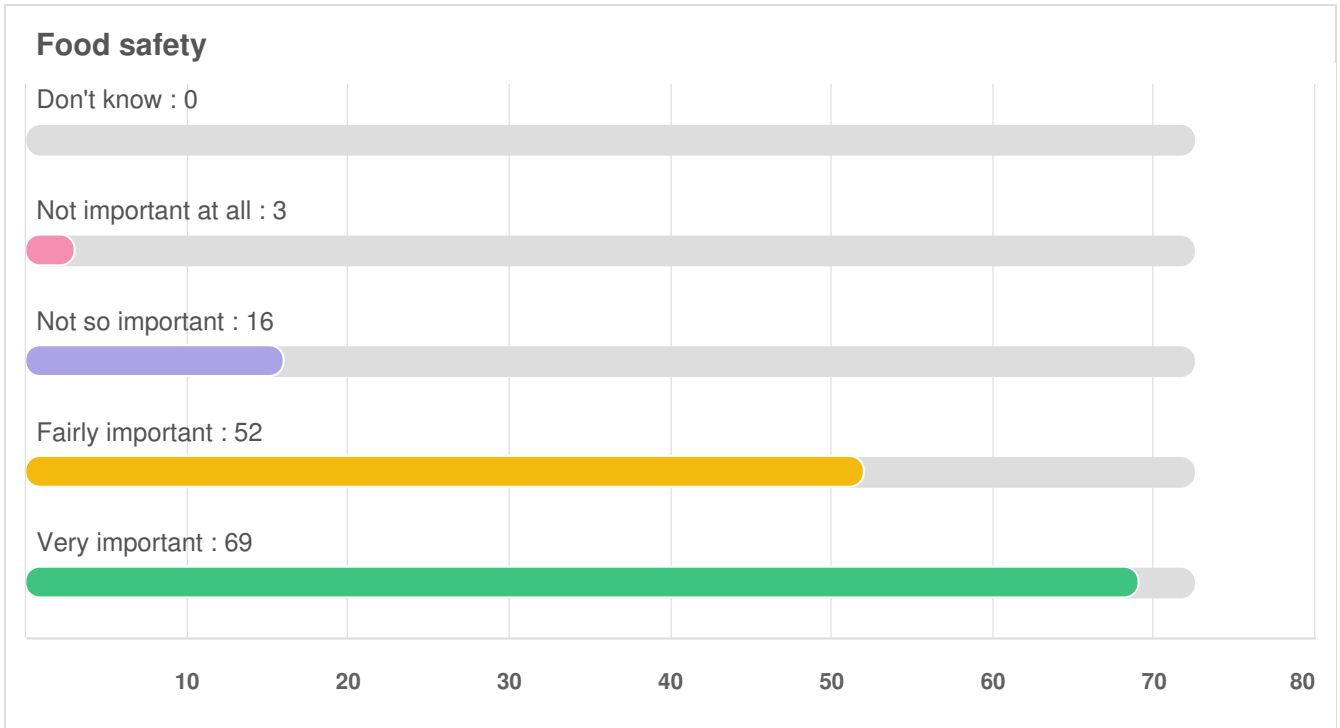


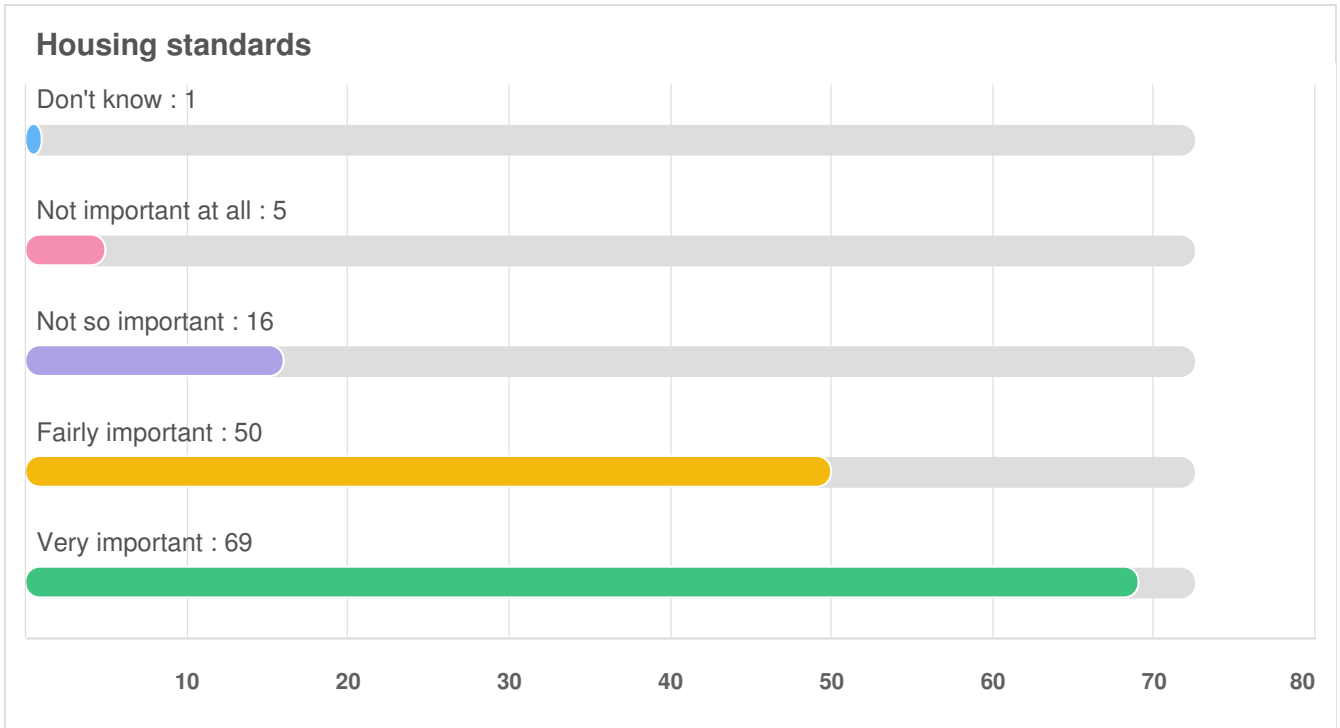
Optional question (141 response(s), 4 skipped)

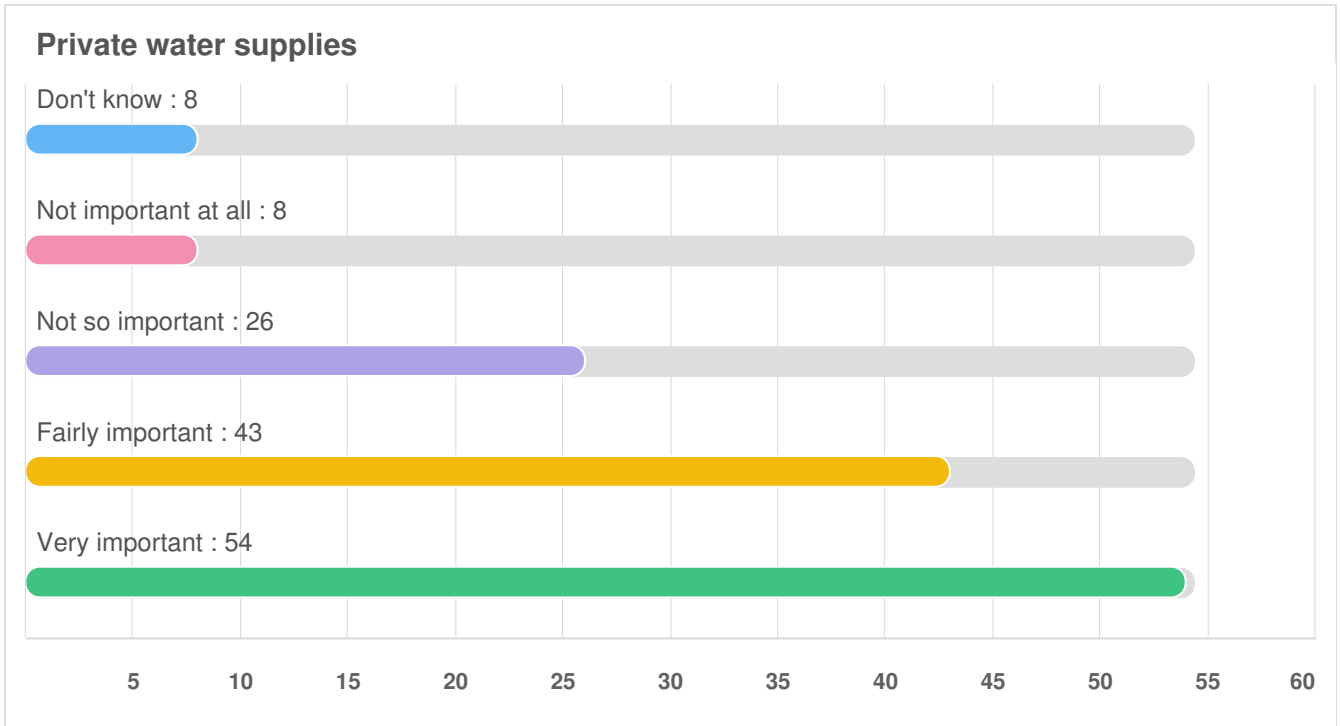
Q3 Environmental Health and Licensing costs about £25.74 per household per year and includes:

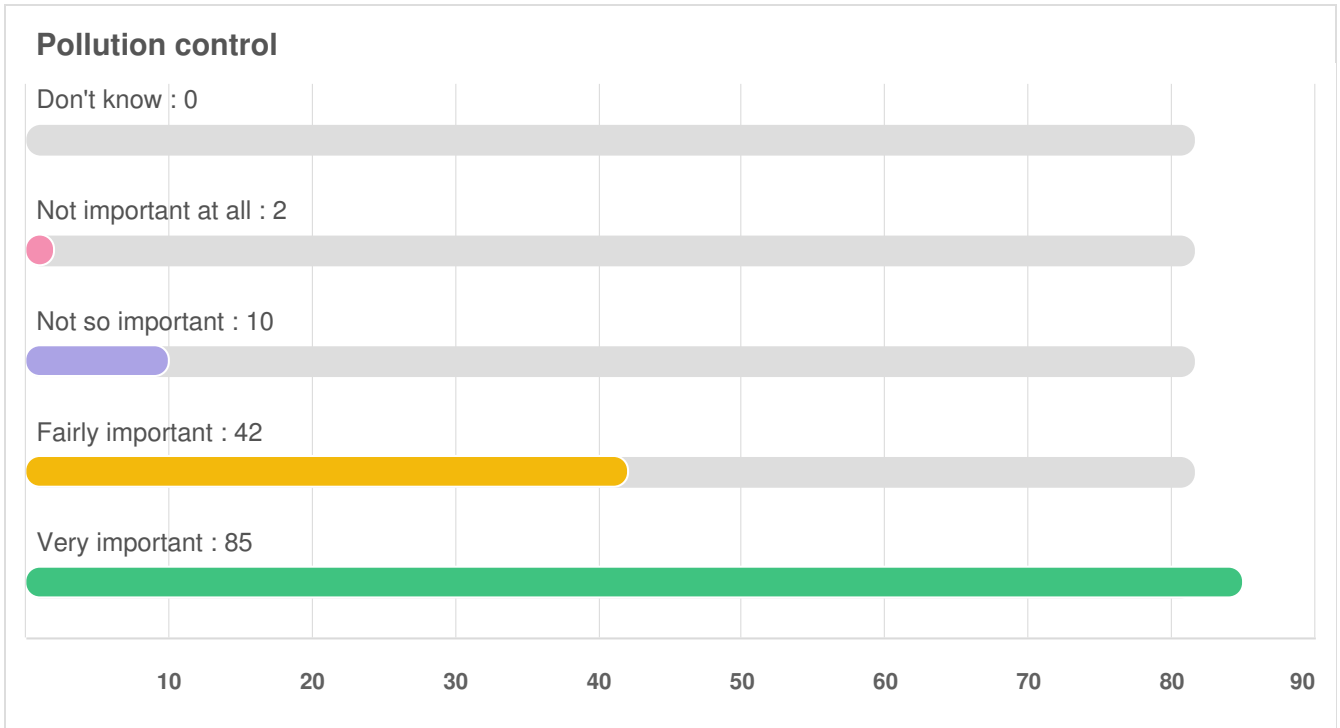
Action to develop cleaner neighbourhoods and to tackle environmental crime such as fly tipping

