

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

CONSULTATION REPORT

A summary of the feedback received on the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

OCTOBER 2022



The full list of comment received are available to view in a separate document on our website pages: [South](#) or [Vale](#).

Note: When stating percentages in the analysis, we are referring to the percentage of respondents that answered the specific question, rather than the total number of responses to the overall survey. Percentages may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding up over .5 and rounding down under .5. Words that appear in italics are quotes taken from comments received.

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SUMMARY

This report provides information on the consultation undertaken by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils on the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, including a summary of its results. The consultation ran between Monday 22 August and Monday 3 October 2022, with a two-weeks extension being granted on Monday 19 September due to the period of national mourning.

We asked residents, businesses/organisations, district, town and parish councillors and council officers to help shape our new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The strategy explains how we will do more than just our legal requirements to help people access our services in the best way possible.

Consultees could provide their feedback through an online survey or by completing a paper comment form available in all libraries across both districts. A total of 234 responses were received to the consultation. Most respondents provided their feedback as individuals/members of the public (87 per cent) and were aged between 55 and 74 (54 per cent).

ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

How we undertook the consultation.



The consultation ran from Monday 22 August to 11:59pm on Monday 3 October 2022. This consultation period was extended and includes two additional weeks for the national mourning period.

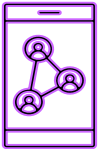


The consultation was sent to the following stakeholders by email:

- Councils' consultation database
- Town and parish councils
- Consultees that fall under the protected characteristics



Letters were issued to 294 consultees registered on the councils' consultation database.



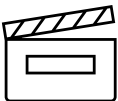
A press release and social media messages (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) were posted throughout the consultation period.



An online survey was created to gather views on the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. A copy of the survey and a summary of the comments received are available to view in this report.



A copy of the Draft Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Easy Read Leaflet and Comment Form were available in all libraires across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.



The below video was created and posted on social media to help reach a wider audience. The video was also translated from English into Mandarin and Polish. These are the most spoken foreign languages in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. To watch the video right-click on it and select "open in browser".



COMMUNICATION

A copy of the email notification issued to consultees on the council's consultation database is provided below.

Subject: Your views on the Draft Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Dear Sir/Madam

People come in all shapes and sizes, we look and sound different and we all see things differently. South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils value and embrace these differences - as these are the things that make each of us unique.

We are creating a new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and would like your views on how we can make it easier for everyone to access the councils' services, support and information.

If you live or work in the area, we know that at some point you may need to make contact with us or find out some information from us. It could be to find out when your bins are being emptied, to let us know you're changing address, a council tax query, business rates query, housing support or some guidance on a planning application.

If you have any specific needs, what would make it easier for you when you interact with us?

You can help shape our new Diversity and Inclusion strategy. Its purpose is to lay out how the councils will go further than just our legal requirements, which we already achieve, to help people access our services in the best way possible for their needs.

A short survey is open **until 11:59pm on Monday 19 September**.

Note that this is a unique link just for you and is tied to your email address. If you would like to forward this message to anybody else, please refer them to the public link to the survey.

If you have any questions about the strategy, please email Lynne.Mitchell@southandvale.gov.uk or call 07598 545906.

What happens next?

Once the consultation has closed we will review the responses and write a report, which we will publish and use to help us improve and add to our strategy and action plan.

We look forward to hearing your views.

Kind regards

Lynne Mitchell

Equality & Inclusivity Officer

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

If you require the survey in an alternative format (for example: large print, Braille, audio, email, Easy Read or alternative languages) please email haveyoursay@southandvale.gov.uk or call 01235 422425.

Hard copies of the documents will be available from **Monday 15 August** in the following locations:

South Oxfordshire: Benson Library, Berinsfield Library, Chinnor Library, Didcot Library, Goring Library, Henley Library, Sonning Common, Thame Library, Wallingford Library, Watlington Library, Wheatley Library and Woodcote Library.

Vale of White Horse: Abingdon Library, Botley Library, Faringdon Library, Grove Library, Kennington Library and Wantage Library

Other: The Beacon, Cornerstone Arts Centre, District Neighbourhood Community Centre and South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

Data protection: Please refer to our privacy policy regarding how your personal data is used for this consultation, available on the consultation page of our websites: South or Vale. If you would like to know more about the council's data protection registration or to find out about your personal data, please visit our websites: South or Vale.

Opt-out: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us like this, please email [click here](#) and you will be removed from our mailing list. Please note, we may still need to contact you for certain consultations if we have a legal obligation to do so.

SURVEY AND SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

A copy of the online survey including a summary of the results is provided below.

Your views on the Draft Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

If you need any of this information in large print, Braille, audio, email, Easy Read or in a different language please email haveyoursay@southandvale.gov.uk or call 01235 422425.

Jeśli potrzebujesz niniejszej ankiety lub strategii oraz towarzyszących jej dokumentów w alternatywnym formacie (na przykład dużym drukiem, alfabetem Braille'a, w wersji dźwiękowej, e-mailem, w uławnionej wersji do czytania lub w innych językach), wyślij e-mail na adres haveyoursay@southandvale.gov.uk lub zadzwoń pod numer 01235 422425.

如果您需要以其他格式（例如大字体、盲文点字、音讯、电邮、易读和其他语言）取得此意见调查或策略和说明文件，请电邮至：haveyoursay@southandvale.gov.uk 或拨打：01235 422425

Draft Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

We would like you to help shape our [new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#). The strategy explains how we will do more than just our legal requirements to help people access our services in the best way possible.

We would like to know what would help you most when you contact us about our services. We would also like to hear about your experiences of contacting us, your views on the draft strategy and what you think about living in your neighbourhoods.

Please note the deadline for completing this survey is **Monday 3 October, 11:59pm**.

What happens next?

Once the consultation has closed we will review the responses and write a report, which we will publish and use to help us improve and add to our strategy and action plan.

Personal details

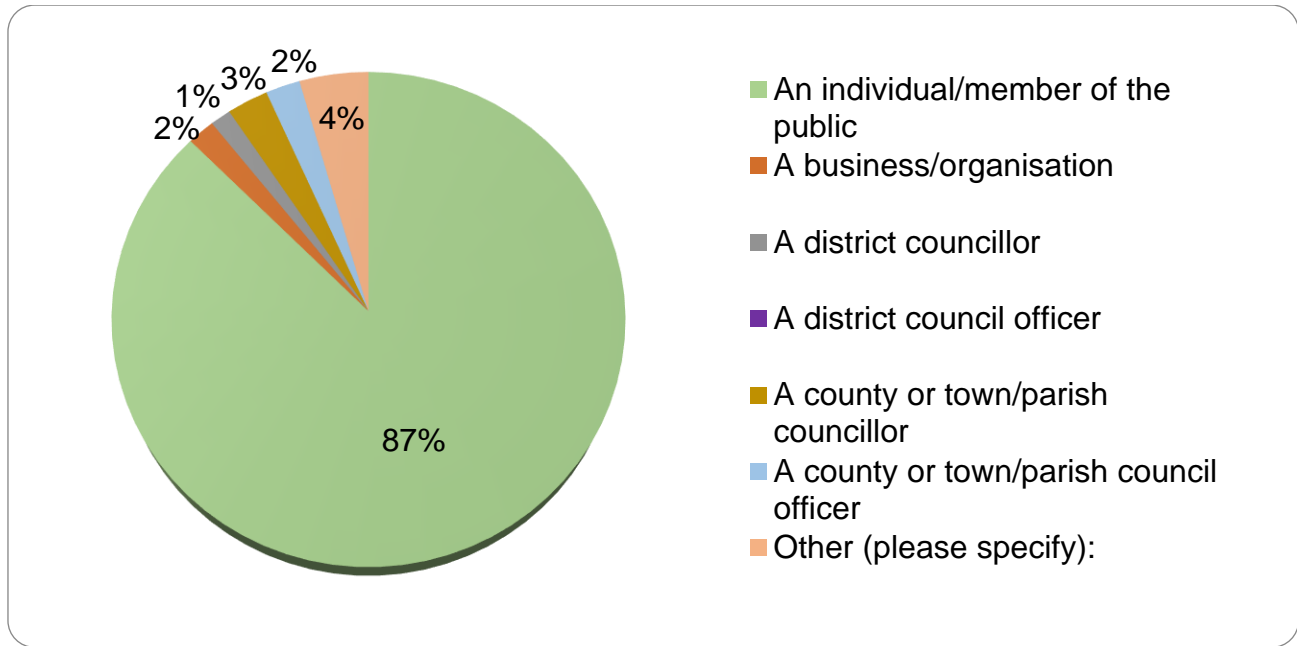
You are not required to provide your name or contact details. Any personal information you provide to the council within your comments that could identify you will not be published in the summary report. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, we may include the organisation's details in our report.

