



Our Budget Challenge – Survey Results

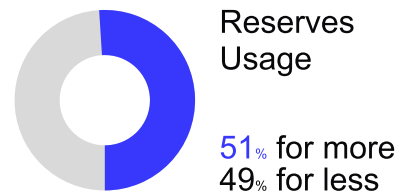
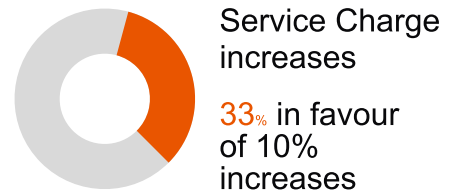
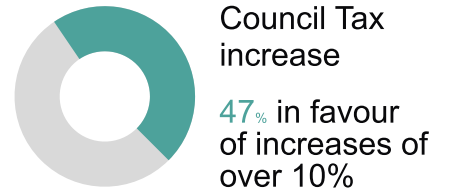
We launched a public consultation in December 2024 to gather local views on potential changes to Council services and charges. These views will help inform the Council's budget setting process in February 2025.

The consultation received 1,077 completed responses. Results are presented in the following pages, including feedback summaries for each question.

The survey demographics are provided as an appendix at the end of the document.

Summary

✓✓	✓	-	x	xx	
24%	48%	18%	6%	5%	Charging for services
26%	30%	15%	12%	17%	Additional free fruit for P1 + P2s
21%	32%	11%	16%	20%	Papdale Halls – extra curricular
14%	19%	11%	15%	42%	↳ Isles response
23%	35%	11%	15%	16%	Papdale Halls – placing requests
22%	25%	9%	14%	30%	↳ Isles response
30%	40%	14%	9%	7%	Orkney Museum winter closure
29%	28%	19%	10%	15%	Early-learning and Childcare
34%	37%	12%	11%	7%	Public events clean up
12%	17%	28%	21%	22%	Closure of Dounby recycling point
40%	33%	10%	7%	9%	Ferry-linked isles - free black bags
22%	18%	13%	14%	34%	↳ Isles response
7%	12%	15%	25%	40%	Emptying skips at the weekend
18%	41%	28%	7%	5%	Standardised time for cleaning
27%	36%	24%	7%	6%	Remove home-based Registrar service
21%	30%	23%	8%	18%	↳ Isles response
11%	30%	29%	18%	12%	Reduce customer services opening hours



Analysis breakdown

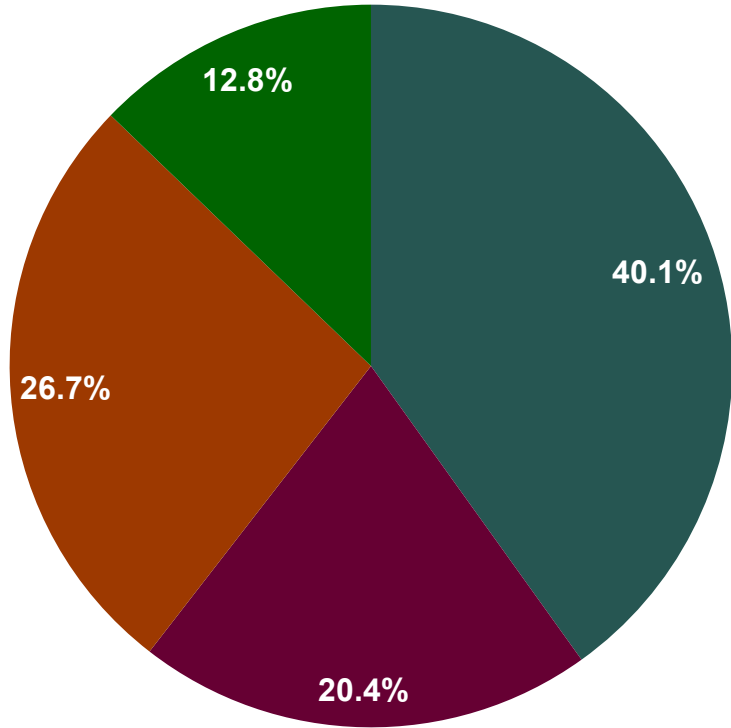
- Throughout this report the responses have been broken down further where appropriate.
- For example, where a proposal would affect a specific group, for example those from the ferry-linked isles, the analysis and comments have been shown for this specific group in addition to the full results.



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- [Q3| What percentage increase](#)
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- [Q6| Papdale Halls of Residence – extra curricular](#)
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Q1| What is the maximum increase in Council Tax that you would be willing to pay to help protect local services?



- Band D increase of £11.41 per month
- Band D increase of £17.12 per month
- Band D increase of £22.82 per month
- I don't know

Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Band D increase of £11.41 per month	40.1%	401
2 Band D increase of £17.12 per month	20.4%	204
3 Band D increase of £22.82 per month	26.7%	267
4 I don't know	12.8%	128
	Comment	306
	Answered	1000
	Skipped	77



Q1| Comments Summary:

General comments

- **Concerns about Council Spending:** Many respondents expressed concerns about how the Council spends its funds, wanting to ensure money is used efficiently and not wasted on unnecessary projects, criticising the growth of back-office teams and the creation of new high-salary positions. Some suggested that the Council should address internal inefficiencies and explore cost-saving measures before increasing taxes. This includes cutting top-level salaries, reducing staff numbers, and eliminating unnecessary expenditures. Some had concerns that increasing Council Tax could negatively impact the local economy by reducing residents' disposable income.
- **Need for Transparency:** There is a call for more transparency regarding what the Council Tax increase will fund. Respondents want to see a clear breakdown of how the funds are used and expect improvements in services in return for the increase: specifically which services would benefit.



Q1| Comments Summary (continued):

General comments continued:

- **Financial Strain on Residents:** The current cost of living crisis was a common theme, with respondents noting that any significant increase in Council Tax would exacerbate financial difficulties for many, including pensioners and those already struggling to make ends meet, particularly those who do not receive benefits. Some comments suggested that the Council should consider offering reductions or exemptions for vulnerable groups, such as those on benefits or low incomes. Many respondents who supported the largest increase mentioned that while they can afford the increase, it would be fairer if people on lower incomes paid less, and that they would want assurance the funds would improve services.

Those who answered ‘Band D increase of £11.41 per month’

- **Equity and service delivery:** Many comments highlighted the disparity in services between the mainland and the isles. Respondents feel that the isles do not receive the same level of services as the mainland, and some suggested that Council Tax should be reduced for island communities.

Those who answered ‘Band D increase of £17.12 and £22.82 per month’

- **Focus on Core Services:** Respondents emphasised the importance of focusing on core services and making difficult decisions about cutting non-essential services. The focus should be on maintaining and improving essential services. Some respondents are willing to pay the increase to ensure that vital services are preserved.

Q1| Comments Summary (continued):

Those who answered 'I don't know'

- **General Opposition to Increase:** Many respondents (41 out of 83 comments) expressed a strong opposition to any increase in Council Tax, citing that they already pay enough or too much for the services they receive. A common theme was the perception that the current level of Council Tax does not provide adequate value for money. Respondents mentioned poor service delivery, such as infrequent bin collections, lack of street lighting, and poorly maintained roads.

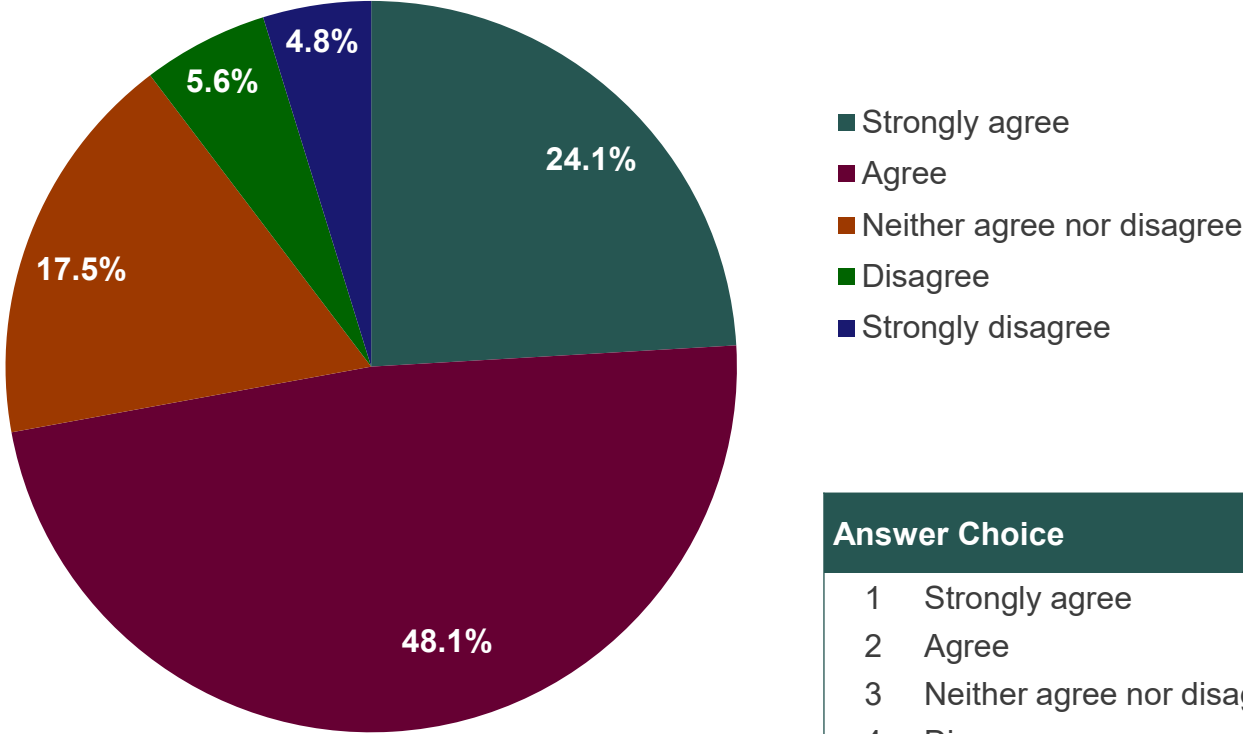
Some other comments and reflections:

- **Explore alternative revenue sources:** including re-banding properties and taxing second homes.
- **Opportunity for further communications:** Some of what is being asked for in the comments is already in place, for example respondents called for a long-term vision and strategic planning to address future challenges rather than short-term fixes. There is an opportunity to improve our communication to the public explaining what is being done / is in place.



Q2| The Council charges for some of its services, for example hiring a room in a public building. Our proposal is to introduce some new charges, or increase existing charges to help protect services, rather than see services cut.