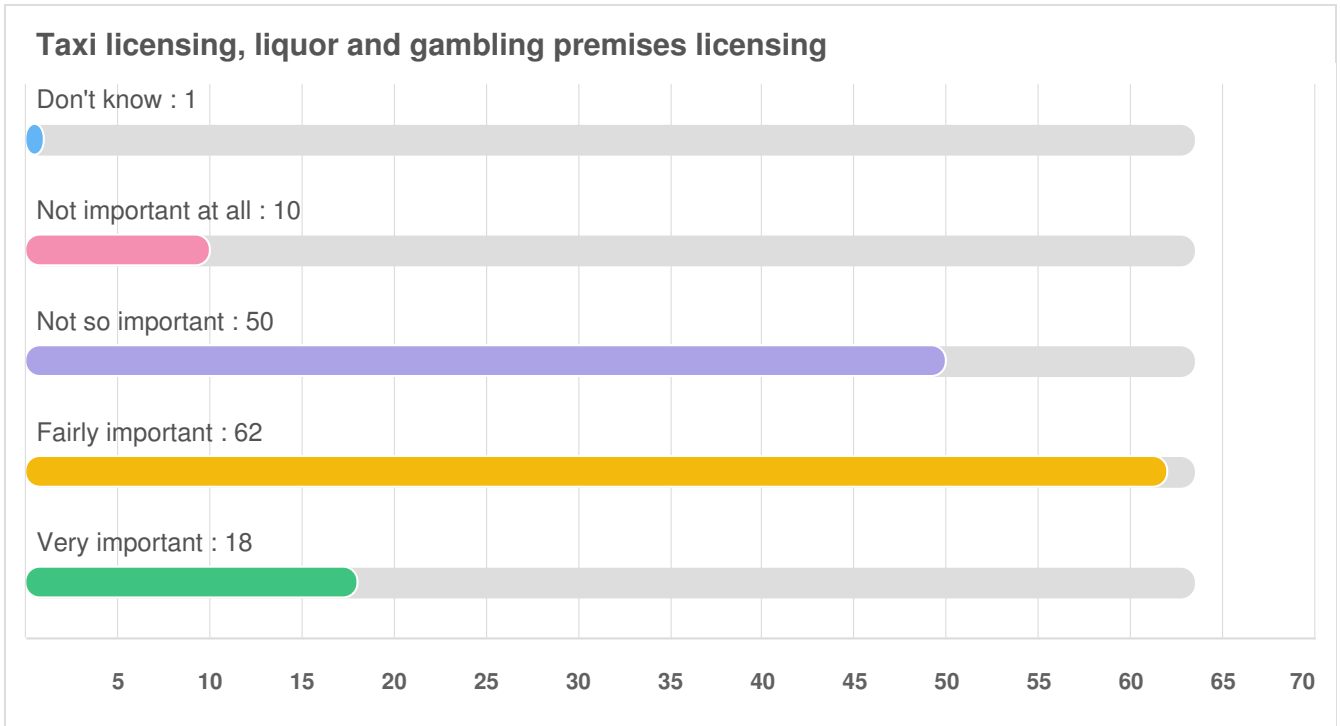




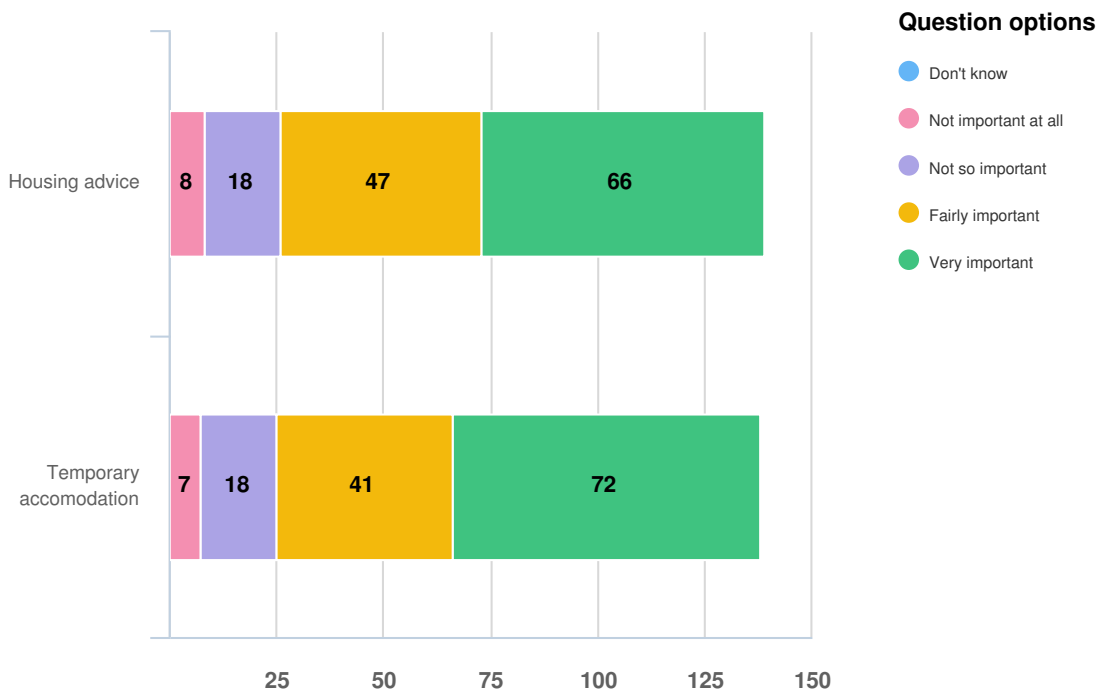








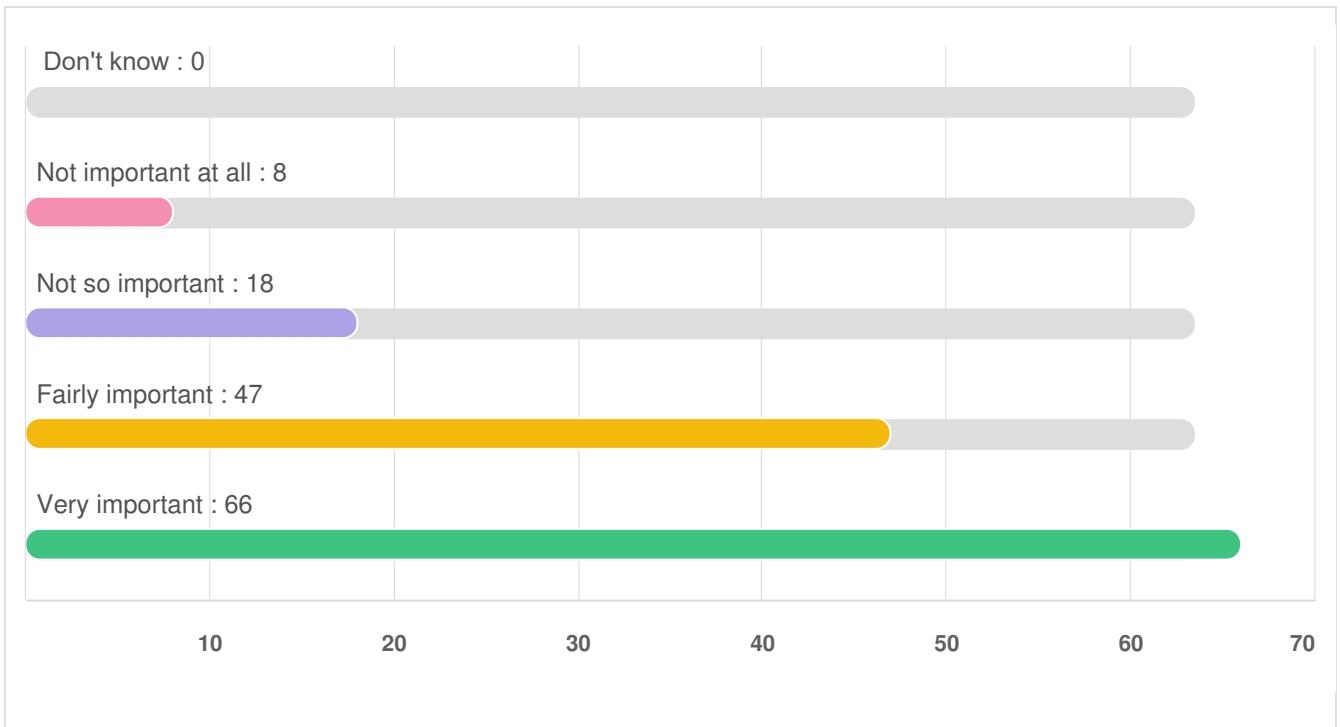
Q4 Housing and Homelessness costs about £11.85 per household per year and includes:

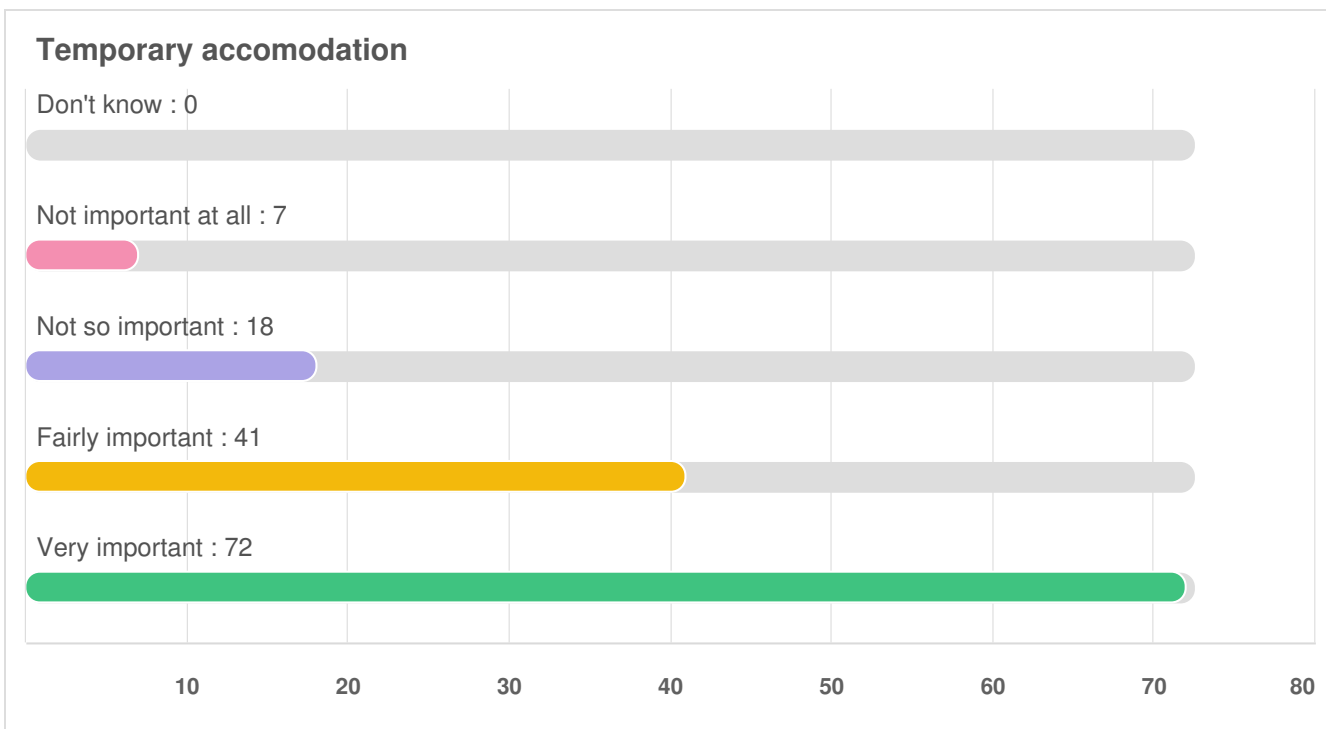


Optional question (139 response(s), 6 skipped)

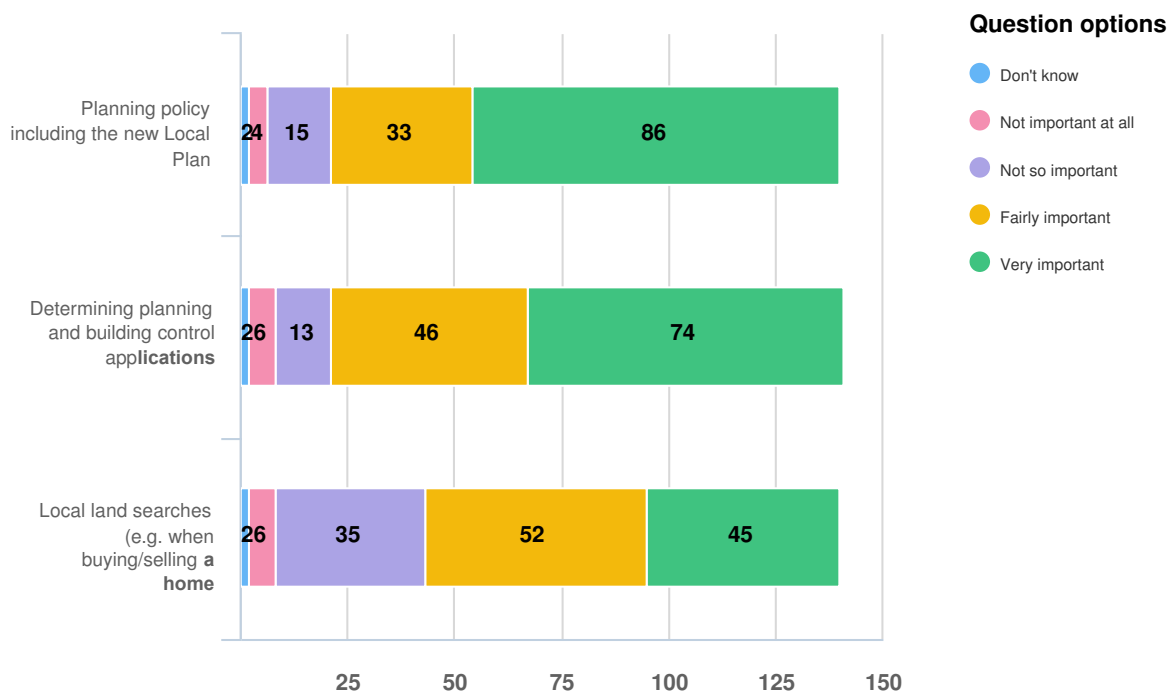
Q4 Housing and Homelessness costs about £11.85 per household per year and includes:

Housing advice





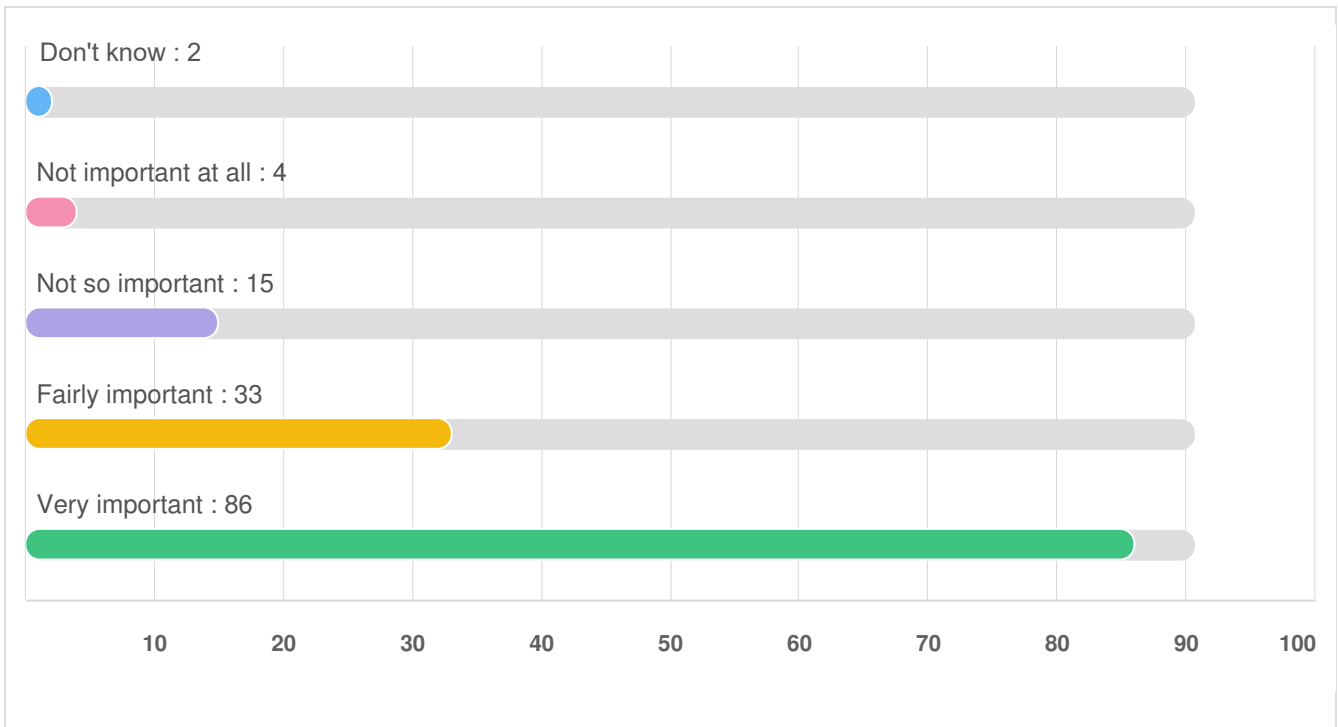
Q5 Planning and Building Control costs about £110.83 per household per year and includes:

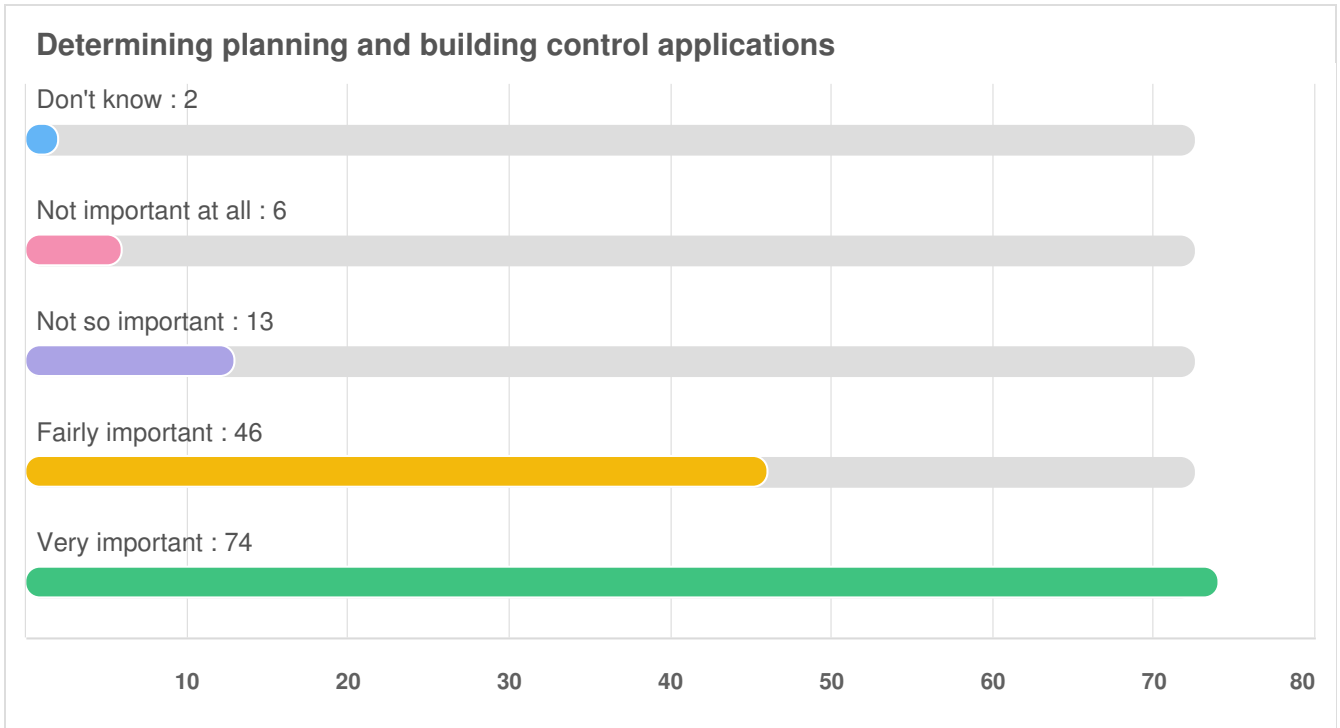


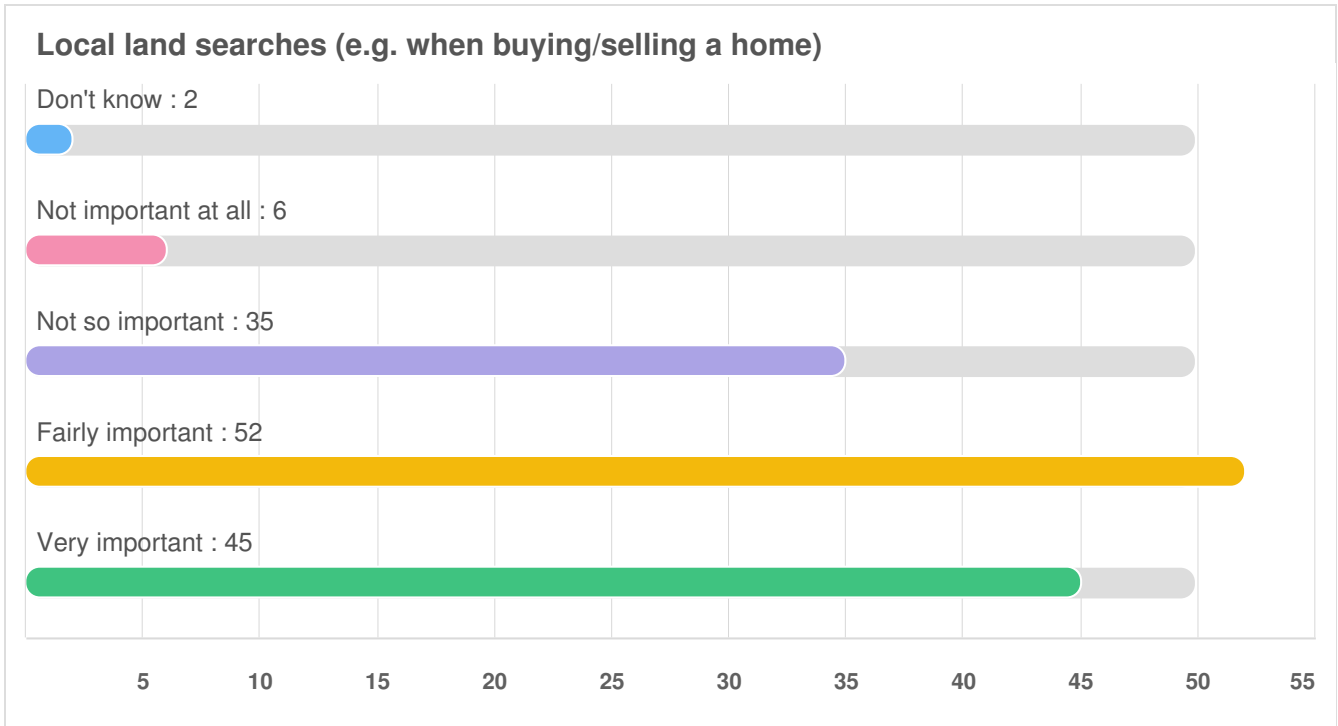
Optional question (141 response(s), 4 skipped)

Q5 | Planning and Building Control costs about £110.83 per household per year and includes:

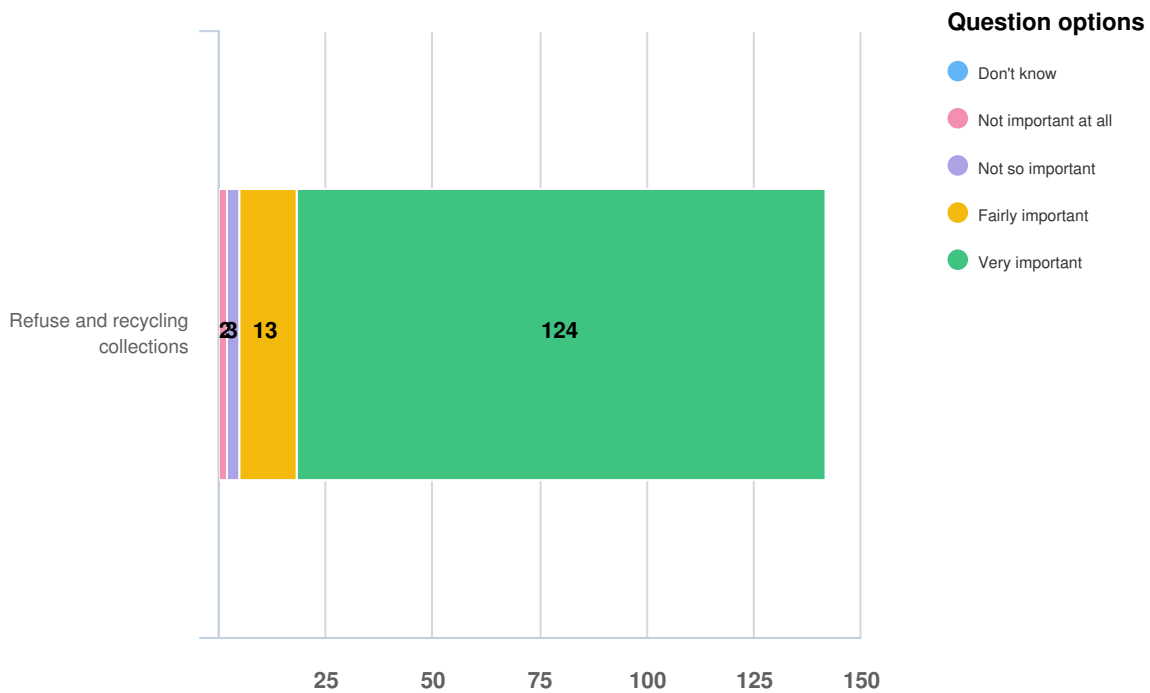
Planning policy including the new Local Plan







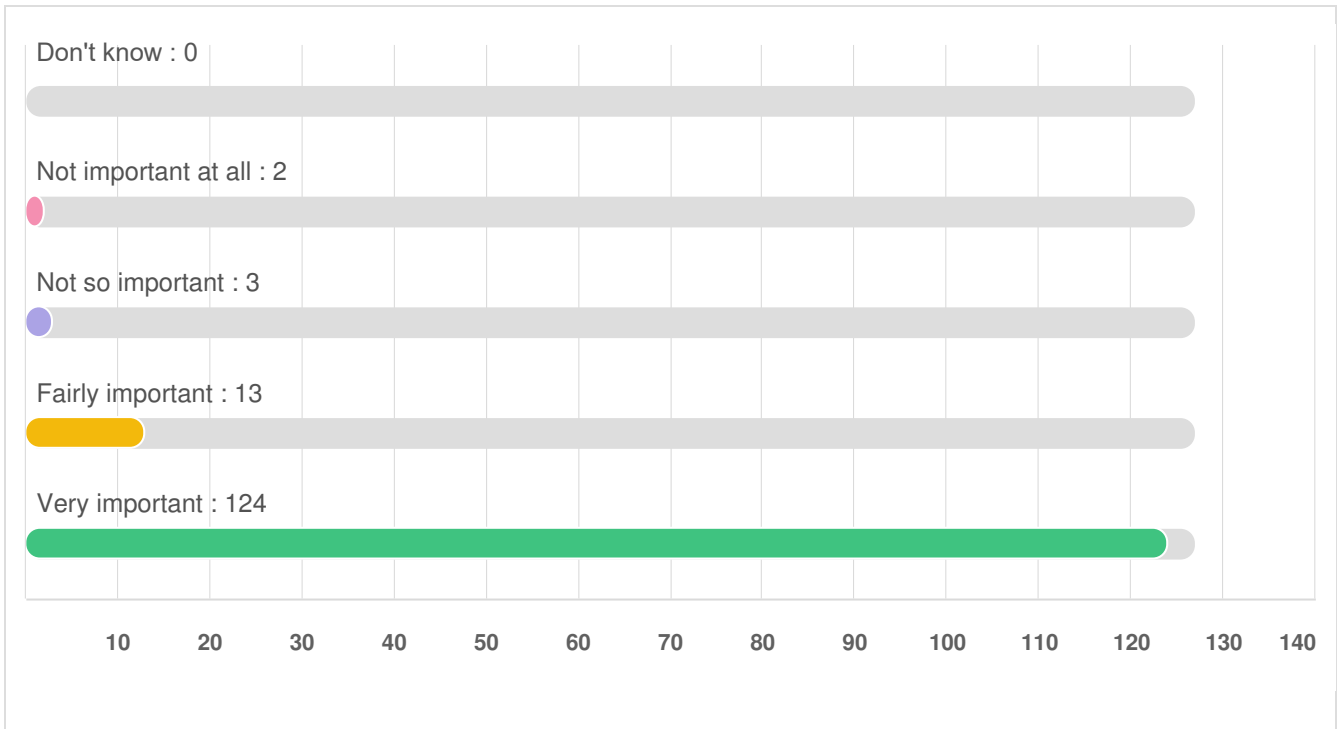
Q6 Refuse and recycling collection costs about £49.47 per household per year



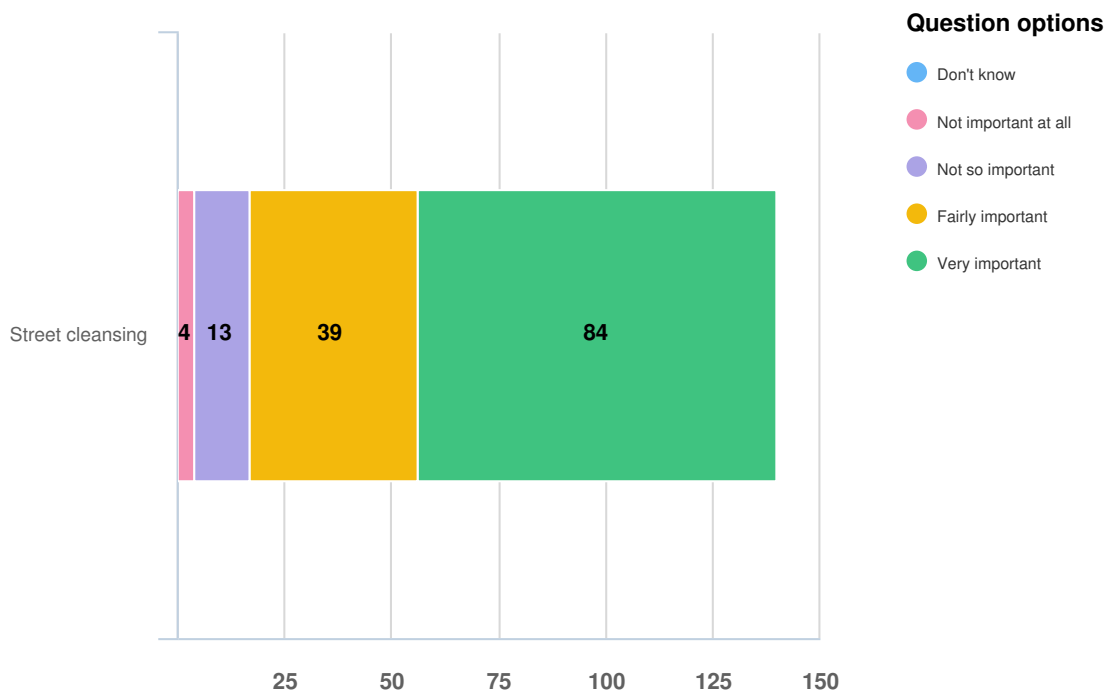
Optional question (142 response(s), 3 skipped)