All personal information supplied to the council will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. Further information on data protection is available in our [privacy statement](#).

Save your progress and return to form later

A 'save and continue later' option is available using a link at the bottom of each page, so that you can save your progress so far, and then return later to your survey. Simply provide your name and email address and you will automatically receive a link via email.

Q1. Are you responding as:



The majority of responses (87 per cent) were received from individuals/members of the public.

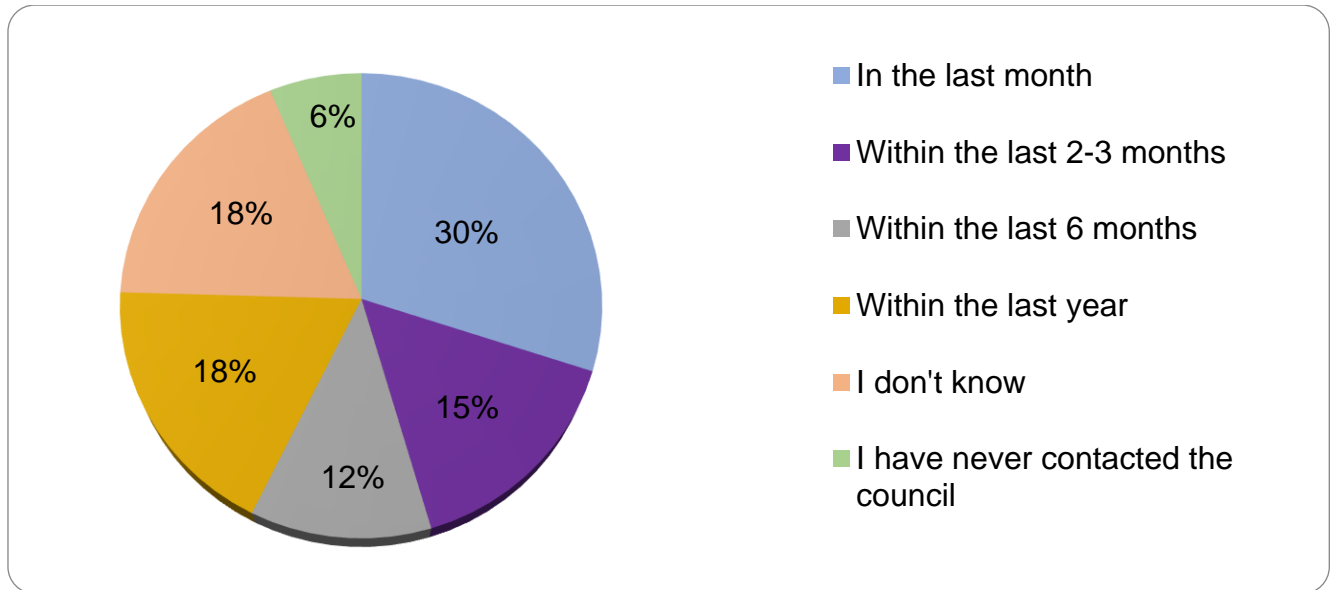
Other:

- Clerk and RFO for Parish Council*
- Parish Clerk X2*
- Former SODC Chairman and Parish Councillor*
- Former town and county councillor and current concerned citizen*
- School Governor*
- Educator*
- Voluntary customer representative group*
- Individual X3*

Q1.1 If you're representing an organisation, you can name it here:

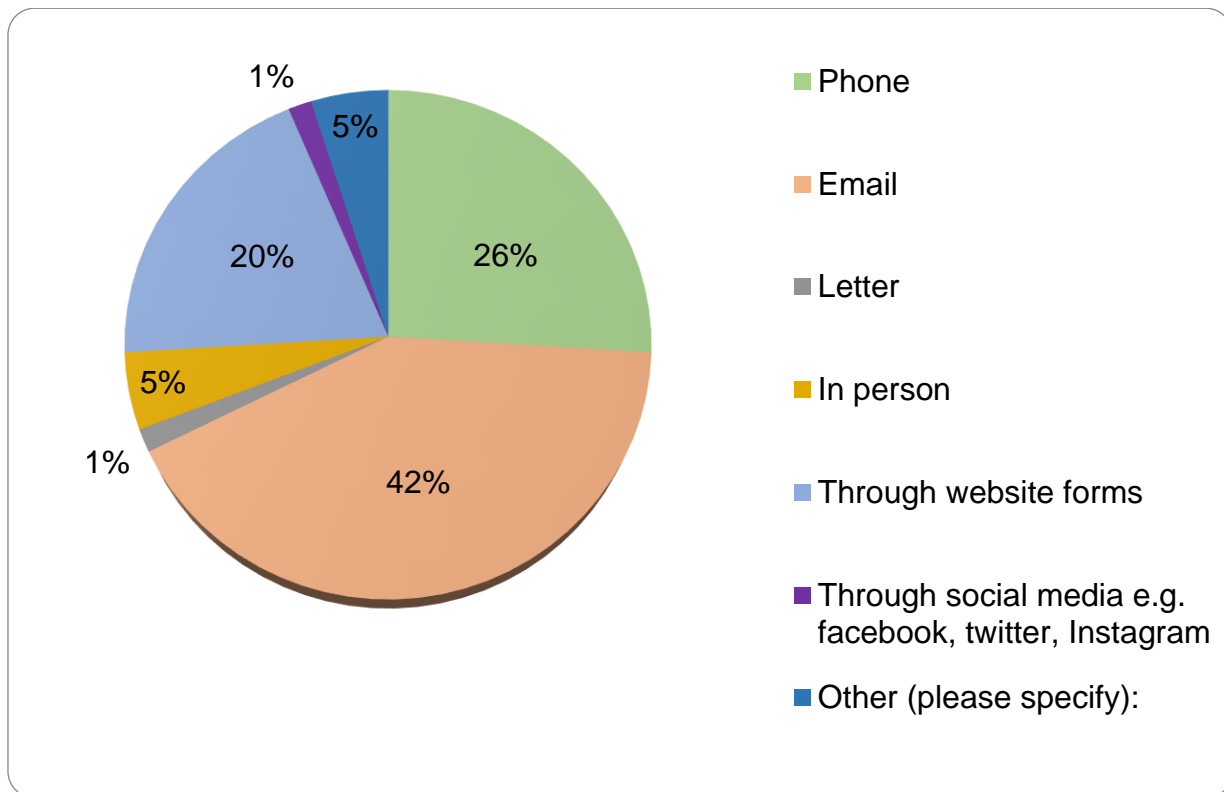
- Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council*
- Stoke Row Parish Council*
- Lewknor Parish Council*
- Chalgrove Parish Council*
- No*
- Binfield Heath*
- Barley Hill Primary School*
- NEPALESE COMMUNITY OXFORDSHIRE (NCO)*
- Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils*
- Wantage & District Mobility Group*
- Wheatley Parish Council*
- Beechcroft Developments Ltd*
- Oxfordshire Transport & Access Group*
- Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council*
- Pyrton Parish Council*

Q2. How long ago did you make contact with the council?



30 per cent of respondents said they had contacted the council in the last month. 15 per cent made contact within the last two-three months and 12 per cent within the last six months. 6 per cent of respondents had never contacted the council.

