

Council spending - have your say

Survey response report

25 September 2023 - 5 November 2023

Uttlesford District Council budget 2024/25



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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 2024 to March 2025.

Background

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

For the current financial year 2023/24 the council's total funding requirement is budgeted at £19,251,000. This is the net cost after taking into account fees for services such as Planning, Licensing, and car park income.

Council Tax income for the year is forecast to be £6,694,000, representing 35% of the net cost of services. The remaining cost is funding through a mixture of business rates, government grants, commercial investments and reserves set aside in previous years.

Increasing cost pressures, and real-terms reductions in government funding, have significantly increased the financial pressures on the council in recent years. This means that we need to ensure we remain efficient while continuing to provide the same high quality services residents expect.

The results of this consultation will help us to decide on the priorities for the budget for April 2024 to March 2025.

Consultation

The questions and format of the consultation followed a very similar format to that we used in 2022 (to inform the budget set for the year 2023-24).

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 23 September to 5 November 2023.

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 29 September.

Promotion of the consultation was included in the *District News*, *Staff News* and *Parish Briefing* e-newsletters which were sent out to over 10,000 subscribers.

Social media promotion went on throughout the consultation period through:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram and LinkedIn

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 other publicity).

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Verified responses:
147

Summary

Online survey responses: 143

Paper survey responses: 2

Additional comments received: 2

Headline responses

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

Q2 Uttlesford District Council provides value for money: Tend to agree by 52% of respondents

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 2024-25: Action to develop cleaner neighbourhoods

Q4 Housing and homelessness

Service priority 2024-25: Temporary accommodation

Q5 Planning and Building Control

Service priority 2024-25: Planning Policy including the new Local Plan

Q6 Refuse and recycling

Service priority 2024-25: Refuse and recycling collections rated as 'very important' by 84% of respondents

Q7 Street cleansing

Service priority 2024-25: Street cleansing rated as 'very important' by 46% and 'fairly important' by 43% of respondents

Q8 Revenues and Benefits

Service priority 2024-25: Administering Council Tax and business rates

Q9 Maintaining amenity areas

Service priority 2024-25: Maintaining amenities rated as 'very important' by 41% and 'fairly important' by 40% of respondents

Q10 Community safety activities

Service priority 2024-25: Community safety rated as 'very important' by 34% and 'fairly important' by 39% of respondents

Q11 Economic development

Service priority 2024-25: Support for local businesses

Q12 Partnerships and communities

Service priority 2024-25: Supporting community groups to deliver projects

Q13 Running Saffron Walden Museum

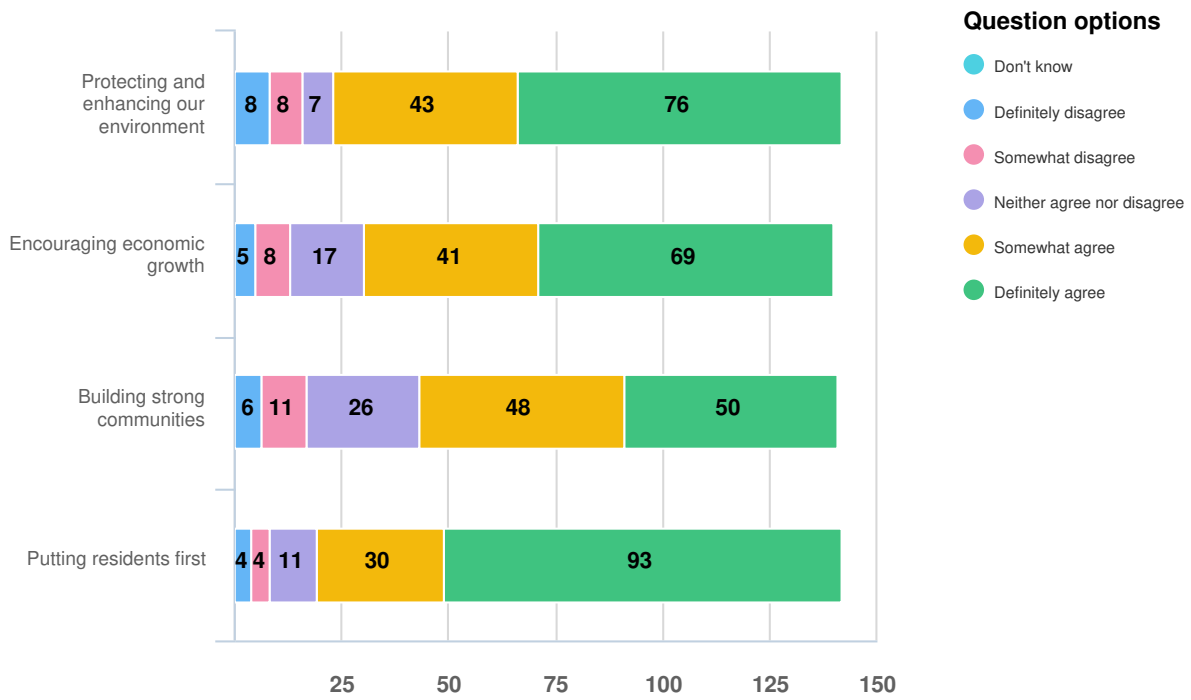
Service priority 2024-25: The museum is rated as 'very important' by 16% and 'fairly important' by 35% of respondents

Q14 Climate change activities

Service priority 2024-25: Climate change activities are rated as 'very important' by 29% but 'not so important' by 28% of respondents

SURVEY RESULTS

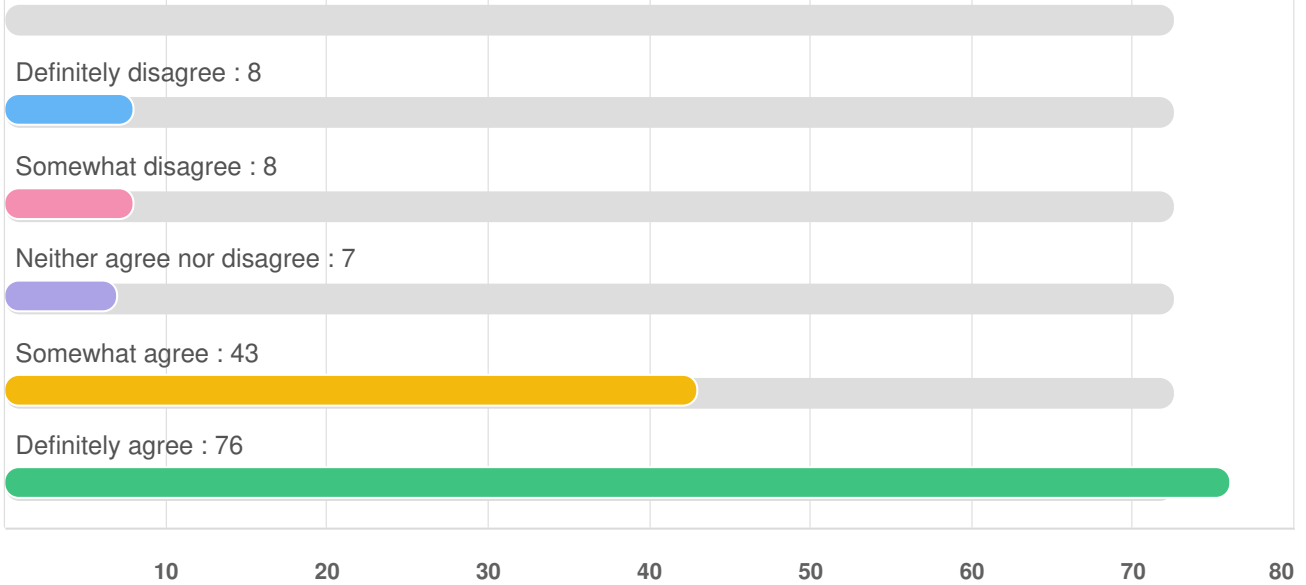
Q1 Are these priorities the right ones for 2024/25?

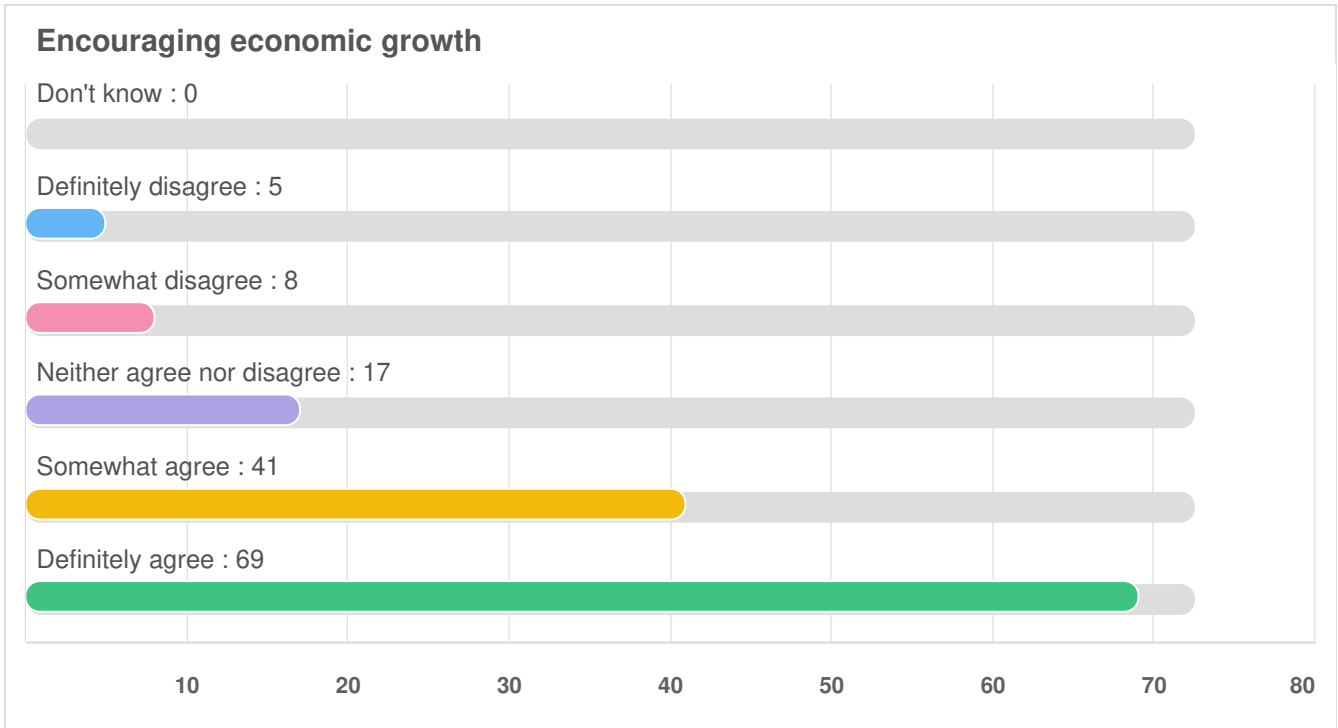


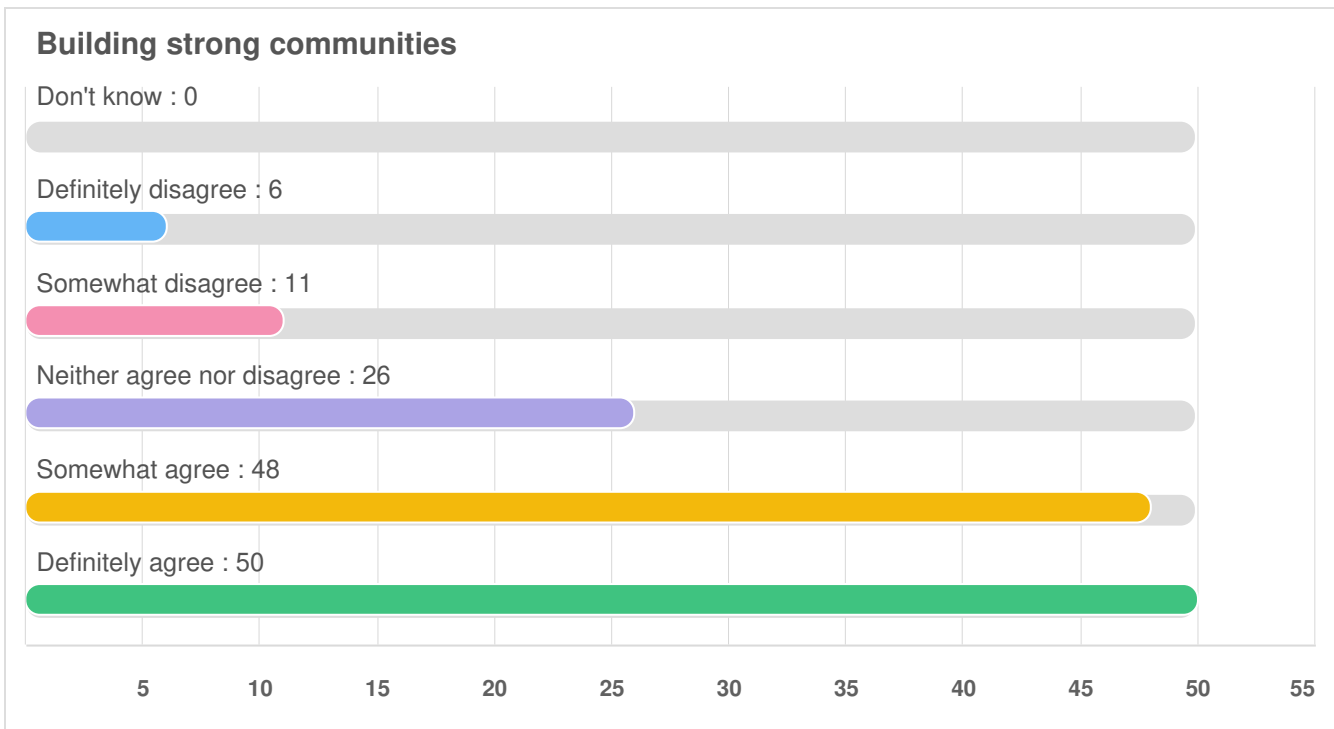
Optional question (142 response(s), 3 skipped)

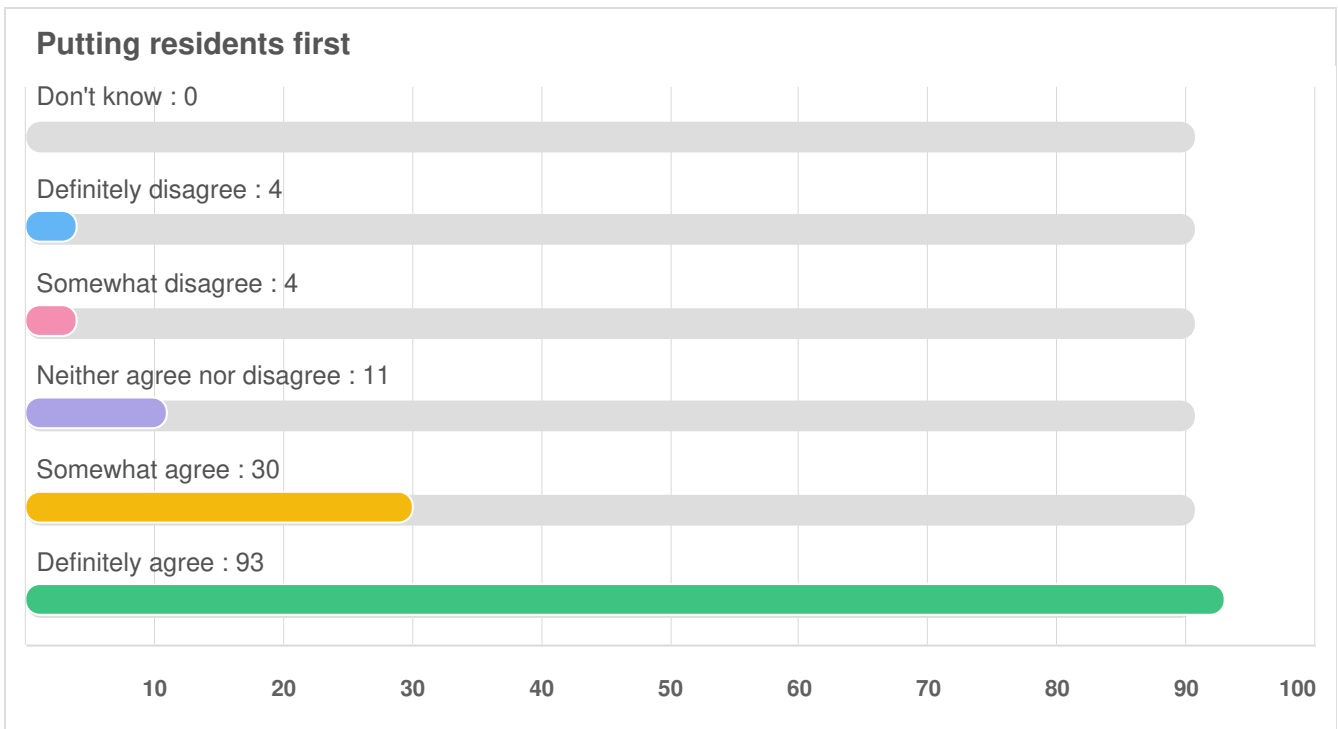
Q1 | Are these priorities the right ones for 2024/25?