Q6 Refuse and recycling collection costs about £49.47 per household per year

Refuse and recycling collections



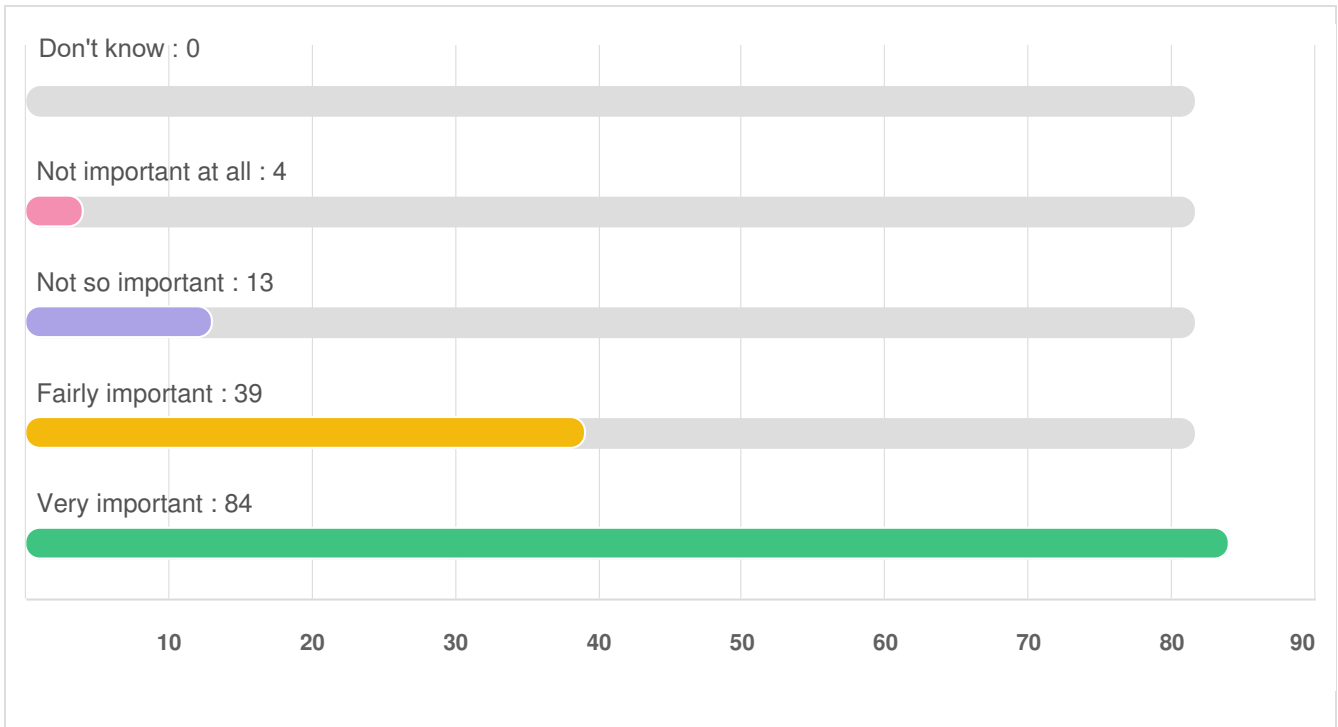
Q7 Street cleansing costs about £14.91 per household per year



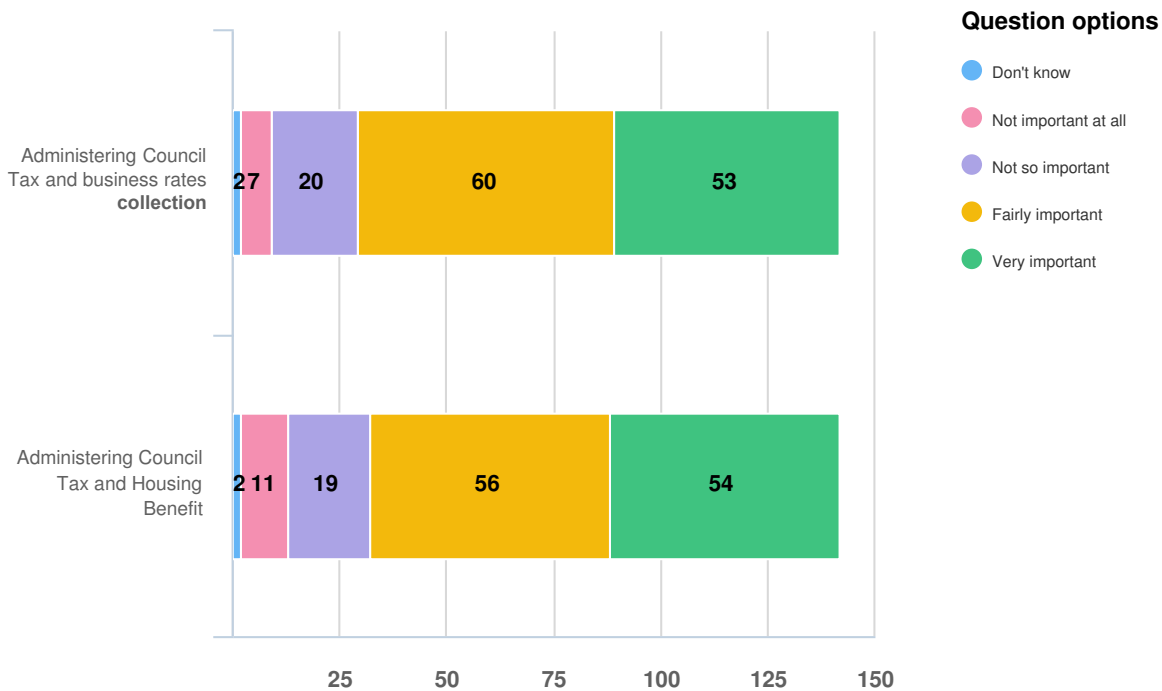
Optional question (140 response(s), 5 skipped)

Q7 Street cleansing costs about £14.91 per household per year

Street cleansing



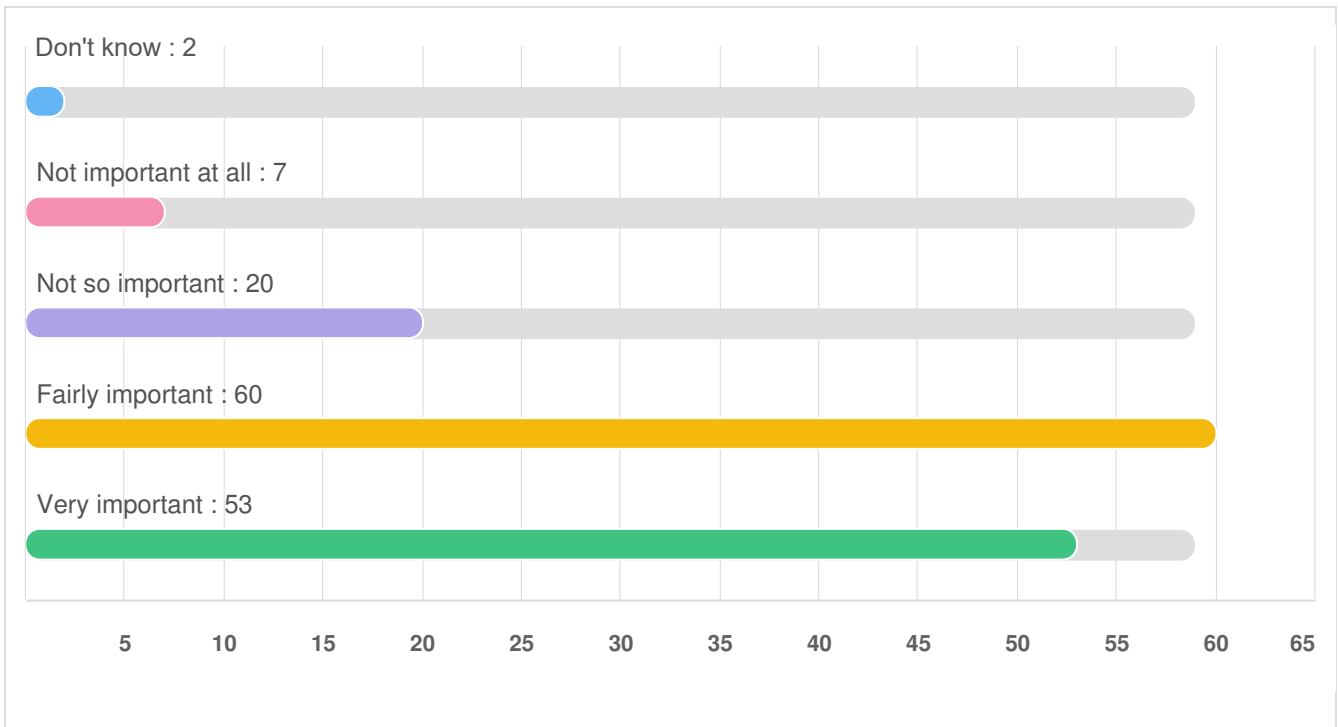
Q8 Revenues and Benefits costs about £48.18 per household per year and includes:

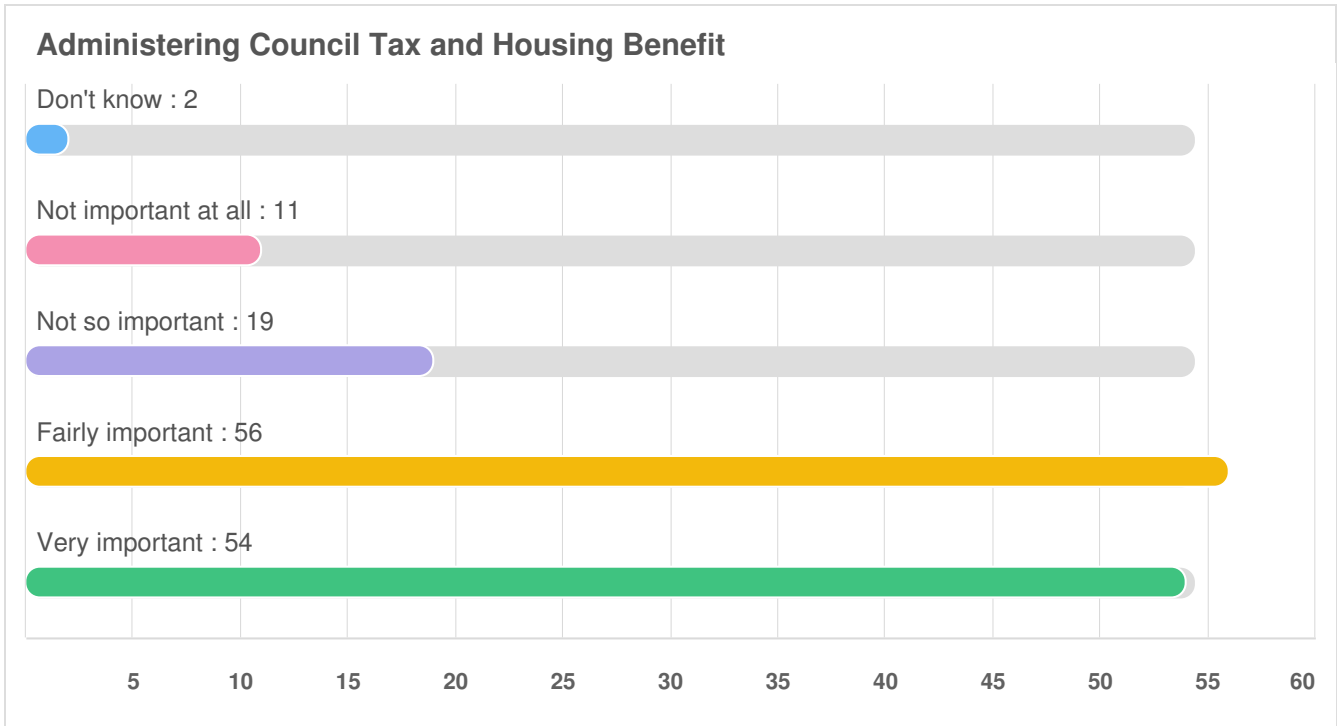


Optional question (142 response(s), 3 skipped)

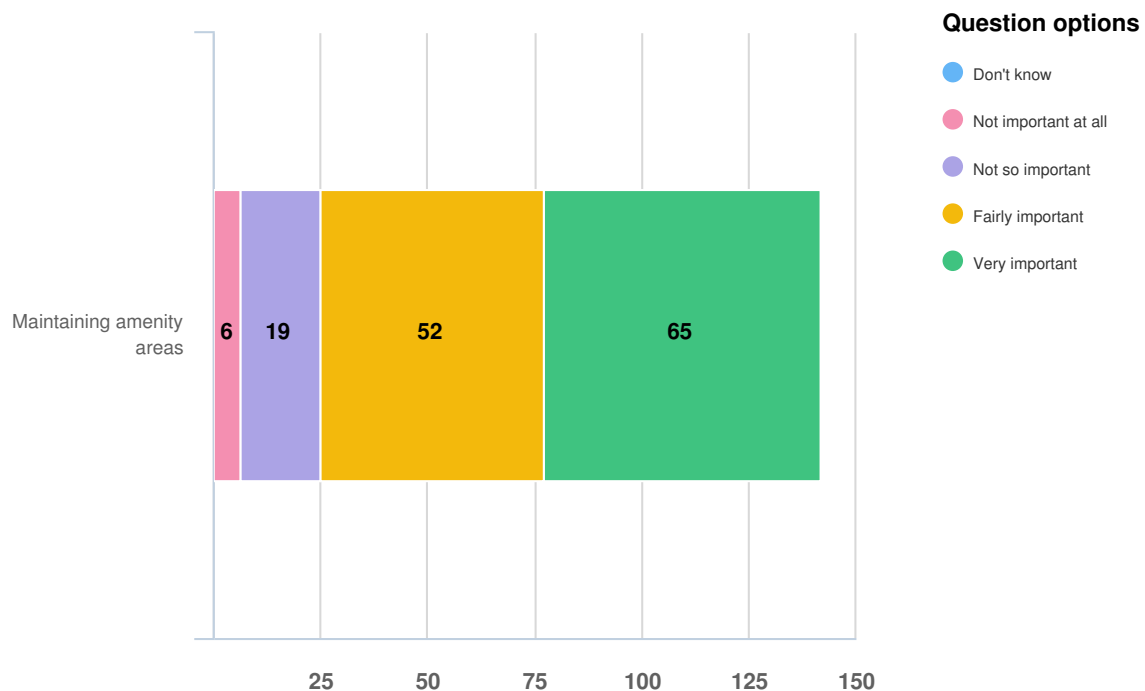
Q8 Revenues and Benefits costs about £48.18 per household per year and includes:

Administering Council Tax and business rates collection





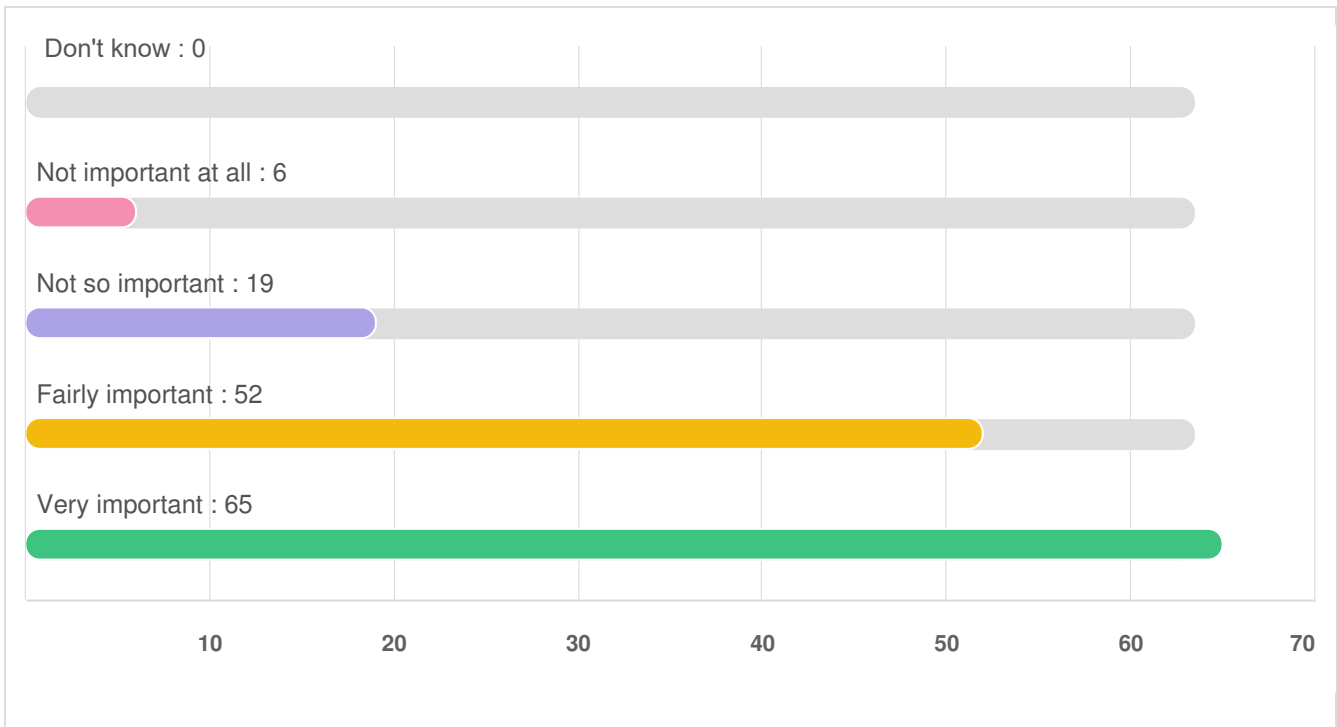
Q9 Maintaining amenity areas, such as grass cutting and general maintenance of various areas of council-owned land costs about £6.04 per household per year.