Do you:



Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	24.1%	247
2 Agree	48.1%	493
3 Neither agree nor disagree	17.5%	180
4 Disagree	5.6%	57
5 Strongly disagree	4.8%	49
	Comment	210
	Answered	1026
	Skipped	51

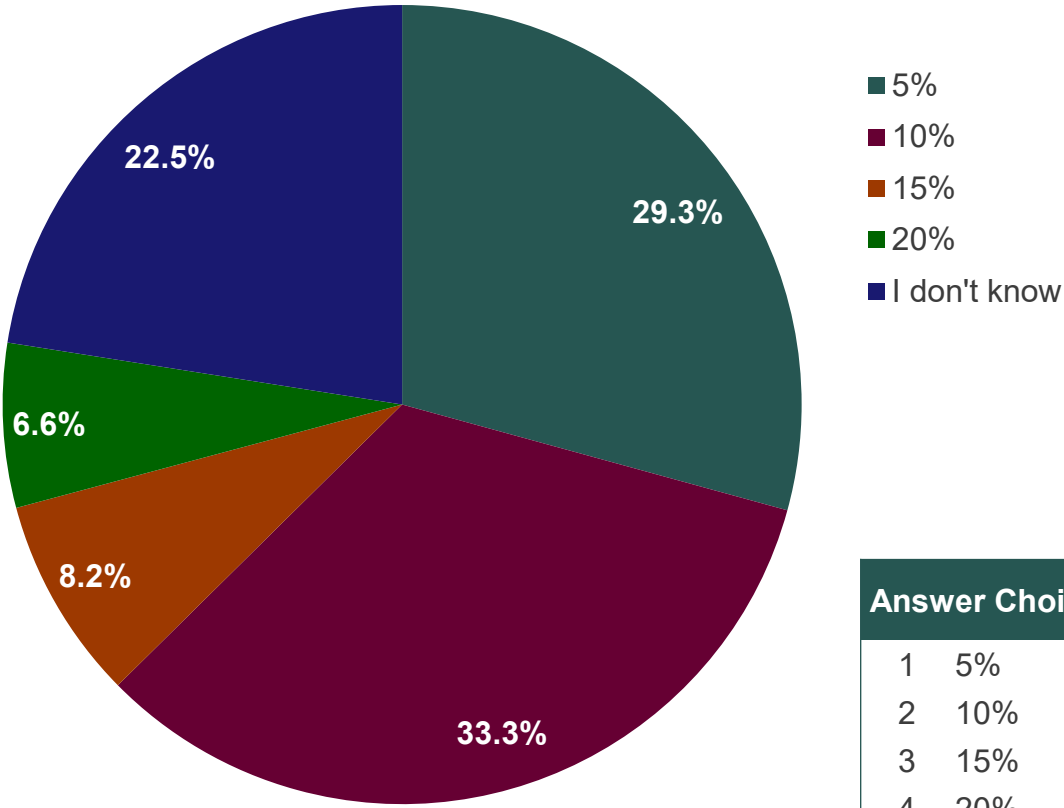


Q2| Comments Summary:

Key points from comments:

- **Support for Increased Charges:** Some agree with the proposal, stating it is reasonable to charge for non-essential services like room hire to avoid cutting essential services.
- **Affordability Concerns:** Many are worried that increased charges will make it difficult for community groups, charities, and low-income individuals to afford these services.
- **Impact on Usage:** Concern that higher charges might lead to reduced usage of Council facilities, which could ultimately result in lower overall revenue.
- **Efficiency and Cost-Saving Measures:** A few comments recommend the Council should focus on reducing management costs and improving efficiency before increasing charges.
- **Comparison with Private Sector:** Charges should be in line with private sector charges for similar services.
- **Support for Voluntary and Third Sector Partners:** Call for the Council to consider how increased charges may impact voluntary and third sector partners, who are vital for delivering savings. Some suggested implementing a tiered pricing system, where different rates are applied to a private function versus a charitable function.
- **Alternative Revenue Sources:** Some suggest exploring other revenue sources, such as selling underused properties or increasing marketing efforts to boost usage.
- **General Agreement with Caveats:** While some agree with the proposal in principle, they emphasise the need for careful consideration of the impact on vulnerable groups and the importance of transparency in the decision-making process.

Q3| If we were to increase charges, what percentage increase would you be willing to pay to help protect local services?



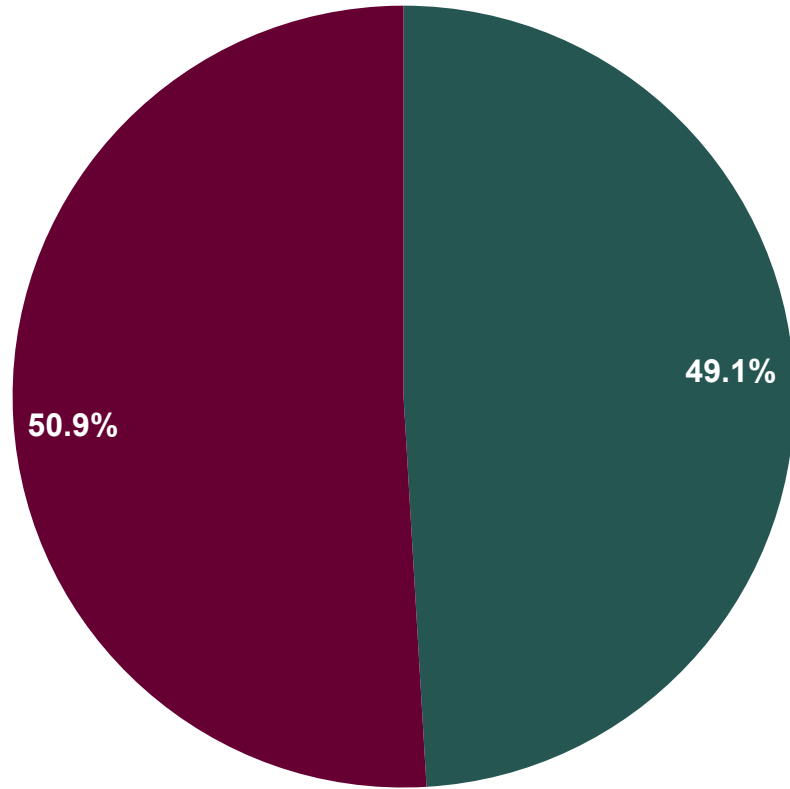
Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 5%	29.3%	295
2 10%	33.3%	336
3 15%	8.2%	83
4 20%	6.6%	67
5 I don't know	22.5%	227
	Comment	191
	Answered	1008
	Skipped	69



Q3| Comments Summary:

- **Concerns about affordability:** Many expressed that any increase in charges should be affordable and in line with wage increases or inflation.
- **Need for clarity and specifics:** Several highlighted the need for more information about current charges and the specific services that would be affected by the increase.
- **Sliding scale approach:** Some suggested a sliding scale for increases, where essential services have minimal increases and non-essential or private functions have higher increases.
- **Impact on Vulnerable Groups:** Concerns about the impact on vulnerable groups
- **Alternative cost-saving measures:** proposed exploring internal cost-saving measures, such as reducing management headcount, asset rationalisation, and operational cost reductions.
- **Fairness and Equity:** emphasised the importance of fairness and equity in any charge increases, ensuring that all citizens benefit from protected services.
- **Concerns about Service Quality:** some were skeptical about whether increased charges would actually protect or improve local services.
- **Negative impact on usage:** worries that significant increases in charges could lead to reduced usage of services, particularly for non-essential services.
- **Government funding:** a few suggested that funding should come from Scottish Government rather than increasing local charges.
- **General opposition to increases:** several were opposed to any increase in charges, citing the current cost of living pressures and dissatisfaction with the Council's performance.

Q4| In 2024/25 we used £20m from our Reserve Fund to balance our revenue budget, which is unsustainable. This is because the role of the Reserve Fund is to fund projects that benefit the community. If we maintain the real value of the fund we can continue financing these projects in the future. Should Orkney Islands Council:



- Reduce the amount that is being withdrawn from these reserves now – meaning that there is less funding available, and we will have to significantly reduce services or projects
- Use more of the reserves – this will mean that core services and projects are maintained now - but there will be less earnings in future which will affect service provision in years ahead

Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Reduce the amount that is being withdrawn from these reserves now – meaning that there is less funding available, and we will have to significantly reduce services or projects	49.1%	471
2 Use more of the reserves – this will mean that core services and projects are maintained now - but there will be less earnings in future which will affect service provision in years ahead	50.9%	489
	Comment	282
	Answered	960
	Skipped	117

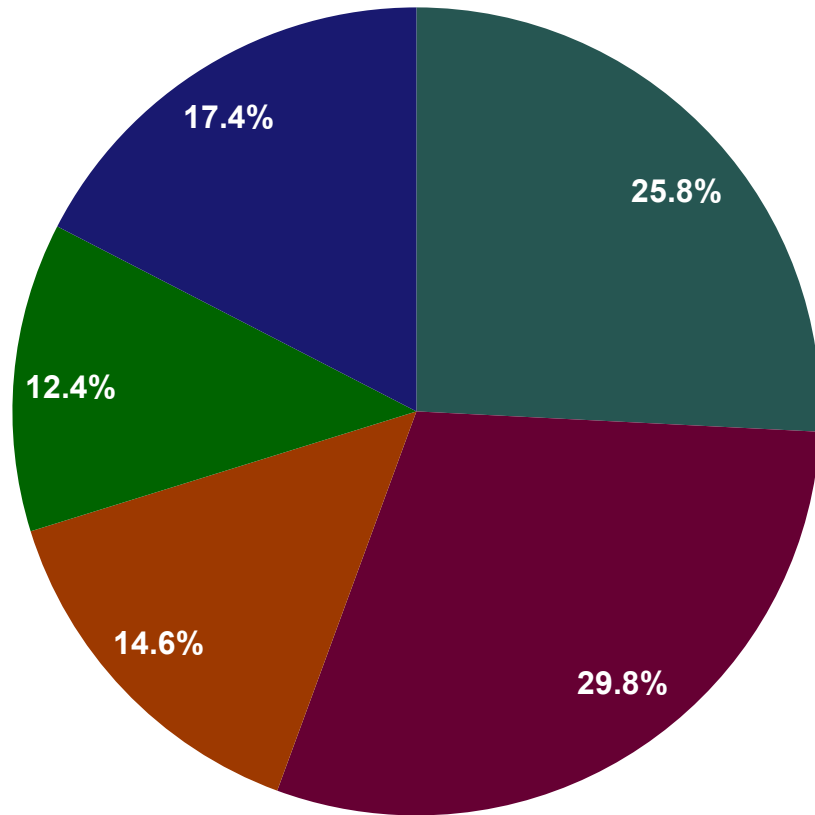
Q4| Comments Summary:

The comments from respondents who support **increasing the amount being withdrawn** from the reserves highlight a strong sense of urgency and a need to address immediate financial pressures. Many believe that the reserves should be used to protect essential services and support the community during tough times, especially given the current cost of living crisis. There is also a call for better management, transparency, and strategic investments to ensure the long-term sustainability of the reserves and the community's well-being.

The comments from respondents who support **reducing our use of reserves** reflect a strong desire for OIC to adopt a more sustainable and responsible approach to managing the Reserve Fund. They emphasise the need to cut unnecessary spending, reform Council operations, and focus on essential services. Additionally, there is a call for better financial management, increased efficiency, and long-term planning to ensure that the reserve fund can continue to benefit the community in the future. These key points highlight the community's concern for preserving the reserve fund for future generations and avoiding short-term measures that could lead to financial instability.