Q3. Thinking about your last contact, what method of communication did you use?

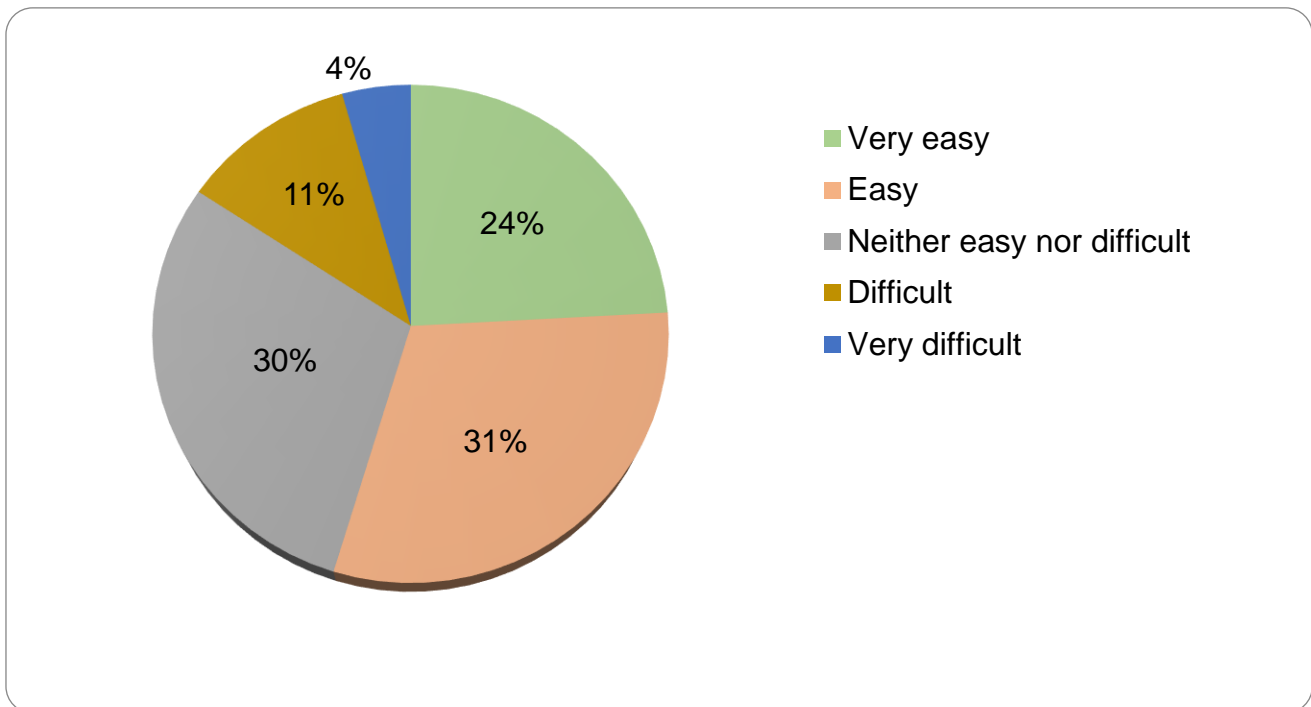


The most popular ways to communicate with the council were via email (42 per cent), by phone (26 per cent) and by website forms (20 per cent).

Other:

Web search for information on policies and planning applications
Teams meeting. I'm not sure why you are asking me this?
I contacted a local councillor
Don't know
Website and email
Too long ago to remember
And email
Zoom or Meet meetings
via teams meeting online face to face meeting
Either website or app (not 100% sure)

Q4. How easy or difficult did you find that interaction?



More than half of respondents (55 per cent) found contact either very easy (24 per cent) or easy (31 per cent), whilst 11 per cent found interaction difficult and 4 per cent found it very difficult.

If you answered quite difficult or very difficult, please explain why below:

This question received 35 comments.

The most common reason provided by respondents to explain why their interaction with the councils was difficult, or very difficult, was that it took too long to obtain an official response, if a response was obtained at all. This was mentioned in 28 per cent of comments.

The second most common answer was that it was difficult to find the right contacts or information online (26 per cent).

Additionally, 15 per cent of respondents said that it took too long for staff to answer the phone or get back to customers, and another 15 per cent said that the lack of in-person contact with

staff and heavy reliance on the website / electronic communications meant that interaction was not user-friendly.

Finally, 10 per cent of respondents said that council’s staff was not helpful.

Q5. Please explain anything we could have done differently to improve that interaction:

This question received 71 comments.

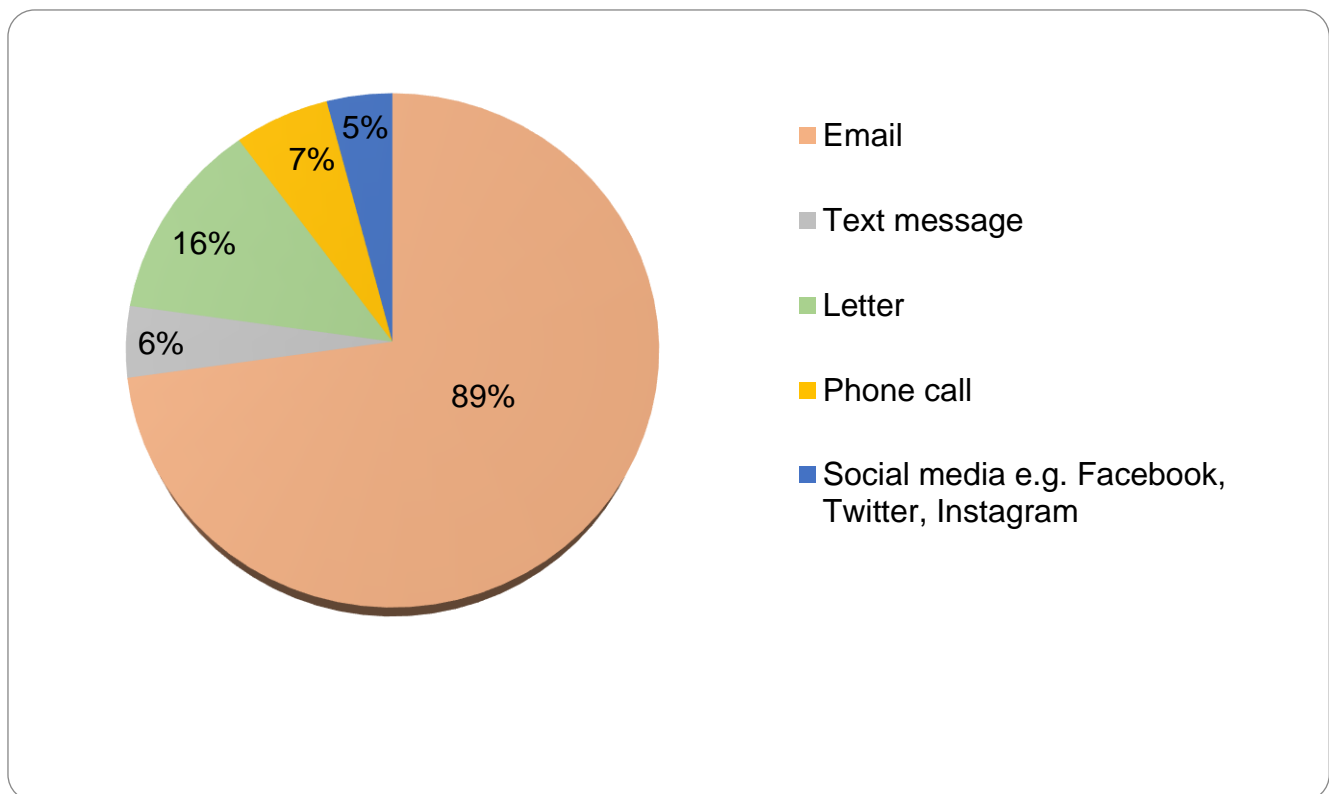
21 per cent of respondents indicated that the councils should respond to emails from customers and speed up the overall response process.