Protectng and enhancing our environment

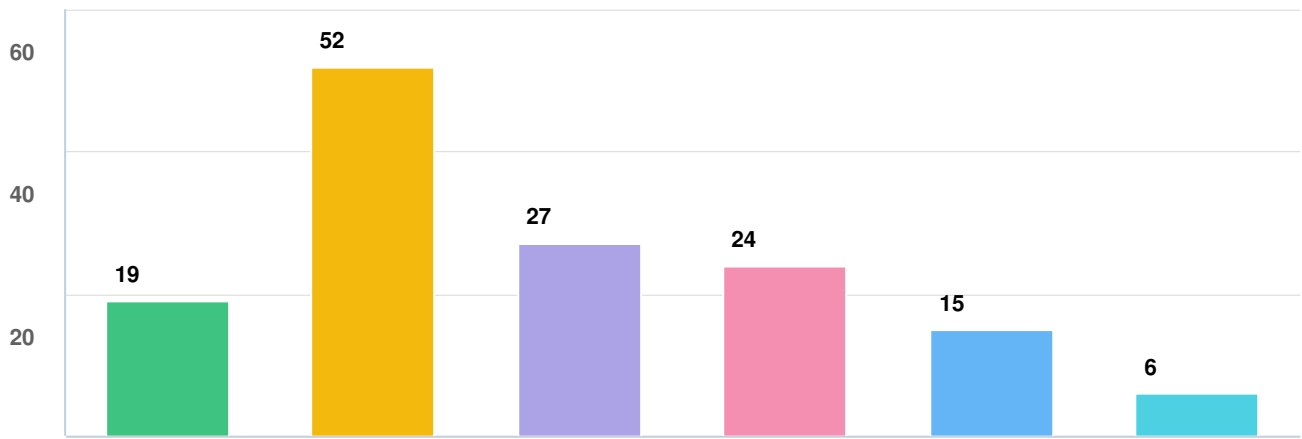








Q2 Bearing in mind Uttlesford householders only pay £171.61 per year for services provided by the council (based on average Band D Council Tax 2023/24), to what extent do you agree or disagree that Uttlesford District Council provides value for money?

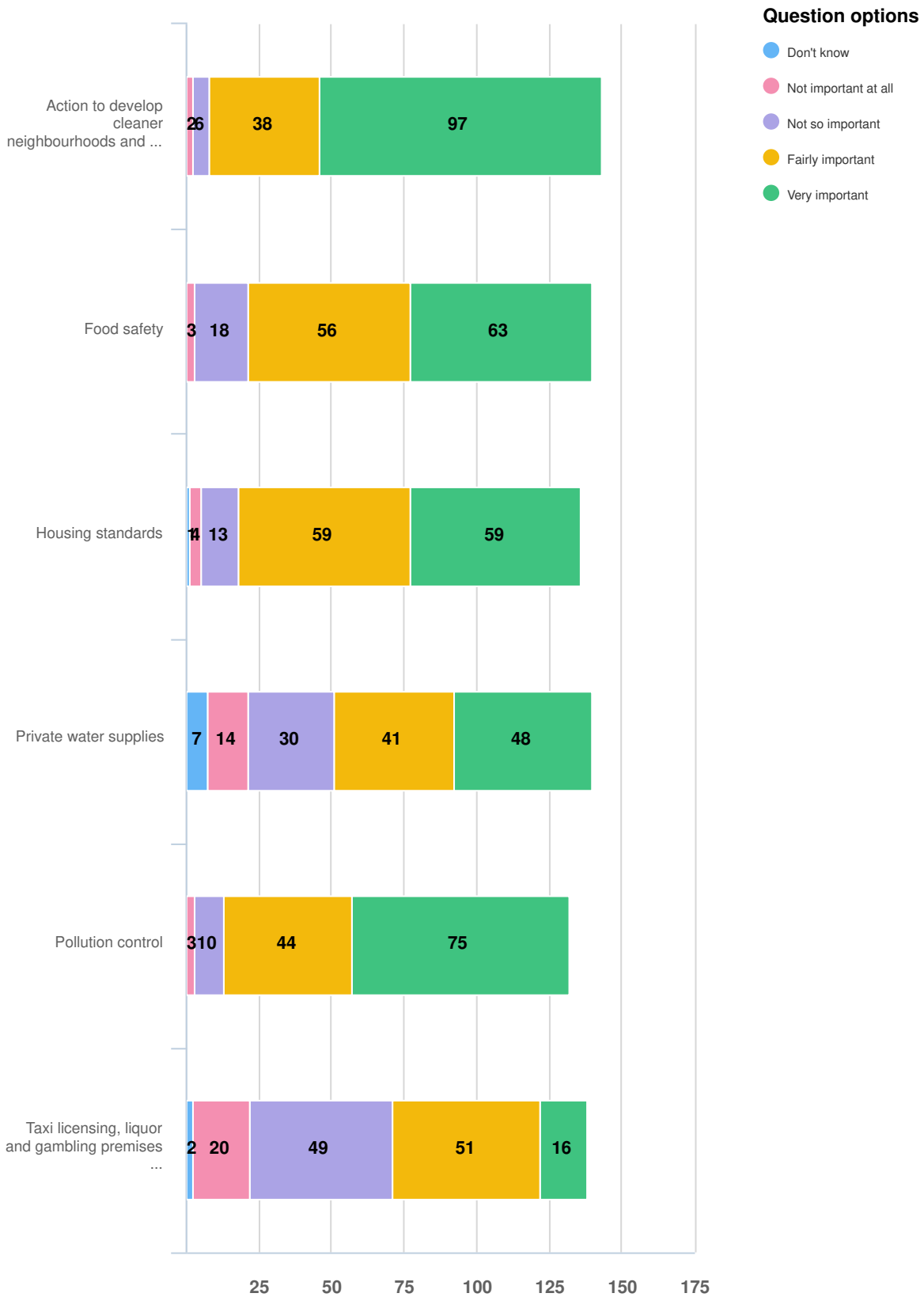


Question options

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

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

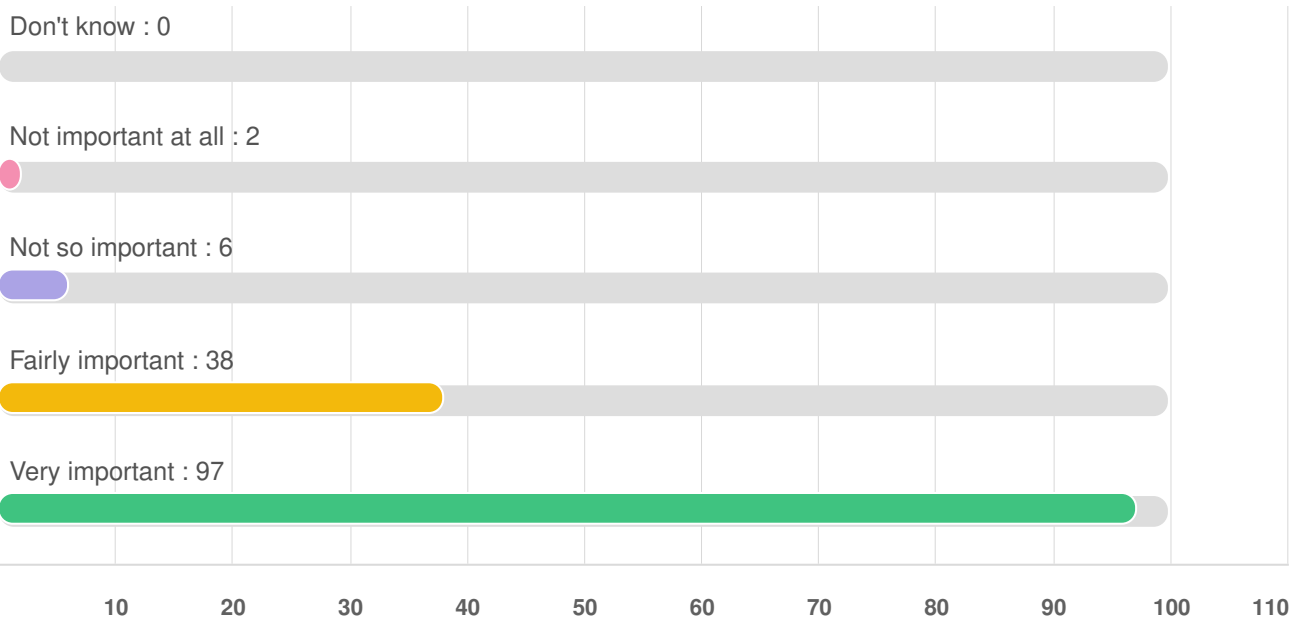
Q3 Environmental Health and Licensing costs about £32.49 per household per year

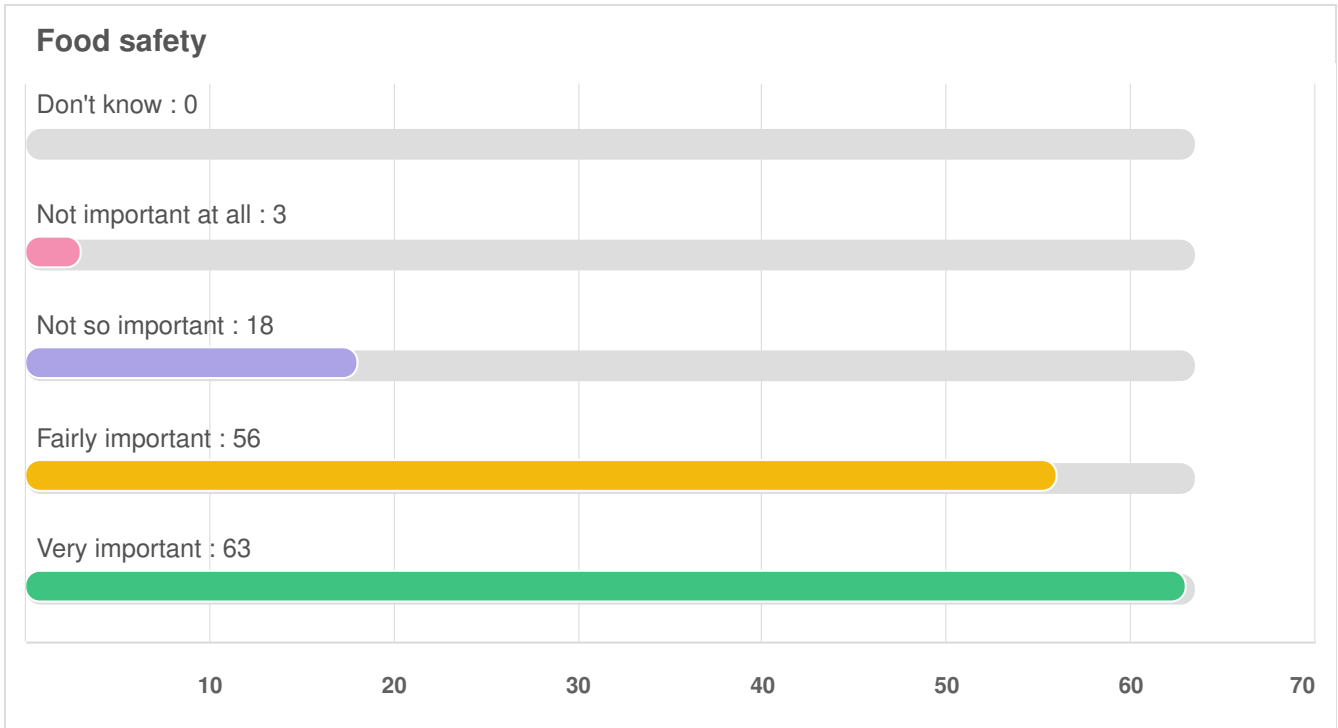


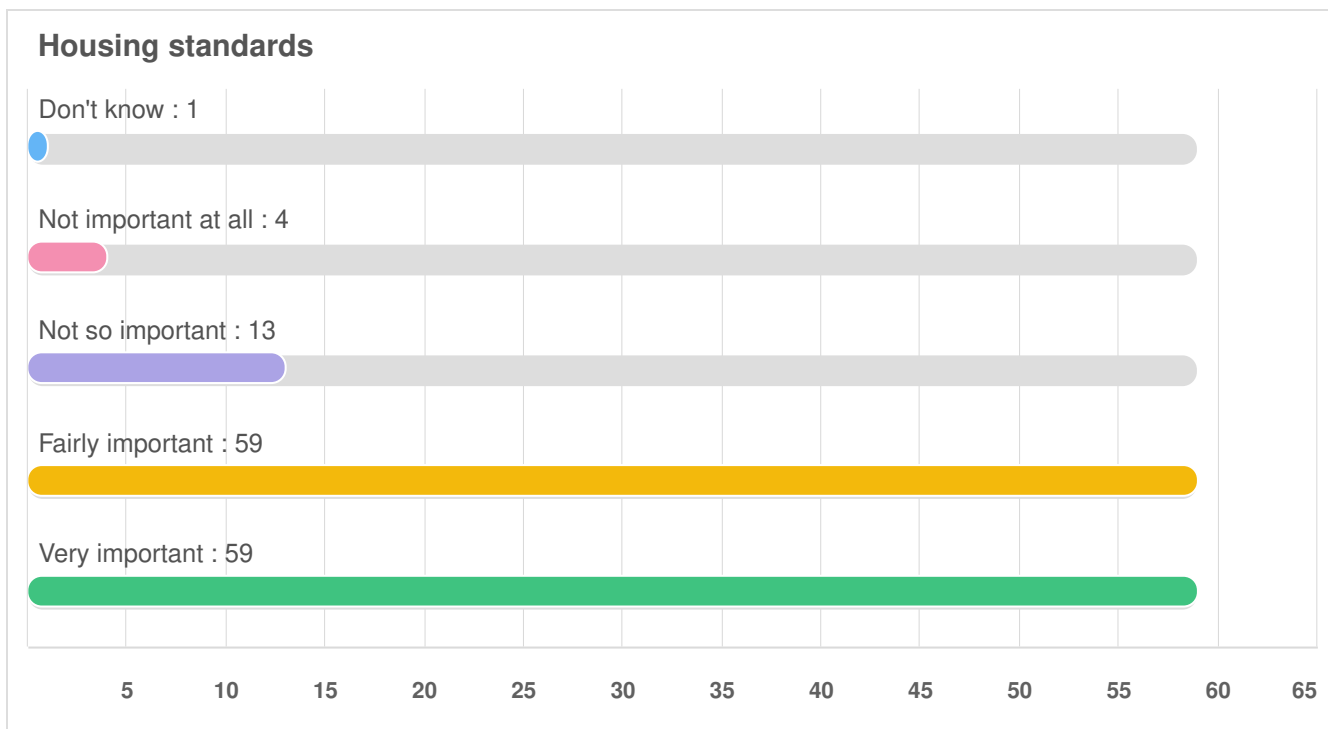
Optional question (142 response(s), 3 skipped)

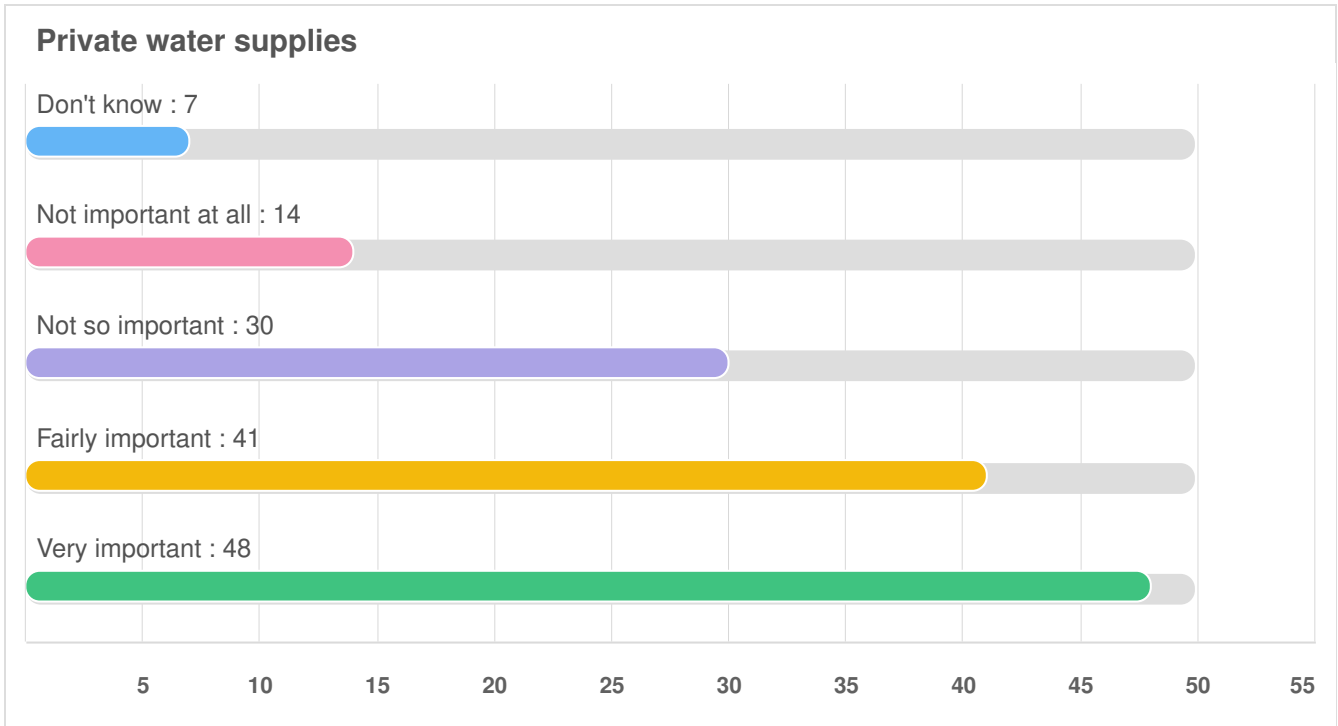
Q3 | Environmental Health and Licensing costs about £32.49 per household per year and includes:

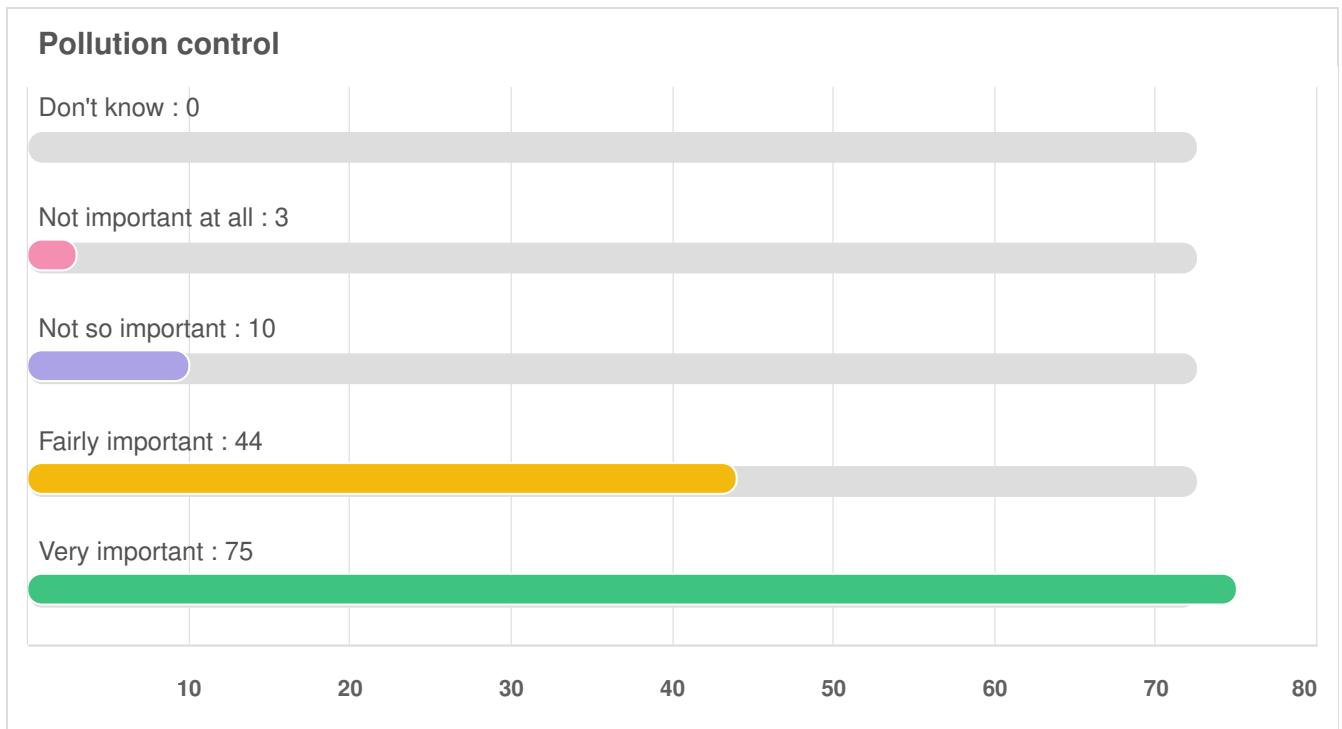
Action to develop cleaner neighbourhoods and to tackle environmental crime

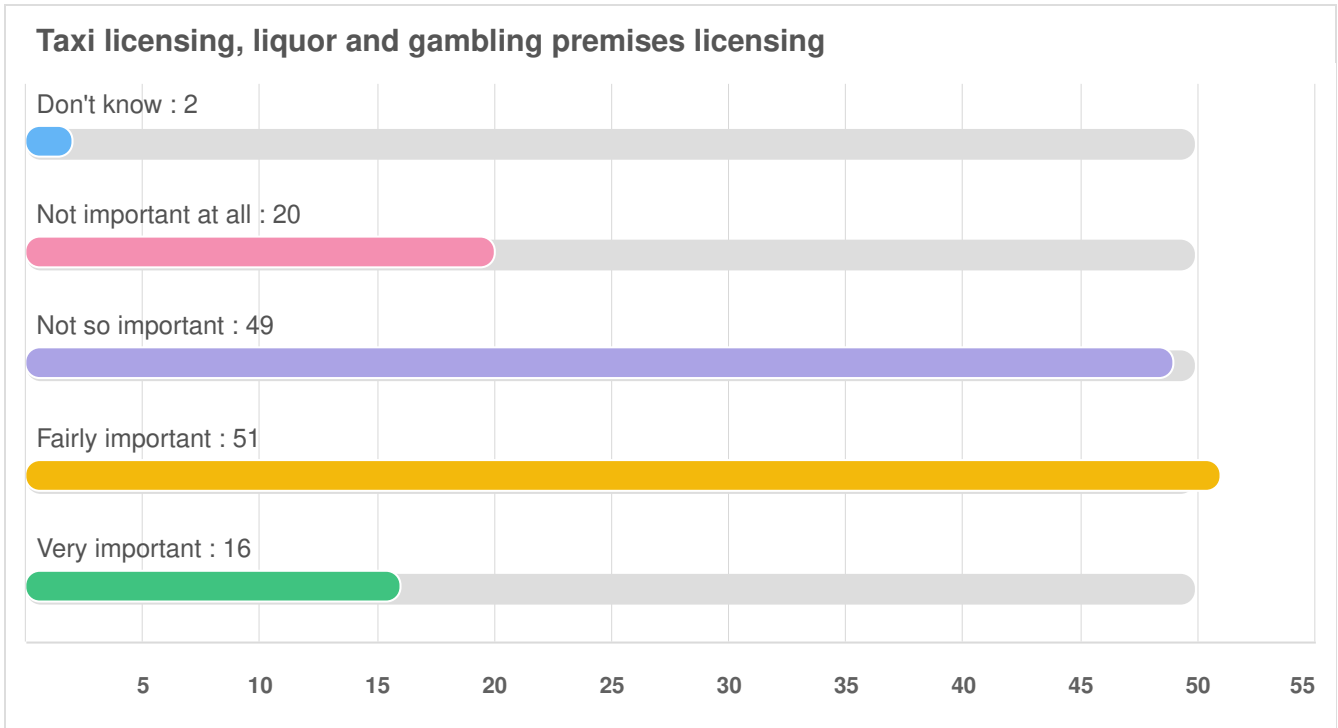




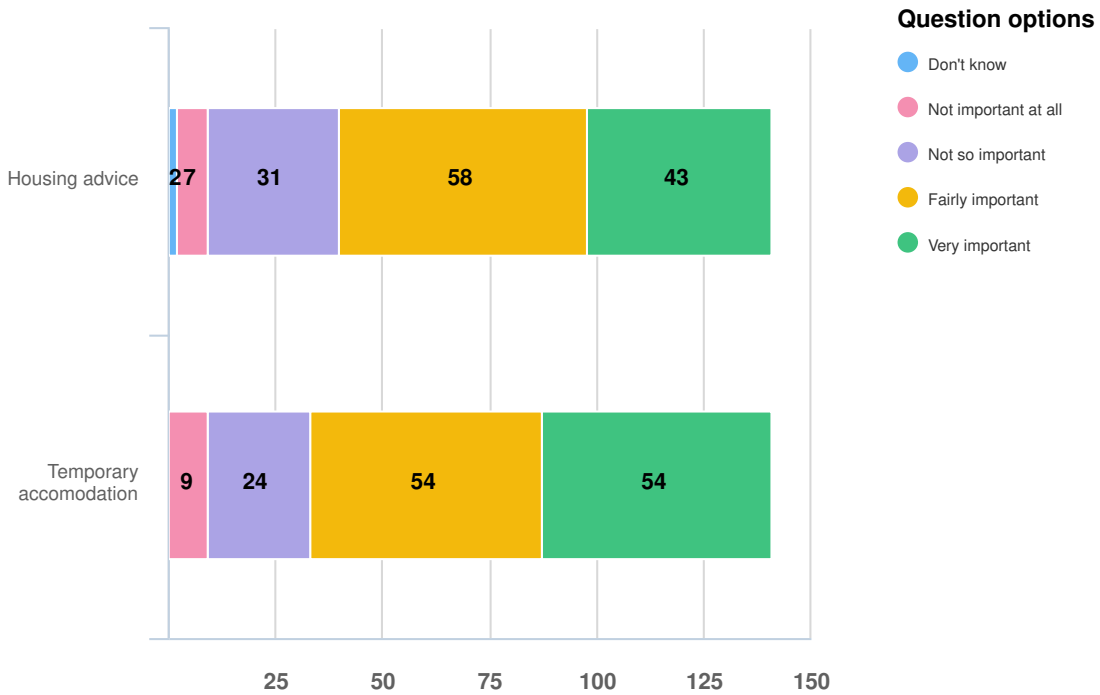








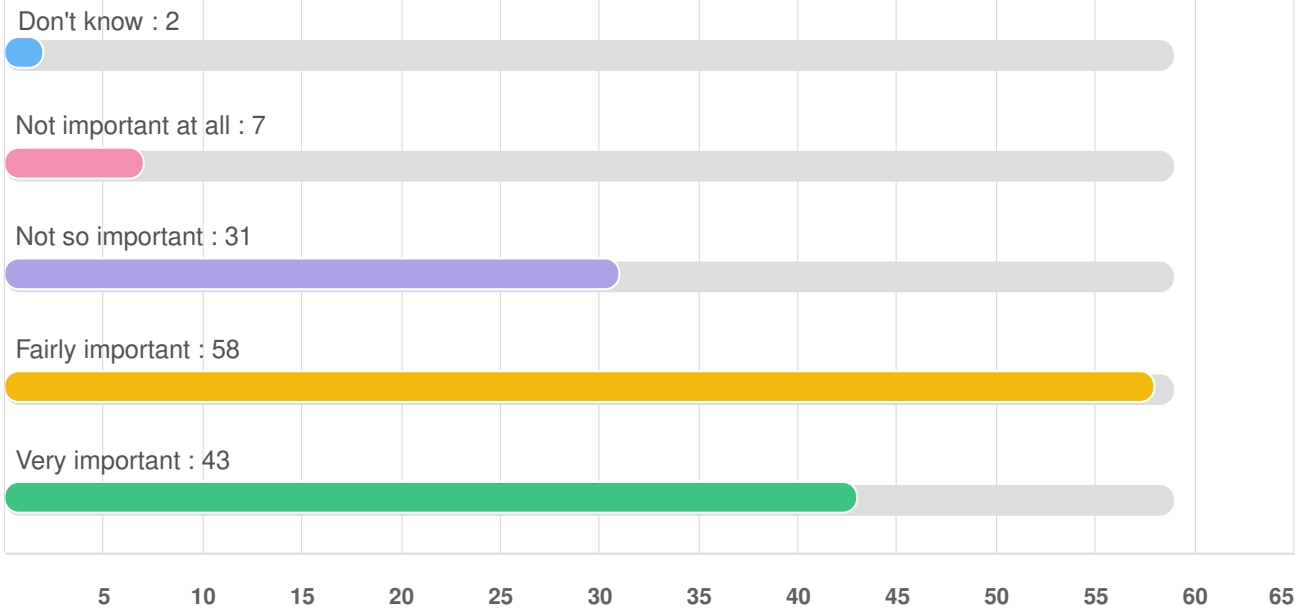
Q4 Housing and Homelessness costs about £14.28 per household per year

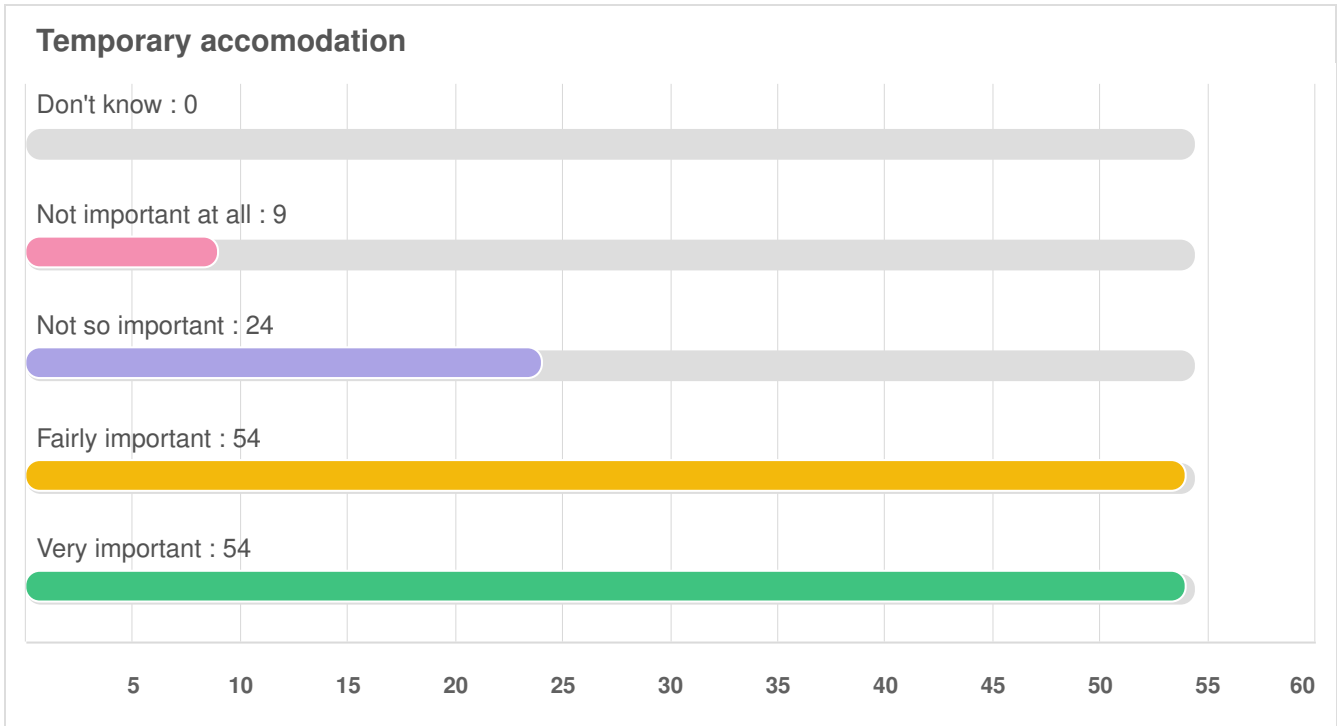


Optional question (140 response(s), 5 skipped)

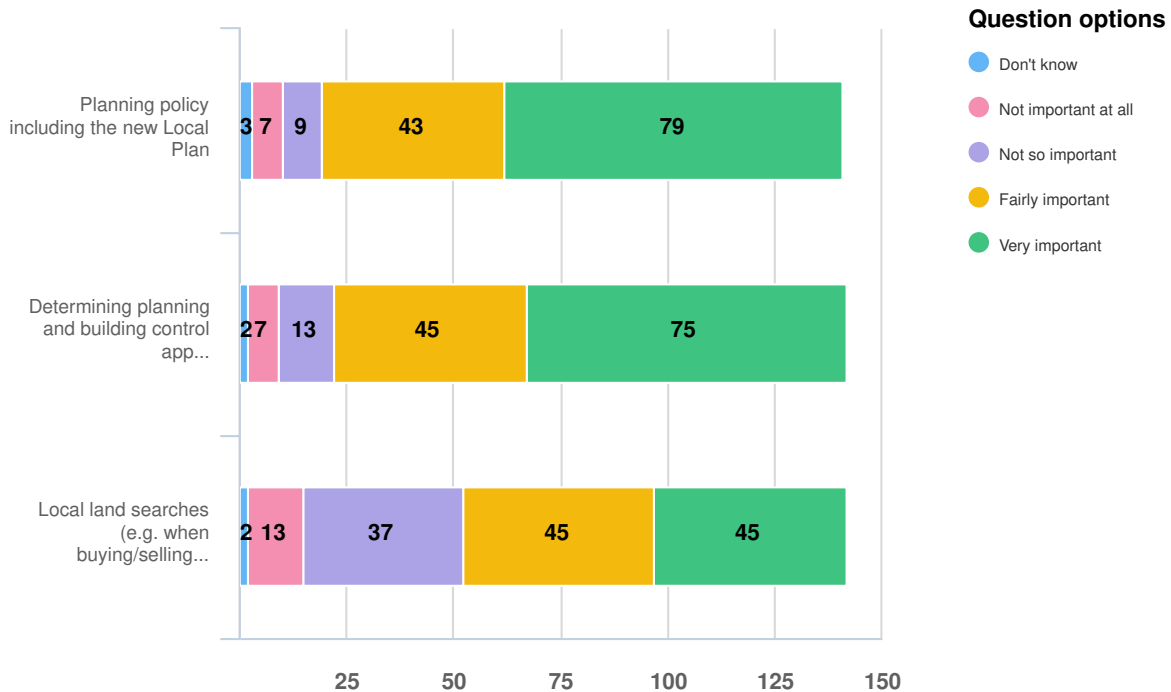
Q4 Housing and Homelessness costs about £14.28 per household per year and includes:

Housing advice





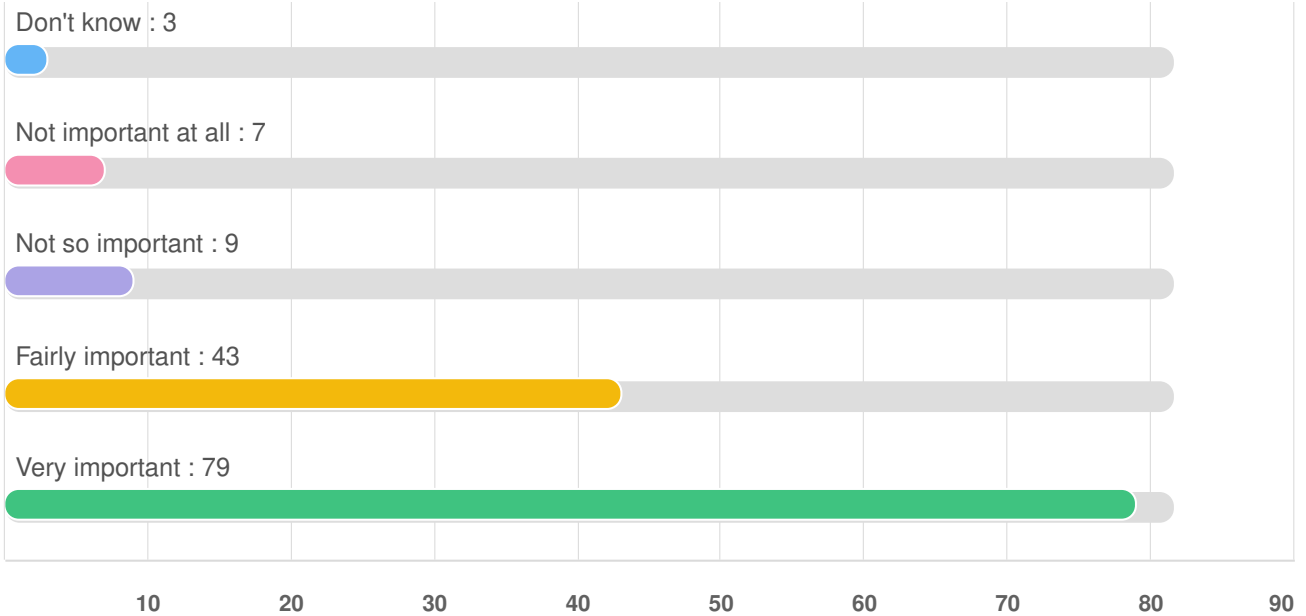
Q5 Planning and Building Control costs about £107.51 per household per year

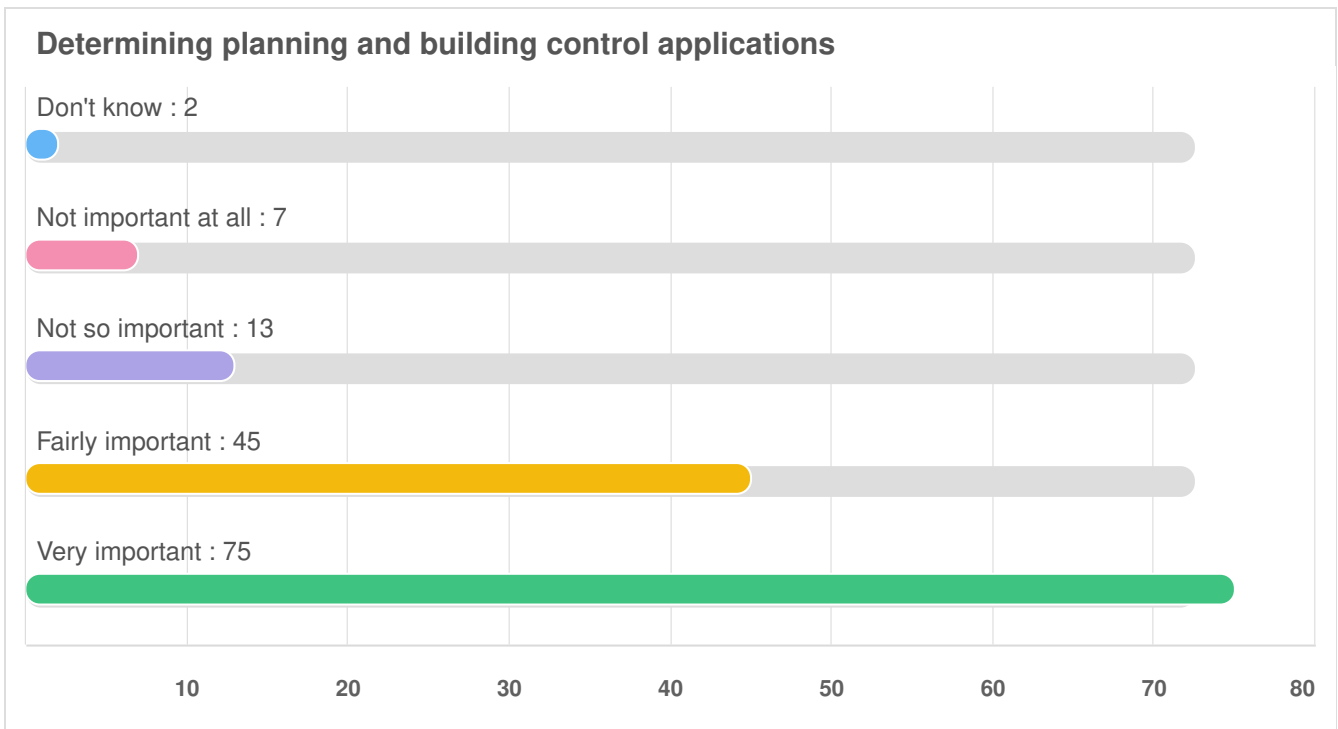


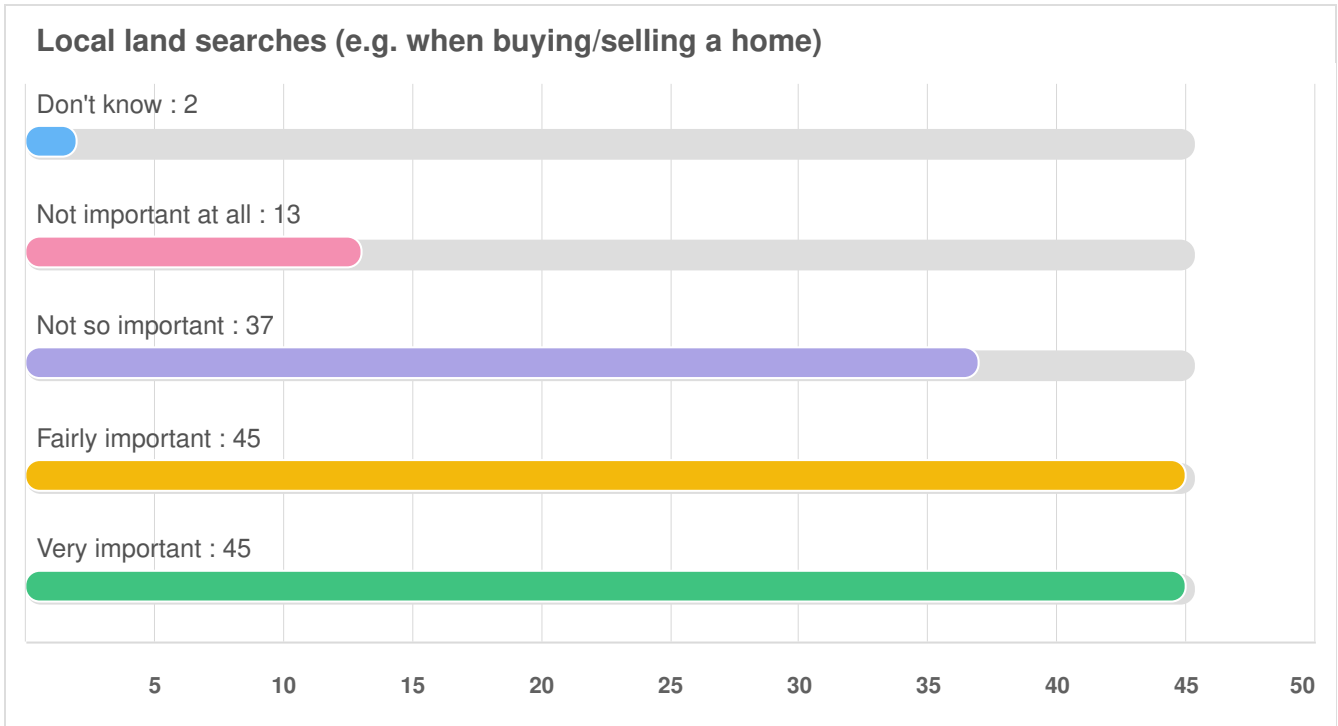
Optional question (141 response(s), 4 skipped)

Q5 | Planning and Building Control costs about £107.51 per household per year and includes:

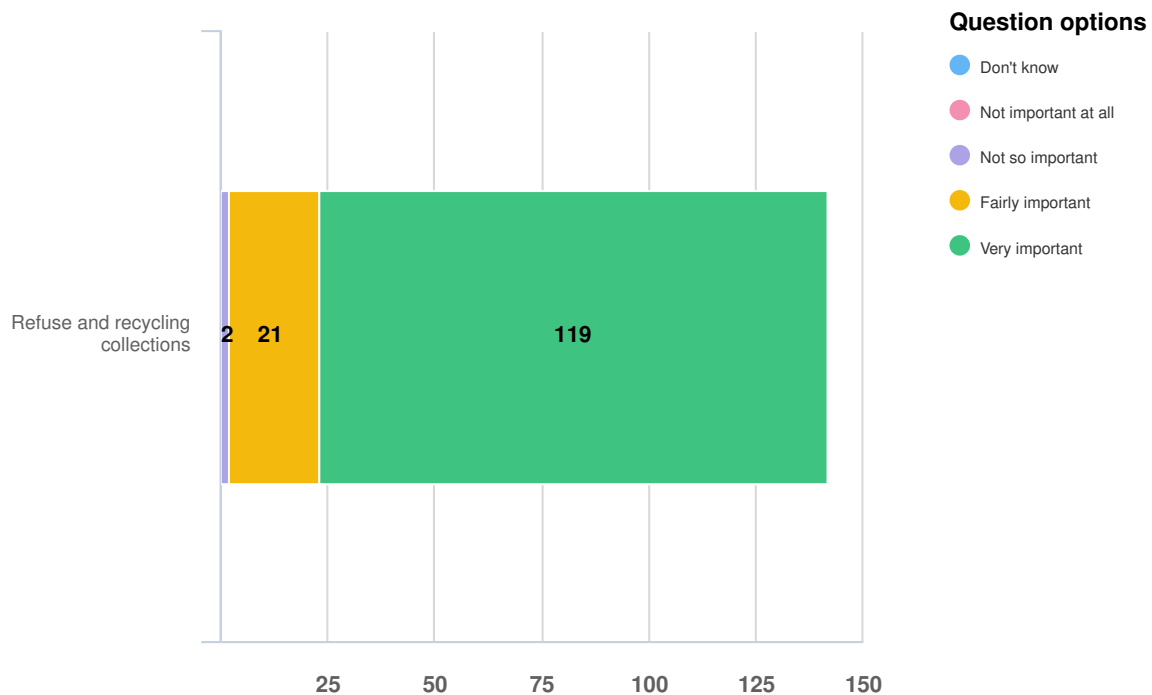
Planning policy including the new Local Plan







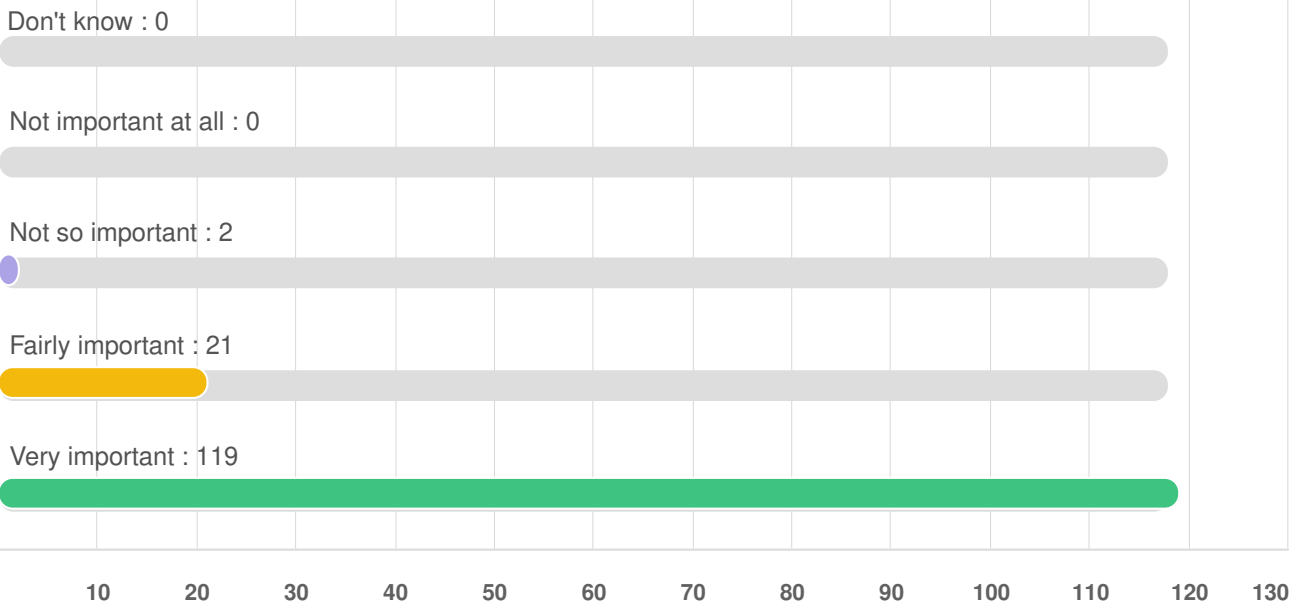
Q6 Refuse and recycling collection costs about £57.94 per household per year



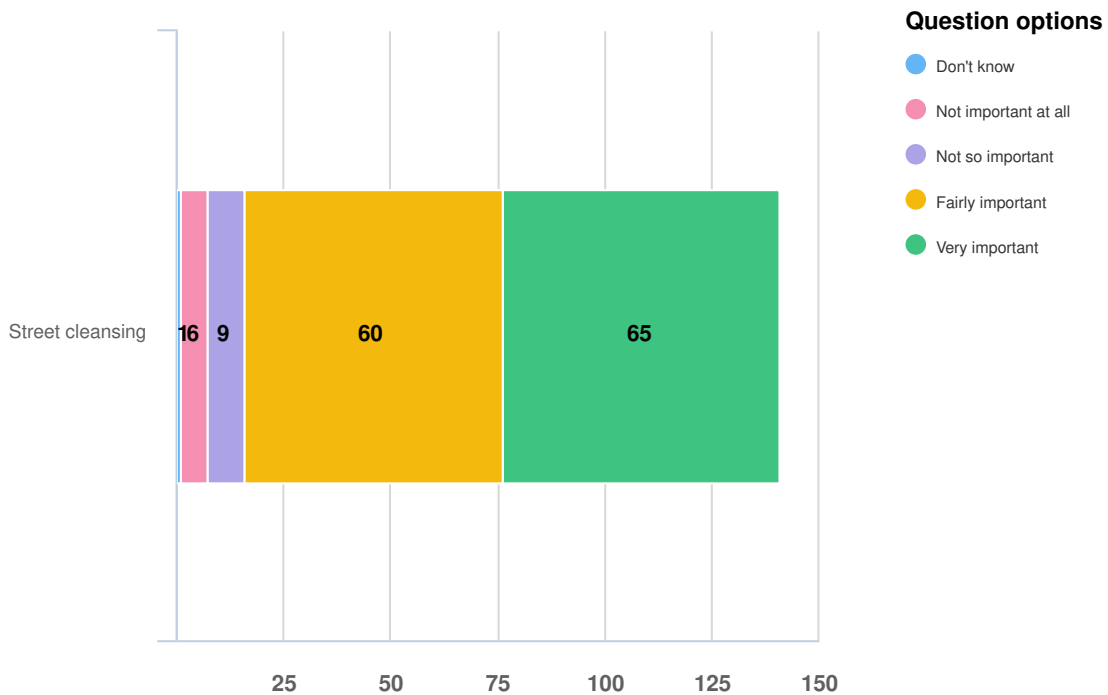
Optional question (141 response(s), 4 skipped)

Q6 Refuse and recycling collection costs about £57.94 per household per year

Refuse and recycling collections



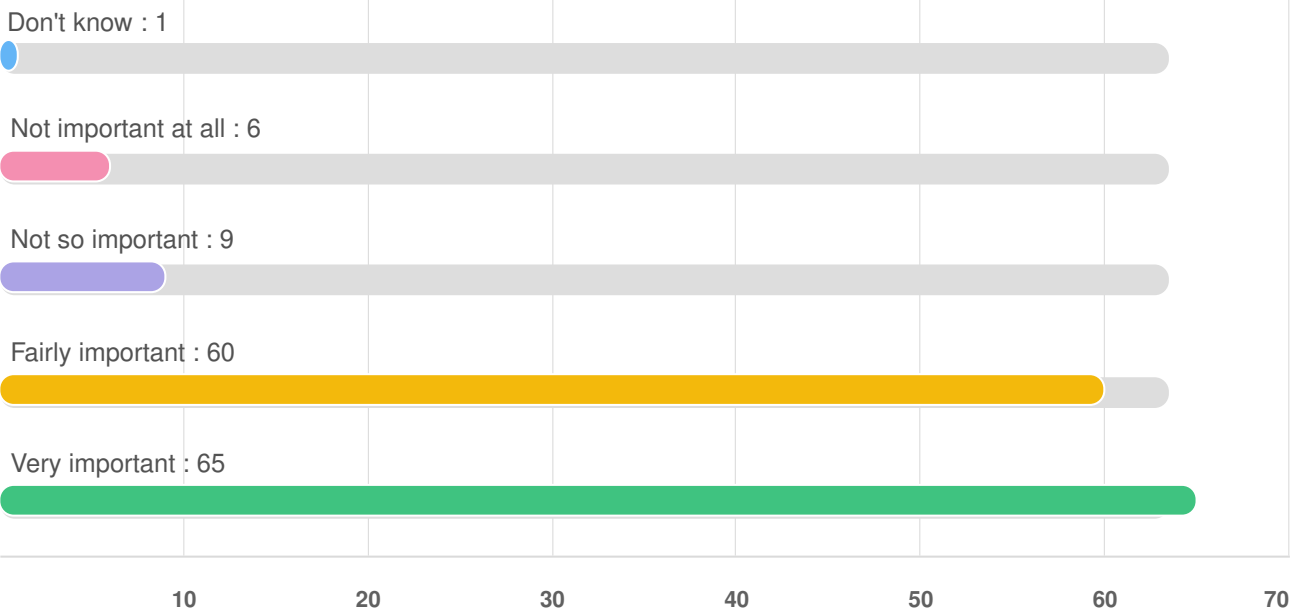
Q7 Street cleansing costs about £18.48 per household per year