Q5| At present, all P1 – P5 pupils get a free piece of fruit with their lunch. P1 and P2 are offered an additional piece of fruit during the day. We’re proposing that we don’t offer that second piece of fruit. Do you:



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	25.8%	265
2 Agree	29.8%	306
3 Neither agree nor disagree	14.6%	150
4 Disagree	12.4%	127
5 Strongly disagree	17.4%	179
	Comment	282
	Answered	1027
	Skipped	50

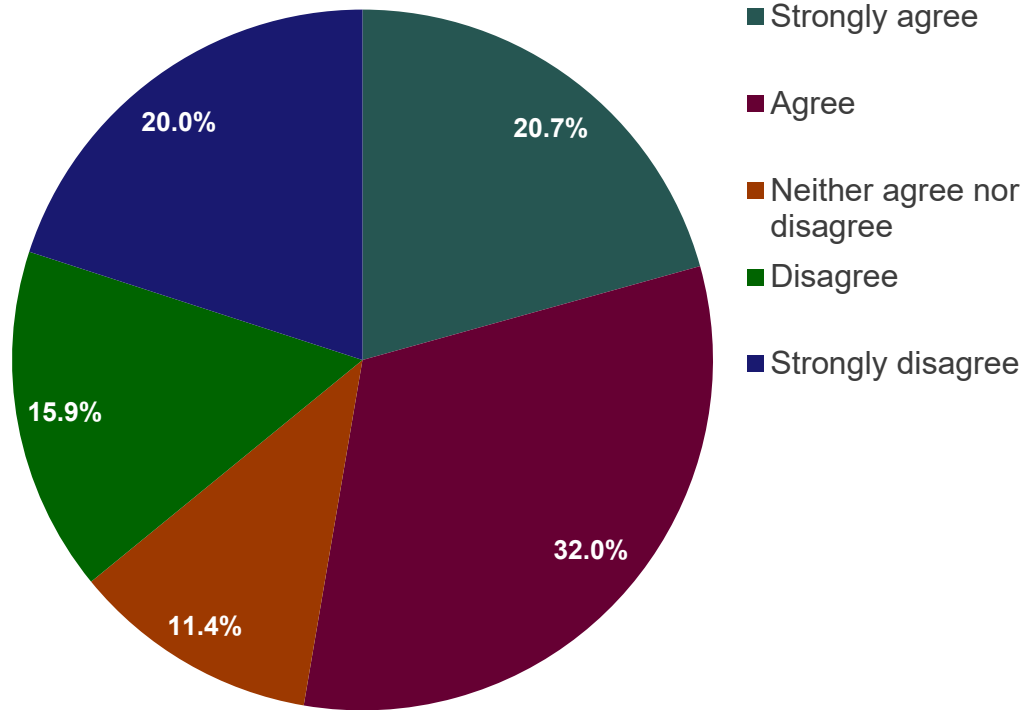


Q5| Comments Summary:

- **Health Concerns:** Many respondent felt that the free fruit is the only healthy nutritional snack some children receive and that removing it could negatively impact their health.
- **Waste and Uptake:** Several suggest the Council should investigate how much of the fruit is actually eaten versus wasted before making a decision.
- **Parental Responsibility:** Some felt that it is the parent's responsibility to provide fruit for their children.
- **Cost Savings:** Mixed opinions on whether cutting the free fruit will result in significant cost savings. Some believe it is a necessary measure, while others think the savings are minimal compared to the benefits.
- **Means Testing:** A few respondents suggested that free fruit should be provided only to children from low-income families or those on free school meals.
- **Council's Priorities:** There is a criticism of the Council's budget management and priorities, with some respondents feeling that other areas should be cut before children's fruit.
- **Alternative Solutions:** Respondents offered alternative solutions such as sourcing fruit more cheaply, working with local businesses or supermarkets for contributions, adding a nominal fee per child, providing vegetables instead of fruit, and offering fruit during the teaching day rather than lunchtime.



Q6| At present pupils from the ferry-linked isles attending extra-curricular activities on the Orkney mainland can stay overnight at Papdale Halls of Residence - including meals – with no charge. We’re proposing charging for this so we can recover the costs.
Do you:



Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	20.7%	212
2 Agree	32.0%	328
3 Neither agree nor disagree	11.4%	117
4 Disagree	15.9%	163
5 Strongly disagree	20.0%	205
Comment		314
Answered		1025
Skipped		52

Choice by Ferry Linked Isles Residents	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	13.8%	23
2 Agree	18.6%	31
3 Neither agree nor disagree	10.8%	18
4 Disagree	15.0%	25
5 Strongly disagree	41.9%	70
Answered		167



Q6| Comments Summary:

Summary of comments from **all** respondents:

- **Support for a Small Charge:** some agree with a small, reasonable charge to help cover costs, suggesting amounts like £10 per night or a minimal charge for meals.
- **Concerns about Affordability:** Many comments express concern that charging could create financial barriers to some families, potentially leading to inequality and reduced participation in extra-curricular activities.
- **Equity and Fairness:** Several respondents highlighted the importance of equity, arguing that children from the isles should not be disadvantaged compared to those on the mainland. Some argued this would be discriminating based on geography.
- **Means Testing:** Suggestions for means testing or a sliding scale of charges based on parental income.
- **Alternative Solutions:** A few respondents propose alternative solutions, such as charging only for meals, implementing communal cooking, or seeking funding from other sources.
- **Impact on Mental Health:** Concerns raised about the potential negative impact on children's mental health and social development if they are unable to participate in activities.
- **Parental Responsibility:** a few respondents believe it is the parents' responsibility to cover the costs.
- **Council's Role and Responsibility:** Some comments criticise the Council for mismanagement and suggest that the Council should find other ways to cover costs without penalising children.

Q6 Comments filtered to **ferry-linked isles residents**

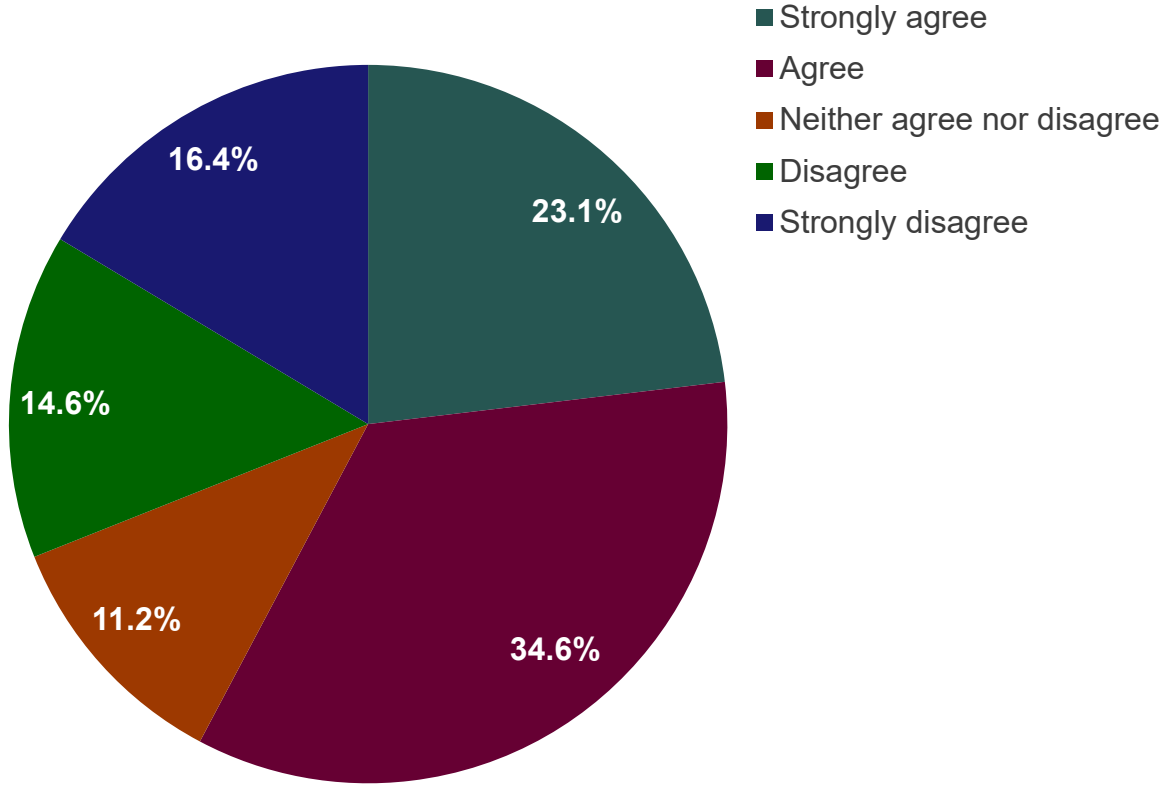
- **Misleading Information:** Many respondents, including Sanday Community Council, stated that the proposal is misleading as pupils from ferry-linked isles have repeatedly been denied the opportunity to stay at Papdale Halls for extra-curricular activities.
- **Limited Access:** Consensus that resources and access to activities for ferry-linked island children are already very limited, and further barriers would negatively impact their development.
- **Equity and Fairness:** Several highlighted the inequity of charging island pupils when mainland pupils do not face similar charges, calling it discriminatory.
- **Financial Impact:** Respondents expressed concern it would create financial challenges for families, potentially preventing children from participating in extra-curricular activities.
- **Impact on Mental Health:** Concerns were raised about the potential negative impact on the mental health and well-being of island children if they are unable to participate in activities due to financial barriers.
- **Cost Savings:** Some doubted that the proposed charges would generate significant revenue that administrative costs might outweigh the benefits.
- **Need for Clarity:** There were calls for greater clarity and transparency from the Council regarding the availability and conditions of the service.
- **Support for the Proposal:** A minority of respondents supported proposal, provided that charges were reasonable and affordable.





Q7| Some pupils who have the option of attending a junior high on their home island or travelling in daily from a ferry-linked isle choose instead to stay at Papdale Halls of Residence – known as a placing request. We don't currently charge for this. Our proposal is that we do charge for this.

Do you:



Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	23.1%	237
2 Agree	34.6%	355
3 Neither agree nor disagree	11.2%	115
4 Disagree	14.6%	150
5 Strongly disagree	16.4%	168
Comment		286
Answered		1025
Skipped		52

Choice by Ferry Linked Isles Residents	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	22%	36
2 Agree	25%	42
3 Neither agree nor disagree	9%	15
4 Disagree	14%	23
5 Strongly disagree	30%	49
Answered		165

Q7| Comments Summary:

Key points from **all** respondents:

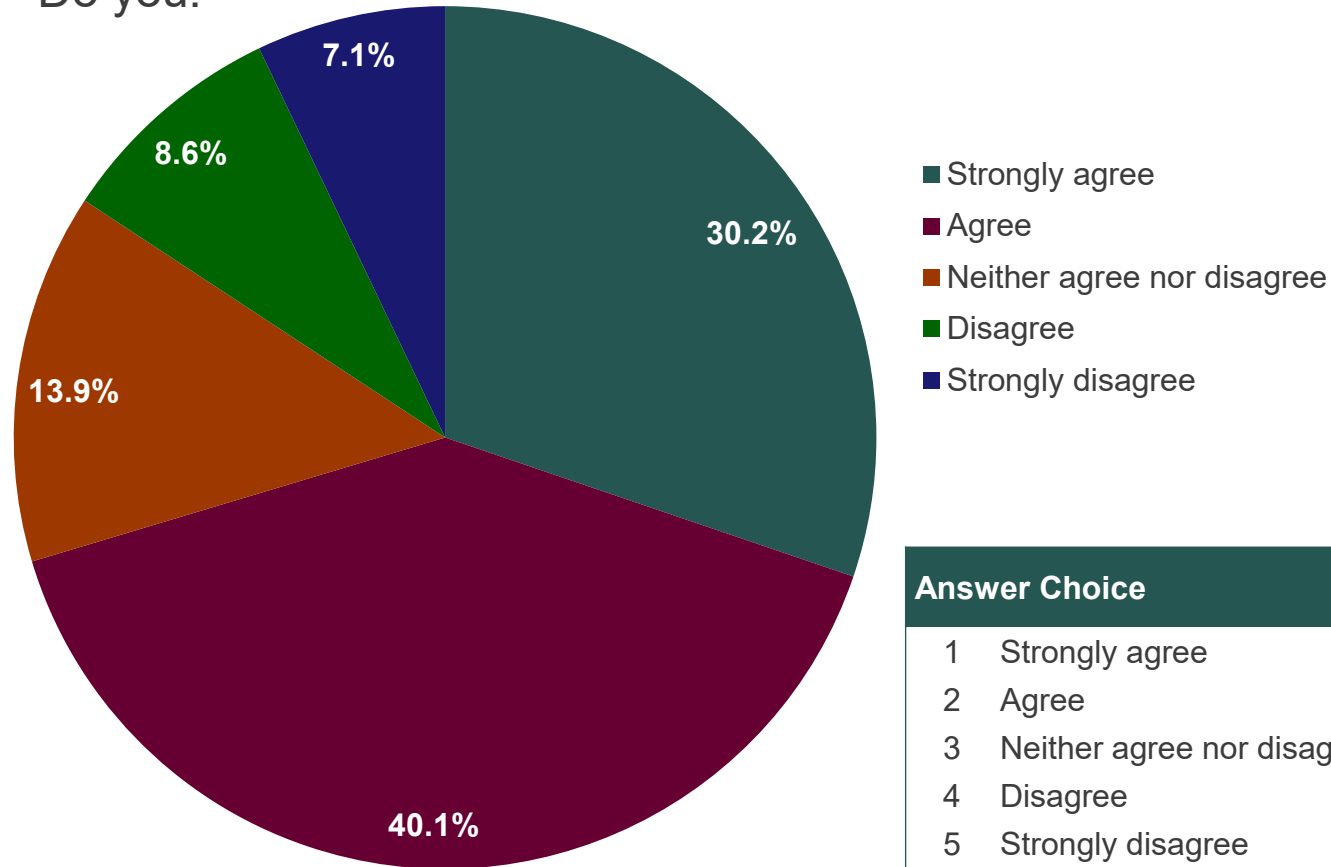
- **Reasonable Charges:** Some believe that a token payment or means-tested charges would be reasonable.
- **Educational Equality:** Strong sentiment that charging for accommodation leads to inequality in education, as not all junior highs offer the same courses and opportunities as the mainland.
- **Choice and Necessity:** Many highlight that attending a mainland school should be a choice, and if the same level of education is available on the home island then charges are justified.
- **Financial Impact on Families:** Concerns were raised about the financial burden on families, especially those from the most deprived areas, and the potential negative impact on children's education.
- **Support for Local Schools:** Some respondents feel that using local junior high schools is essential for their viability and that choosing mainland schools should come with a cost. There is a belief that parents who choose not to use local schools should bear the cost of their decision.
- **Case-by-Case Basis:** decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, considering specific needs and circumstances.
- **Impact on Island Communities:** Charging for accommodation could lead to further depopulation of the islands and negatively affect the local economy
- **Comparison with Other Educational Options:** some compare the proposal to other educational accommodations, such as university or college halls, which do charge for accommodation.

