

Consultation and Engagement



Responding to people living in vehicles

2026 – 2031

Policy proposal

Consultation Report FINAL

1 December 2025

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1. Introduction

The [responding to people living in vehicles 2026-2031 policy proposal](#) was developed in response to the significant increase in the number of people living in vehicles across Bristol, which has risen by more than 300% since 2019.

This increase creates a range of social, public health, and environmental challenges for the city and people living this way. Vehicle dwelling has complex and varied causes, including the affordability of housing, economic hardship, health issues, and alternative lifestyles.

The policy explains how the council will respond to people living in vehicles on highways or council-owned land to achieve these aims:

- To balance the needs of all communities by addressing public health, welfare, safety, and environmental concerns through multi-agency working.
- To support the health and wellbeing of people living in vehicles by taking a proactive approach to the provision of health, housing and welfare advice and support.
- To promote inclusion and reduce stigma by recognising the diversity of people living in vehicles, using respectful language, and involving their voice in the design of services.
- To significantly reduce the number of people living in vehicles on highways and council-owned land (without consent) in Bristol, by offering Meanwhile Site pitches to those who qualify, welfare advice and help finding ways to move into fixed accommodation.
- To take a clear, proportionate, and evidence-based approach to enforcement.

The policy outlines a new integrated response approach:

- a proactive and balanced approach to people living in vehicles, prioritising support and taking enforcement action where appropriate.
- a multi-agency approach to health, substance misuse, and homelessness issues to better support people living in vehicles.
- subject to availability and eligibility, Meanwhile Site pitches will be offered to support safe and hygienic alternatives for people living in vehicles who have a connection to Bristol.
- a clear, proportionate, and evidence-based approach to taking enforcement action to move people living in vehicles off highways and council-owned land (without consent), prioritising action against the most unsafe and unsustainable vehicle groups.

We consulted the public on the policy for 6 weeks between 11 September and 23 October.

2. Methodology

2.1. Online survey

The Policy for Managing Vehicle Dwelling consultation survey was available on the council's Consultation and Engagement Hub (www.bristol.gov.uk/vehicledwellers) for 6 weeks between 11 September and 23 October 2025.

The council was made aware of encouragement for respondents to submit more than one response and has actively taken steps to review responses and ensure the consultation process remains valid and meaningful. No evidence was found to support any impact on the consultation process arising from this issue.

2.1.1. Survey questions

Respondents were asked the following questions:

- Views on the proposed aims of the policy
- Views on the proposed approach to support, including:
 - Proactive approach to outreach
 - Multi-agency co-ordination
 - Providing housing support
- Views on the proposed approach to Meanwhile Sites, which are temporary sites located on council-owned land awaiting redevelopment, which vehicle dwellers can stay temporarily for a weekly licence:
 - Expanding the provision of Meanwhile Sites
 - Allocation of Meanwhile Site pitches
- Views on enforcement, including:
 - Causes for immediate enforcement action
 - Proposed sensitive locations that would lead to immediate enforcement
 - Proposed approach of providing housing and relocation support, followed by enforcement if the offer is not taken up
 - Proposed 3-month timescale for enforcement
- Views on whether the policy uses inclusive language
- Any other comments or suggestions about the policy
- Respondents' postcode – this identifies which parts of the city people responded to the consultation from
- Equalities monitoring information – this enables the council to check if people with specific protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, carers, or refugees and asylum seekers are under-represented in the responses.

2.1.2. Alternative formats

An Easy Read version of the consultation was available on the Consultation and Engagement Hub.

Paper versions of the consultation were distributed with Freepost return envelopes at drop-in sessions and were available on request.

Other formats (braille, large print, other alternative formats, and translation to other languages) were available on request.

2.1.3. Other correspondence

We received 11 other correspondence via email or letter in response to the consultation.

The feedback from the other correspondence has been categorised into themes and included in the survey free text feedback sections in chapter 3.

2.1.4. Drop-in sessions

11 drop-in sessions were provided for people to speak to council officers, find out about proposals, and get help completing the survey.

9 sessions were for all members of the public. 2 were specifically for vehicle dwellers.

There were 120 total attendees.

Figure 1: drop-in dates and venues

Drop-in Date, Time, Venue
23 September, 3pm to 7pm: The Park Centre
24 September, 6pm to 8pm: Avonmouth Community Centre
25 September, 2.45pm to 5.45pm: St Paul's Learning Centre
30 September, 12.45pm to 3.15pm: Wellspring Settlement
1 October, 12pm to 2pm: St Albans Church
1 October, 6pm to 8pm: Lockleaze Community Hub
2 October, 5.45pm to 8.15pm: Eastside Community Centre
7 October, 6pm - 8pm: St Matthews Church Kingsdown
8 October, 6pm to 8pm: St James Priory
17 October, 12pm to 2pm: St James Priory - Vehicle Dwellers
22 October 4:30 - 6:30 City Hall - Vehicle Dwellers

2.2. Publicity and briefings

The following activities were carried out to publicise and explain the consultation.

The consultation was promoted and shared via the following council and partner channels and networks:

- Ask Bristol e-bulletin on 19 September and 11 October 2025 with 7,559 recipients
- Media briefing attended by BBC, ITV, Bristol Live, Bristol 24/7, Global Radio, Greatest Hits radio
- Press releases
- Adverts – Voice series, The Pigeon, The Mead, The Shire, Vocalise (Up Our Street and Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust email newsletters)
- Emails to stakeholders, residents and vehicle dwellers on launch day and a follow-up reminder
- Social media – Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, Nextdoor, including paid advertisements

3. Survey results

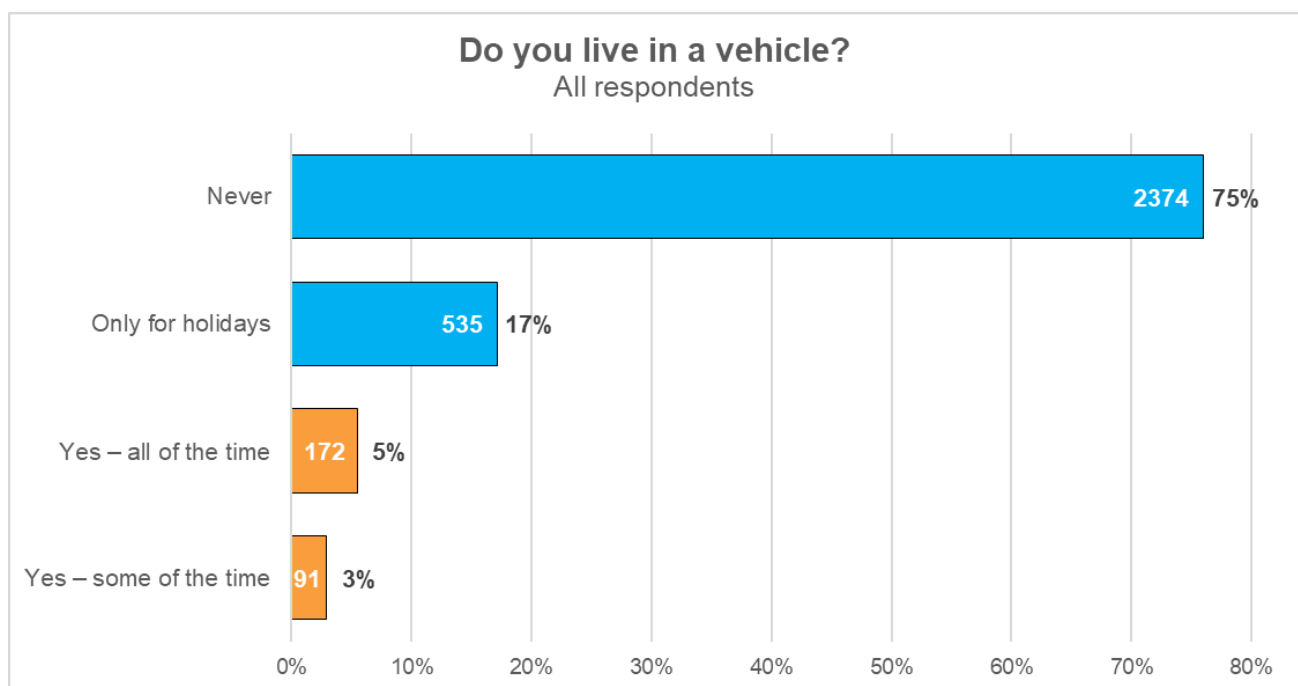
The consultation received a total of 3,219 responses.