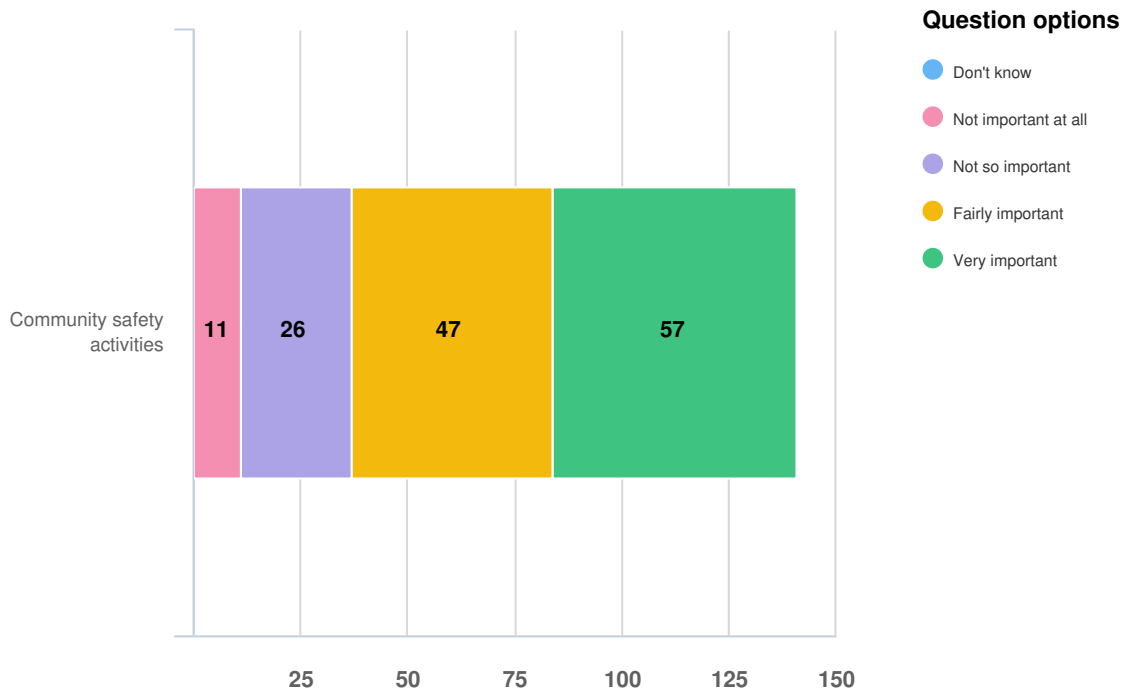
Optional question (142 response(s), 3 skipped)

Q9 Maintaining amenity areas, such as grass cutting and general maintenance of various areas of council-owned land costs about £6.04 per household per year

Maintaining amenity areas



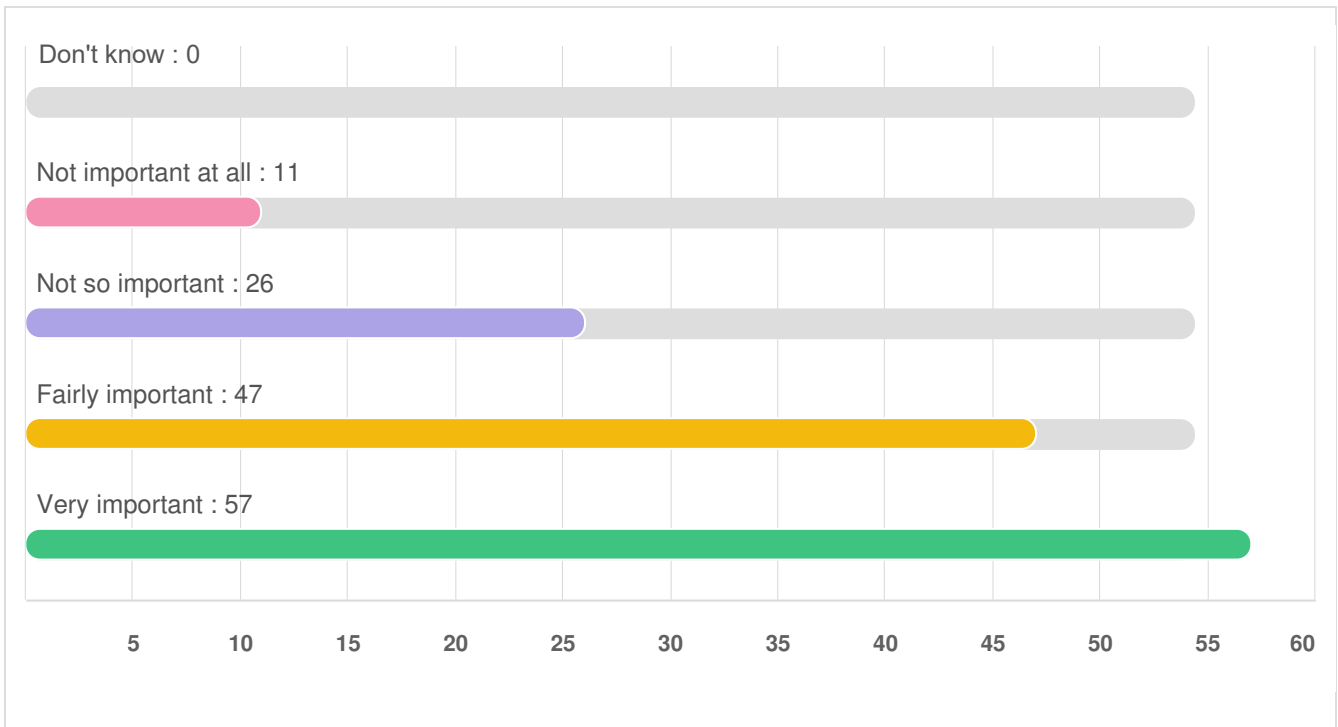
Q10 Community safety activities to support the work of the Community Safety Partnership with the police and others costs about £10.59 per household per year



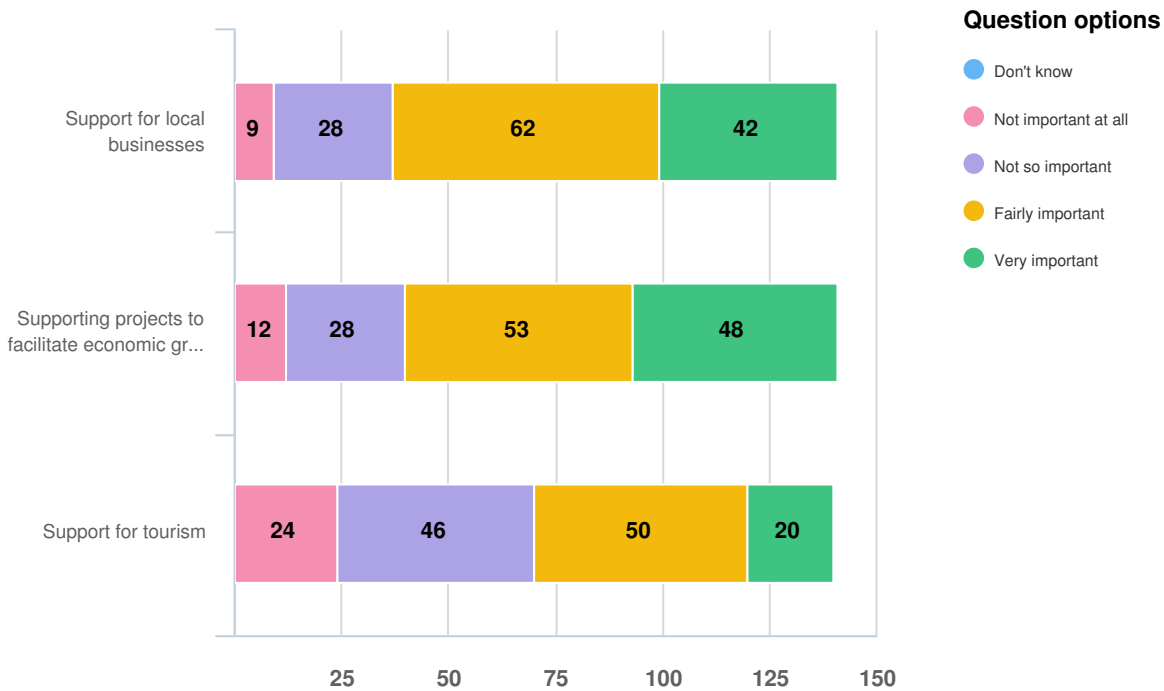
Optional question (141 response(s), 4 skipped)

Q10 Community safety activities to support the work of the Community Safety Partnership with the police and others costs about £10.59 per household per year

Community safety activities



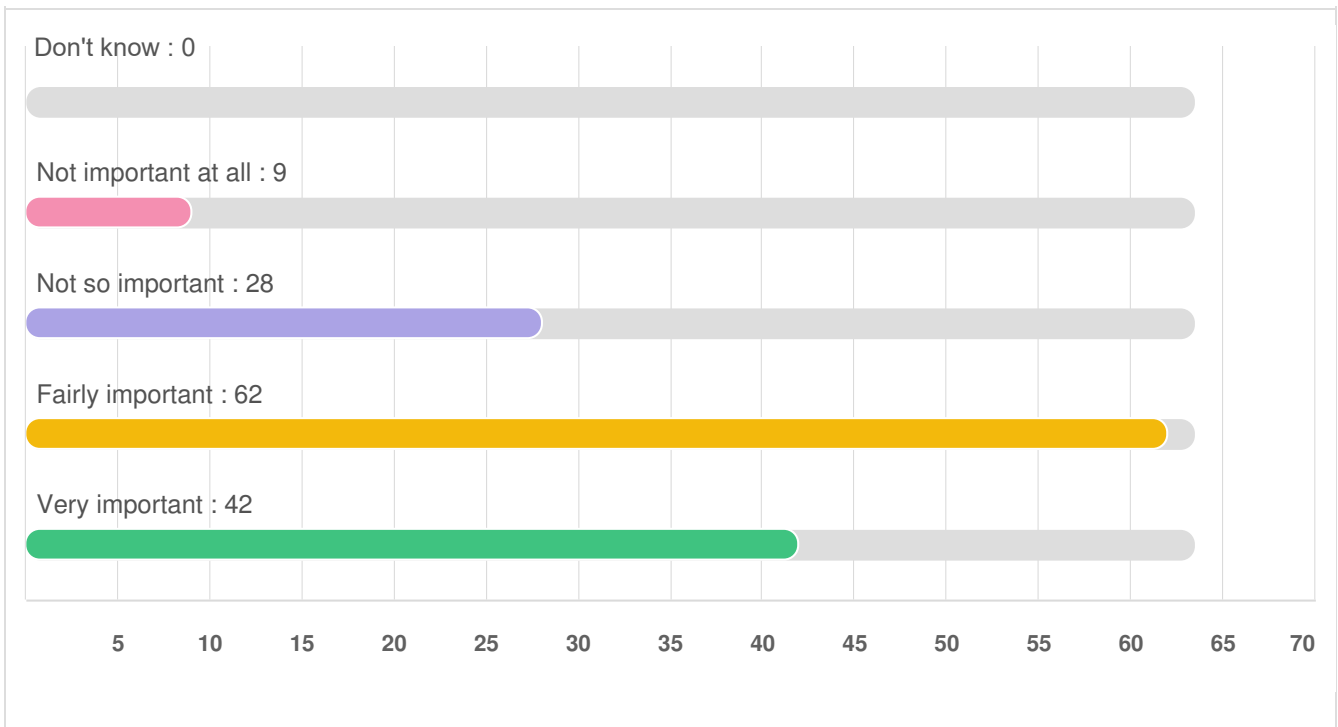
Q11 Economic development costs about £13.78 per household per year and includes:

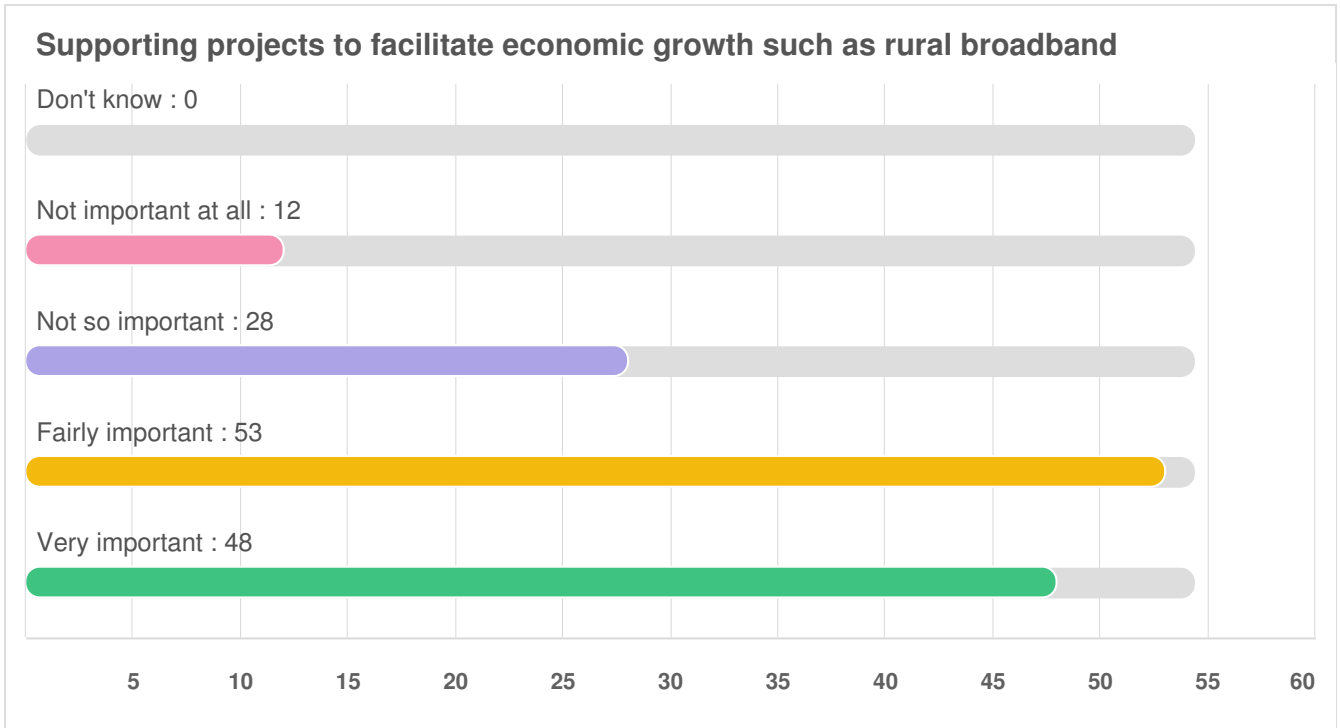


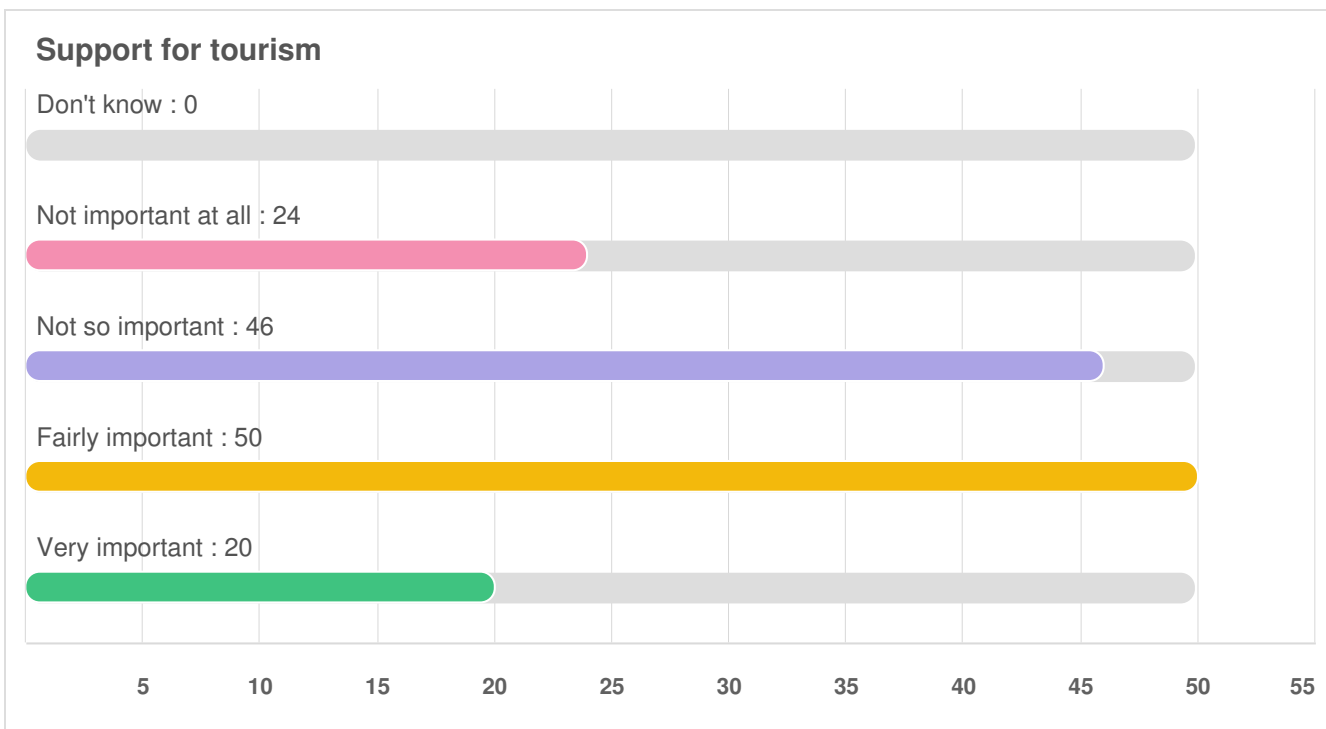
Optional question (142 response(s), 3 skipped)

Q11 Economic development costs about £13.78 per household per year and includes:

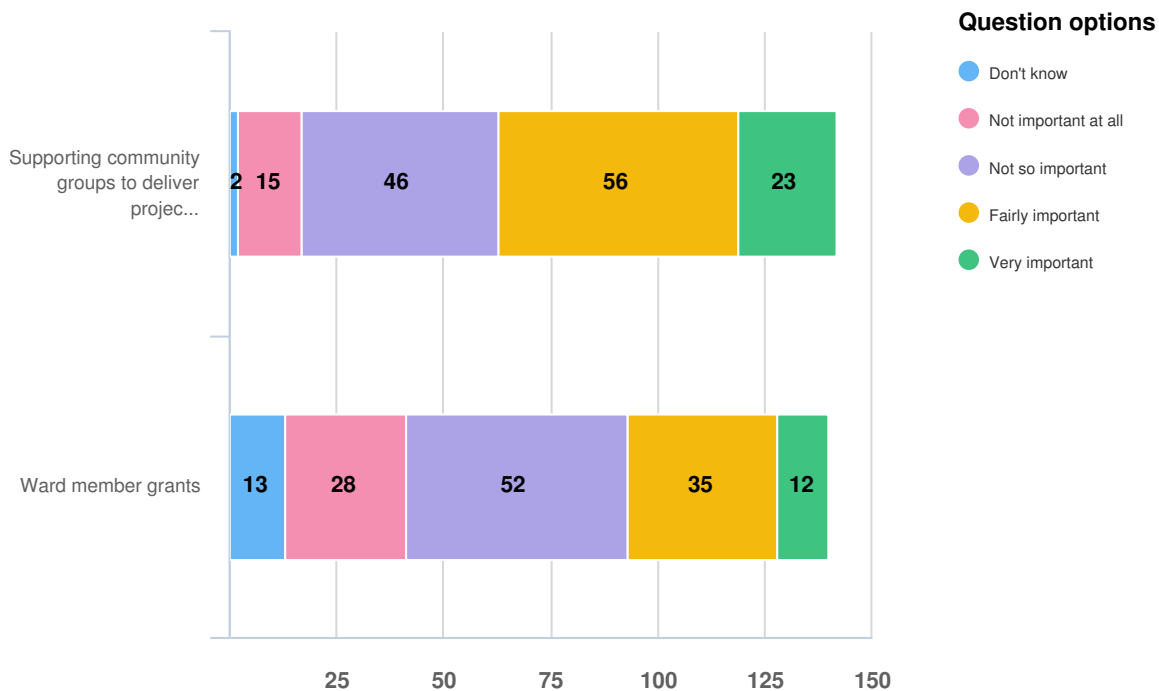
Support for local businesses







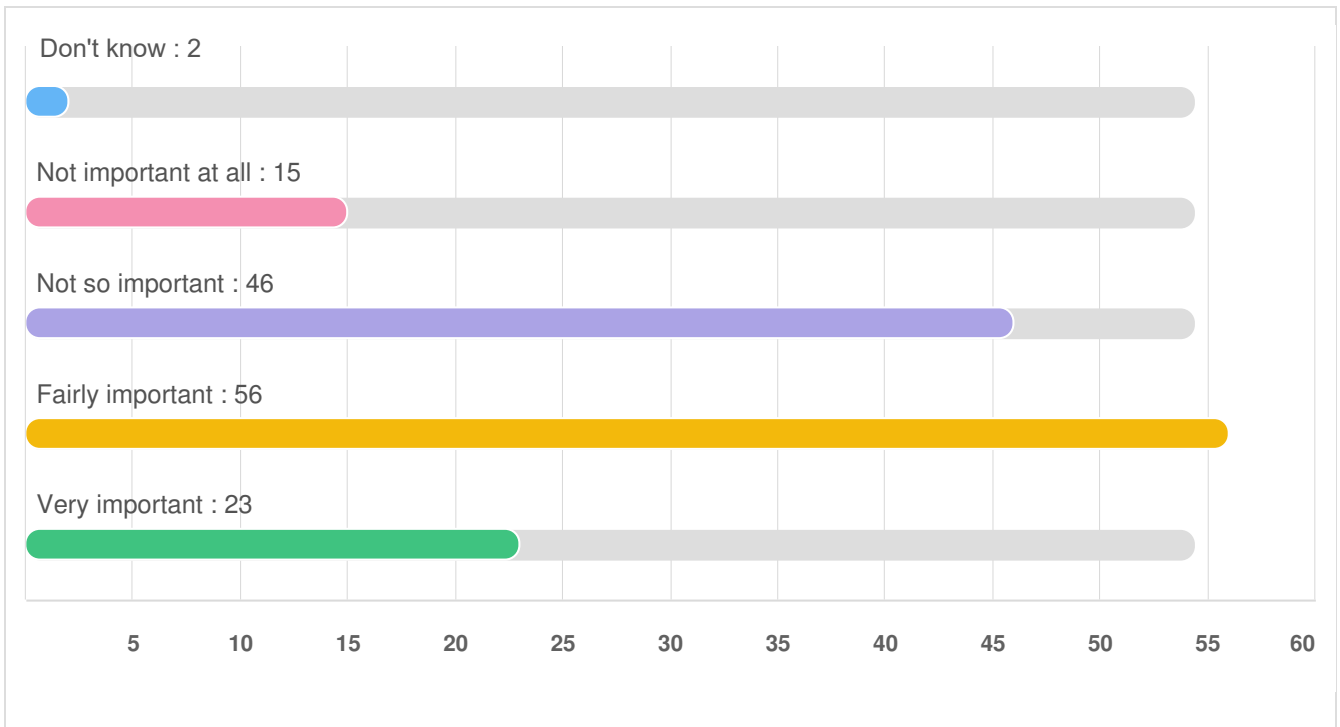
Q12 Partnerships and communities costs about £16.70 per household per year and includes:

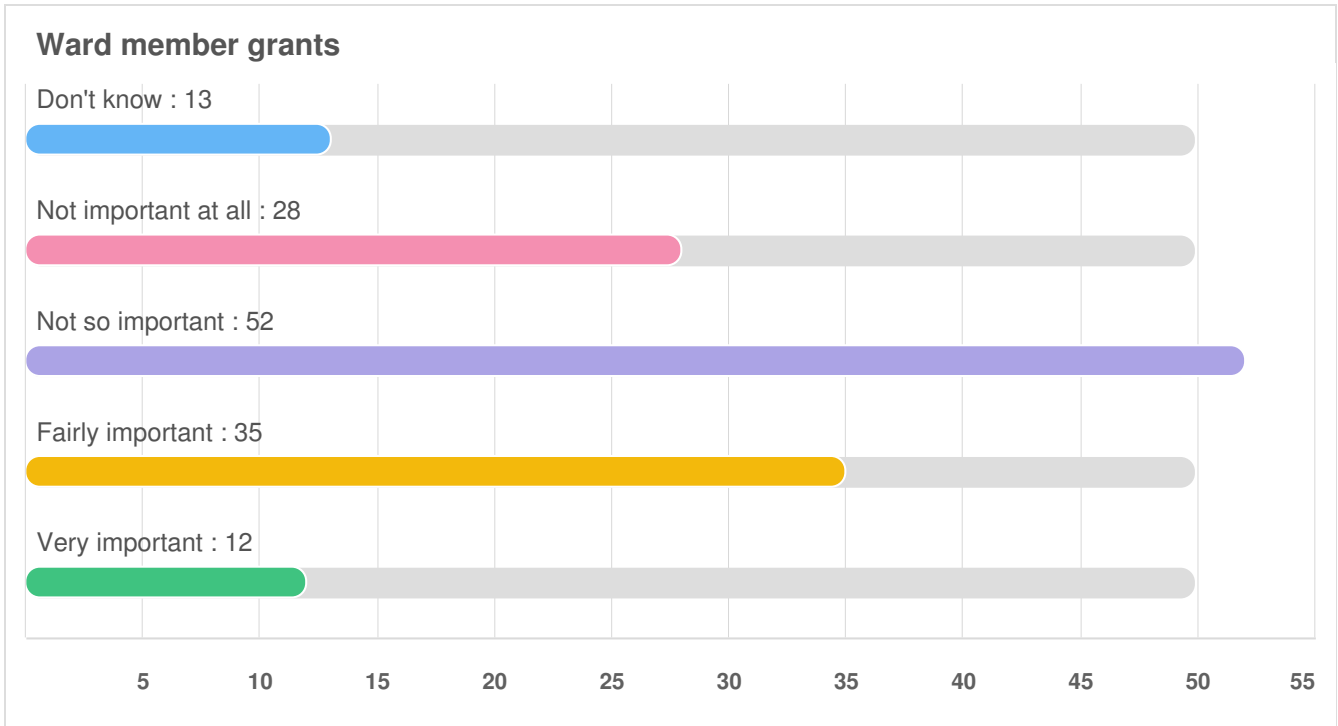


Optional question (142 response(s), 3 skipped)

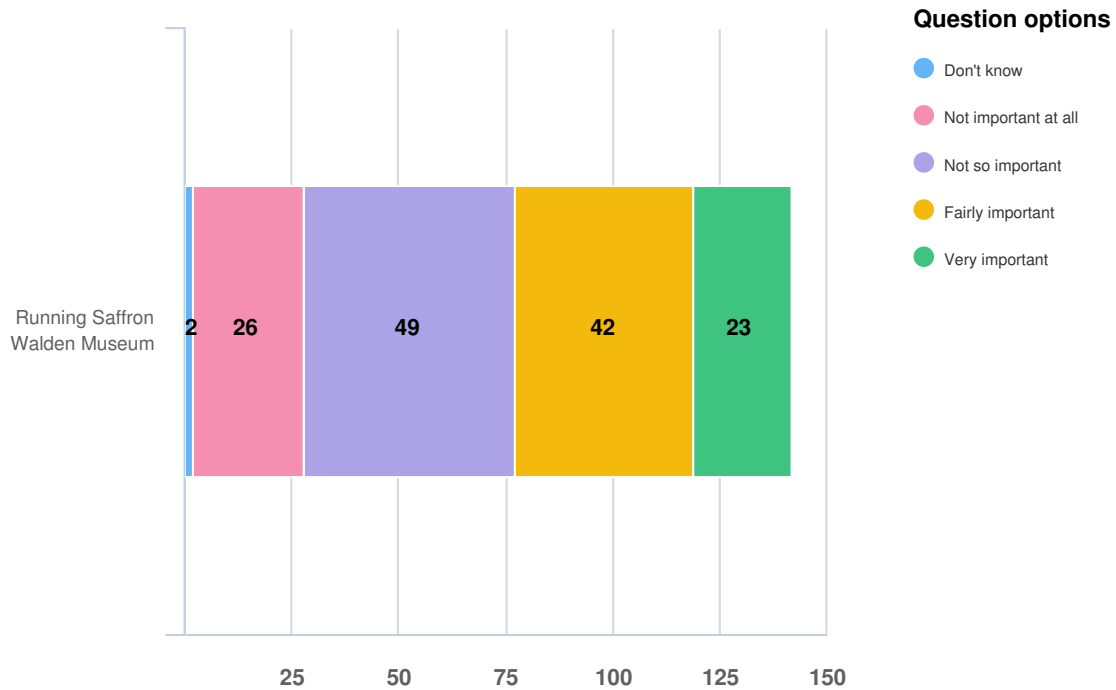
Q12 Partnerships and communities costs about £16.70 per household per year and includes:

Supporting community groups to deliver projects





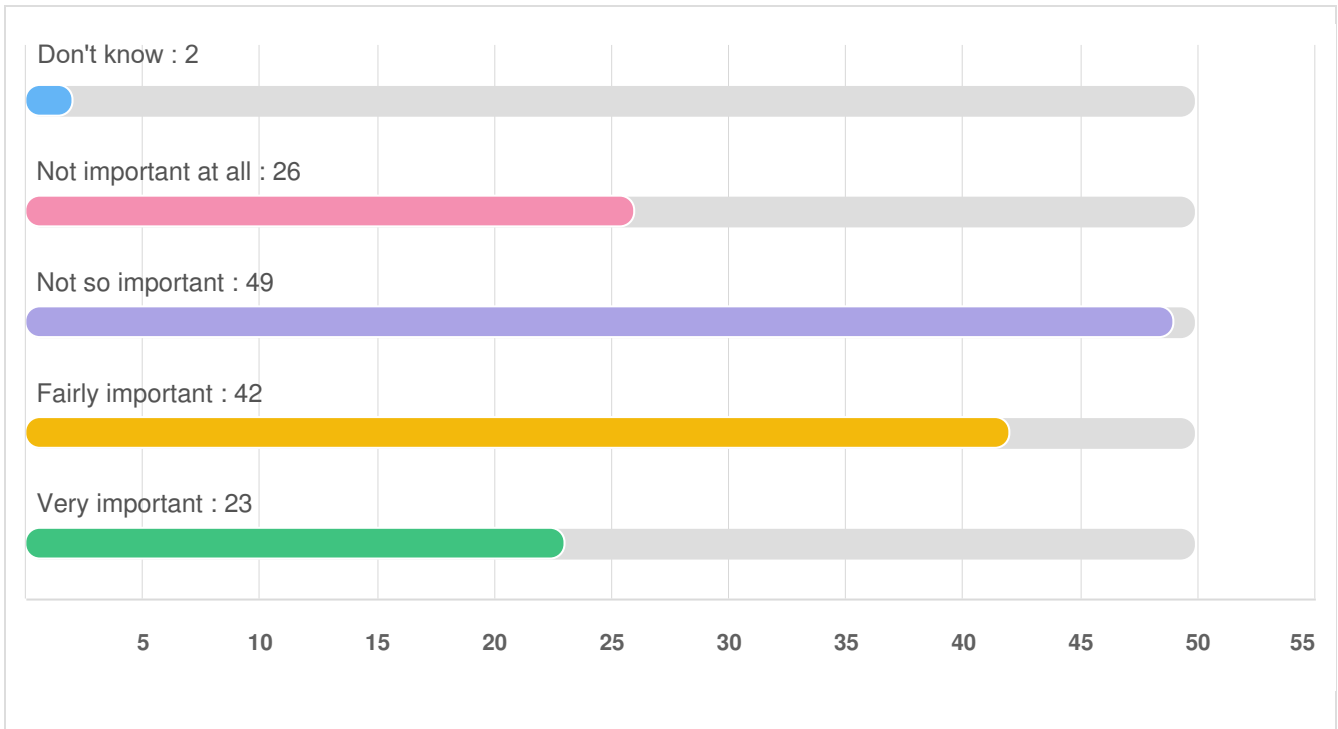
Q13 Running Saffron Walden Museum costs about £9.44 per year



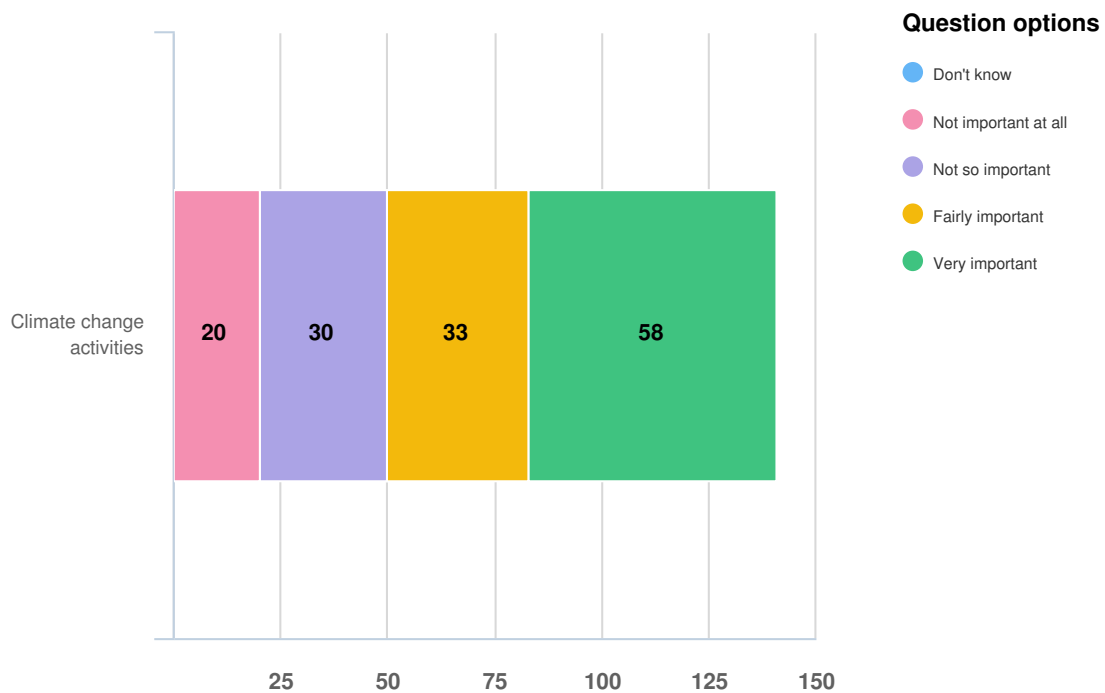
Optional question (142 response(s), 3 skipped)

Q13 Running Saffron Walden Museum costs about £9.44 per year

Running Saffron Walden Museum



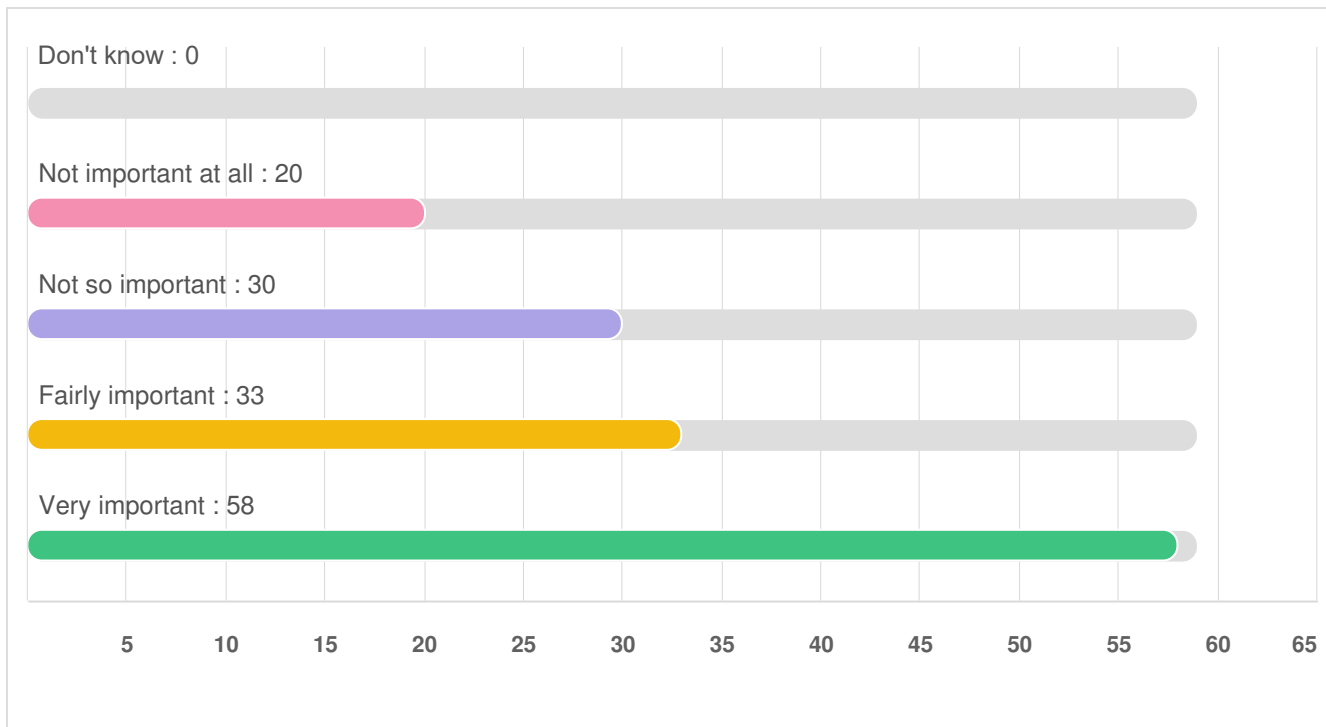
Q14 Climate change activities cost about £9.87 a year



Optional question (141 response(s), 4 skipped)

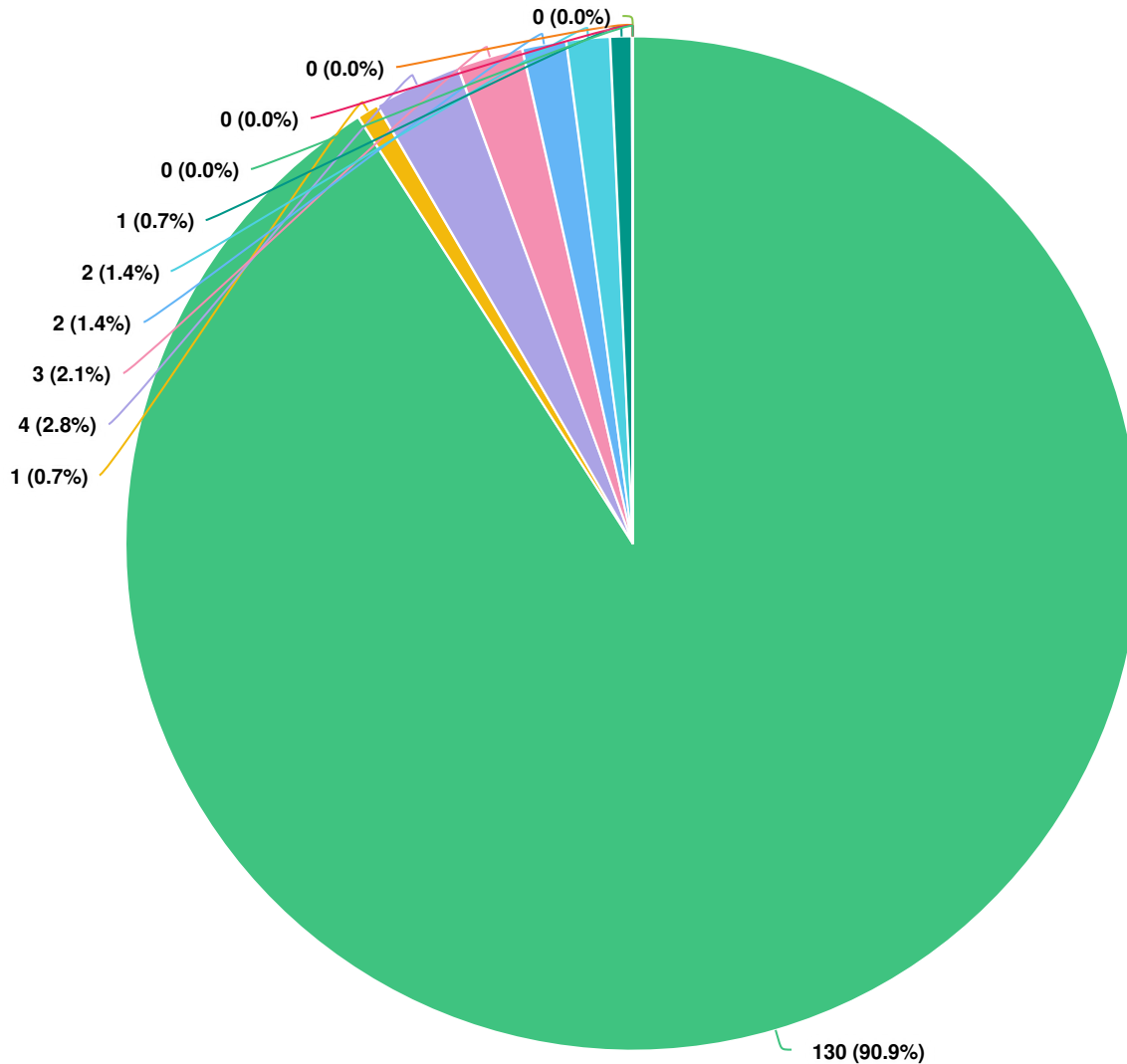
Q14 | Climate change activities cost about £9.87 a year

Climate change activities



Profiling

Q15 I am responding to this survey as:

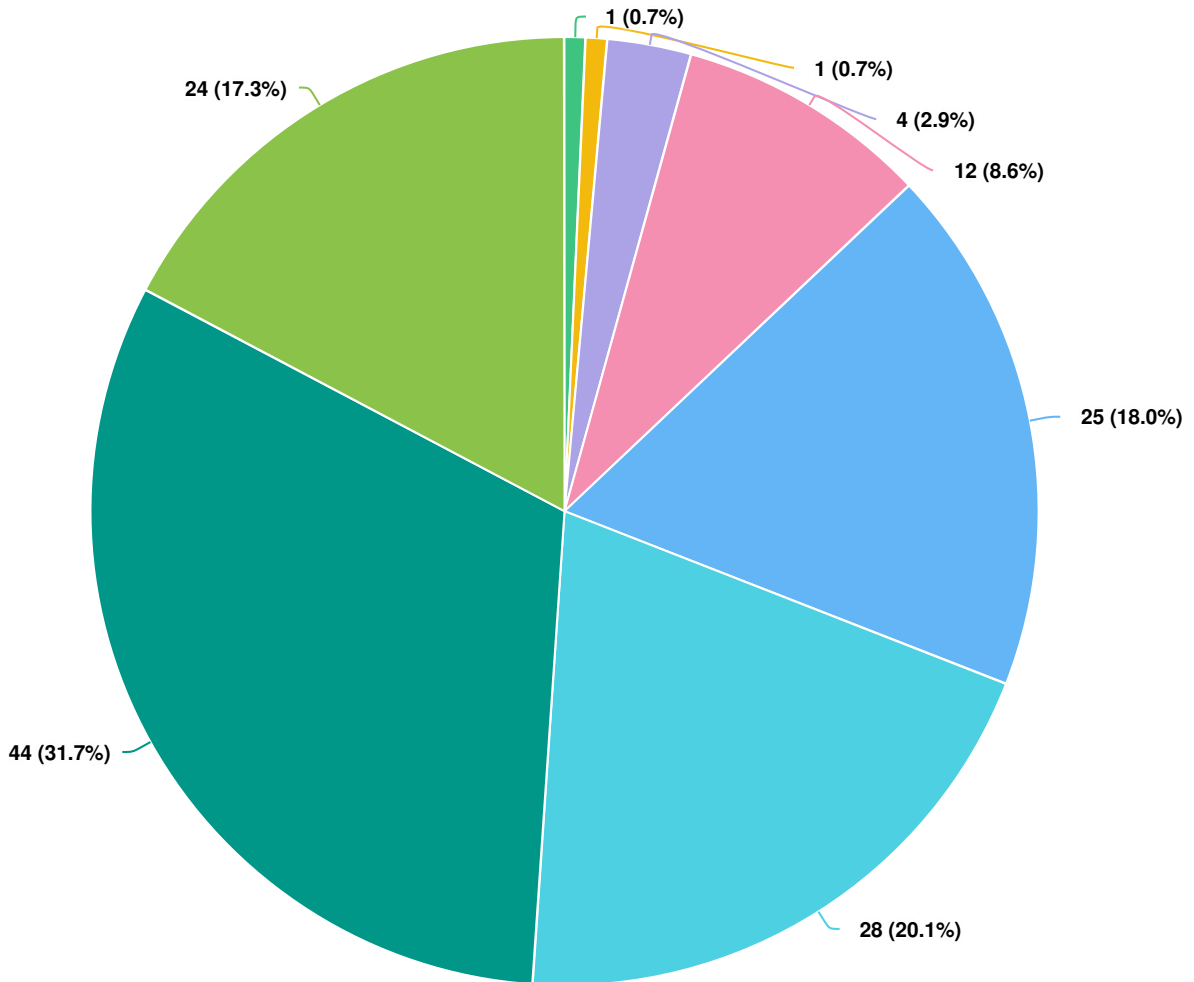


Question options

- Other (please specify)
 ● a local community organisation representative
 ● a local business representative
- an Uttlesford district resident - but not a Council Tax payer
 ● a person who works in the Uttlesford district
- a visitor to the Uttlesford district
 ● an Uttlesford District Council employee
 ● an Uttlesford District Council member
- a local town or parish councillor
 ● a neighbouring local authority or partner organisation representative
- an Uttlesford district resident - Council Tax payer

Optional question (143 response(s), 2 skipped)

Q16 Which age category do you belong to?

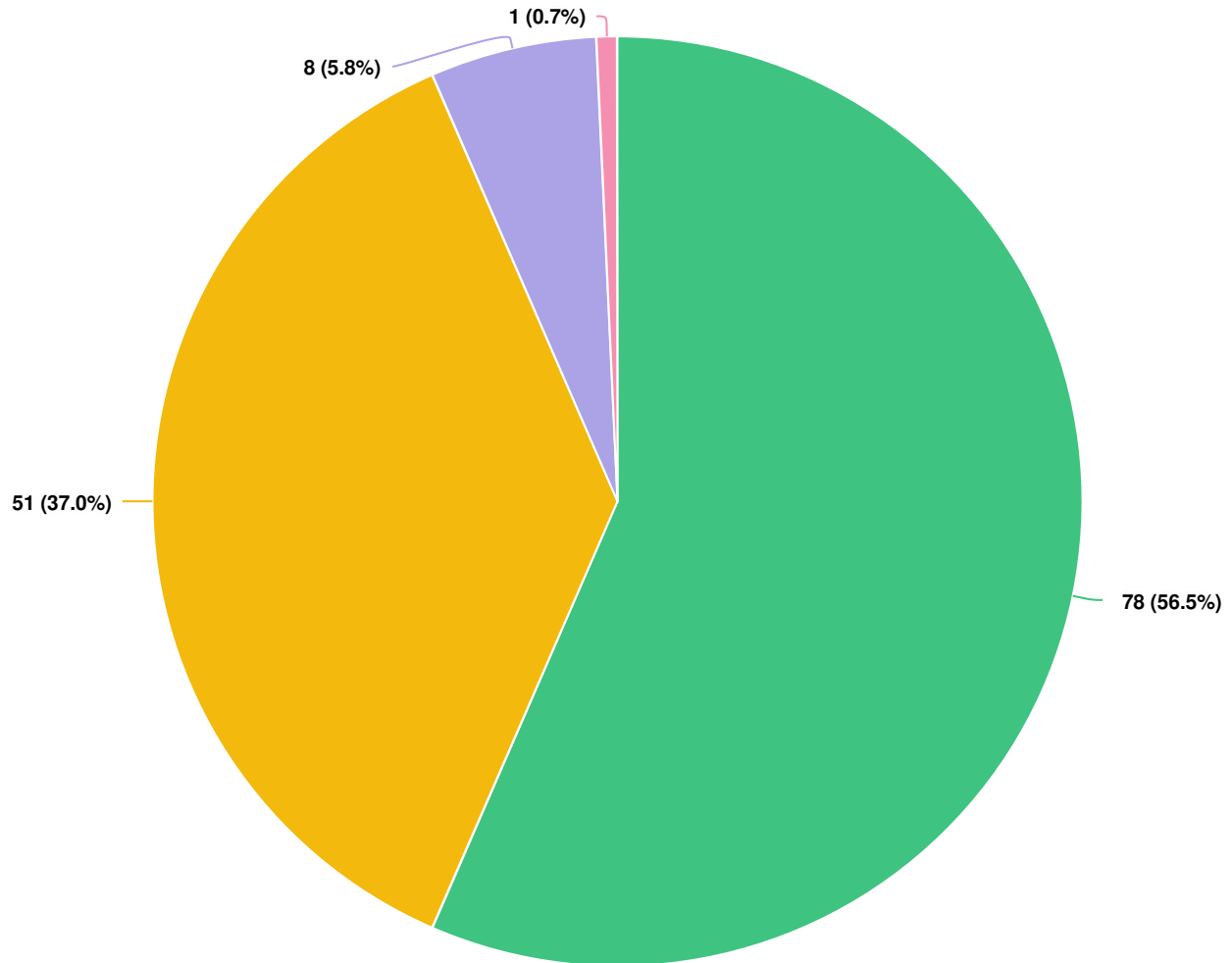


Question options

- 75+
- 65-74
- 55-64
- 45-54
- 35-44
- 25-34
- 20-24
- 16-19

Optional question (139 response(s), 6 skipped)

Q17 What is your gender?

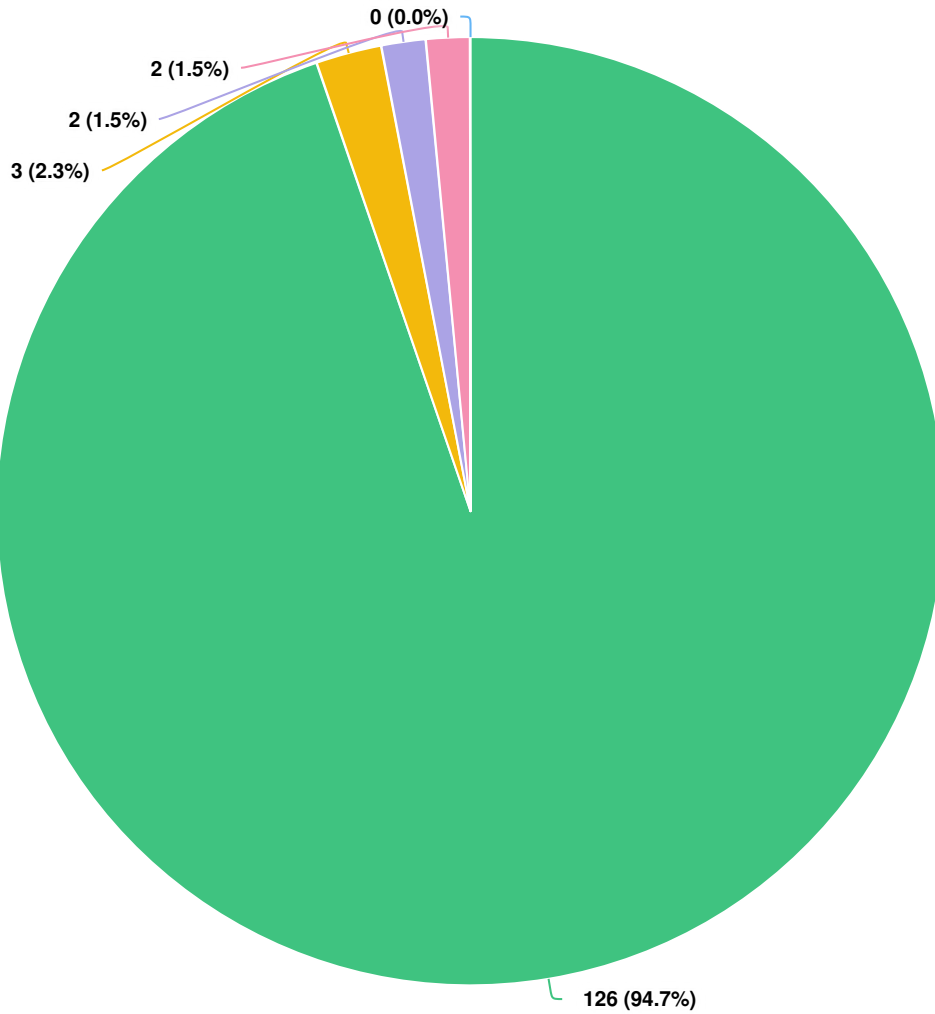


Question options

- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to say
- Female
- Male

Optional question (138 response(s), 7 skipped)

Q18 What is your ethnicity?

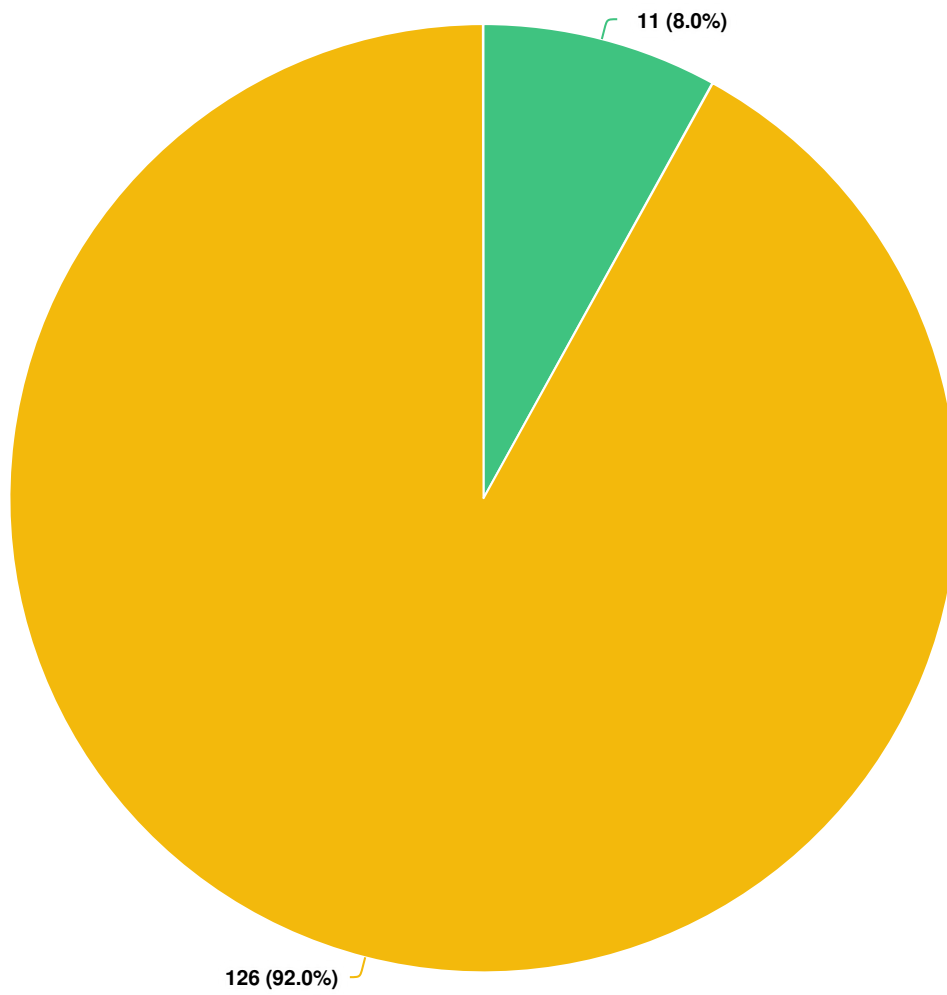


Question options

- Asian or Asian British
- Other (please specify)
- Mixed heritage
- Black or Black British
- White

Optional question (133 response(s), 12 skipped)

Q19 Do you consider yourself to have a disability?



Question options

- No
- Yes

Optional question (137 response(s), 8 skipped)

Additional comments received

We received 2 additional comments relating to the consultation.

Stansted Parish Council

I am writing in response to your request for input from Town and Parish Councils into the

UDC Budget for 2023-24. Please find below comments from Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council:

- 1 We believe that support for lower-tier authorities to promote the needs of their own communities should focus on devolved funding. It is noted that the Communities and Partnerships proposed expenditure for joint working and non-statutory responsibilities, ie voluntary orgs, community safety, youth work support, is estimated at 5% of expenditure. We believe this should be increased in line with the above principles outlined.
- 2 If you consider the devolution of services, such as Day Centres, there is an automatic reduction in staffing levels as already experienced. With home-working etc and any further staff reviews, what impact will this have on administrative costs?
- 3 Economic Development is linked to housing at a proposed expenditure of 10% but for the locality of Stansted, with very few on-street businesses in comparison to Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow, is this a fair allocation?
- 4 Under Capital Financing, interest on borrowings has risen. Previously, the borrowing triggered 1% interest. What impact will the 4% rise incur on savings that also need to be made elsewhere in the budget over the next 4 years? How does this compare with the income on the Council's investments? Is the Council now considering the sale of any assets to bridge the gap?
- 5 Environmental Services - we believe that Climate Change must become a high priority.

Ruth Clifford

Parish Clerk

Member of the public

[Comment in relation to Corporate Plan priority 'Active place-maker for our towns and villages'].

We have too many new houses & developments.

These points should have separate questions. You cannot answer them all with the same answer.