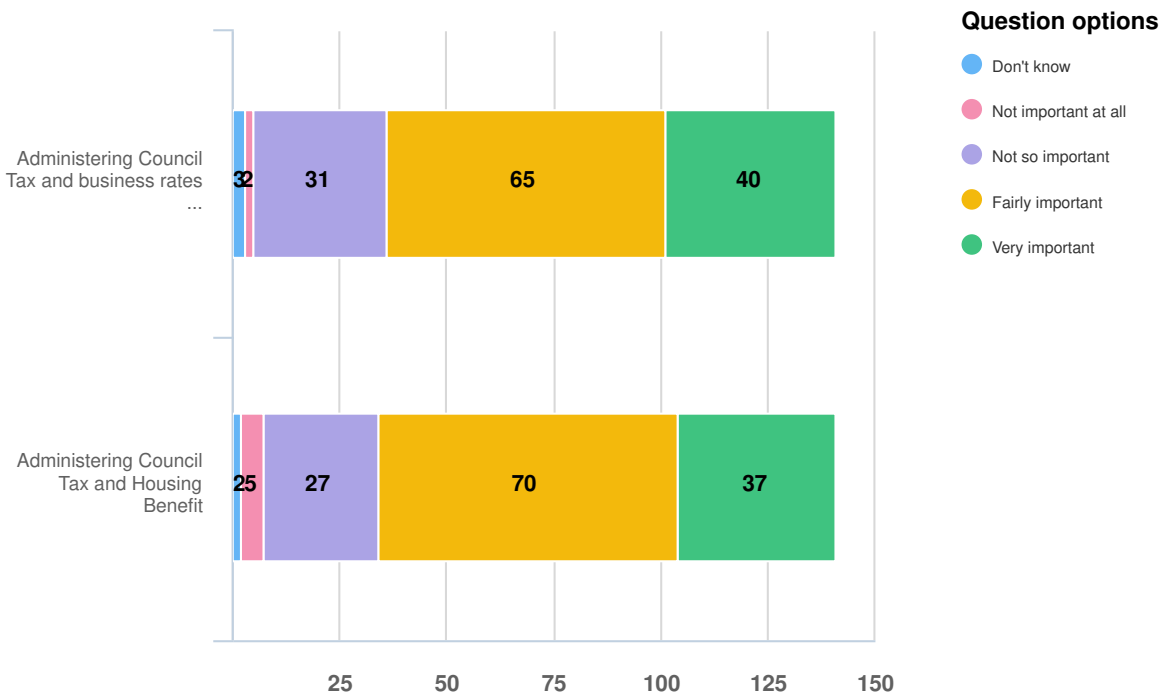
Optional question (140 response(s), 5 skipped)

Q7 | Street cleansing costs about £18.48 per household per year

Street cleansing



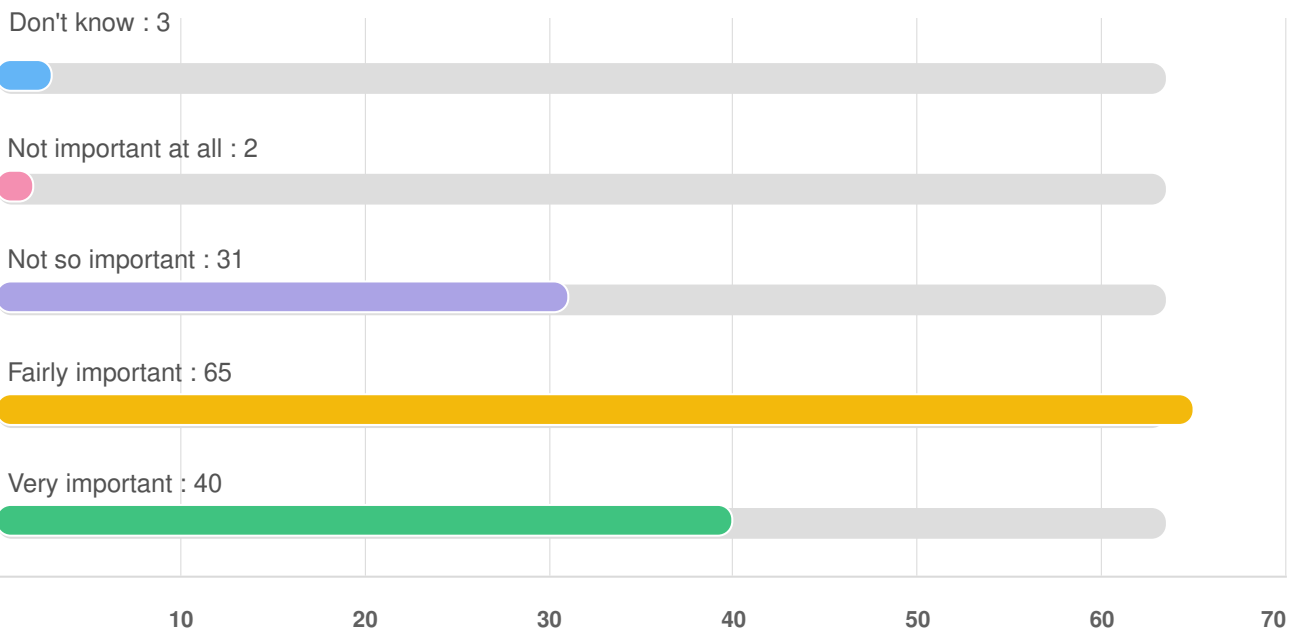
Q8 | Revenues and Benefits costs about £49.80 per household per year

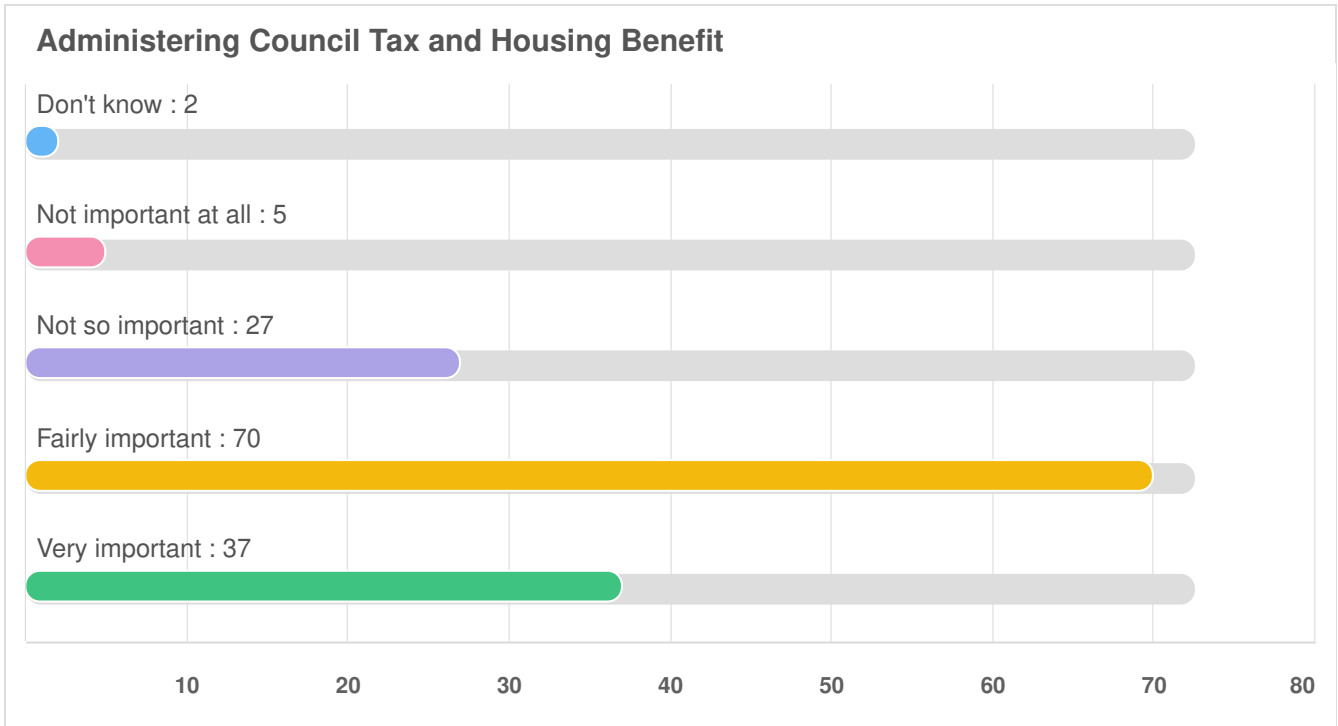


Optional question (140 response(s), 5 skipped)

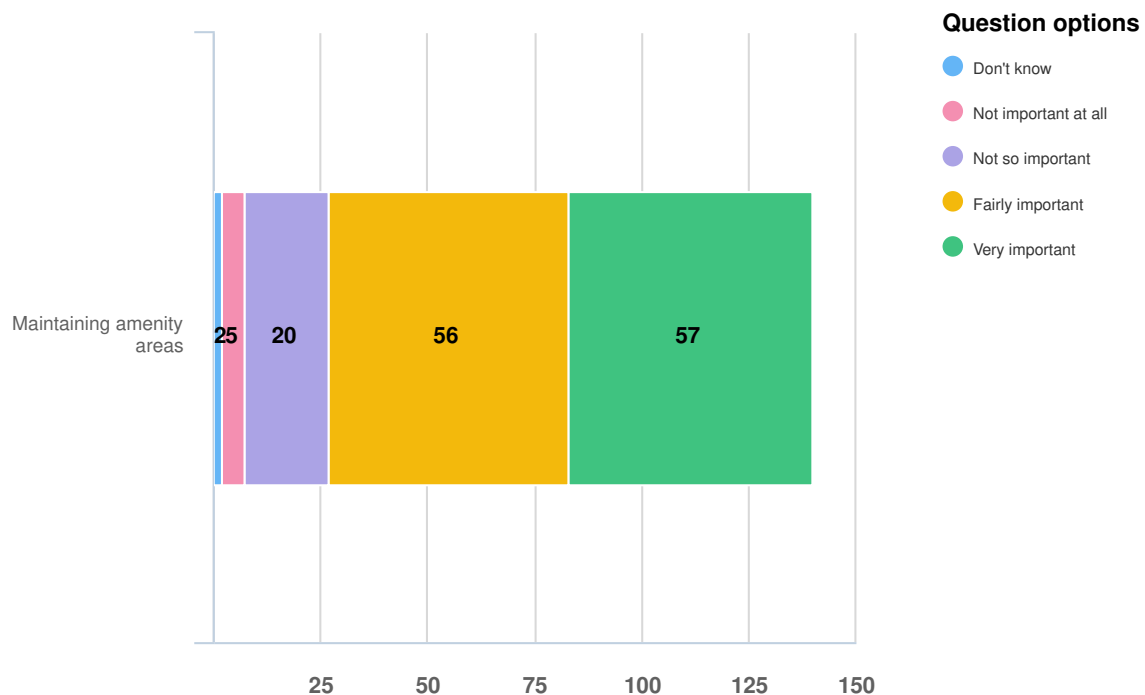
Q8 | Revenues and Benefits costs about £49.80 per household per year and includes:

Administering Council Tax and business rates collection





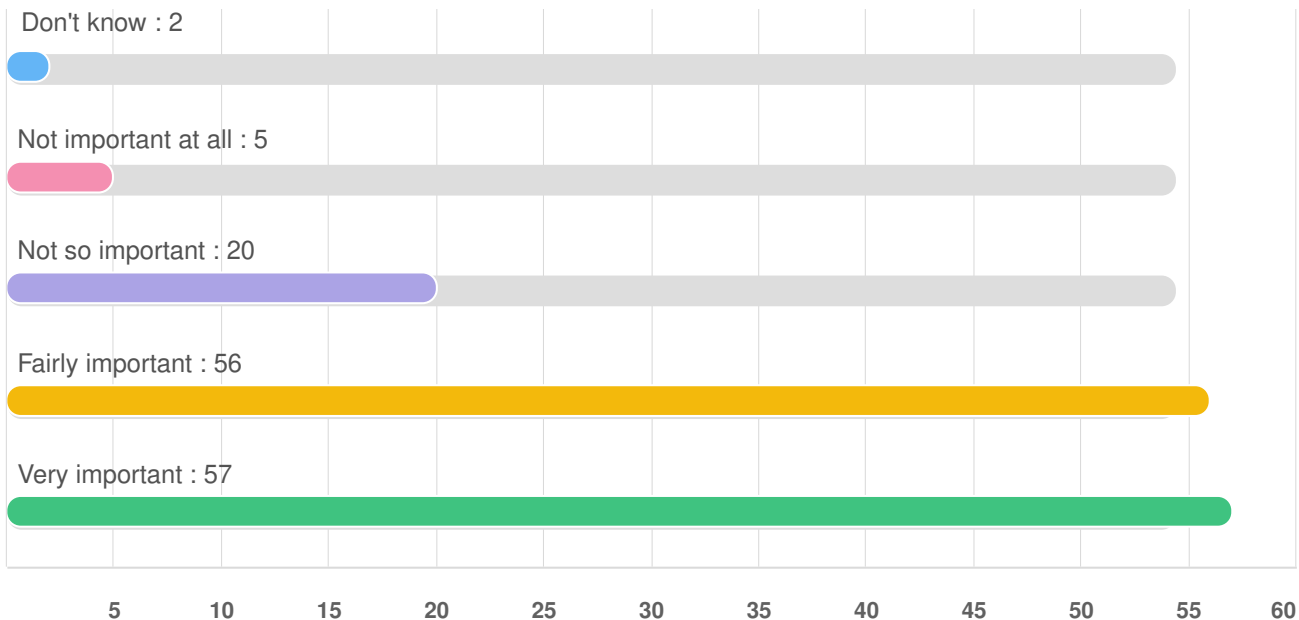
Q9 Maintaining amenity areas, such as grass cutting and general maintenance of various areas of council-owned land costs about £6.19 per household per year



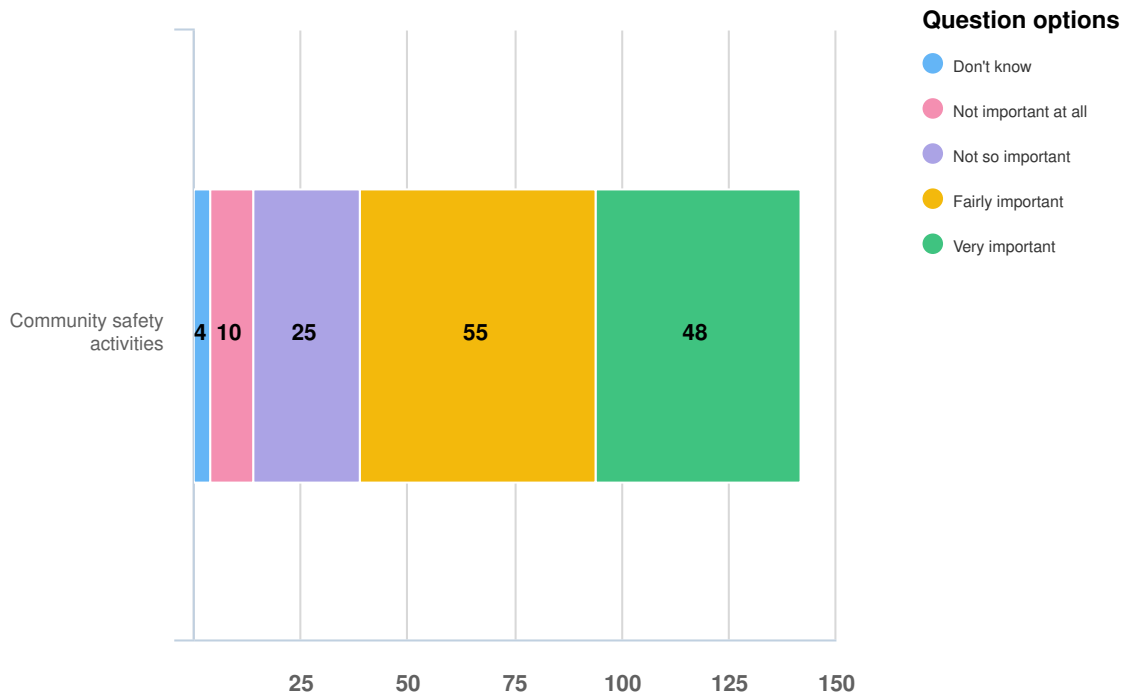
Optional question (139 response(s), 6 skipped)

Q9 | Maintaining amenity areas, such as grass cutting and general maintenance of various areas of council-owned land