3.1. Number of respondents living in vehicles

Respondents were asked whether they live in a vehicle all of the time, some of the time, only for holidays, or never.

- 263 (8%) of respondents said that they lived in a vehicle either all of the time (5%) or some of the time (3%)
- For the purposes of our analyses, we have combined those two groups as vehicle dwellers, and all other respondents as non-vehicle dwellers.
- People who live in a vehicle for holidays are included in the non-vehicle dwellers, as they would not be considered vehicle dwellers for this policy.

Figure 2: Number of respondents who live in vehicles



3.2. Policy aims

The policy explains how Bristol City Council will respond to people living in vehicles on highways or council-owned land to achieve these aims:

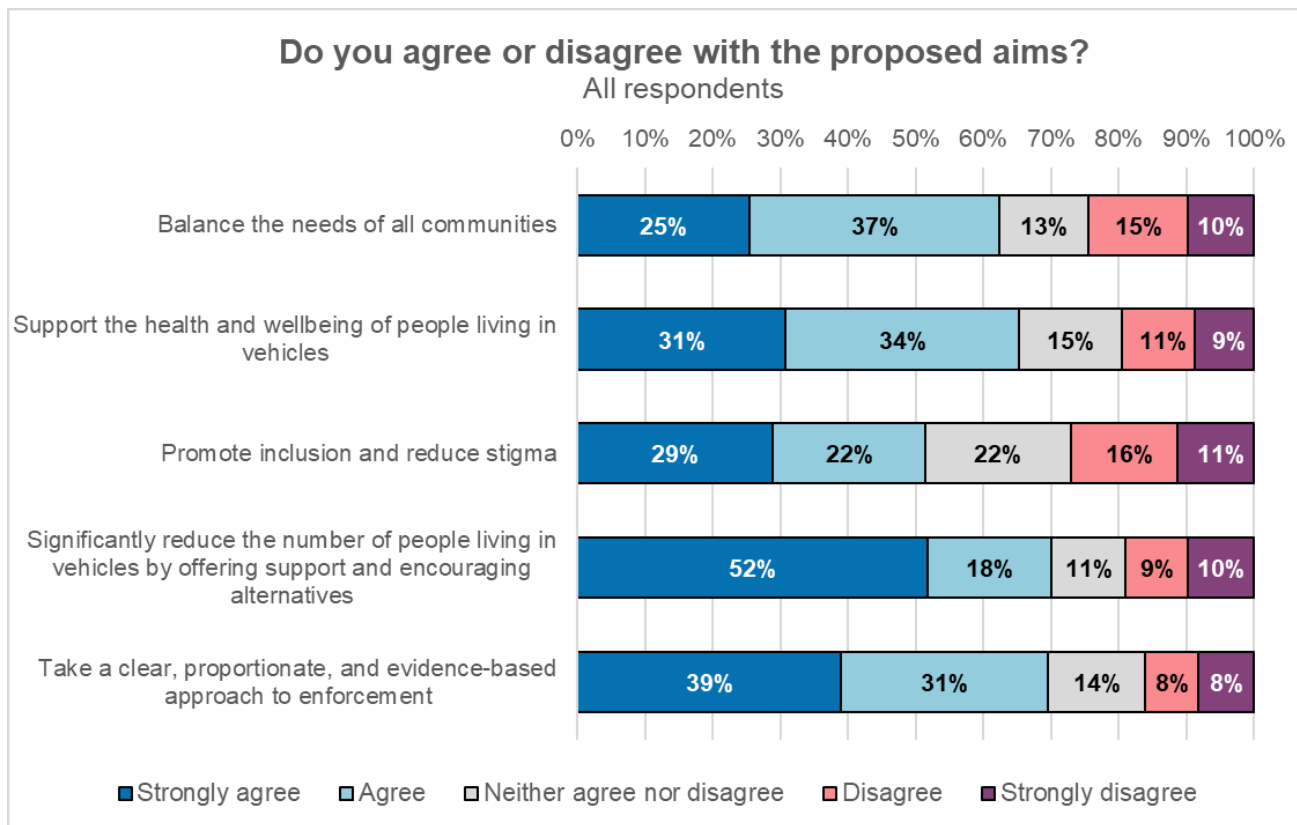
- To balance the needs of all communities by addressing public health, welfare, safety, and environmental concerns through multi-agency working.
- To support the health and wellbeing of people living in vehicles by taking a proactive approach to the provision of health, housing and welfare advice and support.
- To promote inclusion and reduce stigma by recognising the diversity of people living in vehicles, using respectful language, and involving their voice in the design of services.
- To significantly reduce the number of people living in vehicles on highways and council-owned land (without consent) in Bristol, by offering Meanwhile Site pitches to those who qualify, welfare advice and help finding ways to move into fixed accommodation.
- To take a clear, proportionate, and evidence-based approach to enforcement.

Respondents were asked to provide their views on the policy aims. 3,204 respondents answered this question.

The majority of respondents agreed with each of the proposed aims:

- 56% agreed with balancing the needs of all communities
- 65% agreed with the supporting the health and wellbeing of people living in vehicles
- 51% agreed with promoting inclusion and reduce stigma
- 70% agreed with significantly reducing the number of people living in vehicles by offering support and encouraging alternatives
- 70% agreed with taking a clear, proportionate, and evidence-based approach to enforcement

Figure 3: Views on proposed aims from all respondents



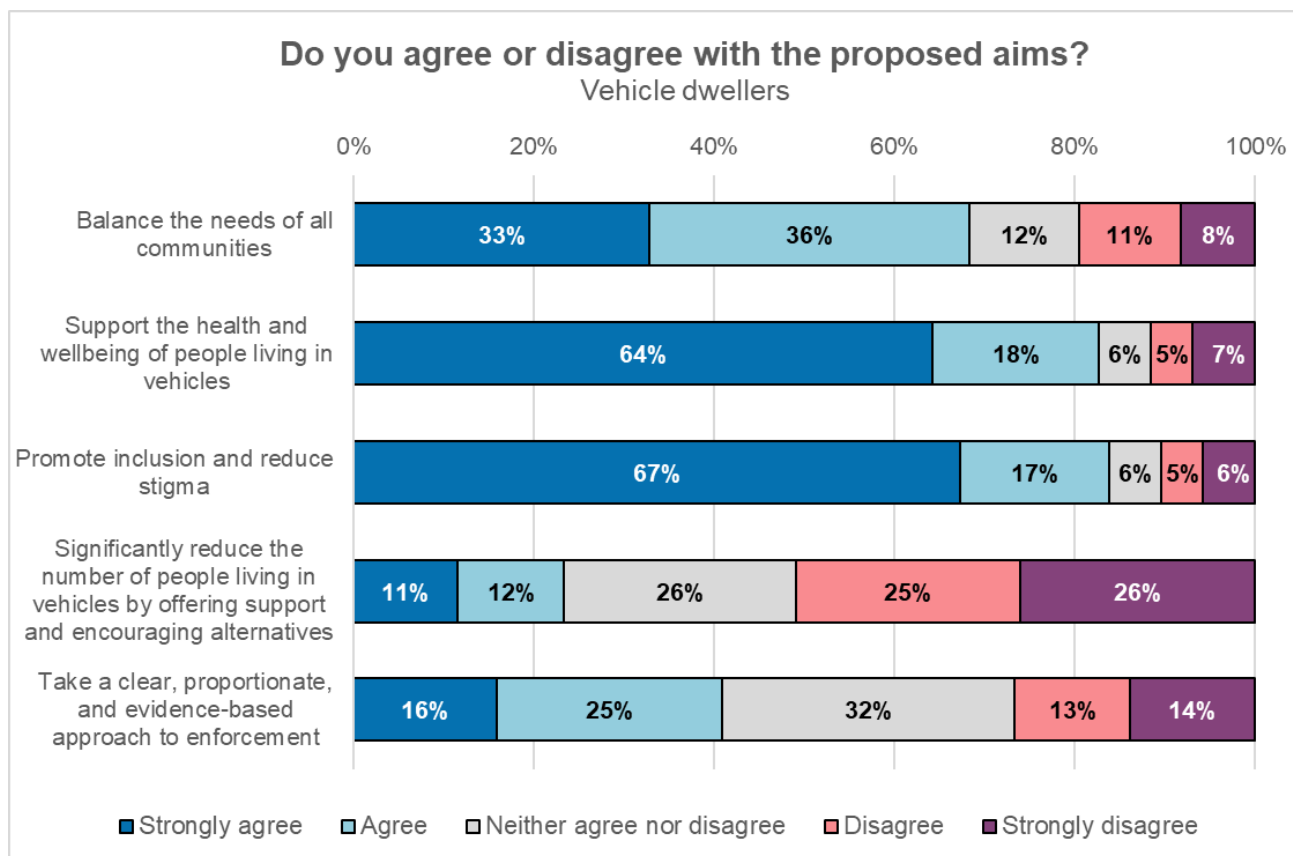
There were differences in the views of vehicle dwellers on some of the policy aims.