Please note that the comments were the same for ferry-linked isles residents as for the rest of Orkney.



Q8| The Orkney Museum is currently open throughout the year. Our proposal is to close it from the beginning of the Christmas break through to the end of February, just like Scapa Flow Museum.

Do you:



Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	30.2%	311
2 Agree	40.1%	413
3 Neither agree nor disagree	13.9%	143
4 Disagree	8.6%	89
5 Strongly disagree	7.1%	73
	Comment	237
	Answered	1029
	Skipped	48



Q8| Comments Summary:

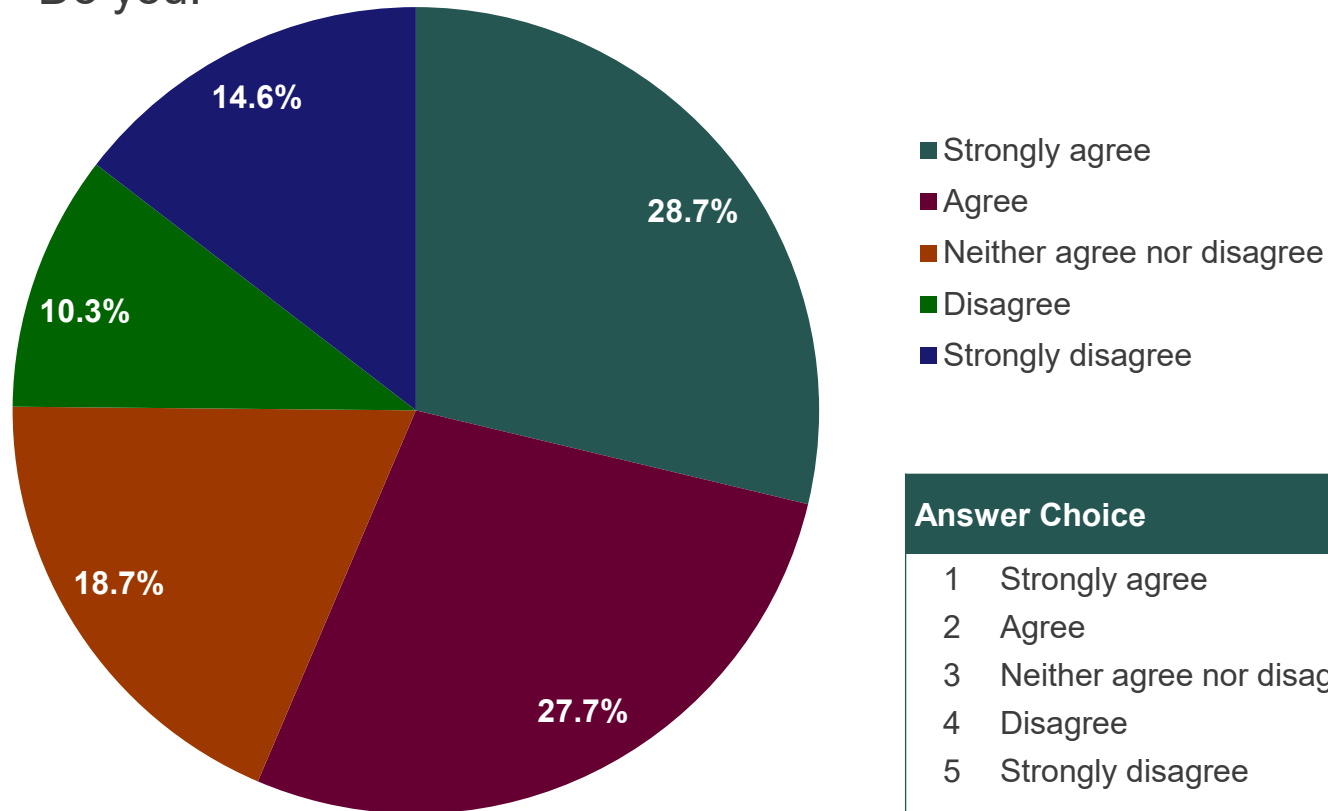
Key points from comments:

- **Admission Fees:** Many respondents suggested charging an admission fee, especially for tourists, to generate revenue instead of closing the museum.
- **Reduced Hours:** Some recommended reducing the museum's operating hours or days instead of a complete closure
- **Local Impact:** Concern that closing the museum would primarily benefit tourists, while locals would lose access during the winter months.
- **Staff Concerns:** Worries about the impact on staff, questioning whether they would be laid off or have reduced hours.
- **Winter Visitors:** Some highlighted that there are still visitors in the winter, and the museum remains an asset during this period.
- **Cost Savings:** Several questioned the actual cost savings, noting that the building would still need maintenance and heating.
- **Cultural Importance:** Closing the museum would undermine the museum's role in preserving and showcasing local heritage.
- **Alternative Revenue:** suggestions of fundraising, events, or tourism taxes to generate revenue.
- **Visitor Data:** Many requested more information on visitor numbers and financial impact to make an informed decision
- **Extended Closure:** a few comments suggested extending the closure period to save more money.



Q9| At St Andrews, Stromness and Dounby early-learning settings (or nurseries) we offer extended and flexible hours for parents and carers using the setting. There is variable uptake on this and staffing is also a challenge. Our proposal is to focus on a ‘term-time, school day only’ model, which will help mitigate the staffing challenge as well as reducing costs and overheads.

Do you:



Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	28.7%	296
2 Agree	27.7%	285
3 Neither agree nor disagree	18.7%	193
4 Disagree	10.3%	106
5 Strongly disagree	14.6%	150
	Comment	295
	Answered	1030
	Skipped	47



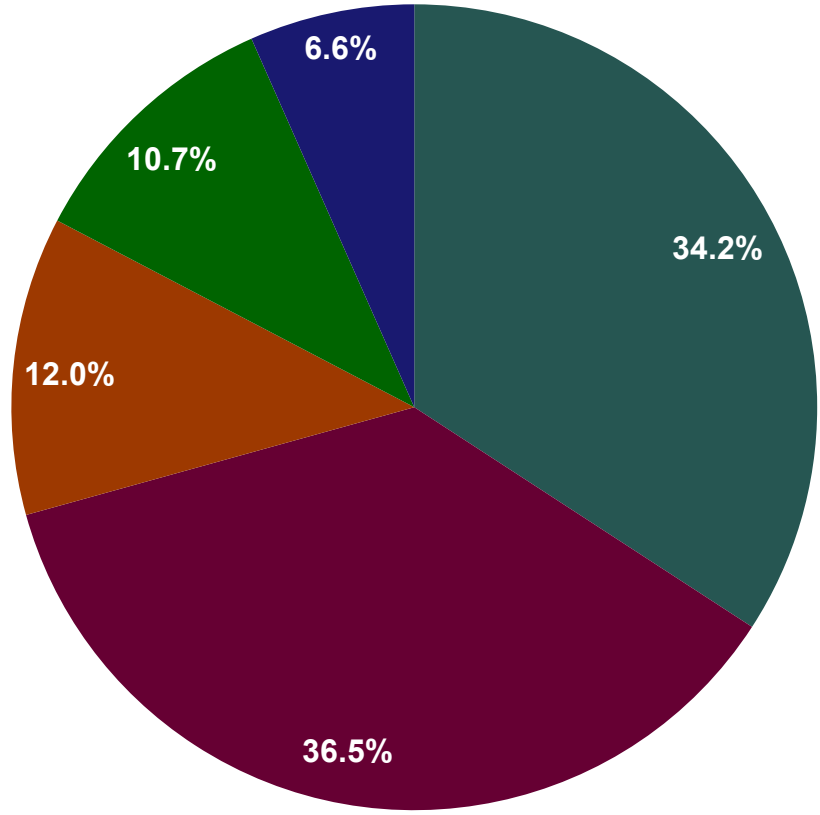
Q9| Comments Summary:

Key points from the comments:

- **Impact on Children's Well-being:** Many expressed concerns that extended nursery hours negatively affect children's well-being, leading to tiredness, emotional distress, and challenging behaviour.
- **Staff Stress and Turnover:** The extended hours have also led to increased stress and anxiety among staff, contributing to higher rates of illness and turnover.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Keeping nurseries open during the holidays when attendance is low is financially unsustainable, citing high costs for staffing and transportation
- **Parental Convenience vs Child's Best Interest:** Some respondents believe that the current system prioritises parental convenience over the best interests of the children, with nurseries being used as a babysitting service.
- **Geographical Disparities:** Concerns about the geographical disparities, with smaller settings in rural areas being disadvantaged compared to those in Kirkwall.
- **Alternative Childcare Solutions:** Suggestions were made such as supporting childminders or creating non-school-based nursery settings
- **Impact on Working Parents:** Many emphasised the importance of nursery services for enabling parents to work, and the negative impact on employment if services are reduced.
- **Equity and Fairness:** Suggestions that all nurseries should follow the same model, whether term-time only or all year round.
- **Community and Economic Impact:** potential for increased poverty and a reduced workforce.