Another 16 per cent of respondents said that they would have liked better information on services and more clarity on contact details.

The third most mentioned area of improvement was communication from staff and councillors, and their knowledge of councils’ services (15 per cent).

13 per cent of comments referred to the need to improve the councils’ services, including taking responsibility for contractors’ negligence.

Q6. Which of these is the easiest way for you to receive information?



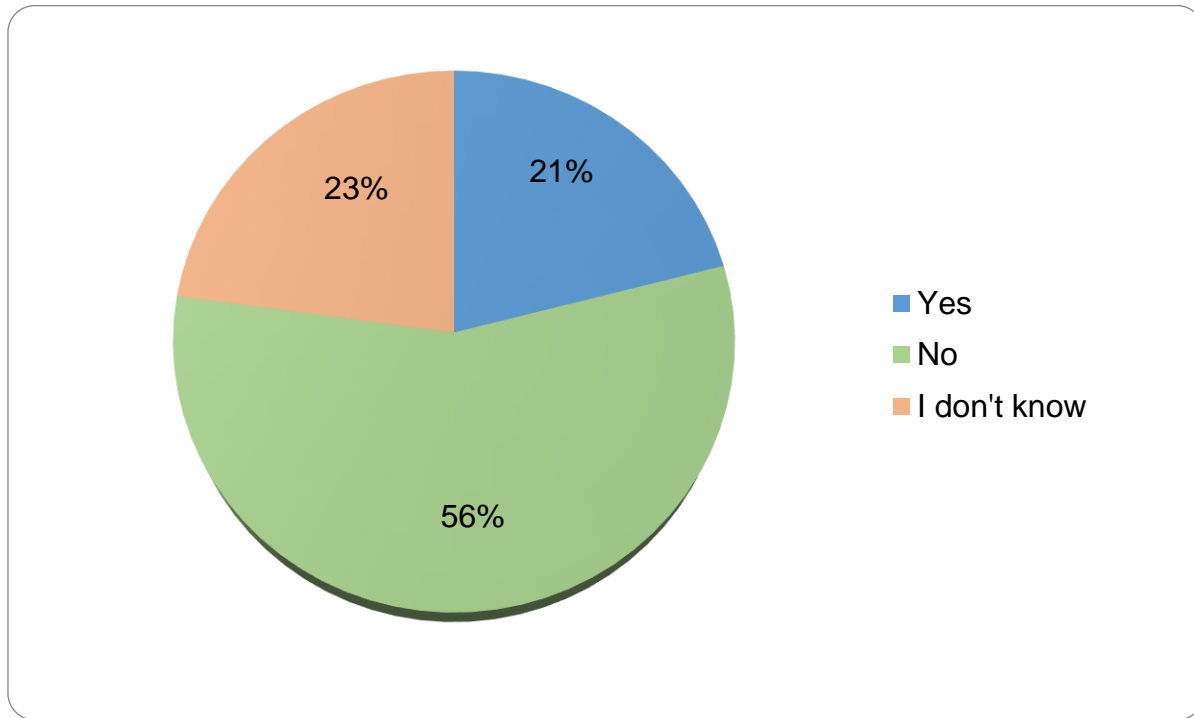
The majority of respondents (89 per cent) said email is the easiest way for them to receive information from the council. The second most popular way of receiving information is letter (16 per cent) and thirdly by a phone call (7 per cent).

Other (please specify):

This option was selected by seven respondents.

4 comments said that the best way to receive information depends on the type of information being communicated.

Q7. Would 'Easy Read' (This is a way of showing information in an accessible and easy to understand format, particularly for people with learning disabilities) be a better way for you or somebody you know to find out information from the council?



The majority of respondents (56 per cent) said that Easy Read is not a better way for them or somebody they know to find out information from the council and 21 per cent said yes.

Draft Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

This section of the survey asked respondents questions about the draft Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and action plan. A link to the strategy and action plan was provided.

[Click or tap here to download and read the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and action plan.](#)

Q8. How far do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach in the action plan towards addressing the following areas:

Knowing our communities

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
20%	44%	19%	8%	7%	3%
(44)	(94)	(40)	(17)	(14)	(7)

Almost two-thirds of respondents (64 per cent) support the approach to “knowing our communities” which is set in the action plan, including 44 per cent who agree and 20 percent who strongly agree with it. 8 per cent disagree with the approach and 7 per cent strongly disagree.

Involving our communities

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
20%	44%	21%	5%	7%	4%
(43)	(95)	(44)	(11)	(14)	(8)

Almost two-thirds of respondents (64 per cent) support the approach to involve our communities which is explained in the action plan, including 44 per cent who agree and 20 per cent who strongly agree with it. 5 per cent disagree with the approach and 7 per cent strongly disagree.

Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
17%	37%	26%	8%	8%	4%
(37)	(78)	(55)	(18)	(18)	(8)

Over half the respondents (54 per cent) said that they support our leadership, partnership and organisational commitment, including 37 per cent who agree and 17 per cent who strongly agree with the action plan. 8 per cent disagree with our leadership, partnership and organisational commitment and another 8 per cent strongly disagree.

Responsive services and customer care

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
27%	39%	15%	7%	8%	4%
(57)	(84)	(33)	(14)	(18)	(9)

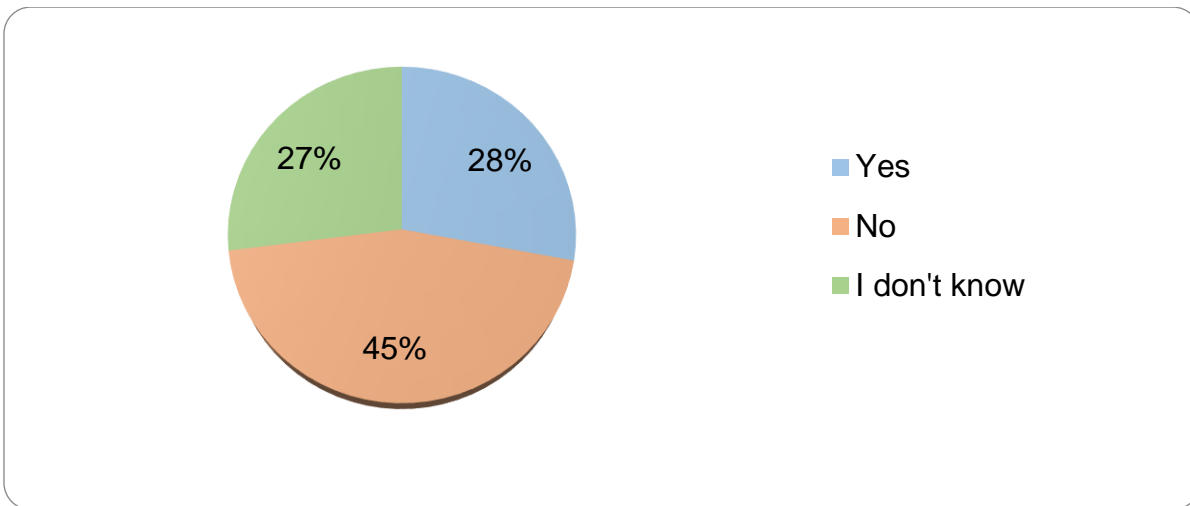
Two-thirds of respondents (66 per cent) support our approach towards responsive services and customer care, including 39 per cent who agree and 27 per cent who strongly agree, whilst 7 per cent disagree and 8 per cent strongly disagree.

A skilled and committed workforce

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
30%	38%	16%	4%	9%	4%
(65)	(81)	(35)	(8)	(19)	(8)

Over two-thirds of respondents (68 per cent) support our approach towards a skilled and committed workforce, including 38 per cent who agree and 30 per cent who strongly agree. This was the area of the Diversity and inclusion Strategy which received the highest level of endorsement. 4 per cent disagree with our approach and 9 per cent strongly disagree.