Maintaining amenity areas



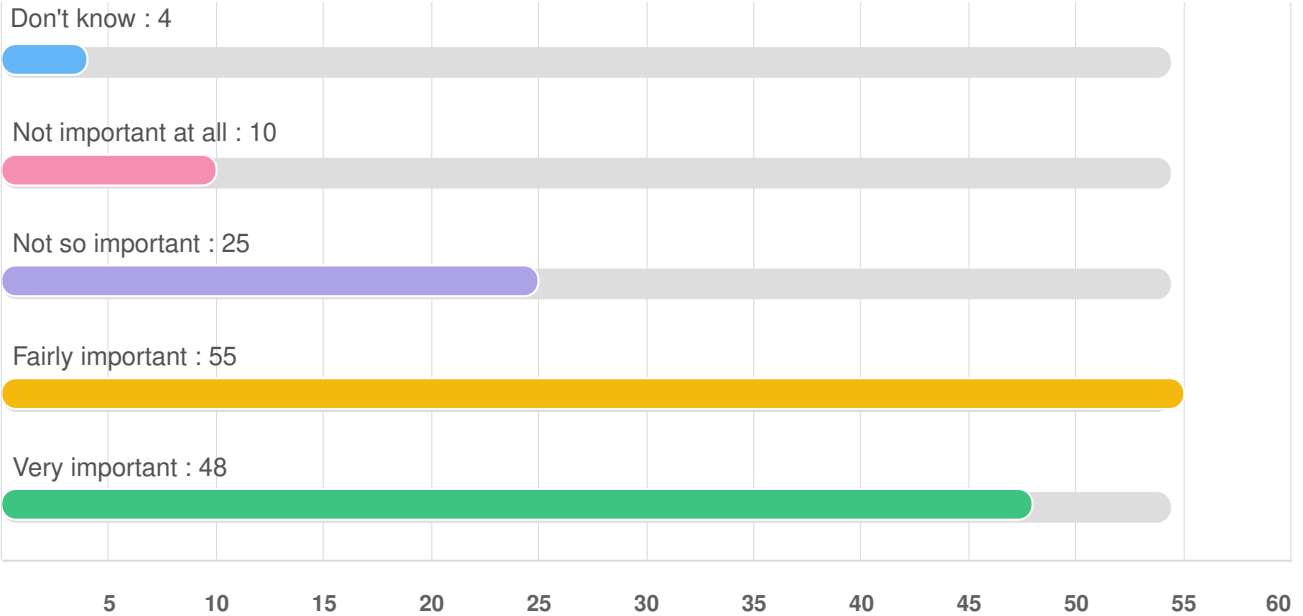
Q10 | Community safety activities to support the work of the Community Safety Partnership with the police and others costs about £11.00 per year



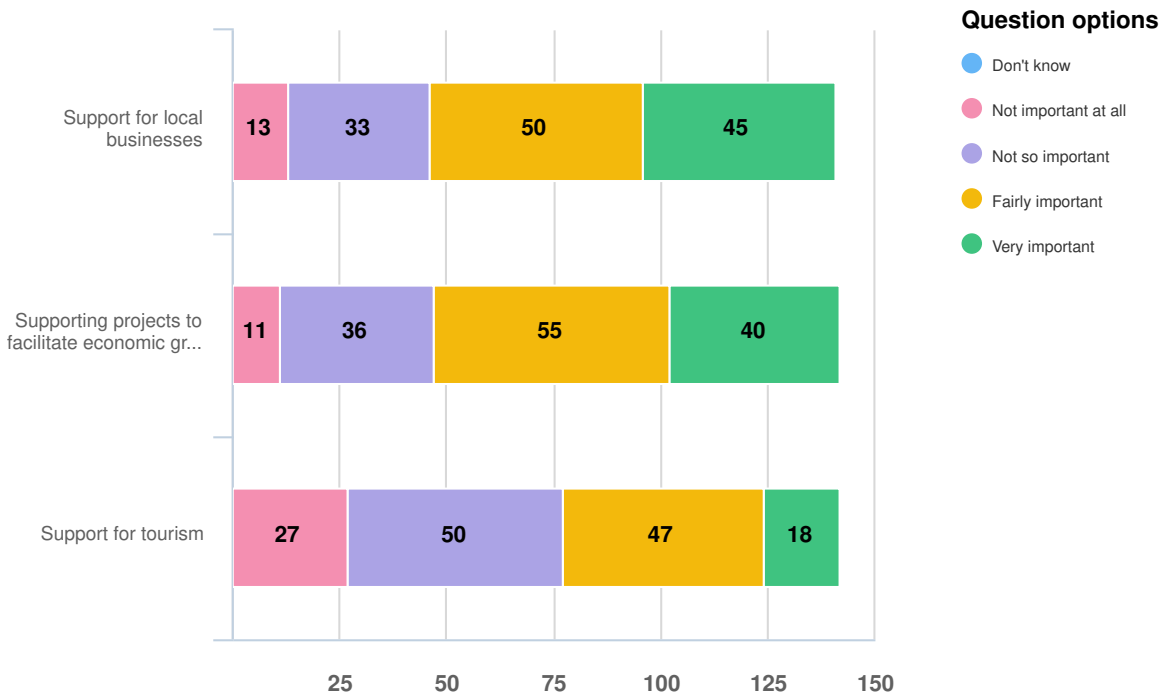
Optional question (141 response(s), 4 skipped)

Q10 | Community safety activities to support the work of the Community Safety Partnership with the police and others

Community safety activities



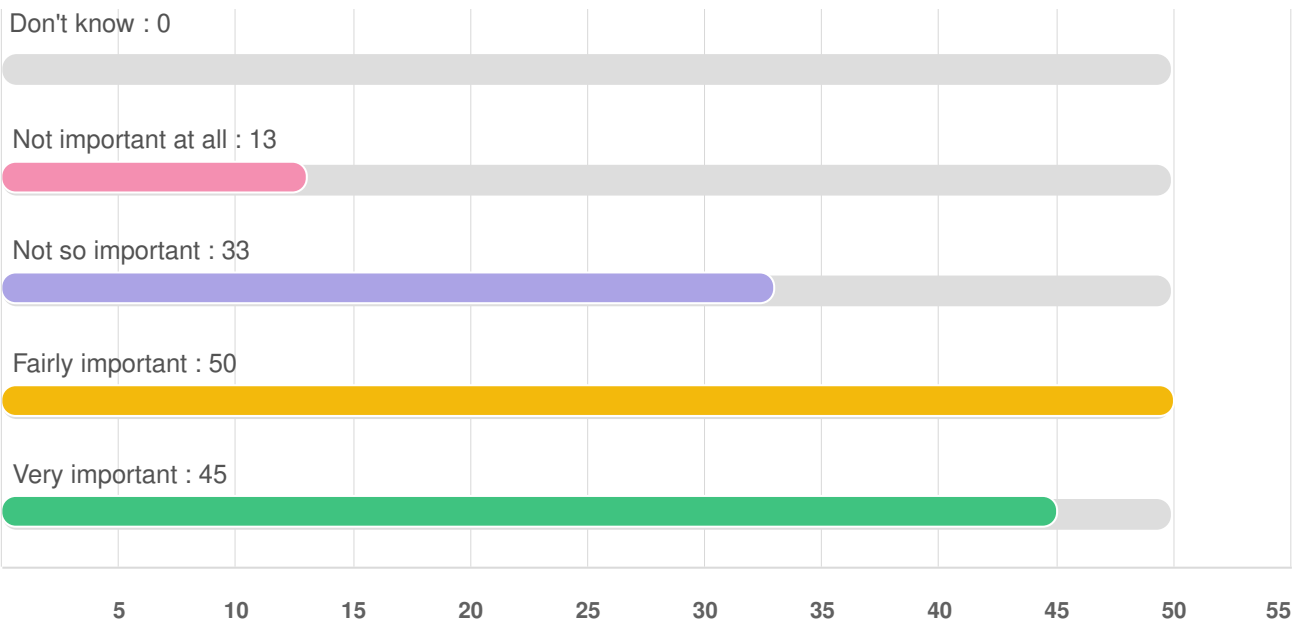
Q11 | Economic development costs about £14.10 per household per year

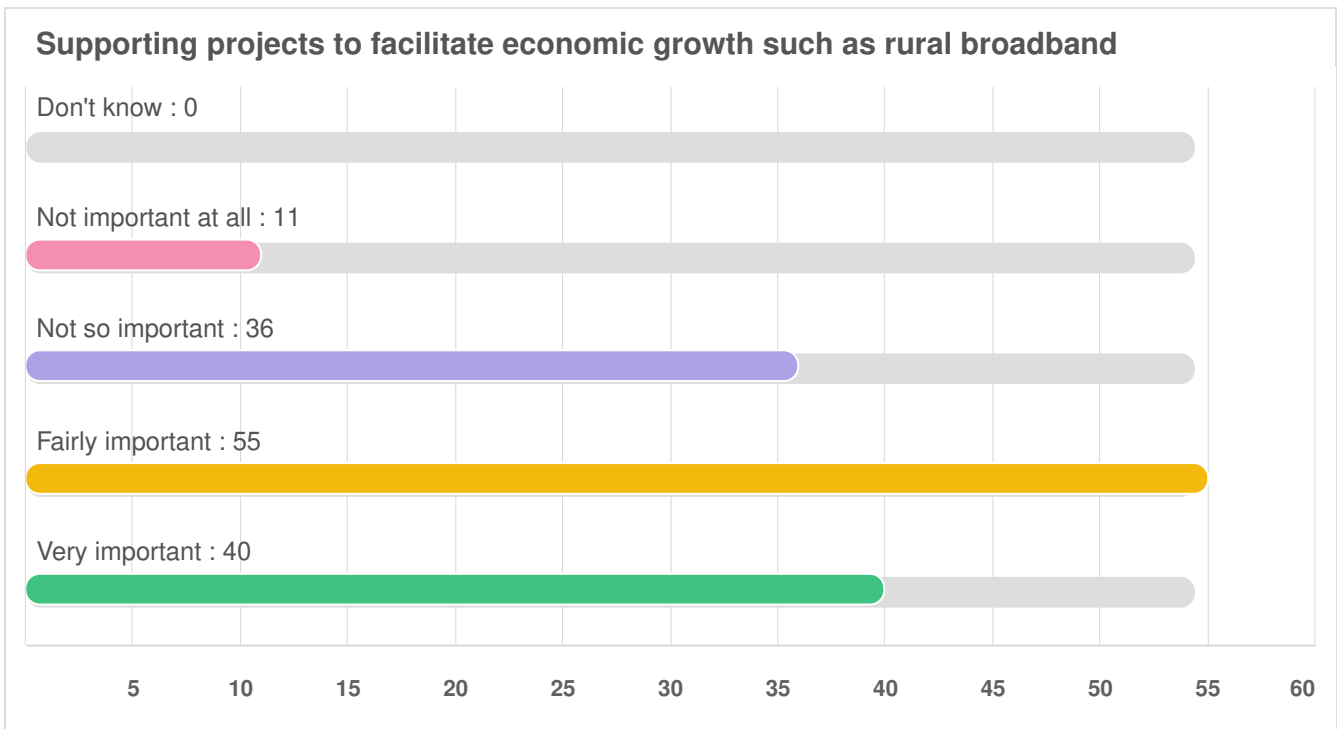


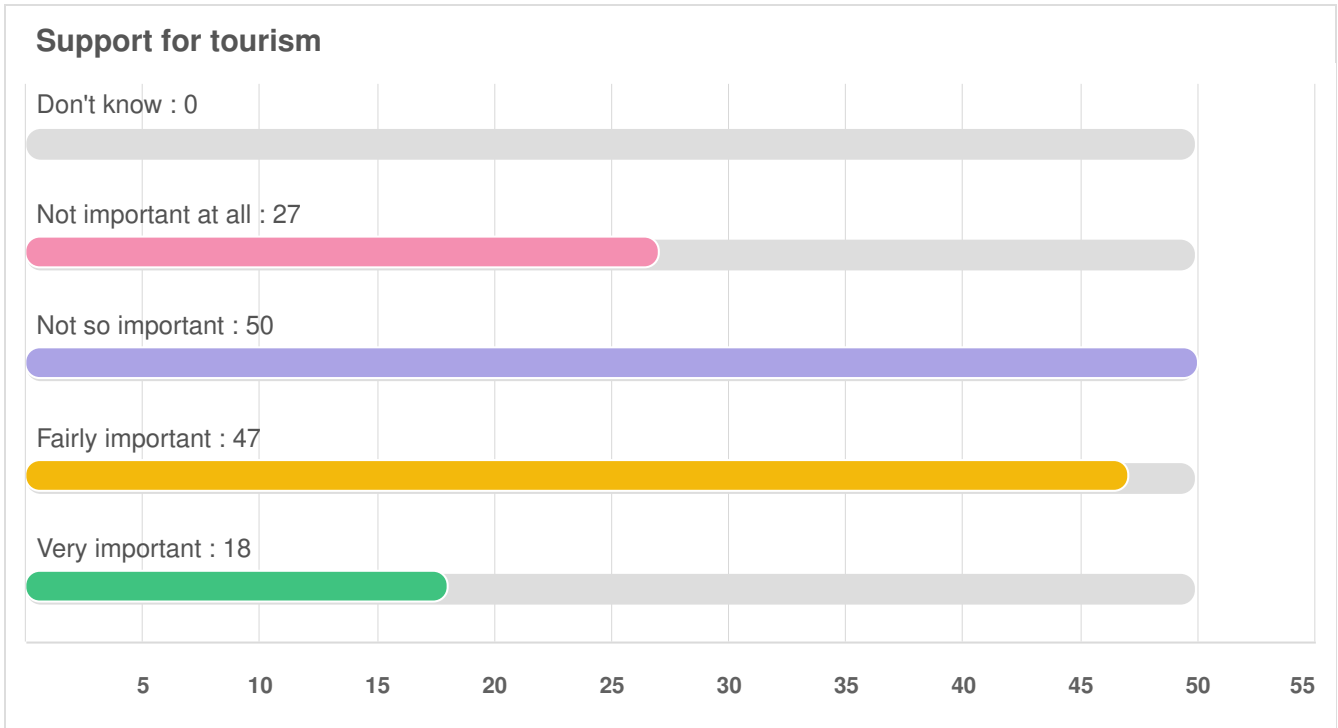
Optional question (141 response(s), 4 skipped)

Q11 | Economic development costs about £14.10 per household per year and includes:

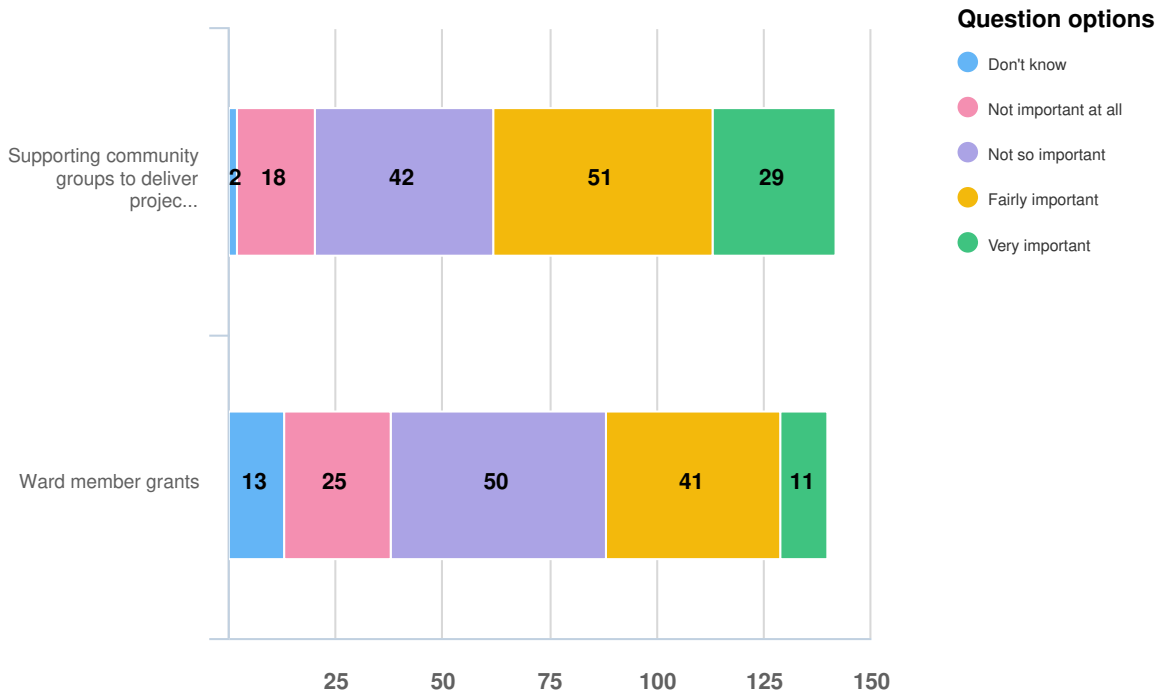
Support for local businesses







Q12 | Partnerships and communities costs about £12.79 per household per year



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

Q12 | Partnerships and communities costs about £12.79 per household per year and includes:

Supporting community groups to deliver projects

Don't know : 2



Not important at all : 18



Not so important : 42



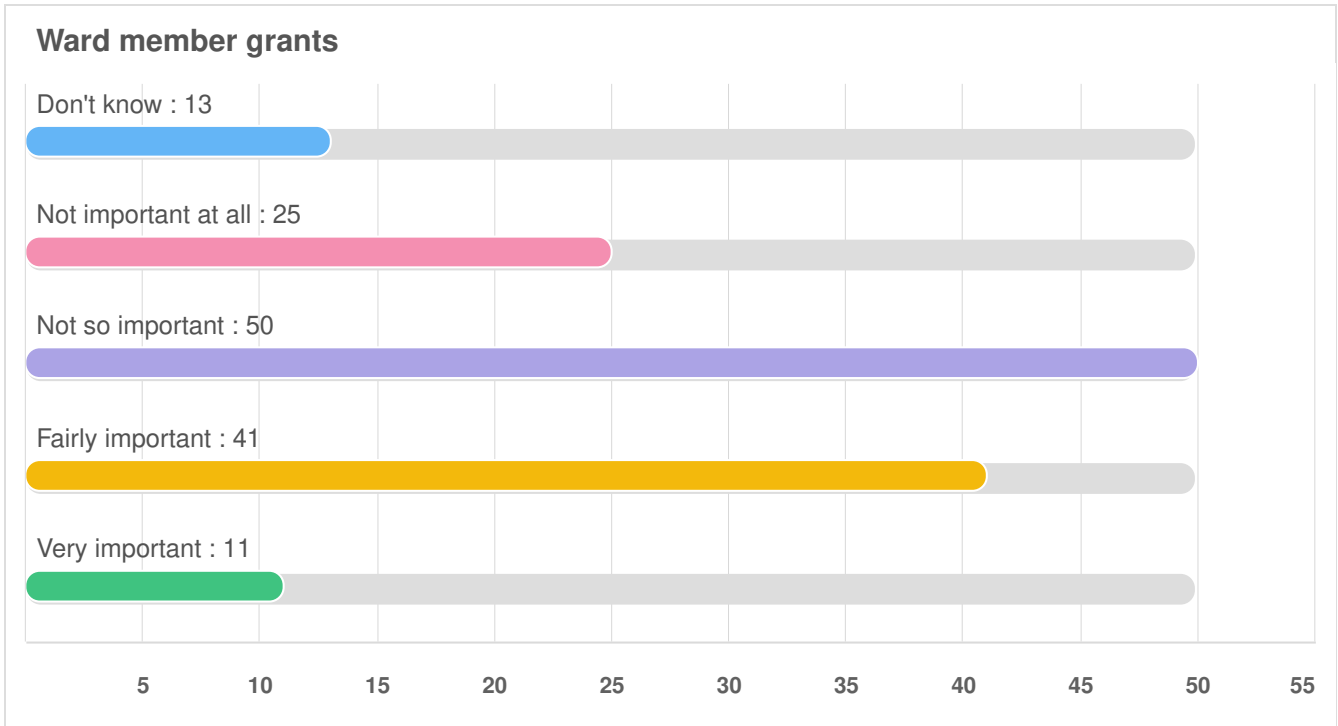
Fairly important : 51



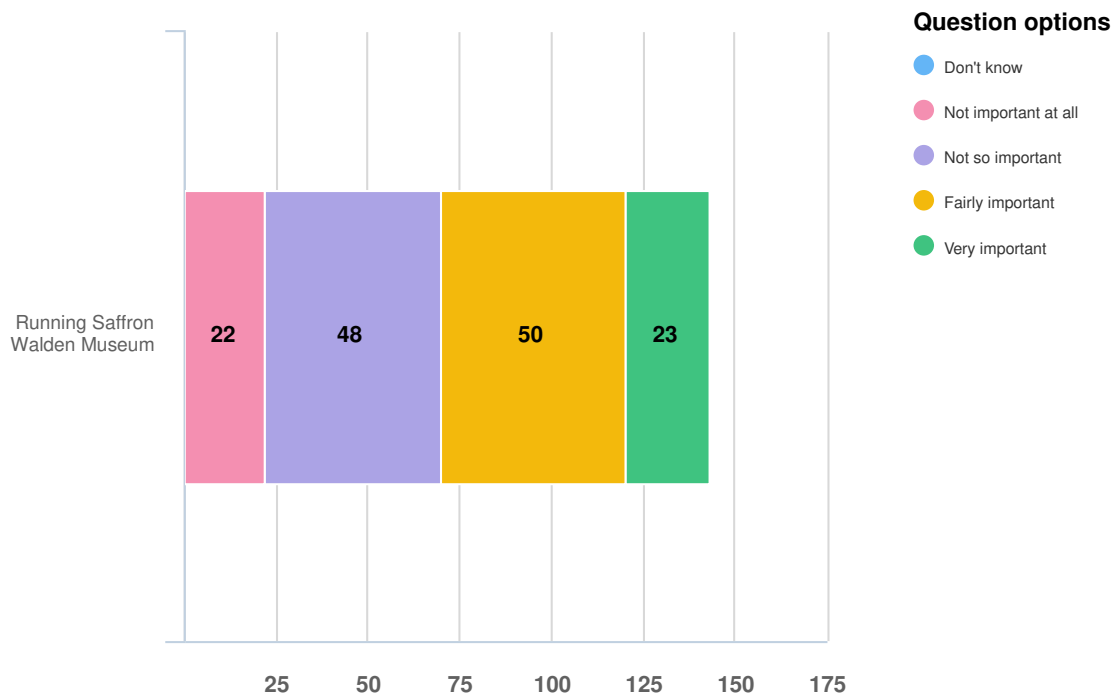
Very important : 29



5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55



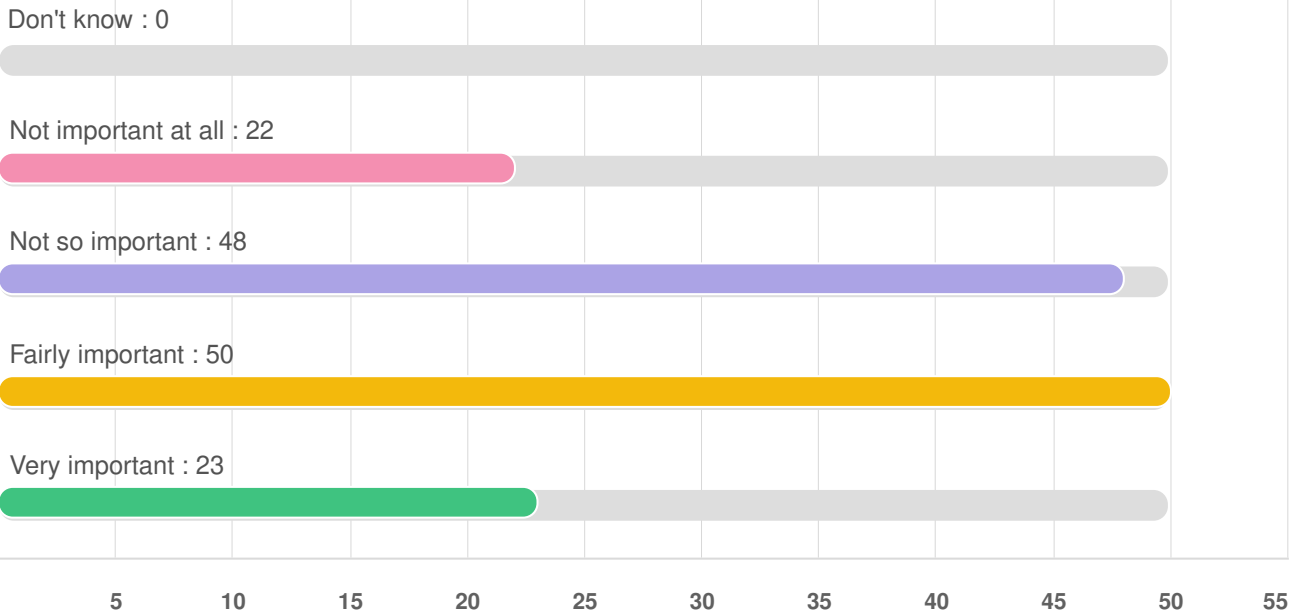
Q13 Running Saffron Walden Museum costs about £11.02 per year



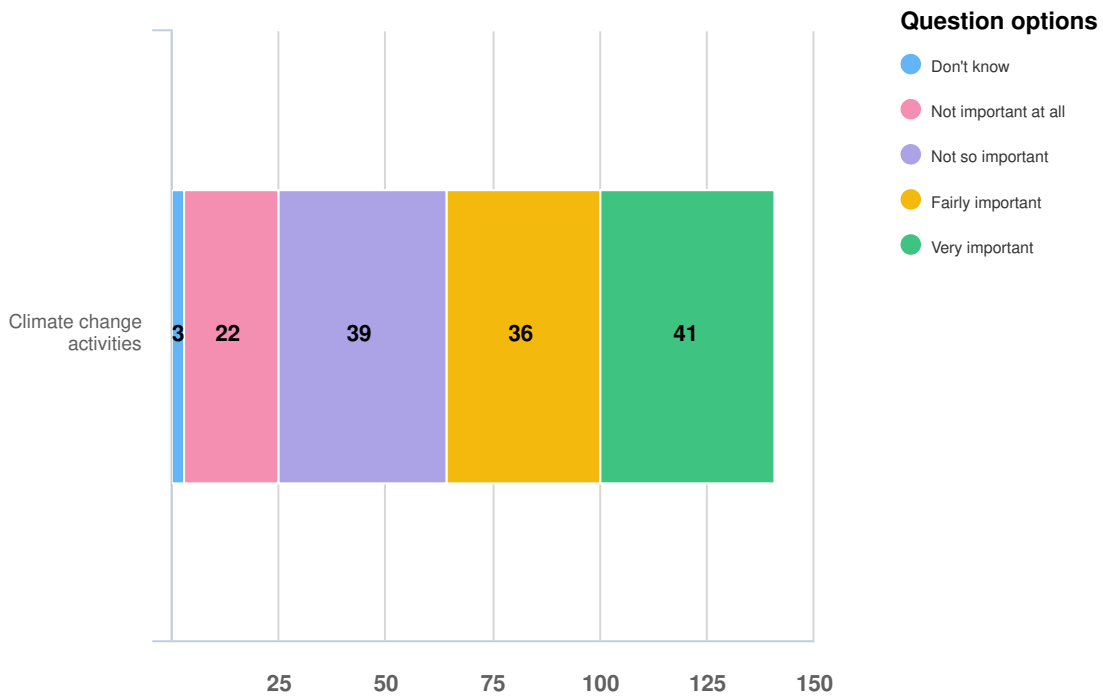
Optional question (142 response(s), 3 skipped)

Q13 | Running Saffron Walden Museum costs about £11.02 per year

Running Saffron Walden Museum



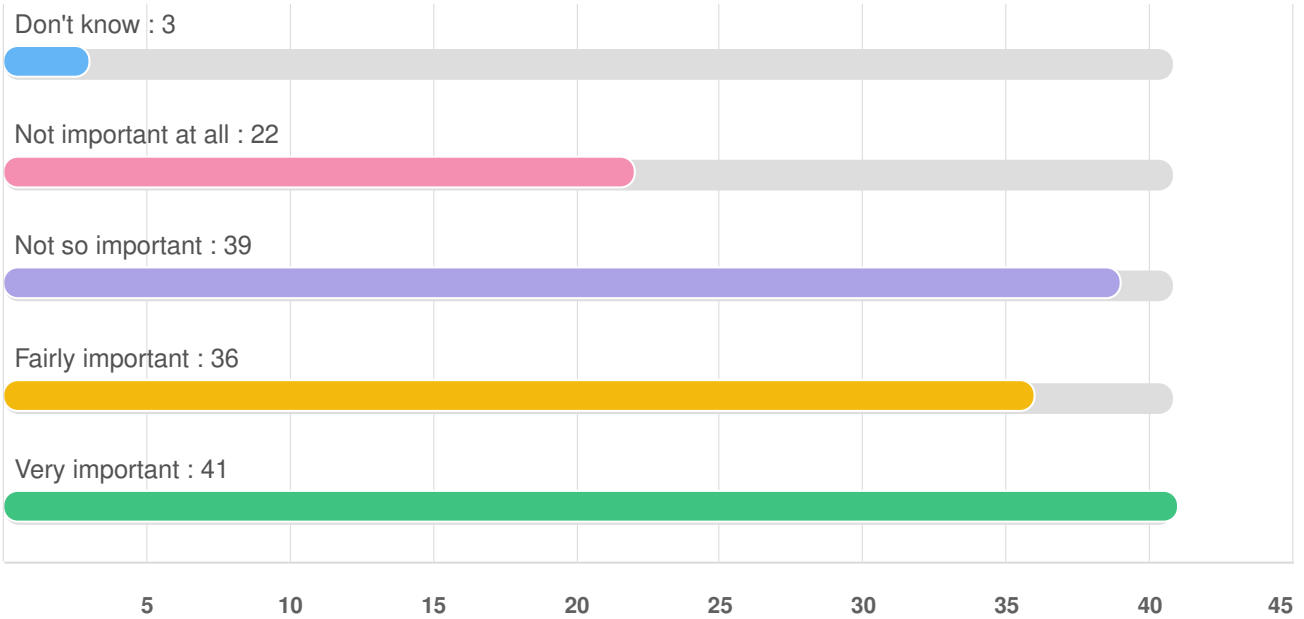
Q14 | Climate change activities cost about £11.63 a year



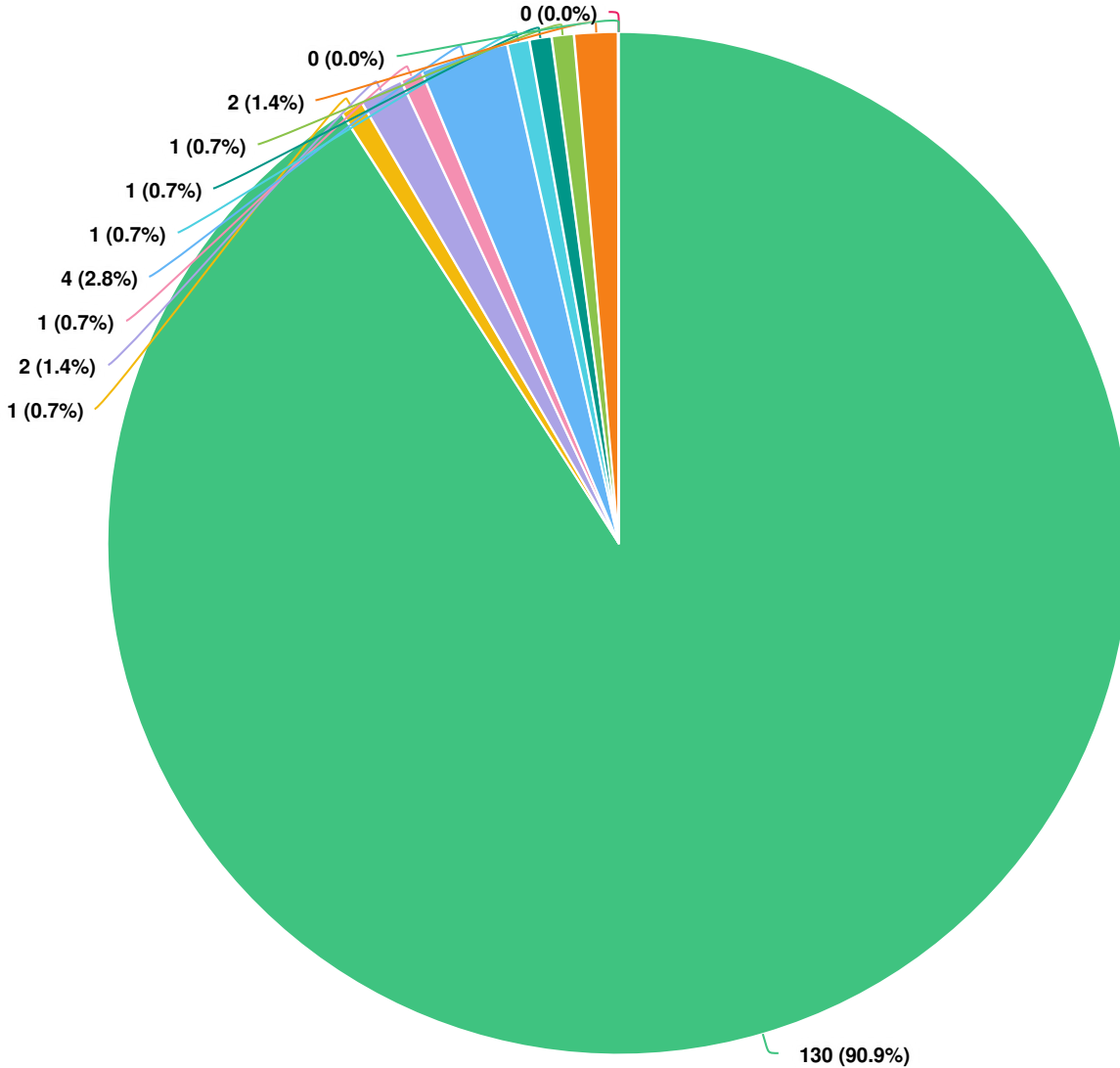
Optional question (140 response(s), 5 skipped)

Q14 | Climate change activities cost about £11.63 a year

Climate change activities



Q15 I am responding to this survey as:



Question options

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

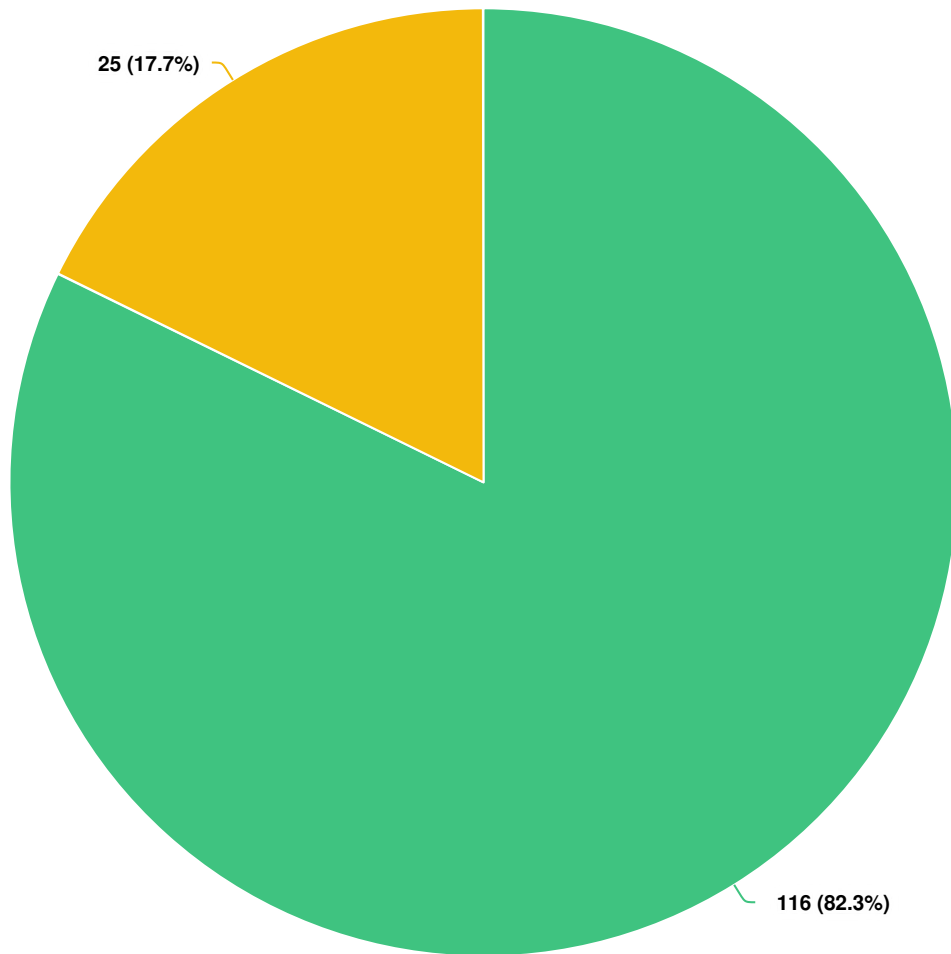
Optional question (143 response(s), 2 skipped)

Q17 | If you are responding as a community organisation please tell us which one.