Q10| Public events – such as the Riding of the Marches - are valued and enjoyed by all that attend and participate. At present the Council carries out a clear-up after the event, for example emptying of bins and street cleaning. We don't charge for this. Our proposal is that we should charge the event organisers.
Do you:



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	34.2%	351
2 Agree	36.5%	375
3 Neither agree nor disagree	12.0%	123
4 Disagree	10.7%	110
5 Strongly disagree	6.6%	68
	Comment	252
	Answered	1027
	Skipped	50

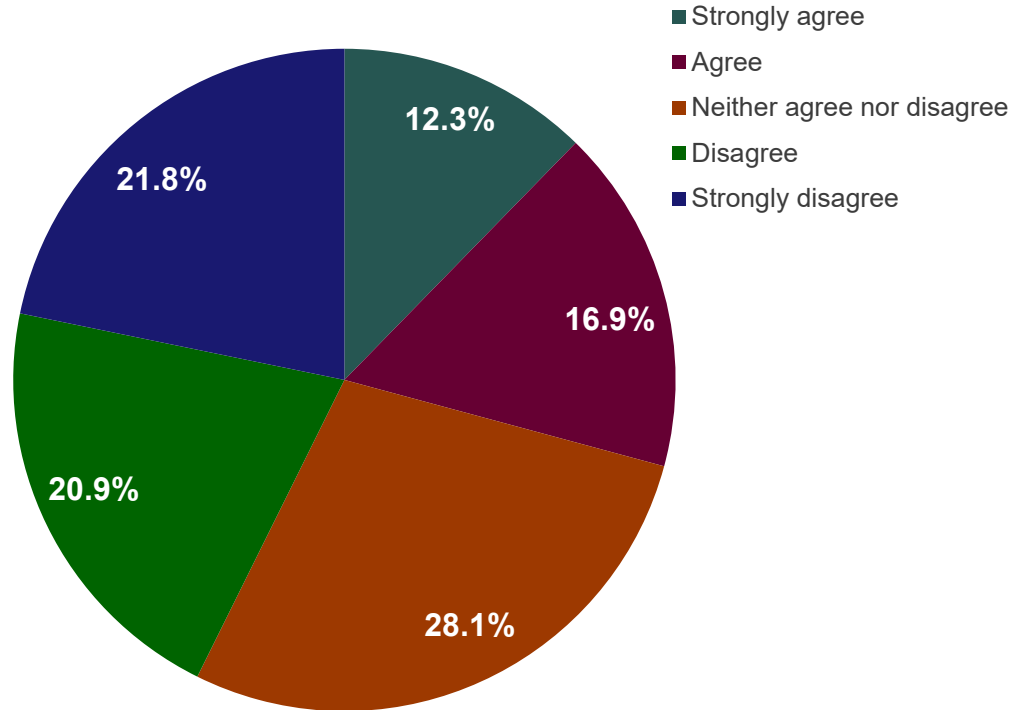


Q10| Comments Summary:

Key themes from the comments:

- **Acceptance of Proposal:** Many believe that event organisers should be responsible for the clean-up, with comments like 'They make the mess, they clear the mess!'
- **Shared Costs:** some suggested that the costs should be shared or minimised, with ideas such as offering clubs an opportunity to support Council staff in the clean-up to reduce charges. Suggestions to charge a modest fee.
- **Negative Impact on Community Events:** fears that additional charges could discourage organisers and volunteers, leading to fewer events and a diminished quality of life for locals and tourists. The Council should be supporting these vents rather than imposing additional charges.
- **Fairness:** several questioned the fairness of the proposal, pointing out that street cleaning and bin emptying are standard Council services that should be covered by existing taxes.
- **Transparency:** the need for transparency in the charges was emphasised and there were suggestions that the costs should be reasonable and not profit-making.
- **Education:** suggestions to educate the public and event organisers about the importance of clean-up and encourage responsible behaviour.
- **Opposition to the Proposal:** a few residents expressed strong opposition to the proposal, arguing that it is the Council's responsibility to provide these services and that additional charges are unnecessary.

Q11| As well as the usual weekly kerbside collections of waste and recycling, Dounby also has a recycling point. Our proposal is to close this.
Do you:



Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	12.3%	126
2 Agree	16.9%	173
3 Neither agree nor disagree	28.1%	288
4 Disagree	20.9%	214
5 Strongly disagree	21.8%	223
Comment		262
Answered		1024
Skipped		53

Choice by West Mainland	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	12%	33
2 Agree	21%	59
3 Neither agree nor disagree	18%	50
4 Disagree	19%	53
5 Strongly disagree	30%	84
Answered		279



Q11| Comments Summary:

Key points from the comments:

- **Importance of Recycling:** Many respondents emphasised the importance of keeping the recycling point open to promote recycling and reduce waste. Closing the recycling point could negatively impact recycling rates, which are already low in Orkney. Some criticised the Council for considering a proposal that seems to contradict their green credentials.
- **Environmental Impacts:** Closing the recycling point would result in more road miles and increased carbon emissions, which contradicts the Council's net-zero goals.
- **Fly Tipping Concerns:** Concerns it would lead to an increase in fly tipping in the West Mainland
- **Accessibility Issues:** Some highlighted that not everyone has access to transport, making it difficult for them to travel to other recycling points.
- **Usage and Justification:** There were mixed options on how well the recycling point is used, with some suggesting it remain open if well-used and others questioning its usage.
- **Cost and Savings:** Some questioned the cost-savings, especially if the recycling point is already not staffed.
- **Fairness to West Mainland Communities:** concerns about the fairness of closing the point
- **Alternative Solutions:** increasing the range of recyclables accepted or creating a commercially focused recycling centre.

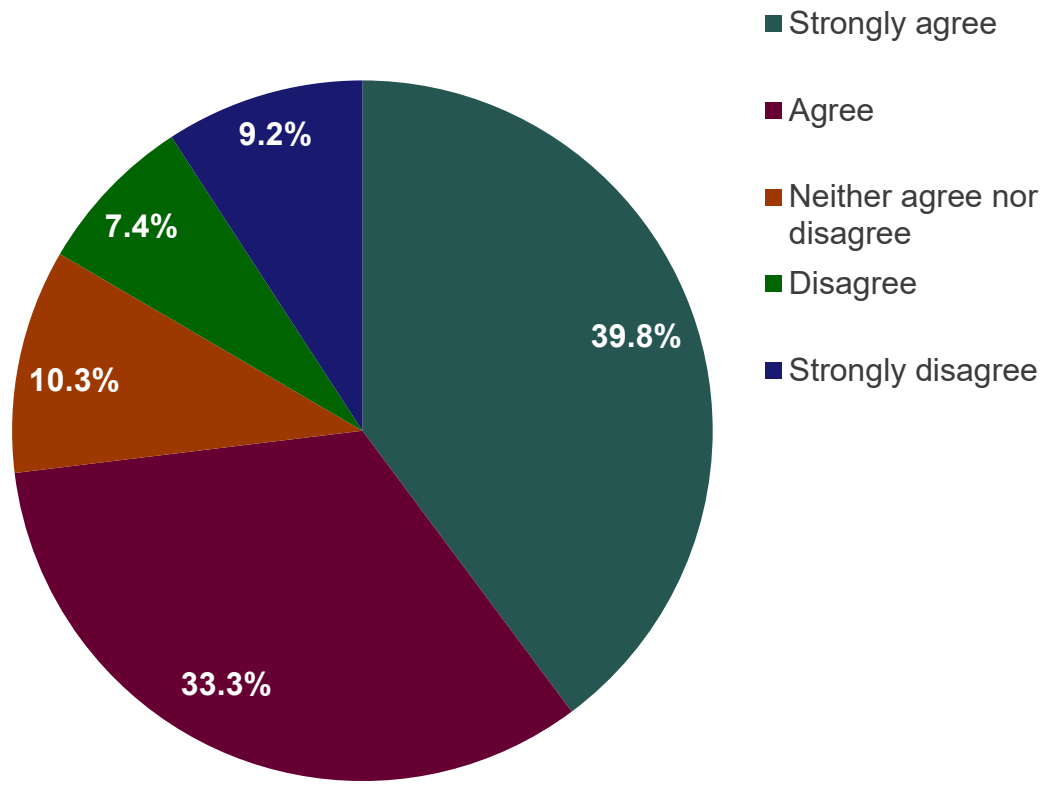
Q11 Comments filtered to those from the **West Mainland**

Key themes from West Mainland residents:

- **Importance to the Community:** Many respondents feel that the Dounby point is crucial for the surrounding community and should remain open
- **Usage and Convenience:** The point is well-used, especially for garden waste and cardboard recycling. Particularly valuable during bad weather and long gaps between roadside collections.
- **Environmental concerns:** closing the point would increase road miles to other centres, contradicting the council's net-zero goals
- **Accessibility Issues:** poor transport or lack of personal transport makes it difficult for some residents to travel to other recycling centres, especially for bulky goods.
- **Cost and Efficiency:** Some respondents question the cost savings of closing the site as it is unmanned and only requires emptying the skips
- **Fly-Tipping Risks:** Closing the point could lead to increased fly-tipping.
- **Awareness and Communication:** Some residents were unaware of the recycling point's existence, indicating a need for better communication.
- **Impact on Other Centres:** closing Dounby would put more pressure on other recycling centres, which are already overstretched.
- **Alternative Solutions:** Suggestions include increasing the range of recyclables accepted at Dounby or closing other sites one day a week to cut costs.
- **Community Sentiment:** There is a strong sentiment against the closure, with many feeling that the council should cater to all residents, not just those in larger towns.



Q12| At present, our ferry-linked isles residents receive a free annual supply of black bags. Mainland residents, and those living in Shapinsay, don't. Our proposal is to remove the free black bags.
Do you:



Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	39.8%	408
2 Agree	33.3%	341
3 Neither agree nor disagree	10.3%	106
4 Disagree	7.4%	76
5 Strongly disagree	9.2%	94
Comment		246
Answered		1025
Skipped		52

Choice by Ferry Linked Isles Residents*	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	22%	36
2 Agree	18%	30
3 Neither agree nor disagree	13%	21
4 Disagree	14%	23
5 Strongly disagree	34%	57
Answered		167

*Includes Shapinsay

Q12| Comments Summary:

Key themes from all comments:

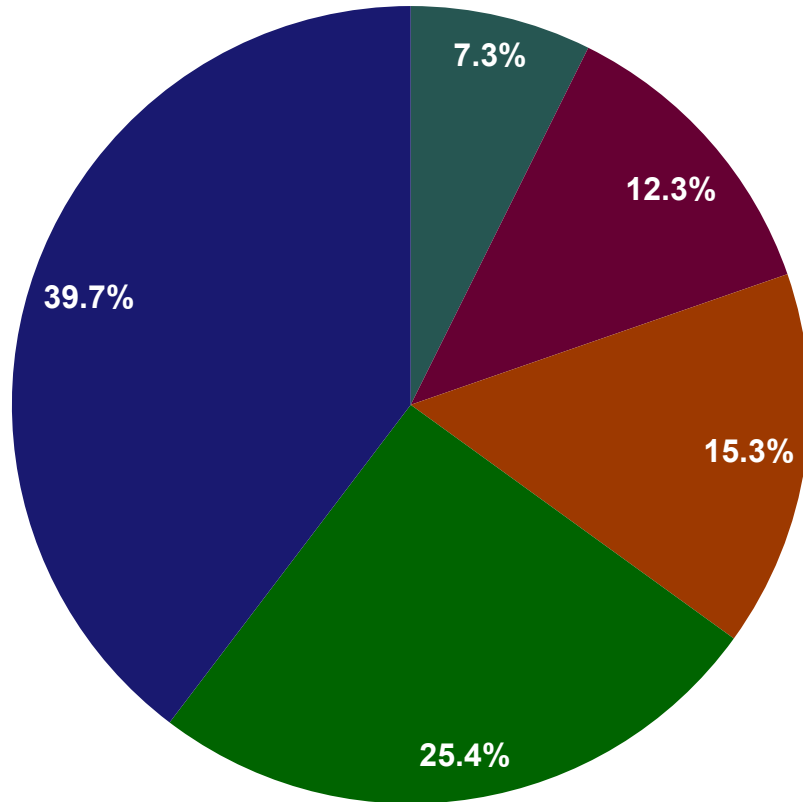
- **Fairness and Equality:** Many respondents thought that all residents should be treated equally, and providing free black bags to isles residents is unfair to those on the mainland who purchase their own. Many respondents feel that isles residents should buy their own refuse bags like everyone else.
- **Cost and Budget:** Concerns about the cost of providing free black bags and whether it is a necessary expense. Money could be better spent elsewhere.
- **Service Comparison:** Several comments suggest that the refuse collection service for the isles should be comparable to that on the mainland. If the isles residents do not receive the same level of service, they should continue to receive free bags.
- **Environmental Impact:** a few comments highlight the potential environmental impact of removing free black bags, such as increased littering and fly-tipping.
- **Alternative Solutions:** Some comments propose alternative solutions, such as providing wheelie bins instead of black bags, or ensuring that all residents have access to proper recycling facilities.
- **Historical Context:** Some respondents question why the free provision of black bags was ever implemented and some believe it should be discontinued.
- **Quality of bags:** Complaints about the quality of the free black bags, with some respondents stating that they are thin and useless.
- **Geographical Discrimination:** There are concerns about geographical discrimination, with some respondents feeling that isles residents are unfairly benefiting from additional services.