Q9. Are there any actions you would like to see added to the action plan in the draft [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#)? (see pages 4 to 8)



45 per cent of respondents said they don't want any actions added to the action plan in the draft Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. This was followed by 28 per cent who said yes and 27 per cent who said they don't know.

Q10. If yes, what actions would you like to see added?

This question received 66 comments.

Among the areas mentioned by respondents, the most common were that the councils should engage with and listen to communities more (21 per cent of respondents), and that this strategy is unnecessary and taxpayer money is better spent on other priorities (21 per cent).

The type of community engagement that most respondents said they would like to see is direct/in-person, for example through local meetings, as this would reach residents who are not internet users due to disability or age.

The third most common comment in response to this question was that more should be done to improve accessibility and inclusion (13 per cent), for example among young, school-age children. 12 per cent of respondents commented that the policy is vague and difficult to assess.

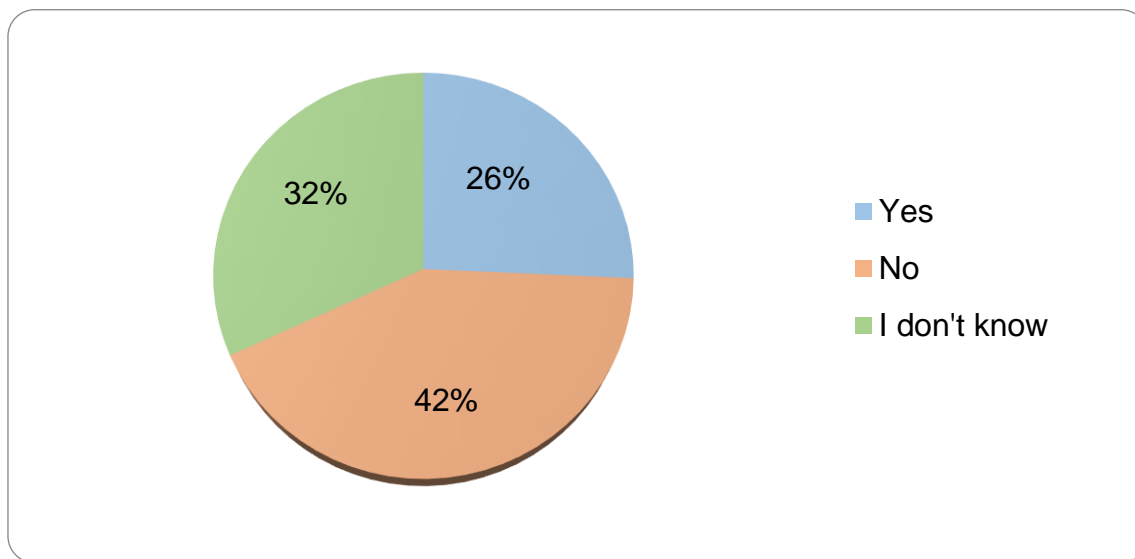
Q11. Overall, what do you think about the draft [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#)?

This question received 154 comments.

44 per cent of respondents considered the draft Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to be sensible, thorough, and useful. 29 per cent of comments voiced disappointment with the strategy, which was considered unnecessary and a waste of public money.

13 per cent of respondents judged the strategy to be a little vague, difficult to put into practice and assess its impact on communities.

Q12. Do you think anything is missing from the draft [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#)?



42 per cent of respondents said they don't think anything is missing from the draft Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. This was followed by 32 per cent who said they don't know and 26 per cent who said yes.

Q13. If yes, what is missing from the draft [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#)?

This question received 59 comments.

The area that was mentioned the most was that the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy lacks practical actions that can promote inclusion (34 per cent of comments). Among the actions that were suggested, respondents mentioned: *more community engagement, English classes for non-English speakers, religious facilities for all faiths, training for councils' staff and improved communication.*

19 per cent of respondents said that the strategy lacks concision and clarity around the measures of success, and that it was quite complicated. An additional 19 per cent of comments were unrelated to the question.

7 per cent of respondents said that the strategy should clearly indicate the protected characteristics. More specifically, most comments in this category indicated the need to include sex and not gender.

Q14. What do you think is the most common mistake an organisation makes in its approach to diversity and inclusion?

This question received 158 comments.

The most common response was that organisations risk not basing their diversity and inclusion policies on evidence and fail to directly engage with the community. This was mentioned by 25 per cent of respondents.

The second most common response, which was mentioned by another 24 per cent of respondents, was that organisations risk developing such policies just for appearance but fail to put them into practice.

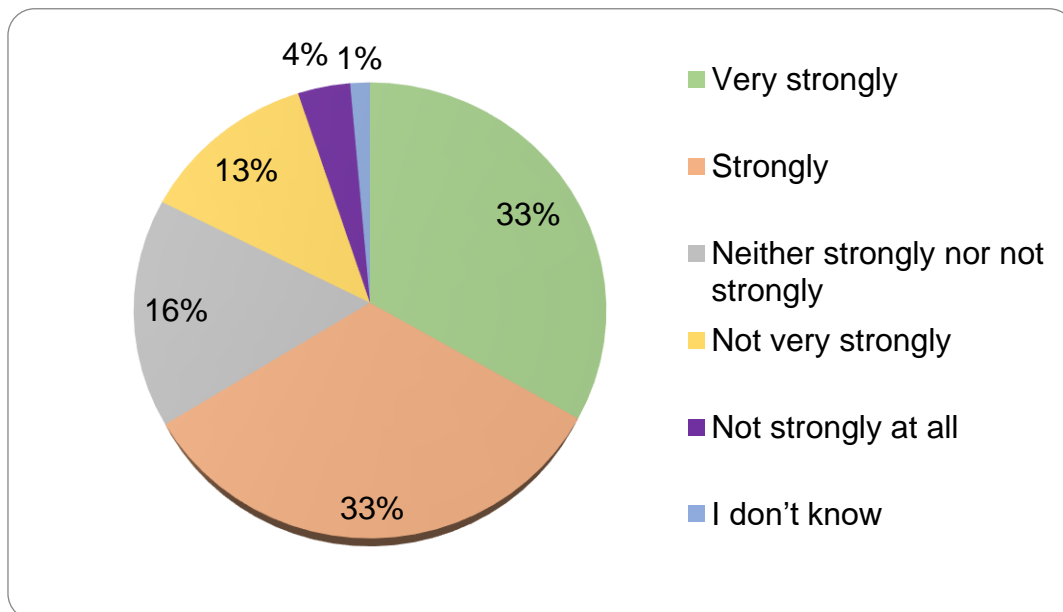
The third biggest group of respondents (18 per cent) said that spending public money to develop diversity and inclusion policies is not appropriate and such principles should just be embedded in the culture of the organisation.

Community Cohesion

This section of the survey was included to help the councils gain a better understanding of community relations.

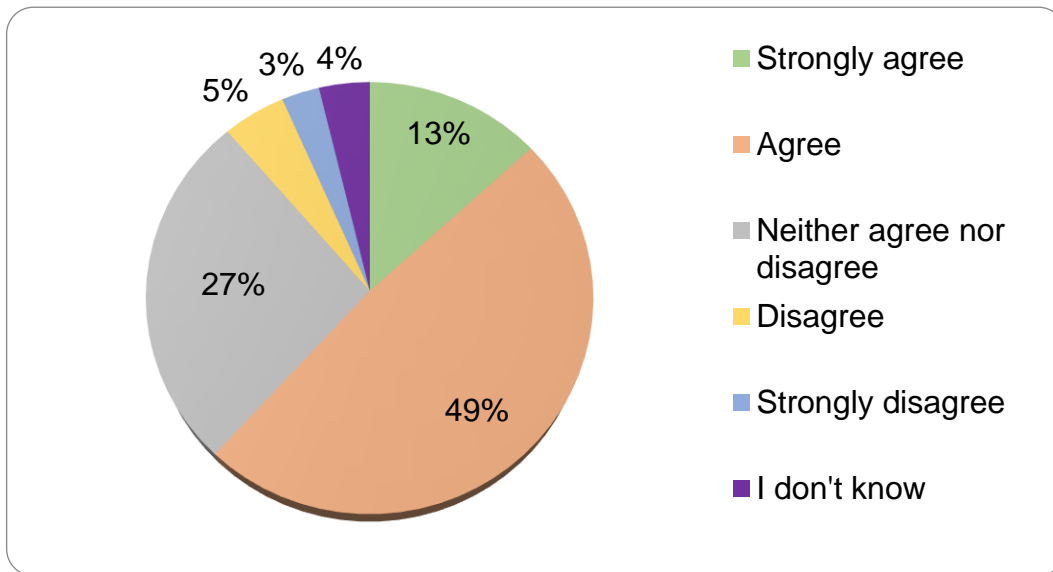
Q15. How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?