- 50% of vehicle dwellers disagree or strongly disagreed with significantly reducing the number of people living in vehicles, while 24% agreed or strongly agreed
- 41% of vehicle dwellers agreed or strongly agreed with taking an evidence-based approach to enforcement, while 27% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 32% neither agreed nor disagreed

The majority of vehicle dwellers agreed with the rest of the policy aims. There was much higher agreement on:

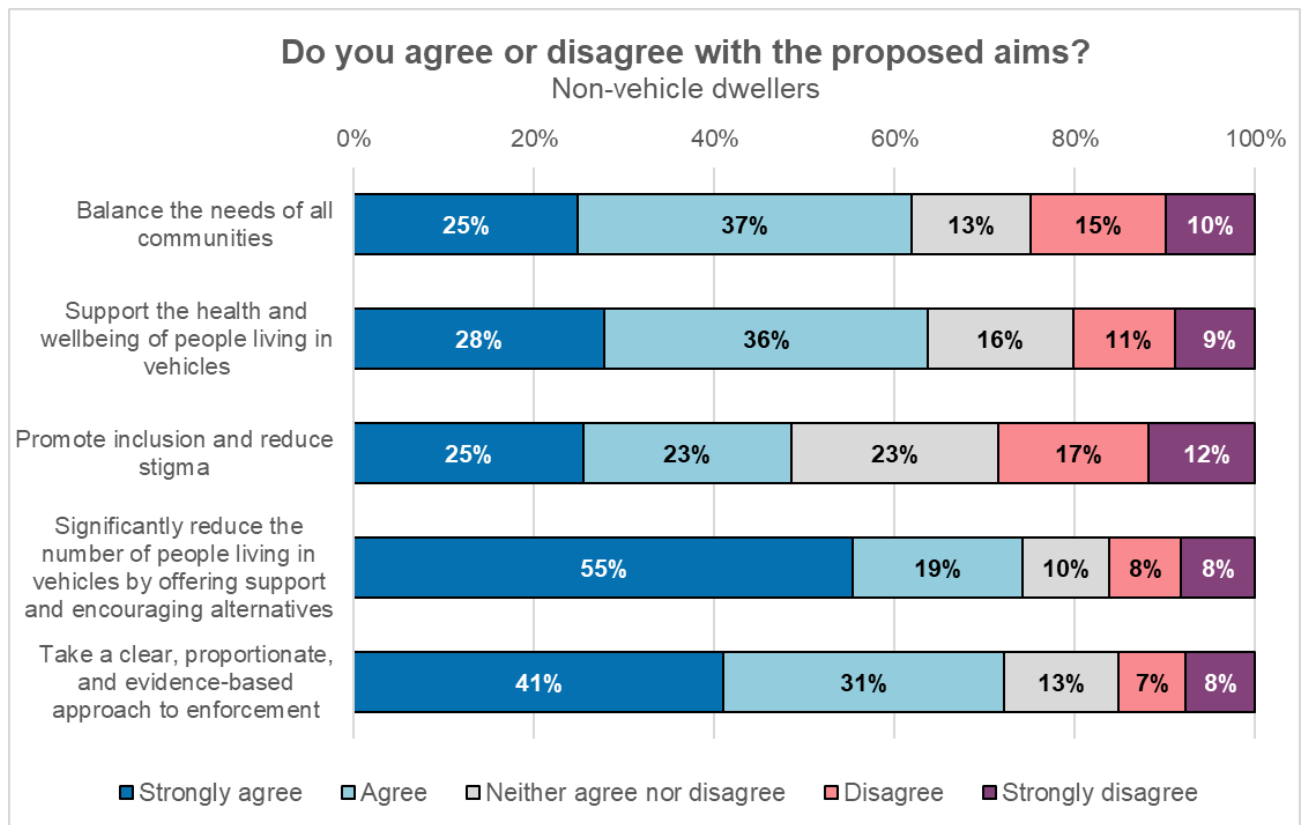
- Support the health and wellbeing of people living in vehicles (82% of vehicle dwellers compared to 65% of all respondents)
- Promote inclusion and reduce stigma (84% of vehicle dwellers compared to 51% of all respondents)

Figure 4: Views on proposed aims from vehicle dwellers



The response from non-vehicle dwellers was similar to that of respondents as a whole (see figure 5).

Figure 5: Views on proposed aims from non-vehicle dwellers



3.3. Support for vehicle dwellers

3.3.1. Proactive approach to outreach

The policy states that proactive outreach will be provided by outreach workers from the Bristol Street Outreach Service. They will be supported by a health worker and a social worker.

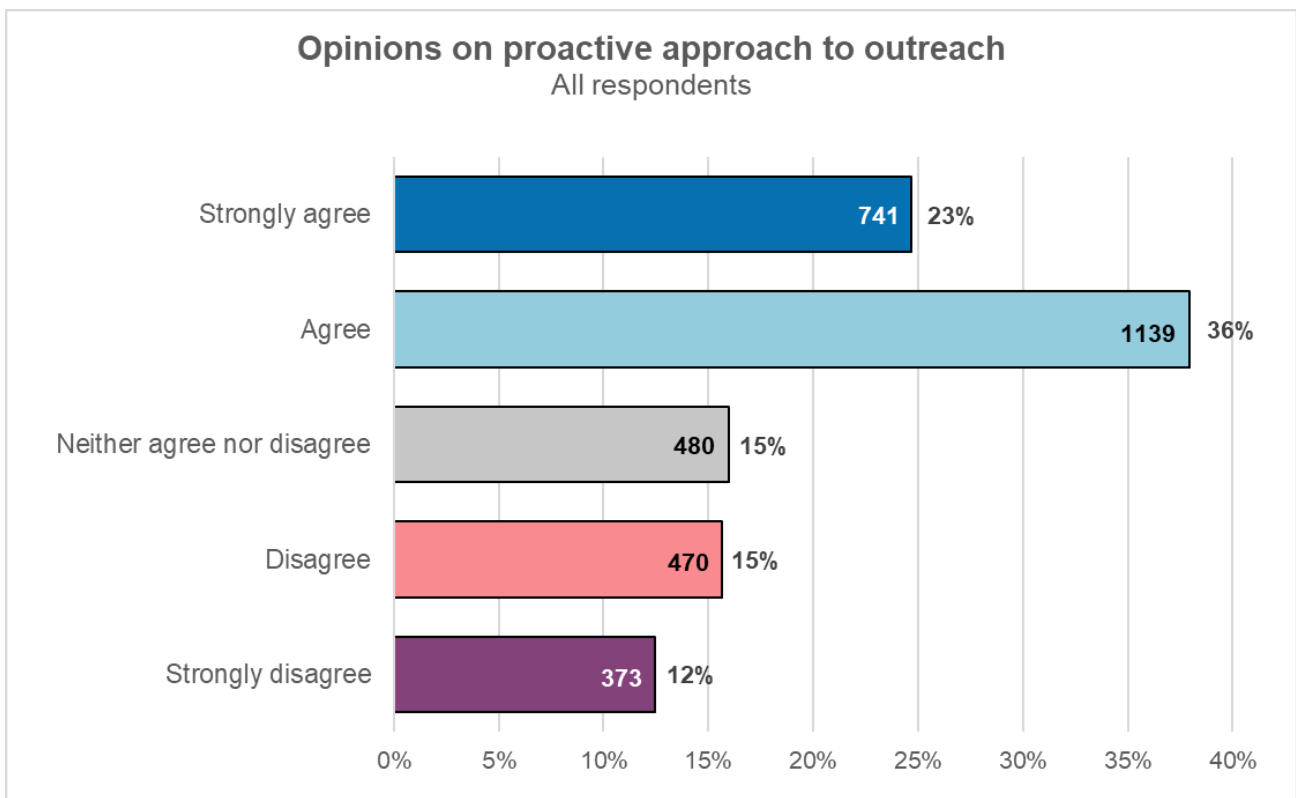
The primary objectives of outreach are identifying health and welfare needs and assessing the needs of people living in vehicles to find routes out of living in vehicles.