Q12 Comments filtered to those from the **ferry-linked Isles**

- **Bag Quality:** Many respondents mentioned that the current black bags are of poor quality and often useless.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Concerns that removing the bags without providing recycling options would lead to increased littering and improper waste disposal including fly tipping.
- **Equity Issues:** There is a sentiment that removing the free bags would exacerbate the existing inequalities between mainland and isles residents, who already face higher costs and fewer services.
- **Council Tax Value:** Some residents believe that the black bags and their collection are among the few services they receive for their council tax payments
- **Logistical Challenges:** The unique logistical challenges of waste disposal on the isles, such as infrequent bulky collections and lack of recycling options were highlighted.
- **Financial impact:** Some respondents questioned the financial savings of the proposal, suggesting that the cost of providing the bags is minimal compared to potential negative impacts.
- **Cost and Convenience:** Some residents are willing to buy their own bags but feel that the council should provide better quality bags if they continue to supply them.
- **Alternative Solutions:** Suggestions were made to provide wheelie bins and kerbside collection instead of black bags. Some residents felt that the refuse collection on the isles should be comparable to that on the mainland before considering the removal of free black bags.

Q13| We currently empty the skips at Household Waste Recycling Centres on a Saturday morning. If we didn't do this, it would be more likely that the centres would close earlier than planned at the weekend. Our proposal is to stop emptying the skips at the weekend. Do you:



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	7.3%	75
2 Agree	12.3%	126
3 Neither agree nor disagree	15.3%	156
4 Disagree	25.4%	259
5 Strongly disagree	39.7%	405
	Comment	337
	Answered	1021
	Skipped	56



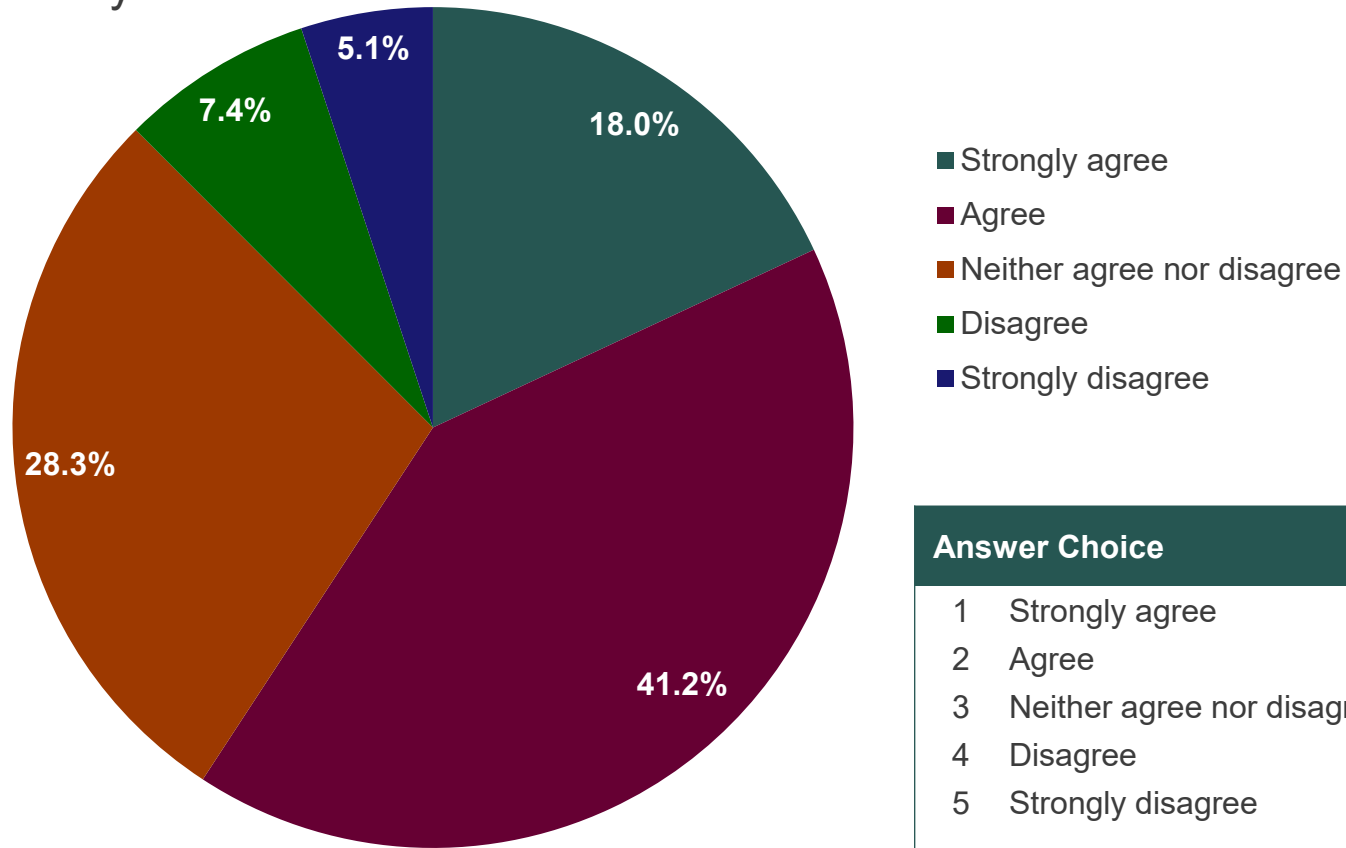
Q13| Comments Summary:

Key Themes from the Comments:

- **Impact on Working People:** Many respondents highlighted that the proposal would disproportionately affect working people who can only visit the centres on the weekend.
- **Fly-tipping Concerns:** Strong concern that not emptying skips on weekends will lead to increased fly-tipping
- **Service Quality:** Complaints about the current service quality, with skips often being full and centres closing early.
- **Sustainability and Recycling:** A few respondents mentioned the importance of increasing recycling opportunities and living more sustainability.
- **Alternative Suggestions from Comments:** several respondents suggested emptying the skips on Friday afternoon instead; Some comments proposed extending weekday opening hours if skips are not emptied on weekends; Some suggested considering seasonal demand and adjusting the schedule accordingly; Some suggested operational changes, such as moving more skips during the week or training operatives to manage skips better.
- **General Disapproval:** There is a general disapproval towards this proposal, with many respondents finding it unreasonable and inconvenient.

Q14| At present, we don't have a standardised amount of time taken for public toilets and buildings to be cleaned. Bringing in a standardised time could reduce the time allocated in some areas – for example the toilets at Rousay Pier. Our proposal is to bring in a standardised time.

Do you:



Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	18.0%	185
2 Agree	41.2%	422
3 Neither agree nor disagree	28.3%	290
4 Disagree	7.4%	76
5 Strongly disagree	5.1%	52
	Comment	196
	Answered	1025
	Skipped	52



Q14| Comments Summary:

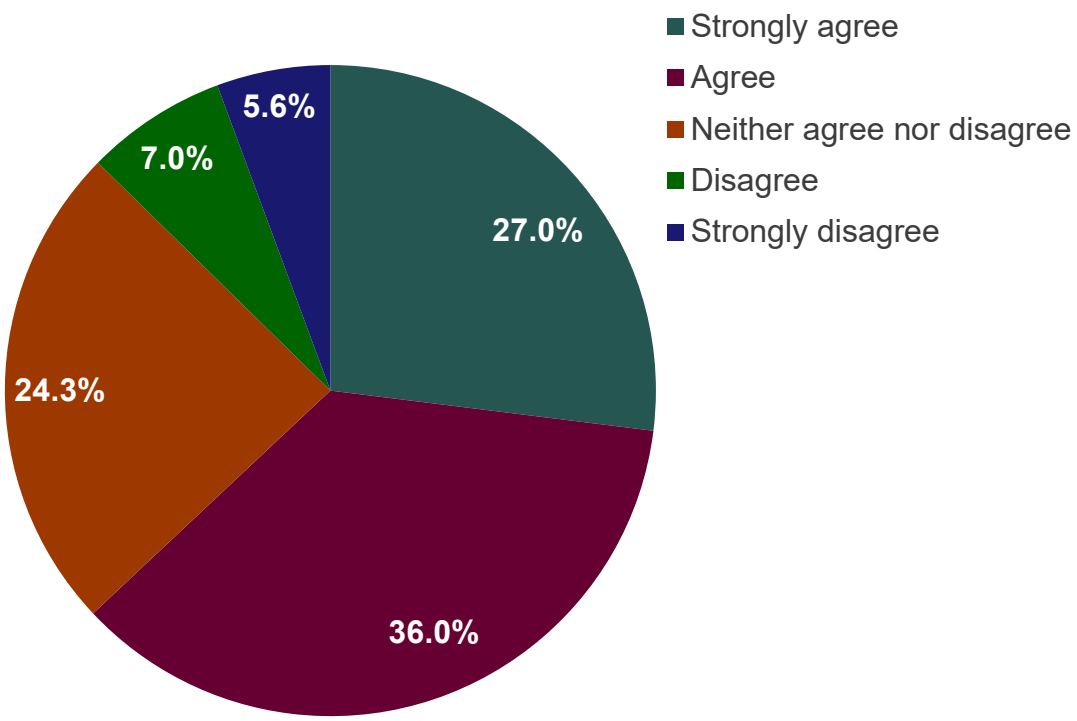
Key points:

- **Concerns about cleanliness standards:** Many respondents are worried that standardising cleaning times might lead to a further decline in cleanliness standards.
- **Variability in cleaning needs:** Several comments highlight that the time required to clean public toilets can vary greatly depending on usage, location and the state of facilities. Respondents suggest that cleaning schedules should be flexible to accommodate varying levels of dirtiness and usage.
- **Impact on tourism:** Cleanliness of public toilets is seen as directly linked to tourism, with dirty toilets potentially harming the area's reputation
- **Monitoring and accountability:** Calls for better monitoring of cleaning staff.
- **Training and efficiency:** Proper training for cleaning staff is seen as essential to ensure efficient and effective cleaning
- **Concerns about staff morale:** Imposing strict time limits might lead to stress and reduced morale among cleaning staff
- **Suggestions for alternative solutions:** Ideas such as introducing a tourist tax, employing cleaners directly, or involving the community in maintenance were proposed as alternative cost-saving measures to standardising cleaning times.



Q15| From September 2022, the Scottish Government has changed legislation surrounding the registration of births. Parents are now permitted to register their child’s birth remotely. In Orkney you can do this by contacting the Senior Registrar in Kirkwall by telephone or Microsoft Teams. Because of the change in the law, you do not need to make an in-person appointment with a local home-based registrar. There are currently nine home-based registrars in Orkney, including eight in the ferry-linked isles. The home-based registrars are only able to initiate birth registrations within their home. The registrations thereafter require to be completed by a Registrar in one of the Council Offices in Mainland Orkney as only the offices have access to the National Records of Scotland electronic system. Our proposal is to remove the home-based Registrar service.