(When answering the questions in this section, please consider your local area to be within 15-20 minutes walking distance from your home)



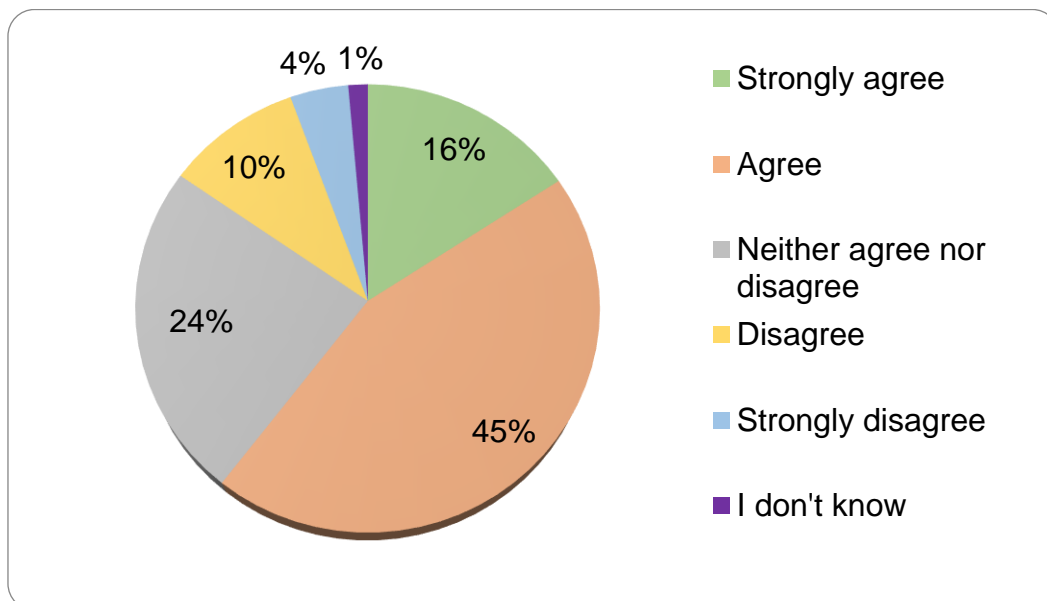
33 per cent of respondents stated that they feel they very strongly belong to their local area, while a further 33 per cent stated that they strongly belong. Overall, two-thirds of respondents feel strongly or very strongly connected to their local area. A total of 13 per cent feel they do not very strongly belong to their local area and the figure for not strongly at all is 4 per cent.

Q16. To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?



49 per cent of respondents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together and 13 per cent strongly agree with this. A total of 5 per cent disagree and 3 per cent strongly disagree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Over a quarter of respondents (27 per cent) indicated they neither agree nor disagree.

Q17. To what extent do you agree or disagree that people pull together to improve the local area?



45 per cent of respondents agree that people pull together to improve their local area, and 16 per cent strongly agree with this. 10 per cent of respondents disagree and 4 per cent strongly disagree that people pull together to improve their local area. Almost a quarter of respondents (24 per cent) neither agree nor disagree.

Q18. Do you have any other comments about diversity and inclusion that you would like to add? If yes, please use the box below.

This question received 76 comments.

The most recurring comment was disagreement over the use of public money to develop a diversity and inclusion strategy. This was mentioned by 20 per cent of respondents.

Similar views were voiced by the second biggest group of respondents (18 per cent), who don't see diversity and inclusion as being an issue in the districts.

The third biggest group of respondents (16 per cent) feel that their community is not always inclusive, or they don't feel connected to it.

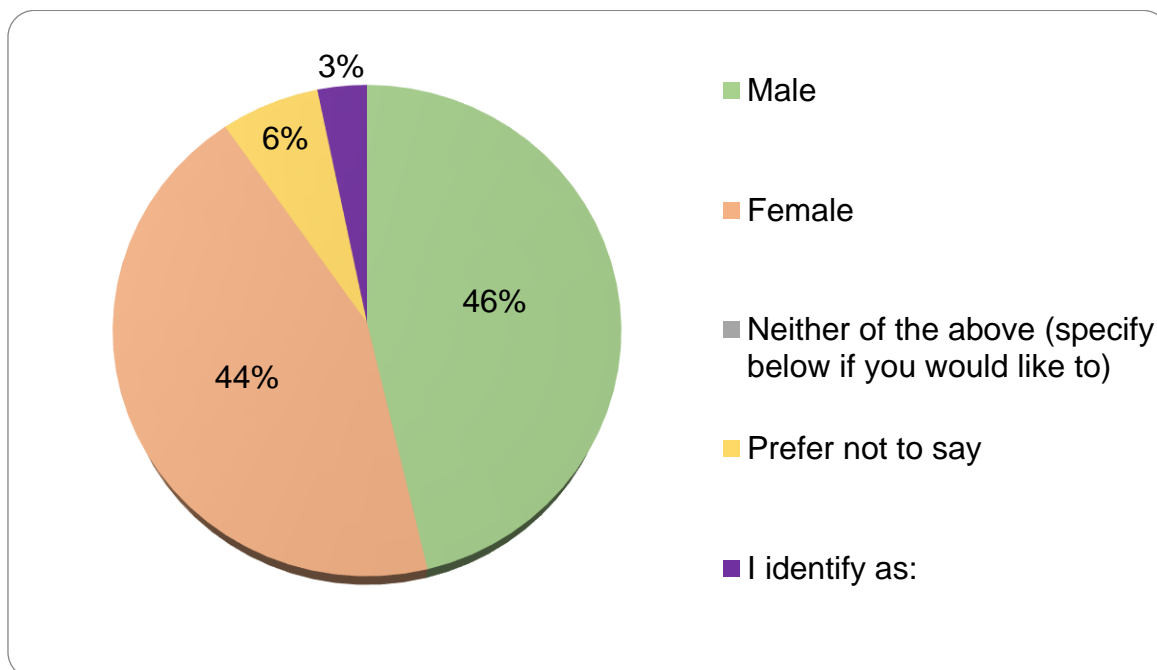
Our commitment to equal access for all

The councils are committed to making sure that residents have equal access to all services. The questions included in this section of the survey help us monitor how successfully we are achieving this.

Whenever possible, we have compared the demographic characteristics of respondents to those displayed by the districts' population. This helps us understand to what degree results are representative of our community. The districts' demographic data has been drawn from both the 2021 and 2011 Census, which is available on [Local Insight](#) and [Nomisweb](#).

All questions were optional. All information is confidential and will only be used to help us understand whether views differ across the community.

Q19. Which of the following describes how you identify yourself?



46 per cent of respondents said they identify as a male followed by 44 per cent of females. Since male and female respondents are almost equally split in two groups, this is a good representation of the districts' population, where males and females residents each constitute

50 per cent of the total. However, with 6 per cent of respondents preferring not to disclose their gender, the actual distribution of respondents by gender is less clear.

I identify as:

Vulcan

Please don't conflate sex (Male/Female) with gender identity - you can capture both if you want without rolling them into one Q. It renders the info you are capturing useless for some purposes - how will you know if women are underrepresented in answering this survey?

I don't identify as anything. I'm a female. I have a nationality.