Uttlesford neighbourhood Watch.

Optional question (1 response(s), 144 skipped)

Q19 | Would you now be willing to answer some questions about your age, ethnicity and where you live?

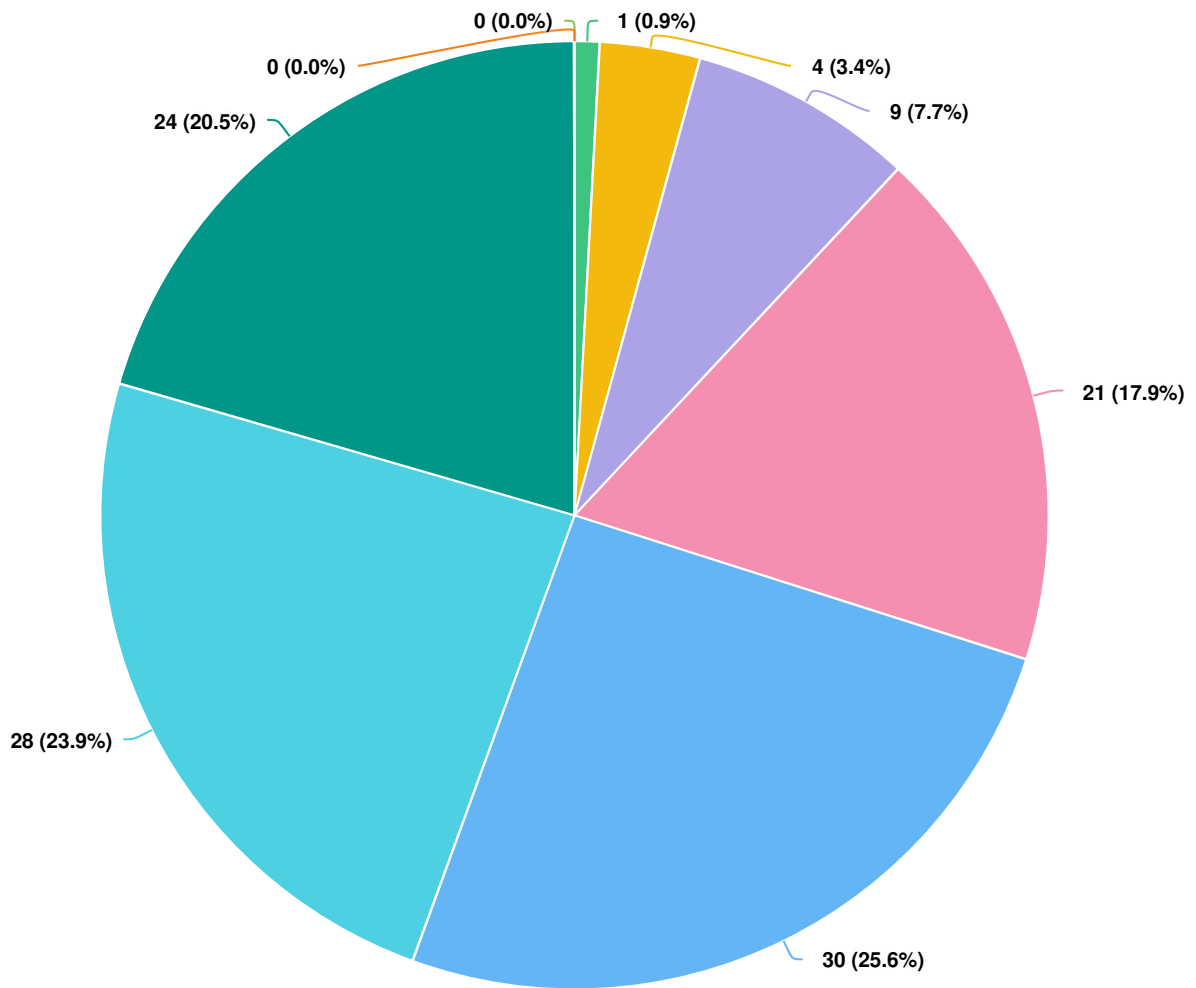


Question options

- No
- Yes

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

Q20 Which age category do you belong to?

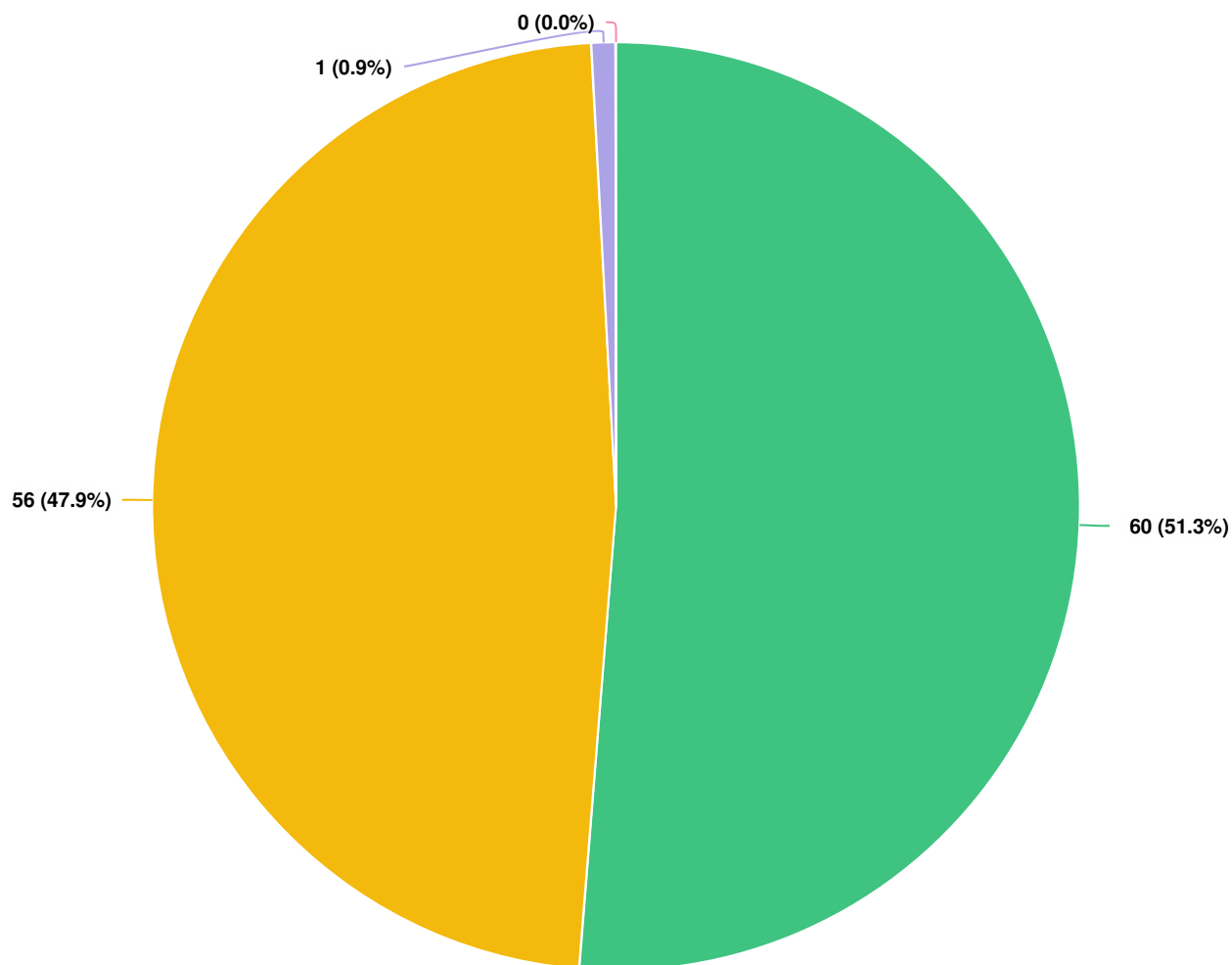


Question options

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

Optional question (117 response(s), 28 skipped)

Q21 | What is your gender?

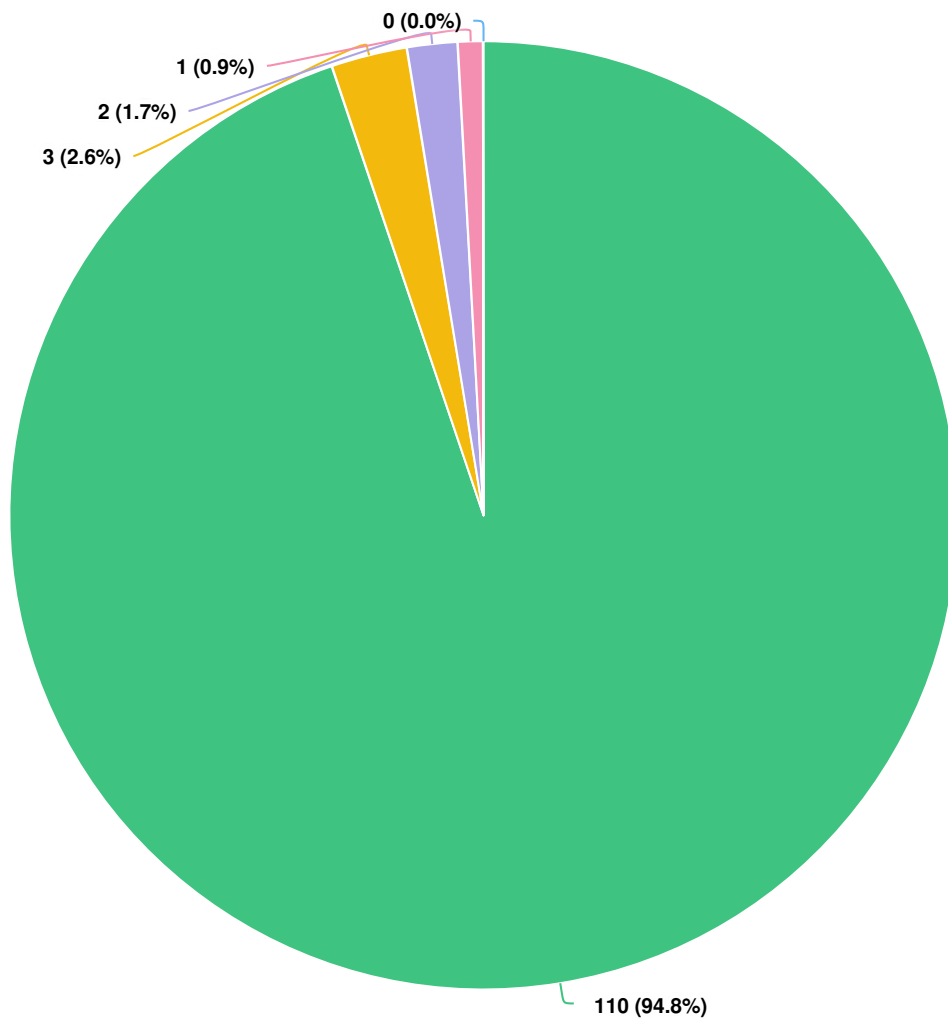


Question options

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

Optional question (117 response(s), 28 skipped)

Q22 | What is your ethnicity?

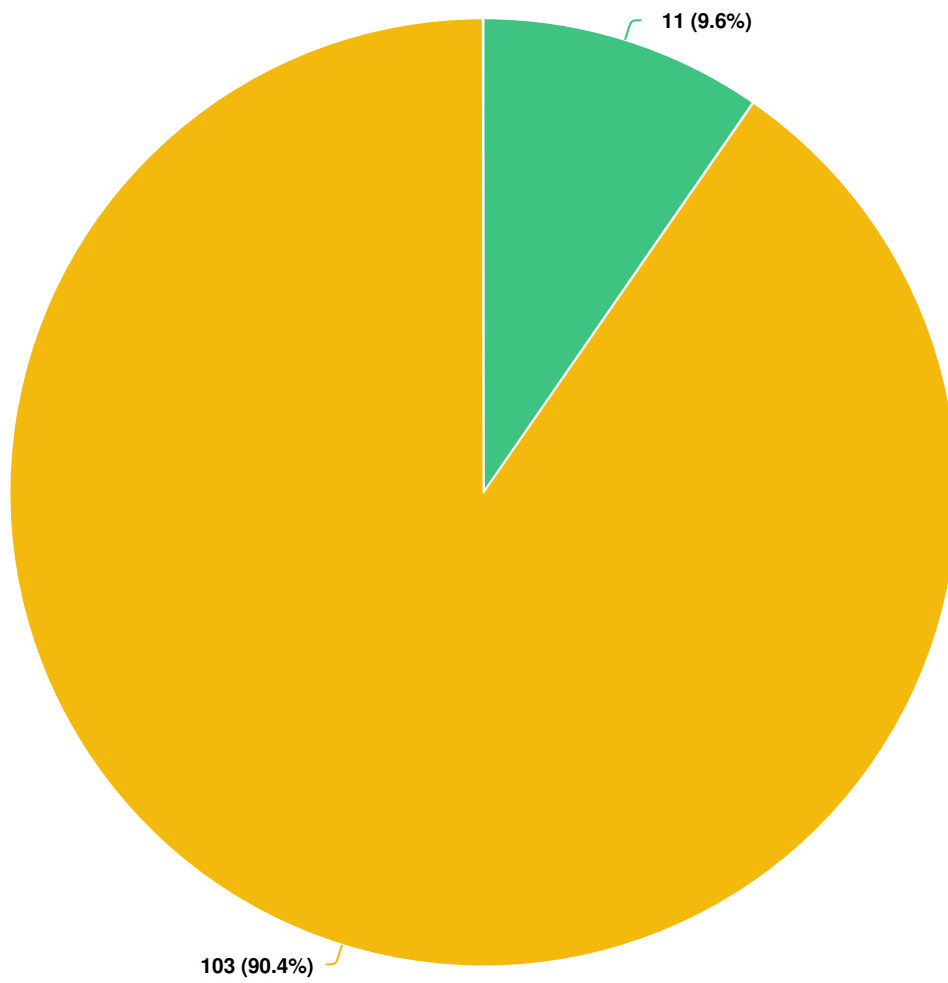


Question options

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

Optional question (116 response(s), 29 skipped)

Q23 | Do you consider yourself to have a disability?



Question options

- No
- Yes

Optional question (114 response(s), 31 skipped)

Additional comments

Anonymous

10/31/2023 17:12PM

We would like to see the Rangers services increased. They are about but this valuable service is a must on our country roads. Keeping pathways and roads clear of vegetation is vital for safety reasons.

We would also like the road signage kept clean and replaced when necessary.

Thank you for the invitation for residents to have their say on budgetary spending.

I believe you have the right headings listed in the online survey, however I would like to raise a couple of ideas and some may not cost the council money.

Anonymous

11/05/2023 10:14PM

Saffron Walden is a beautiful market town that is growing disproportionately to the facilities we have available. The place does look neglected and tired including the roads that lead into Saffron Walden and I wondered if the council can instil a better sense of pride in the town through local businesses, schools and residential areas. They often say architecture and its environment can have a positive impact on people's wellbeing and it also encourages people to take care of it.

1. The roundabout at the bottom of Sparrows End Hill. A company (ies) could sponsor it by having a simple planting display and signage to display the company logos - something which is easy to maintain and gives a better impression.
2. Have a regular update on social media and in the newspapers outlining activities happening.
3. Be realistic if you cannot fund everything then ask for help from the community maybe with skills rather than finance.
4. Encourage or support shops to take care of their cigarette butts and facias.
5. Provide more bins or replace bins with a better design to prevent people using the top of the bins for stubbing out or attaching chewing gum and stickers.
6. Employ or redirect resources to have a local street cleaner. The impact of having the local policeman has been fantastic and I am sure a visible local street cleaner would be warmly welcomed.
7. Build communities within communities to take care of their local area maybe with incentives.
8. Inform residents, especially those in new housing developments, of the wider local community and how they can get involved. The skills exist in the local community to help each other - we all just need a bit of direction, encouragement, support and motivation and the rewards from helping can be immense.

Optional question (2 response(s))