Do you:



Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	27.0%	277
2 Agree	36.0%	370
3 Neither agree nor disagree	24.3%	250
4 Disagree	7.0%	72
5 Strongly disagree	5.6%	58
Comment		141
Answered		1027
Skipped		50

Choice by Ferry Linked Isles Residents	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	21%	35
2 Agree	30%	50
3 Neither agree nor disagree	23%	39
4 Disagree	8%	14
5 Strongly disagree	18%	30
Answered		168



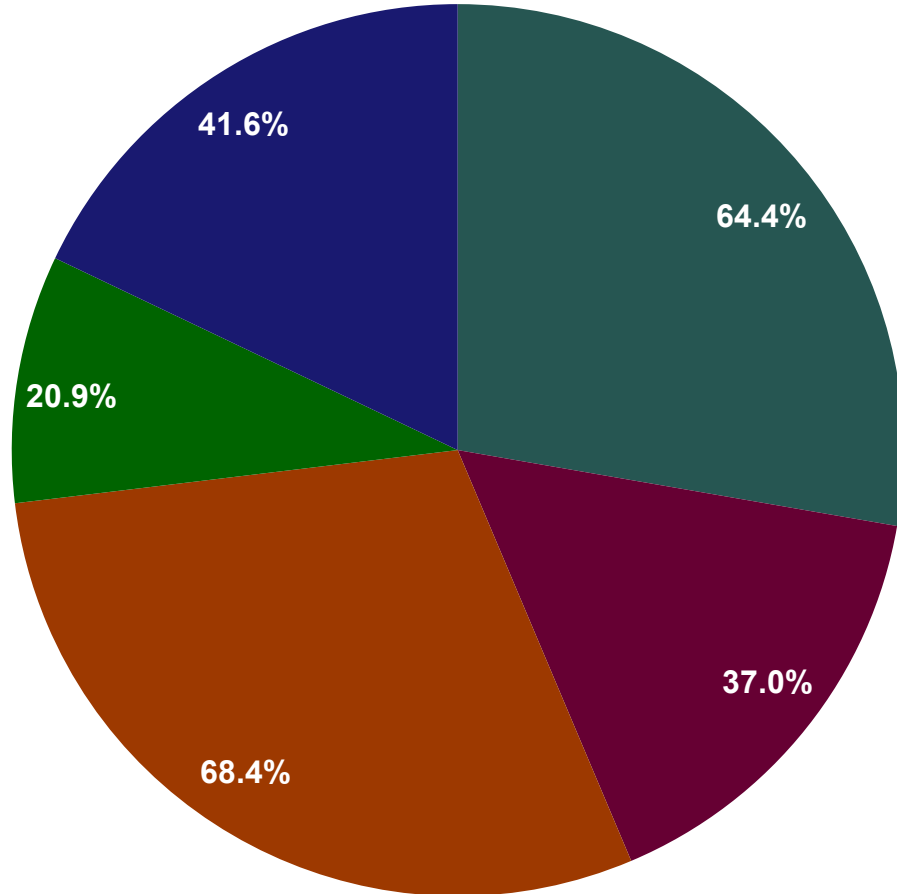
Q15| Comments Summary:

Key themes in the comments were:

- **Support for digital transition:** Many respondents agreed with the proposal, citing the convenience and efficiency of registering births online or by phone. They see the proposal as a sensible cost-saving measure that aligns with modern practices.
- **Concerns about Accessibility:** Some respondents are worried about the accessibility of online services, especially for those with limited internet access or technical skills
- **Impact on Local Jobs:** Concern about the potential loss of income for registrars.
- **Heritage and Tradition:** Several comments highlight the importance of maintaining local traditions and the tangible history of written records.
- **Registration of Deaths:** Respondents emphasise the need for local registrar services when registering deaths, which can be a sensitive and urgent matter.
- **Concerns about Travel:** There are concerns about the inconvenience and potential hardship of travelling to Kirkwall, especially for new parents and those in remote areas.
- **Need for a Detailed Analysis:** Respondents suggest conducting a detailed analysis of the current usage and impact of the home-based registrar service before making a final decision
- **Flexibility and Support:** Suggestions to provide flexible options and support for those who may struggle with the transition to online services.

Please note that the comments were the same for ferry-linked isles residents as for the rest of Orkney. Isles residents were more concerned about poor internet connectivity.

Q16| Have you used the following way of dealing with the Council in the last year:



- Called customer services
- Emailed customer services
- Found information on the Council's website
- Online requests using MyOrkney
- Visited in person to School Place in Kirkwall or the Warehouse Buildings in Stromness

Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Called customer services	64.4%	608
2 Emailed customer services	37.0%	349
3 Found information on the Council's website	68.4%	646
4 Online requests using MyOrkney	20.9%	197
5 Visited in person to School Place in Kirkwall or the Warehouse Buildings in Stromness	41.6%	393
	Comment	146
	Answered	944
	Skipped	133



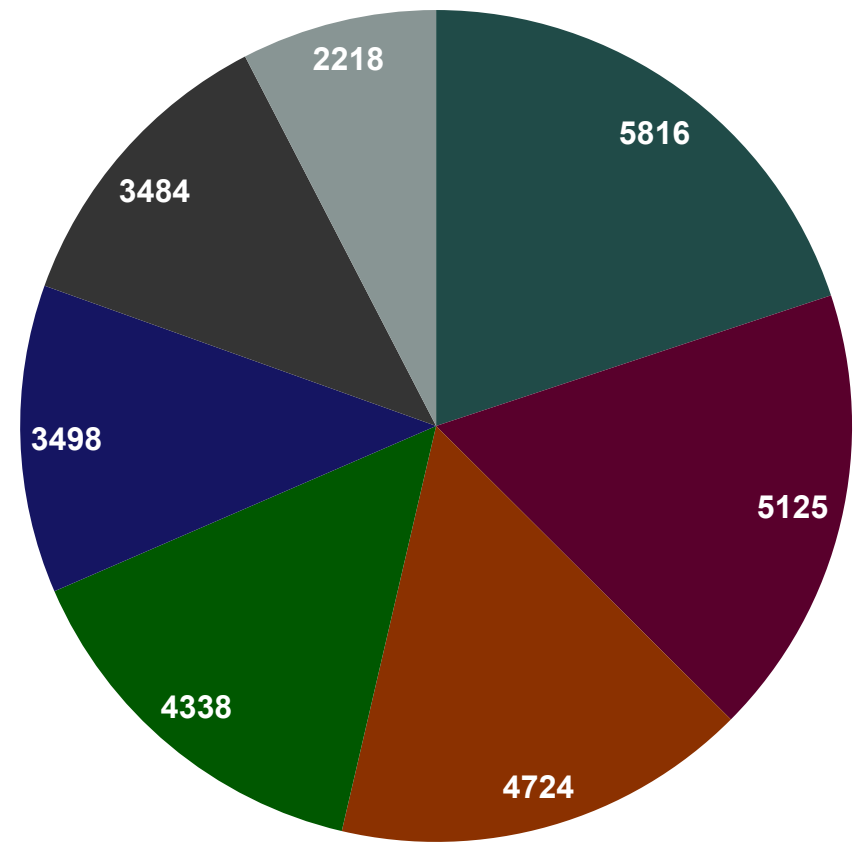
Q16| Comments Summary:

Key themes in the Comments:

- **Website issues:** many respondents found the website difficult to navigate, outdated, and not-user friendly.
- **Importance of In-Person Services:** a significant number of comments emphasised the necessity of maintaining in-person services, especially for the elderly, disabled, and those who are not tech-savvy
- **Customer Service Staff:** Some respondents praised the helpfulness and friendliness of the customer service staff, while others suggested to reduce the number of customer service staff or limiting in-person services to save costs
- **Negative Experiences:** A few respondents shared negative experiences with the Council's services, including unresponsive staff and unresolved issues
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** There were various suggestions for improving the Council's services, including modernising the website, integrating more services into a call centre, and offering hybrid and remote working options.



Q17| What methods would you like to be able to use when dealing with the Council (Please rank in order of preference):



- Calling the Council by phone
- Emailing the customer services team
- Finding answers on our website
- Able to log requests online using MyOrkney
- Using live text chat to talk to a member of the customer services team
- Visiting the Council in-person
- Using a chat bot to answer questions from the website

Answer Choice	Total Score	Overall Rank
1 Calling the Council by phone	5816	1
2 Emailing the customer services team	5125	2
3 Finding answers on our website	4724	3
4 Able to log requests online using MyOrkney	4338	4
5 Using live text chat to talk to a member of the customer services team	3498	5
6 Visiting the Council in-person	3484	6
7 Using a chat bot to answer questions from the website	2218	7
	Comment	141
	Answered	1043
	Skipped	34



Q17| Comments Summary:

- **Online Services and Website Improvement:** There is a strong preference for online services, especially for those who work during the week and cannot visit in person. However, most respondents found the current OIC website difficult to navigate and outdated. They suggest a complete redesign to make it more user-friendly and efficient. They also suggested that the website should be regularly updated
- **Live Chat with Real People:** Many respondents prefer live chat with real people over chatbots, which they find frustrating and unhelpful.
- **In-Person Services:** There was a significant number of respondents who value in-person services, particularly for complex queries or for those who are not tech-savvy
- **Telephone Communication:** Some prefer using the telephone, especially those who have poor internet access.
- **MyOrkney Platform:** Several people were either unaware of the MyOrkney platform or found it difficult to use.
- **Response Time:** Quick and efficient responses are a priority for many respondents. They express frustration with delayed responses via email or other channels.
- **Customer Service:** Some respondents appreciate the current customer service but believe improvements can still be made, especially in terms of inter-departmental communication
- **Accessibility for the Elderly.** There is concern that elderly people may not have access to or be comfortable with online services.



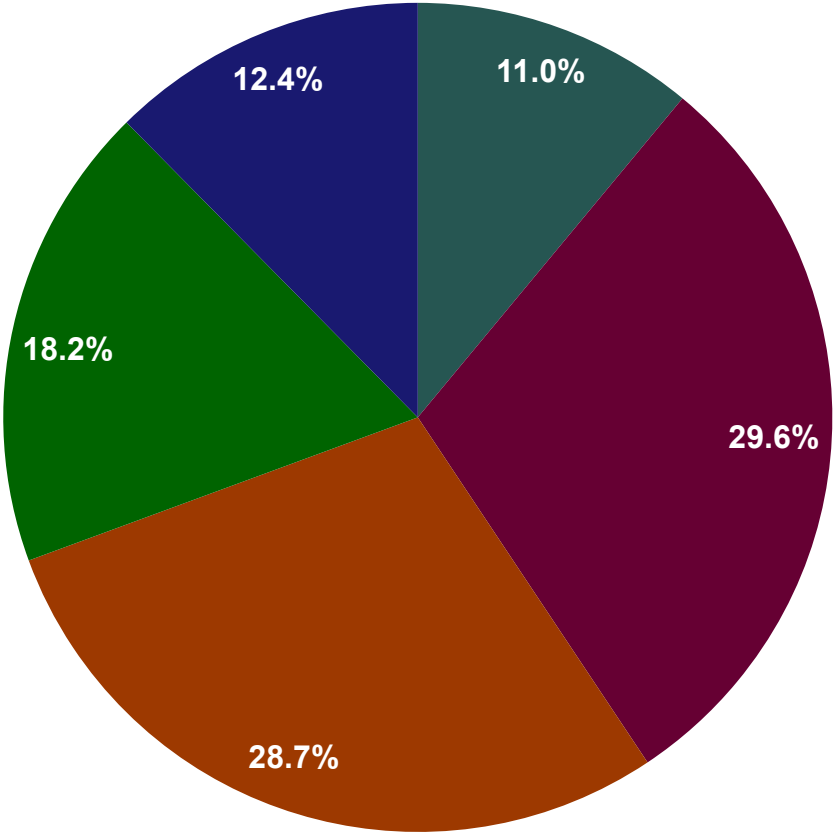
Q18| Comments Summary:

Reasons for preferred opening times (in order of popularity)

- **Morning:** It fits in well with their daily schedules and allows them to handle tasks early in the day
- **Lunchtime:** convenient for those who work a 9 – 5 and can only visit during their lunch breaks
- **Normal office hours:** Favoured by those who have flexible schedules or can visit during their work hours
- **After 4pm:** Preferred by those who work until late afternoon and can only visit after their work hours
- **Mid-mornings or Mid-afternoon:** Some respondents prefer as it fits well with their daily routines and other commitments.
- **Outside of working hours:** A few respondents prefer visiting outside of regular working hours to avoid conflicts with their work. Some of these respondents suggest opening on a Saturday.