Outreach will include regular door-knocking and follow-up visits to ensure proactive engagement, including where access is not initially gained.

Respondents were asked for their opinions on a proactive approach to outreach. 3,203 respondents answered this question.

- The majority of respondents (59%) agreed or strongly agreed with a proactive approach to outreach.
- This is compared with 27% who disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 15% who neither agreed nor disagreed.

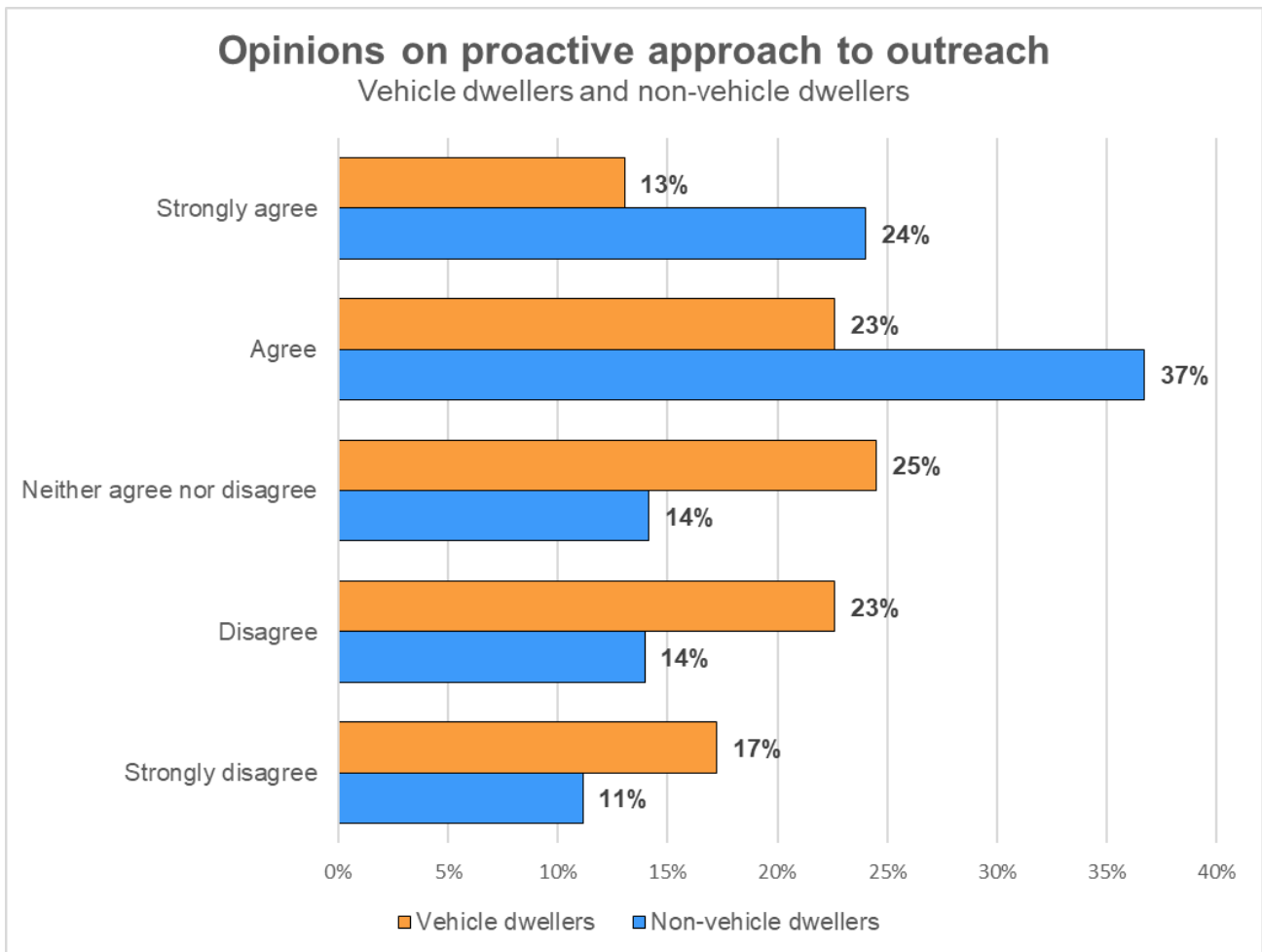
Figure 6: Opinions of all respondents on proactive approach to outreach



There was slightly more disagreement (40%) than agreement (36%) with the proactive approach to outreach from vehicle dwellers (see figure 7).

61% of non-vehicle dwellers agreed or strongly agreed (see figure 7).

Figure 7: Comparison of opinions on proactive approach to outreach by vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers



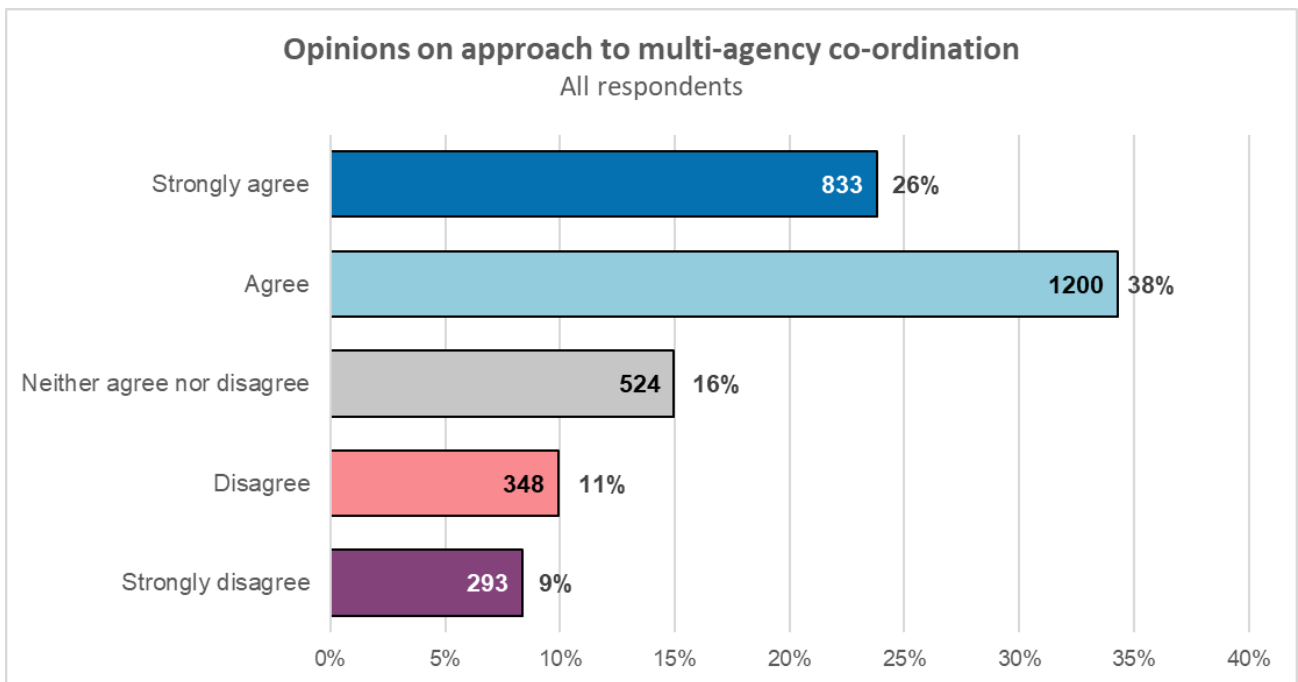
3.3.2. Multi-agency co-ordination

The policy states that the outreach workers will be supported by the council’s Adult Social Care, Children’s Services, Public Health, and Homelessness Prevention teams. This allows the council to make a holistic assessment of needs and collect data used to focus resources where most needed.