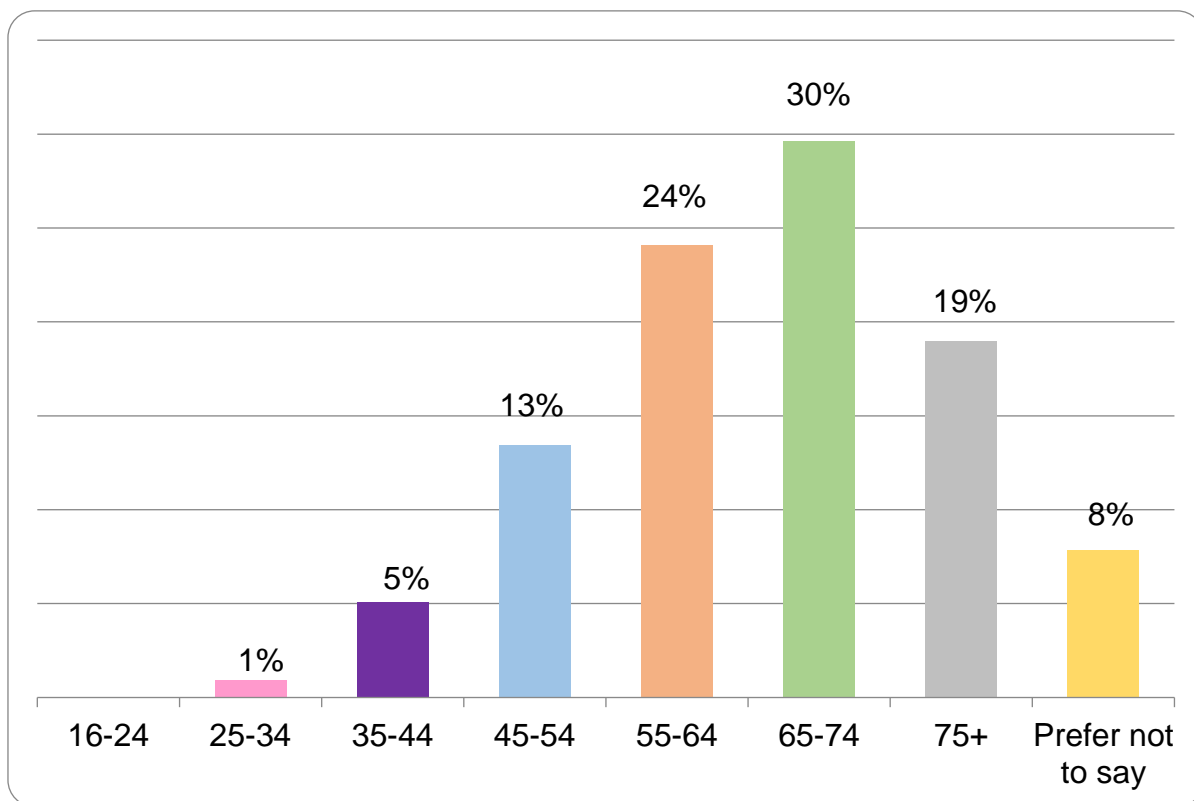
I do not identify as anything - I am an adult human female. Your question is badly phrased and a cause for concern

Human

How can you not be male or female woke woke woke

We are two people responding together. One male, one female.

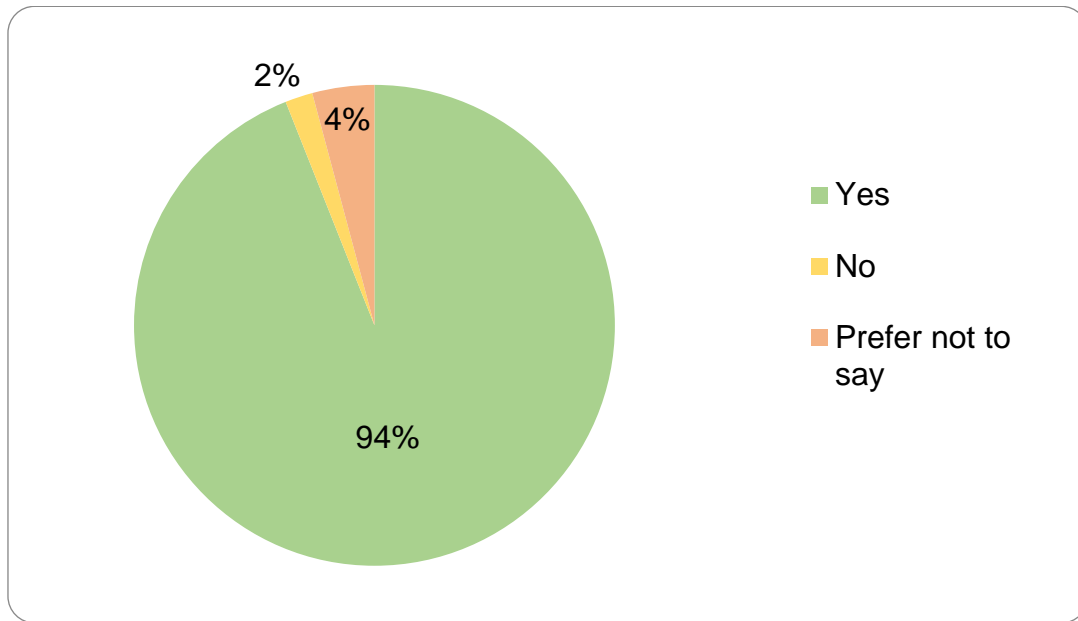
Q20. How old are you?



The largest age group was 65–74-year-olds, which included 30 per cent of respondents. This was followed by 55-64-year-olds with 24 per cent and 75+ with 19 per cent. We received 5 per cent of responses from those in the 35-44 age group and 1 per cent in the 25-34 age group.

The age distribution of respondents does not well represent the districts’ population. More specifically, older age groups seem to be overrepresented in this survey while younger groups are underrepresented. For example, while those over 55 make up 73 per cent of survey respondents, they make up 33 per cent of the districts’ population.

Q21. Is English your first language?

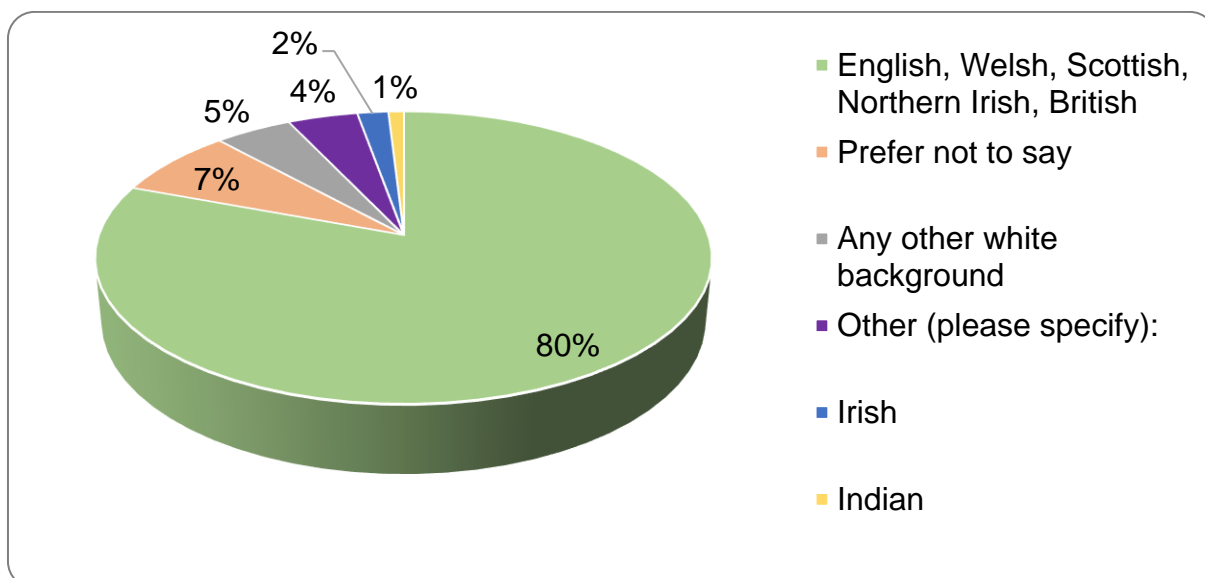


The majority of respondents (94 per cent) said that English is their first language. This seems to represent well the wider population of the districts, where 96 per cent of residents consider English as their main language, whilst 3 per cent don't consider English as their main language.