Answered	516
Skipped	561

Q19| Our proposal is to reduce the customer services opening hours of School Place in Kirkwall and the Warehouse Buildings in Stromness. Do you:



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	11.0%	112
2 Agree	29.6%	301
3 Neither agree nor disagree	28.7%	292
4 Disagree	18.2%	185
5 Strongly disagree	12.4%	126
	Comment	146
	Answered	1016
	Skipped	61

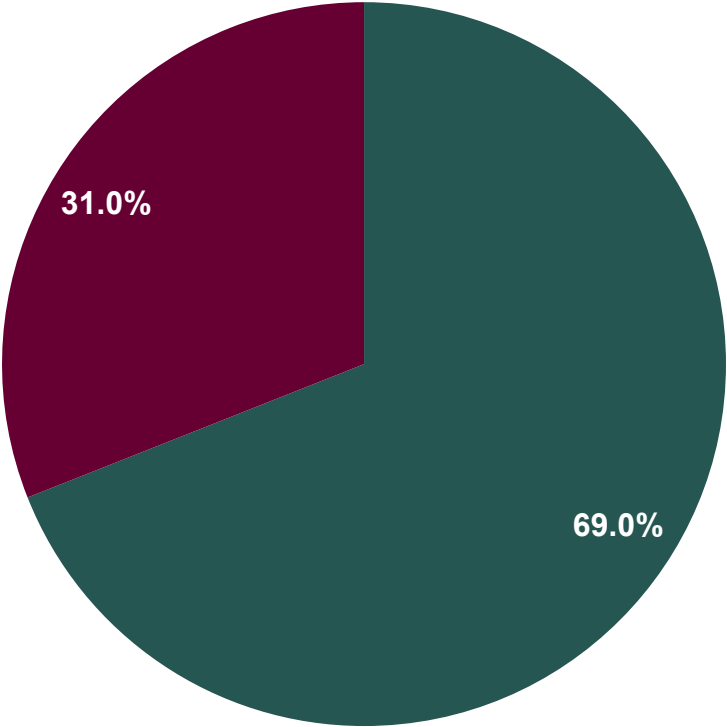


Q19| Comments Summary:

Key points from comments:

- **Vital Service for Vulnerable People:** Many respondents emphasised that in-person customer service provides essential support for elderly and vulnerable individuals who may not have access to or be comfortable with online services.
- **Concerns about Accessibility:** Many respondents expressed concerns that reduced hours would make it difficult for working people and those with busy schedules to access services.
- **Need for Flexible Hours:** Suggestions to vary the opening hours to accommodate different schedules, including later evenings and specific days with extended hours. Some respondents suggested specific reductions, such as closing on Friday afternoons or reducing hours in Stromness while maintaining current hours in Kirkwall.
- **Impact on Staff and Services:** Concerns about the potential impact on staff, including job security and workload, as well as the overall quality of customer service.
- **Evaluation Based on Usage:** changes should be based on actual usage data and footfall.
- **Alternative Solutions:** increasing digital services, extending direct dial to departments, or having staff multitask to cover customer service needs.
- **Need for Clear Communication:** Respondents stressed the importance of clearly communicating any changes in opening hours to avoid confusion.

Q20 | If hours were reduced, would you prefer to see:



- Shorter hours each day
- Closed for a longer period on certain days each week

Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Shorter hours each day	69.0%	583
2 Closed for a longer period on certain days each week	31.0%	262
	Comment	138
	Answered	845
	Skipped	232



Q20| Comments Summary:

Those who answered for shorter hours open every day, commented that:

- **Consistency and Predictability:** consistent hours each days reduce confusion and make it easier to remember when services are available
- **Daily Access:** even if the hours are shorter, it is important to ensure that people can visit or contact the Council every day
- **Impact on Meetings and Services:** Concerns were raised about how reduced hours might affect pre-arranged meetings and general access to OIC services, limiting in-person access to officials.
- **Website and Online Services:** There were suggestions that *if* hours were to be reduced, further investment and work on the Council's website and online services would be necessary to compensate for the reduced in-person access.

Those who answered longer hours open on fewer days, commented that:

- **Better Access for those who work:** Reduced daily hours for those who work full-time and have limited lunch breaks
- **Mid-week Closures:** such as a half-day on Wednesdays or Fridays was suggested. Respondents believed that people would adapt to the new schedule, even if it meant certain days were closed earlier.

Both groups were concerned about accessibility for those on the Outer Isles

Q21| Do you have any suggestions for public services provided by the Council that could be considered as part of budget savings?

Summary of suggestions:

- **Reduce management and bureaucracy:** Many respondents suggested cutting down on the number of managers and reducing bureaucratic processes. Better training for staff, automating processes, and modernising systems to save time and resources.
- **Review and Reduce Services:** Several comments focused on reducing or eliminating certain public services and facilities that are perceived as non-essential. This includes reducing grass cutting, and closing certain schools or community centres.
- **Reduce use of subcontractors and agency staff:** suggestions to reduce the use of subcontractors and agency staff, and to employ more permanent staff instead. Additionally, some respondents mentioned the need to monitor staff absences more closely and reduce the number of office staff.
- **Implement cost-saving measures:** energy-saving initiatives, reducing travel expenses, and cutting down on unnecessary expenditures like hospitality and foreign trips.
- **Generate additional revenue:** charging higher rates for short-term letting properties, implementing a tourist tax, and increase charges for certain services.
- **Involve the community:** Some respondents suggested involving the community more in certain tasks, such as using volunteers for maintenance work and involving community services teams in local projects

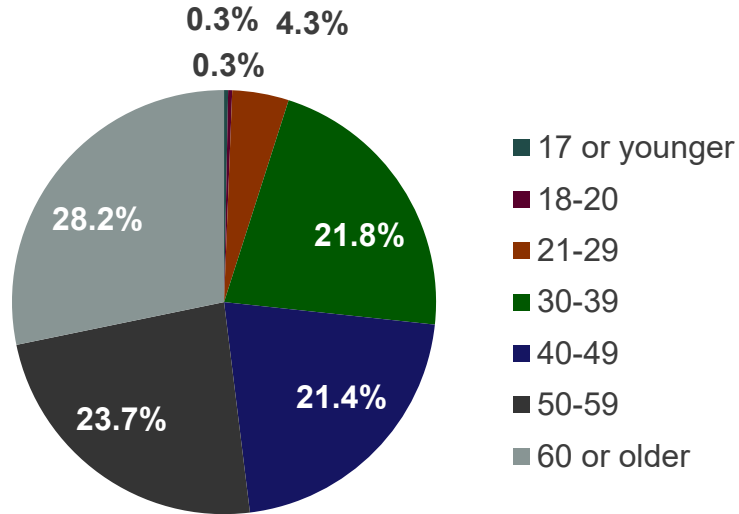
Answered	357
Skipped	720

Q21| Summary of suggestions (continued)

- **Increase Transparency and Accountability:** Respondents emphasised the need for greater transparency and accountability in how the Council spends its budget, including holding managers accountable for overspending and providing clear information on the costs and benefits of different services.
- **Reduce Hospitality and Travel Expenses:** Suggestions included cutting down on hospitality offered to councillors and reducing travel expenses by using virtual meetings.
- **Review High-Paid Positions:** There were calls to review and possibly reduce the number of high-paid positions within the Council.
- **Utilise Technology:** Suggestions included using technology to reduce costs, such as implementing automated systems and using digital communication instead of printed letters.
- **Sell or Repurpose Under-utilised Assets:** Some respondents suggested selling or repurposing under-utilised Council assets to generate revenue.
- **Focus on Core Services:** There were calls to focus the budget on core services and reduce spending on non-essential projects and initiatives. The island games were cited as specific non-essential project
- **Implement a Tourist Tax**

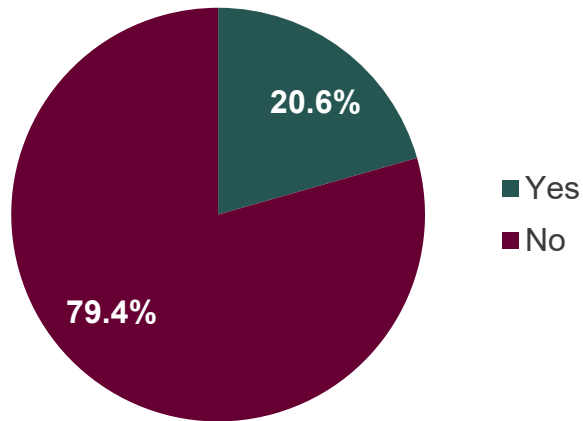
Appendix: Survey Demographics

Q | What is your age group?



Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 17 or younger	0.3%	3
2 18-20	0.3%	3
3 21-29	4.3%	42
4 30-39	21.8%	212
5 40-49	21.4%	208
6 50-59	23.7%	231
7 60 or older	28.2%	275
	Answered	974
	Skipped	103

Q | Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expecting to last 12 months or more?

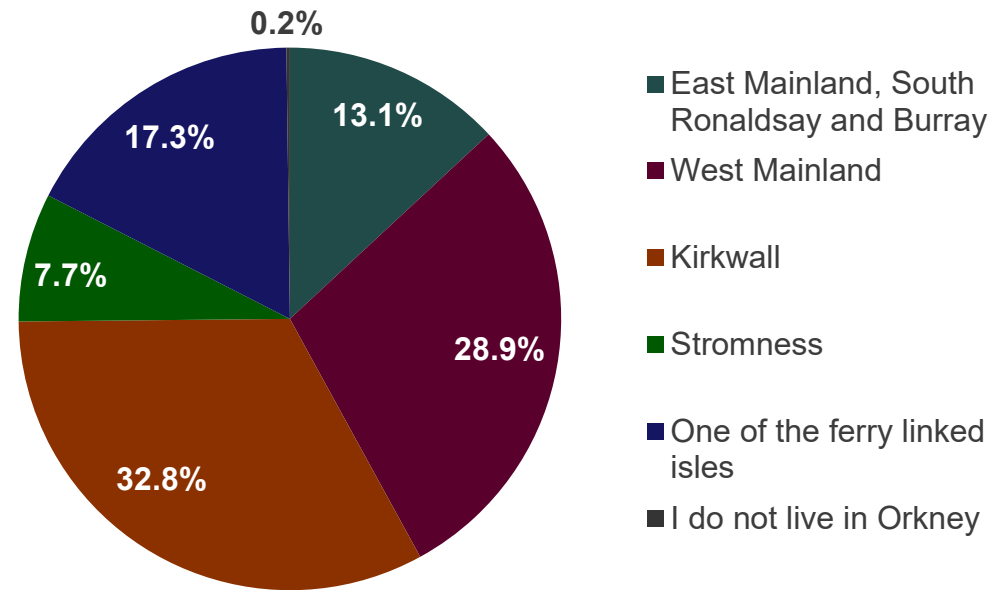


Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Yes	20.6%	197
2 No	79.4%	760
	Answered	957
	Skipped	120



Appendix: Survey Demographics

Q | Where do you live?



Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray	13.1%	128
2 West Mainland	28.9%	283
3 Kirkwall	32.8%	321
4 Stromness	7.7%	75
5 One of the ferry linked isles	17.3%	169
6 I do not live in Orkney	0.2%	2
	Answered	978
	Skipped	99