Respondents were asked for their opinions on multi-agency co-ordination. 3,198 respondents answered this question.

- 64% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed approach to multi-agency co-ordination
- 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 16% neither agreed nor disagreed

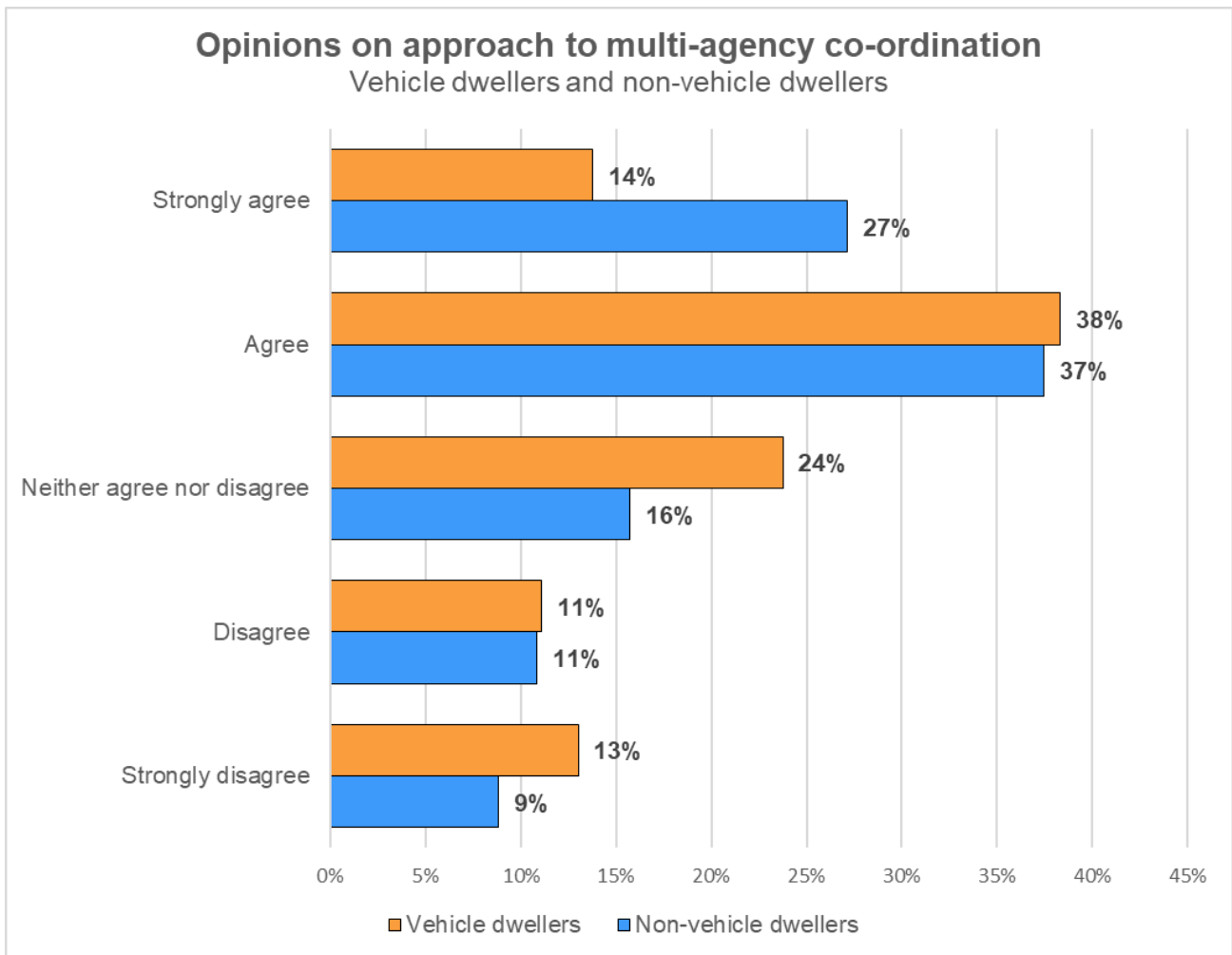
Figure 8: Opinions of all respondents on approach to multi-agency co-ordination



The majority of both vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers agreed with approach to multi-agency co-ordination

However, there was less strong agreement from vehicle dwellers, with 14% vs 27% from non-vehicle dwellers (see figure 9).

Figure 9: Comparison of opinions on approach to multi-agency co-ordination from vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers



3.3.3. Proposed approach to housing support

The proposed approach to housing support is that we will aim to advise and support people living in a vehicle to plan a move away from living in vehicles or find safer options that are not on the highway or council-owned land (without consent).

Part of this offer will be to:

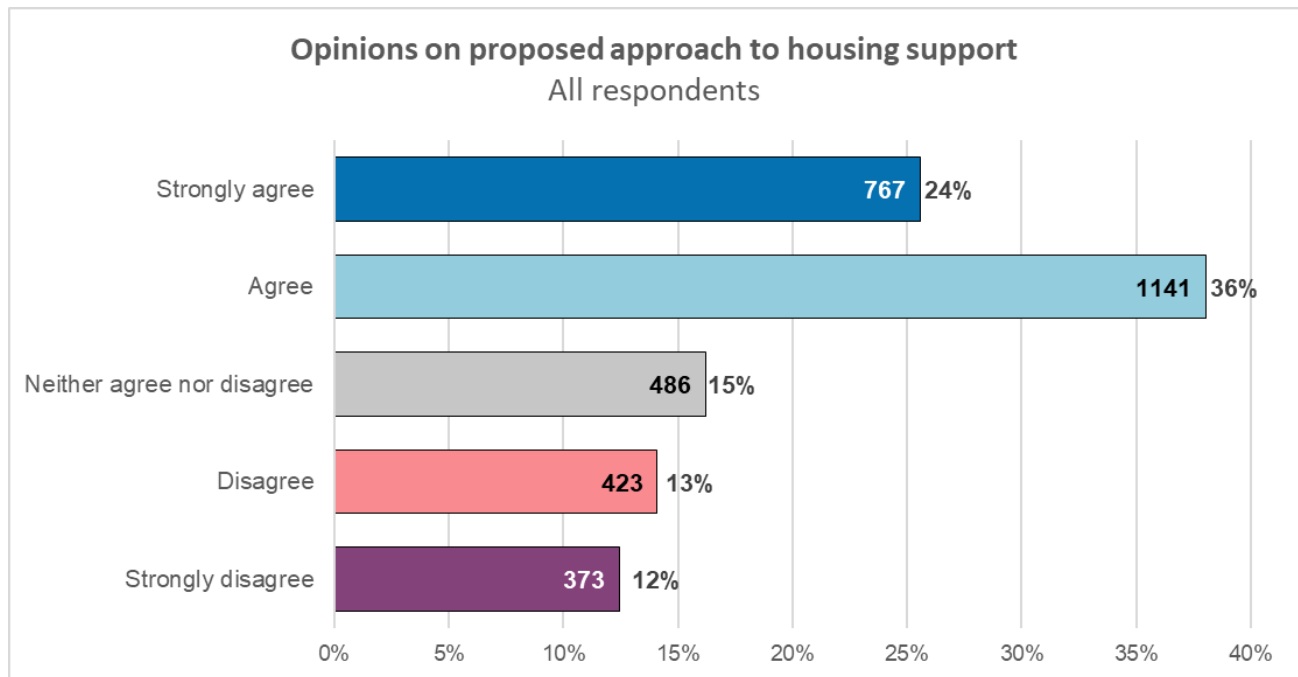
- access private sector accommodation
- move into supported accommodation where needed

Outreach Workers will liaise with the Homelessness Prevention Team to ensure full assessments under homelessness legislation are completed where appropriate.