If you have said 'no' please let us know what your first language is here:

Fante
Nepali

Q22. What is your ethnic group?

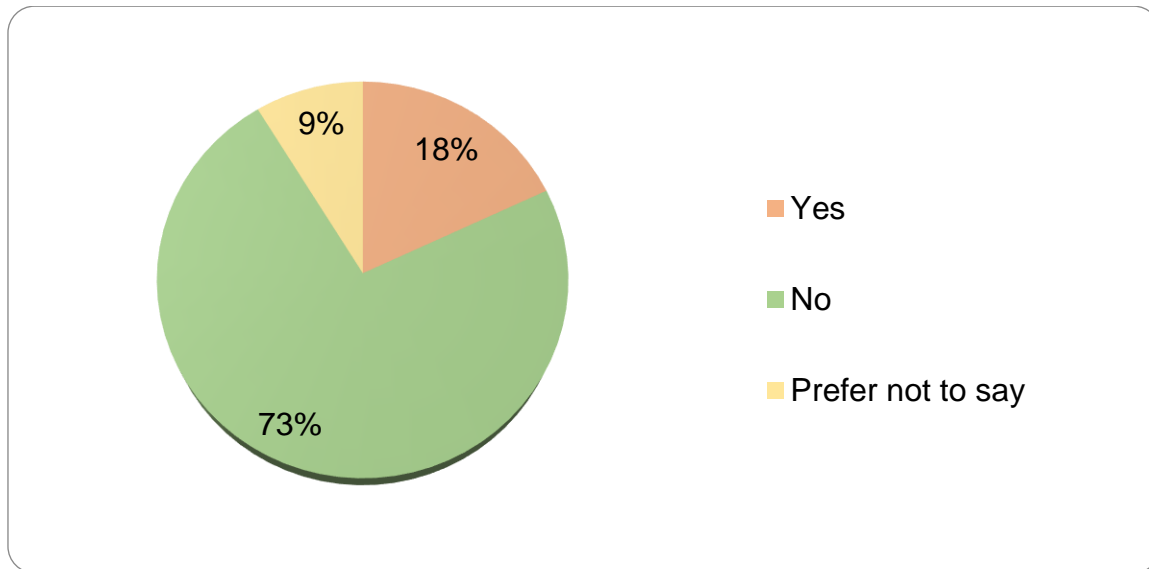


The majority of respondents (80 per cent) said their ethnic group was English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British. 7 per cent said they would prefer not to say. Of the 4 per cent that selected 'Other (please specify)', groups mentioned included *Nepali*, *Maori* and *Norwegian*. For

ease of representation, ethnic groups which recorded zero per cent of responses have been omitted in the above chart.

These results are representative of the wider population of the districts, where 90 per cent of residents identify as White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish and British, 4 per cent are from any other White background, 1 per cent are Indians and 1 per cent are Irish.

Q23. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more?



The majority of respondents (73 per cent) said that their day-to-day activities are not limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more. Another 18 per cent of respondents said that their activities are limited due to a health problem or disability.

If yes, please specify:

The largest group of respondents said that they struggle with mobility issues. The second and third most common health issue was arthritis and neurological disease.

Anything else?

Q24. If you have any additional comments you would like to make, please provide them in the comment box below.

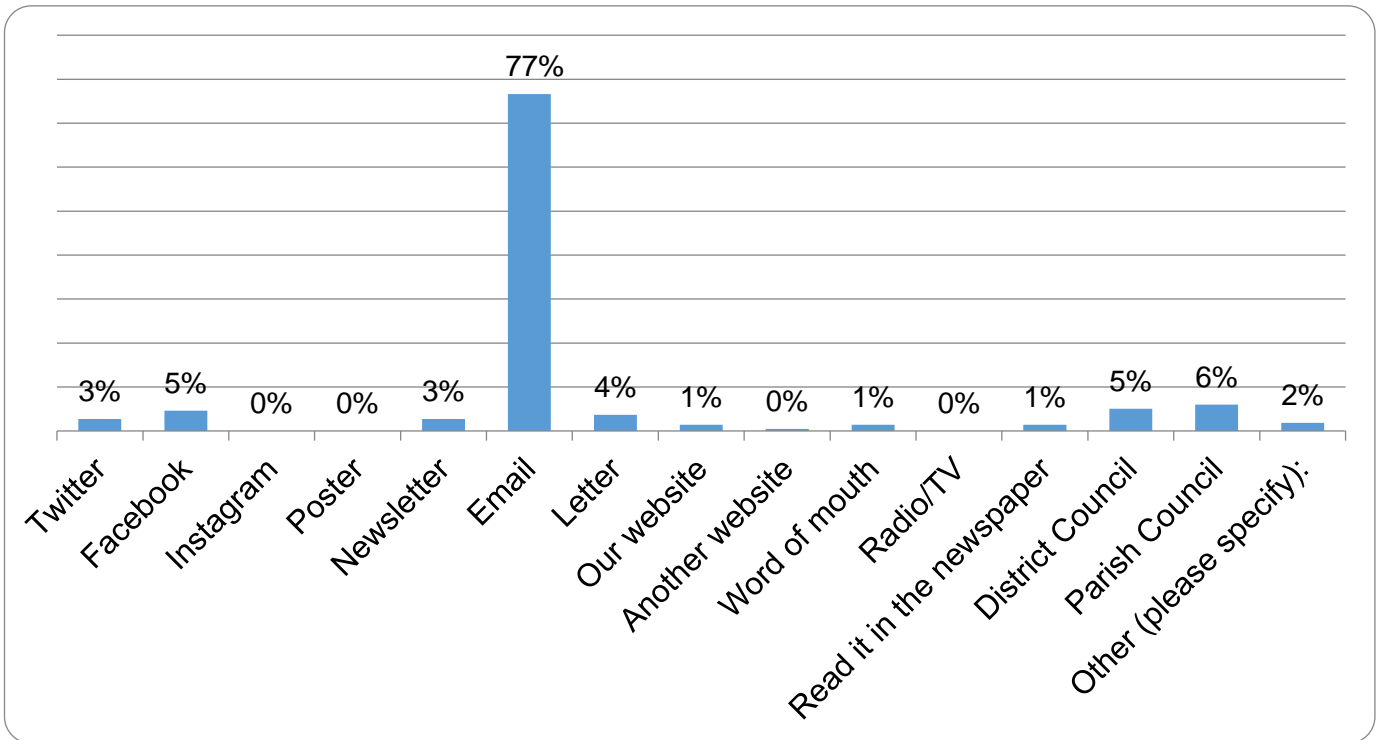
51 comments were received in response to this question.

27 per cent of respondents said that they feel that the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is not a priority and represents a wasteful use of public resources.

The second and third largest group of respondents said they had no further comments to make, or made other comments, including some unrelated to the question. Both groups made up 17 per cent of respondents.

Finally, 11 per cent of respondents said that more should be done to tackle social exclusion due to technology, age and disability.

Q25. How did you hear about the Draft Diversity and Inclusion Strategy?



Most respondents (77 per cent) said they heard about the Draft Diversity and Inclusion strategy via email.

Other (please specify):

- Twitter*
- Email X2*
- Cornerstone*

FURTHER INFORMATION

For information about the consultation or the results presented in this report, please contact:

Consultation and Community Engagement Team
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
01235 422125
haveyoursay@southandvale.gov.uk

To enquire about the council's work on the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, please contact:

Lynne Mitchell
Equality & Inclusivity Officer
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
lynne.mitchell@southandvale.gov.uk

END.