Respondents were asked for their opinion on the proposed approach to housing support. 3,190 respondents answered this question.

- The majority of respondents (60%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed approach
- 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 15% neither agreed nor disagreed

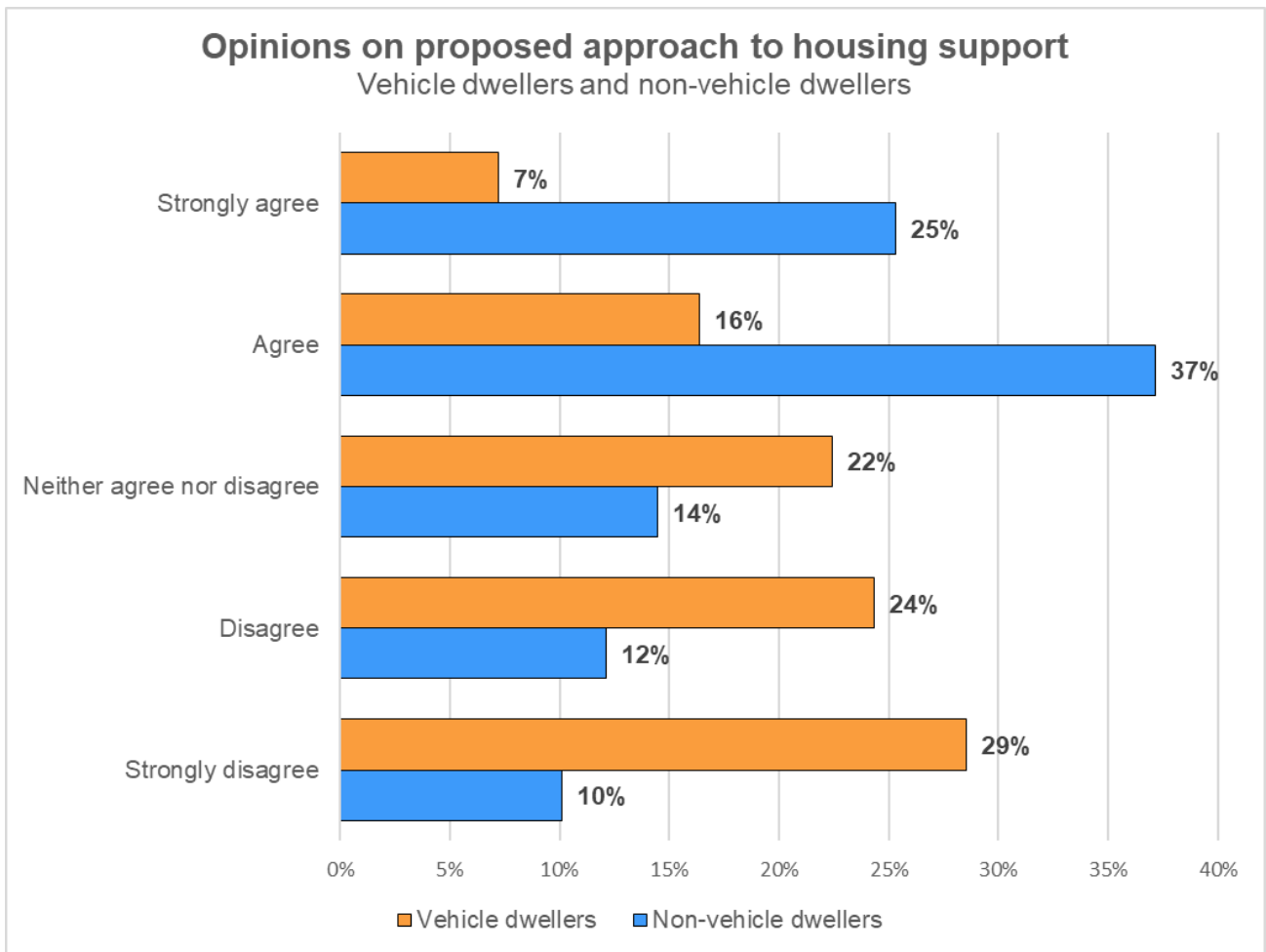
Figure 10: Opinions of all respondents on proposed approach to housing support



There were differences in the opinions of vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers.

- Majority of vehicle dwellers (53%) disagreed with the proposed approach to housing support
- Majority on non-vehicle dwellers (62%) agreed with it

Figure 11: Comparison of opinions on proposed approach to housing support by vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers



3.3.4. Free text responses on support for vehicle dwellers

Respondents were asked to provide any comments or suggestions on the proposed approach to supporting vehicle dwellers. 1,963 respondents commented.

The comments were categorised into the following themes:

Supporting the health and wellbeing of vehicle dwellers

- **Support for health, welfare, and vulnerable groups:** Requests for proactive, tailored health, welfare, employment and housing support for vehicle dwellers, especially those who are vulnerable or in hardship.
 - **Sample comment:** “Its important they are supported holistically including finding the accommodation and also other support around wellbeing, financial etc”
- **Addressing the housing crisis and housing affordability, accessibility and suitability:** Unaffordable rents, lack of social housing, and poor alternatives are highlighted as root causes of vehicle dwelling, with calls for the council to focus on increasing affordable housing and tackling systemic issues rather than just managing symptoms.
 - **Sample comment:** “All actions are hopeful but ultimately useless without a serious overhaul of rent caps. You can't redirect people to other housing if they can't afford it. People are turning to van life a lot because living in Bristol is unaffordable for many.”
- **Distinction between choice and necessity:** Respondents said that the council needs to distinguish between those living in vehicles by choice and those forced by circumstance, with calls for support to be targeted at those in genuine need while respecting autonomy and diversity within the community.
 - **Sample comment:** “Your questions assume all people living in vans are not doing it out of choice. Some people choose to live in vehicles and therefore will not need support to move into another accommodation. For some, it is a necessity but for others, it's a lifestyle choice.”
- **Voluntary engagement and person-centred support:** Comments said that support should be available but not forced, allowing vehicle dwellers to engage voluntarily and choose whether to accept assistance or move into fixed accommodation.
 - **Sample comment:** “Some people prefer to live in vehicles and deserve to be left alone. I agree with a proactive approach and supporting folks that want to live in permanent accommodation (sic) but those who don't shouldn't be harassed.”
- **Provision of legal sites and essential facilities:** There is support for creating legal sites and proper amenities such as sanitation, water, and waste disposal for vehicle dwellers as an alternative to roadside living.
 - **Sample comment:** “You need to offer permanent sites for van dwellers to live, so they have somewhere to care for, and can build community support networks. These people work in Bristol, many were born here. And they can't afford to live in a house here. Let them have some land, and live in their vans on it. If they are dirty, fine them. Simples.”

- **Flexible and creative management solutions:** Temporary time-limited sites, designated camping areas, community-led sites, use of local brownfield sites, and adoption of European models such as Aires sites and empty buildings are suggested as flexible solutions to address vehicle dwelling.
 - **Sample comment:** “We propose that Bristol pilots a proven, cost effective alternative that has been highly successful in Leeds: Negotiated Stopping. This is a formal, common sense agreement where the council provides basic services (toilets, waste disposal) and agrees to a temporary, undisturbed stay. In return, the community agrees to keep the area clean and manage their own site respectfully.”
- **Concerns about exploitation and safety:** Issues of vulnerable vehicle dwellers being exploited by van landlords or facing safety risks were raised, with requests to investigate and stop this.
 - **Sample comment:** “Nowhere is there any reference to the sinister OCG's that profit from this highly complex and distressing situation - buying up old, ramshackle, unroadworthy caravans/campers etc., and placing unfortunates such as vagrants, addicts, illegal unauthorised & displaced persons in them for a payment or regular payments. This MUST be addressed as well as the suggestions fielded in this consultation. The cycle must be broken in order to achieve decent living for all, & tax payers shouldn't be the ones penalised by the environmental, social, unlawful & often intimidating presence of this out of control situation.”

Concerns of the wider community

- **Fairness and impact on local residents:** Concerns are raised about fairness for settled residents, with calls for vehicle dwellers to contribute financially through Council Tax or other means, and worries about anti-social behaviour, rubbish, and loss of public spaces.
 - **Sample comment:** “There does not appear to be any consideration given to support for housed residents having to live near uninvited vehicle dwellers on nearby roads. While support for vehicle dwellers is laudable, it must not be to the detriment of home owners who cannot move themselves away and are simply expected to put up with vehicle dwellers near their properties.”
- **Environmental, public health and safety impact:** Litter, waste disposal, sanitation, pollution, illegal and anti-social behaviour and the impact on public spaces are frequently cited, with calls for better management, facilities, and enforcement to protect community wellbeing and the environment. Vehicles should be roadworthy, habitable, and not pose a fire risk.
 - **Sample comment:** “Support all those who show respect and consideration for others. Many types of vehicle dwellers have no consideration for others and can be abusive, show disregard to the environment, are anti-social, can be menacing to others, cause potential health hazards. Many choose to live this way but do not, even though having the means, contribute to the council income and certainly do not respect other groups.”

- **Fair and consistent enforcement:** Requests were made for fair and consistent enforcement of parking, vehicle condition, and anti-social behaviour laws.
 - **Sample comment:** “There’s no mention of enforcing the law, or compelling van dwellers to move. They may well like living where they do, even if they’re breaking the law by doing it. Turning a blind eye to law breaking leads to more and more of it. It’s only fair that we’re all expected to abide by the law - no exceptions.”
- **Concerns about fairness in access to support services and policy attracting more vehicle dwellers:** Commenters said that support for vehicle dwellers should be comparable to that offered to other vulnerable groups and raised concerns that increased support and facilities may make Bristol more attractive to vehicle dwellers from outside the city, potentially exacerbating issues and straining resources.
 - **Sample comment:** “However, it is important that this policy does not encourage more caravan dwellers on highways and council owned land (without permission), with the hope of finding the support mentioned within the policy e.g. supported accommodation/private sector accommodation. Additionally, we should make sure that these services are already being offered and promoted to Bristol’s homeless community rather than just to vehicle dwelling communities.”
- **Prevention of new encampments and roadside living:** Requests that policies should prevent the formation of new encampments and the normalisation of permanent vehicle dwelling on city streets, using enforcement, designated areas, physical barriers, clear signage, and new byelaws.
 - **Sample comment:** “You make effort to use inclusive language towards vehicle dwellers, but the problem is not with the people themselves but with their actions. Living in a vehicle is illegal unless is done in a permitted location. If someone is breaking the law, action needs to be taken promptly. Living in a vehicle in a residential street or park is unsustainable and needs to be stopped regardless of the person situation of the vehicle dwellers”
- **Prompt removal of abandoned and unoccupied vehicles:** Unoccupied and abandoned vehicles should be identified and removed quickly.
 - **Sample comment:** “Many vans are unoccupied. The owners should be tracked down, if possible, and all such vans removed immediately (at owner’s expense if they can be identified). This should act as a disincentive to others who may want to dump (or just park) their van on the Downs.”

Suggestions and concerns with the council approach and policy

- **Critique of council mismanagement and inaction:** The council is criticised for failing to address vehicle dwelling earlier and being too lenient or ineffective. Urgent action to address it is requested.
 - **Sample comment:** “I am pleased the council is finally doing something about the van dwellers on the downs. I recognise that there are reasons for people living in caravans but it is a completely unacceptable situation. As a tax payer and local resident I have been incredibly frustrated by the council not removing the van dwellers which have caused more to come. This is ruining the downs for the rest of the city. There is now a massive issue of unsocial behaviour and rubbish on what was once a lovely part of the city.”
- **Scepticism about policy effectiveness:** Scepticism exists regarding the council’s ability to deliver proposed support due to limited resources, previous inaction, vague policy language, and doubts about practicality and transparency.
 - **Sample comment:** “How can the council suddenly find the manpower and resources to help vehicle dwellers, when it is lacking in resources and man power to help people living in poor housing across the city. Will the law be enforced for illegal camping on roadsides? Will council workers persevere in talking to vehicle dwellers, what will happen to vehicle dwellers that will not accept help or move to designated sites?”
- **Transparent, measurable, evidence-based policy actions:** Comments said that the council should provide transparent information about vehicle dweller numbers, support outcomes, and regular updates on enforcement, with clear accountability for decisions and actions. Support is expressed for an evidence-based policy, with calls for better data collection and monitoring to ensure interventions are proportionate and effective.
 - **Sample comment:** “The policy shows little evidence of being informed and shaped by accurate data characterising the van dweller demographic - and the reasons behind their choice this lifestyle. How can a policy be effective and impactful without this information as its foundation?”
- **Suggestions and concerns about multi-agency coordination:** Suggestions were given for agencies that should be involved, including the emergency services and drug and alcohol services. Issues were raised with multi-agency coordination, with there potentially being too many conflicting priorities, and that it would result in delays and high costs. It was suggested that one organisation needed to take charge to avoid these potential downsides.
 - **Sample comment:** “The problem with a multi-agency approach is that determining a person's needs can get caught up in disagreements between agencies as to whose need is actually the greater. It's essential that there is one agency or person who has the final say and which can act quickly (overriding the objections of one agency vs the recommendations of another) when getting a truly vulnerable person into care.”
- **Need to differentiate types of vehicle dwelling:** Comments suggested that the policy needed to differentiate different types of vehicle dwelling and vehicles used, e.g. differentiating between static caravans and motorhomes/converted vans, and between

lifestyle vehicle dwellers, traveller encampments, vulnerable or otherwise homeless people, and criminals.

- **Sample comment:** “You need to be clear about the difference between permanent encampments with static vehicles and caravans and permanent encampments occupied by mobile vans that frequently move. At encampments with static vehicles it may be possible to make visits for assessment or enforcement but with mobile vans that frequently come and go such actions may be impracticable.”
- **Limiting support to local residents:** Requests to restrict support to Bristol residents.
 - **Sample comment:** “I worry that all the vehicle dwellers would be accommodated in Bristol, even though many did not come from Bristol (as far as I am aware). Are there plans to encourage people to move back to where they came from? Are there plans to discuss with other councils?”
- **Mistrust of the council and other organisations:** Concerns were raised that vehicle dwellers do not trust the council or other organisations involved in delivering support.
 - **Sample comment:** “The council's official channels have been ineffective at engaging with our community due to the deep seated fear, distrust and inadequate consideration for the disabled and or neurodivergent... For engagement to be successful, it must be community led, with the council acting as a supportive partner to trusted community groups who can guarantee safety and anonymity.”
- **Promotion of respect and inclusion for alternative lifestyles:** Comments said that the legitimacy of vehicle dwelling as a lifestyle choice should be recognised, respectful language should be used, and vehicle dwellers should be involved in service design to promote inclusion and reduce stigma, with caution against policies that reinforce prejudice or marginalisation. Suggestion that bridge building initiatives between vehicle dwellers and local communities could improve community cohesion.
 - **Sample comment:** “Members of our community are keen to take the lead in changing the narrative through positive, bridge building initiatives. These include community litter picks and "meet your neighbour" events, which directly challenge the unfounded stigma around waste and anti-social behaviour.”

3.4. Meanwhile Sites

Meanwhile Sites are temporary sites located on council-owned land awaiting redevelopment. Vehicle dwellers can stay temporarily for a weekly licence fee.

In the policy we proposed expanding the provision of Meanwhile Sites as a way to reduce the number of people living in vehicles on highways and council-owned land.

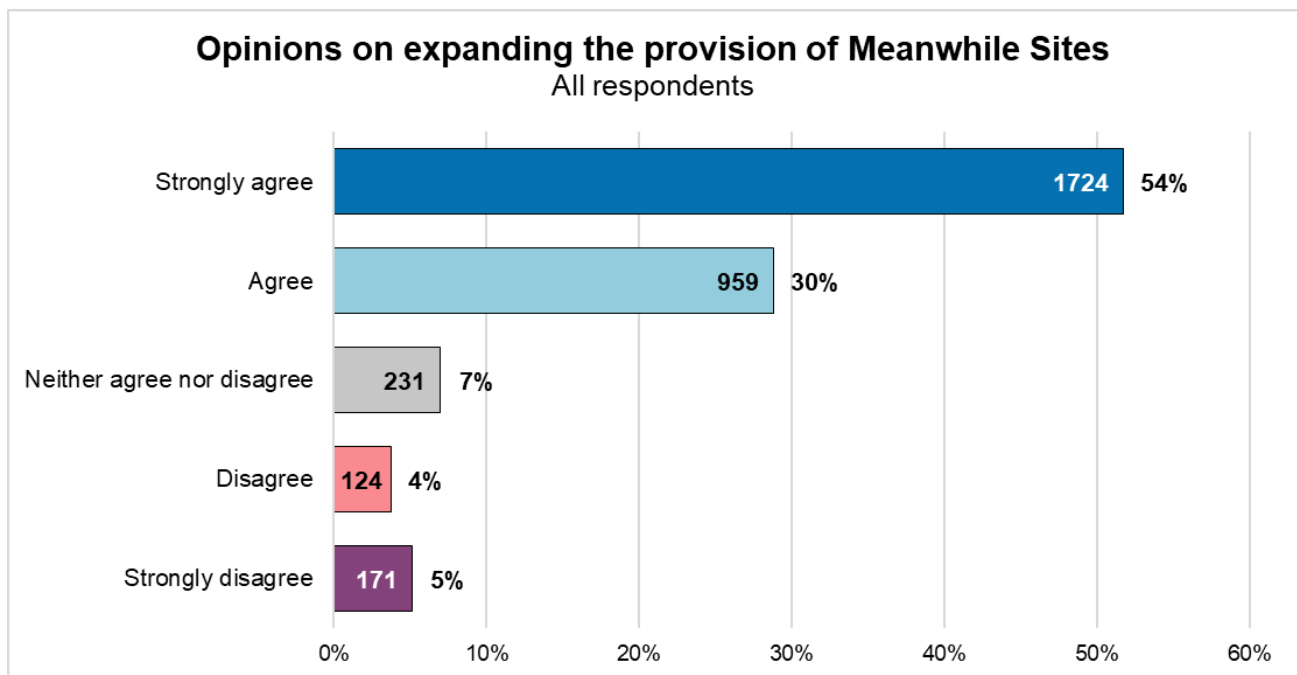
Meanwhile Sites are managed by the council with a clear code of conduct.

3.4.1. Views on expanding the provision of Meanwhile Sites

Respondents were asked their views on expanding the provision of Meanwhile Sites. 3,209 respondents answered this question.

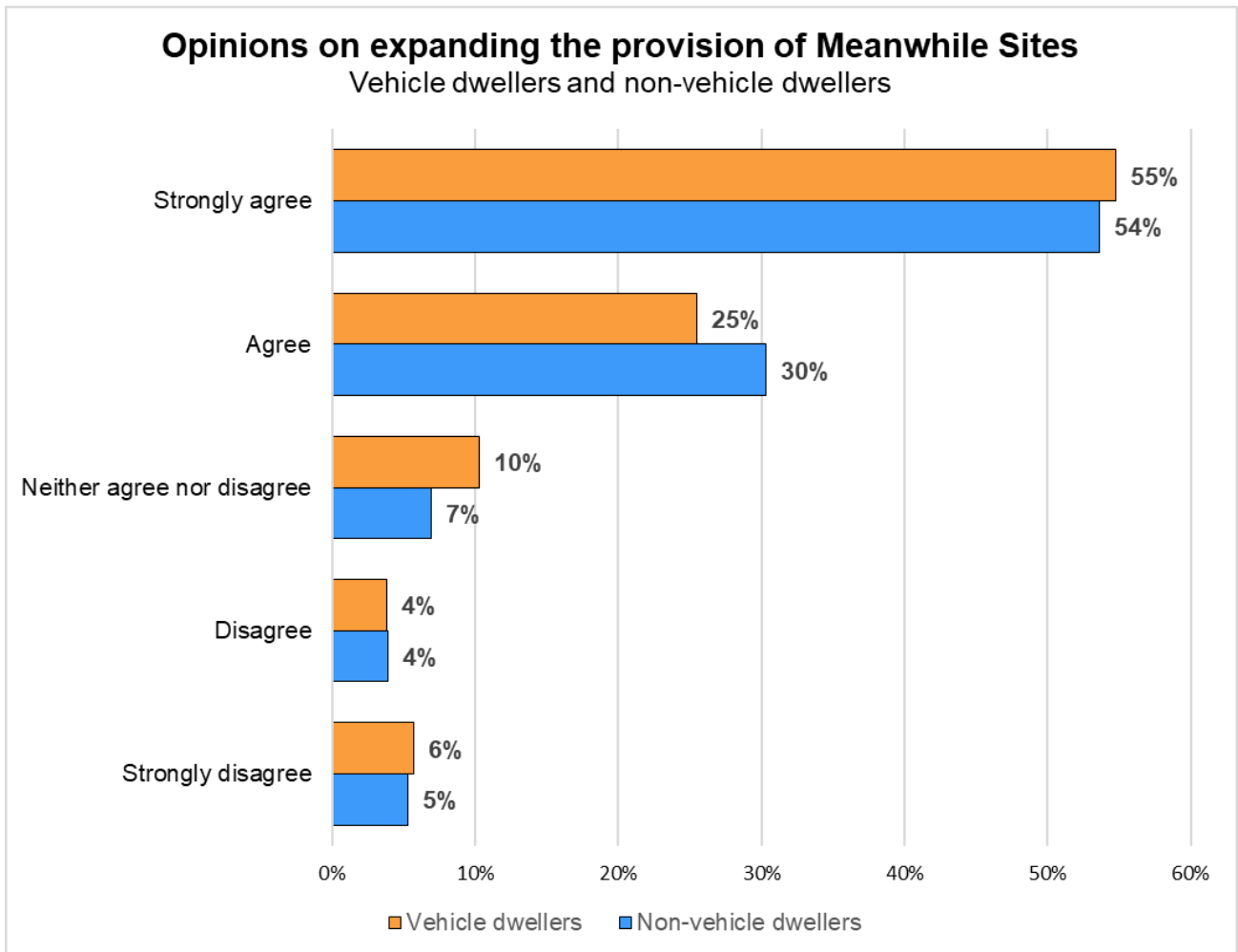
- The majority of respondents (84%) agreed or strongly agreed with expanding the provision.
- 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 7% neither agreed nor disagreed

Figure 12: Opinions of all respondents on expanding the provision of Meanwhile Sites



The opinions were similar between vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers, with the majority of both groups agreeing with expanding the provision (see figure 13).

Figure 13: Comparison of opinions on expanding the provision of Meanwhile Sites by vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers



3.4.2. Views on approach to allocating Meanwhile Site pitches

The proposed approach to allocating Meanwhile Site includes requirements for applicants:

- not to be subject to immigration control
- be aged 18 or over
- have a local connection to Bristol

A person will have a local connection to Bristol if they meet one of the following criteria:

- they have been living within the Bristol City boundary continuously for the last 2 years immediately prior to the date of their application
- their normal place of work (paid employment and not voluntary work) is in Bristol
- they have close family currently living in Bristol who have lived in Bristol continuously for the last 2 years immediately prior to the date of application, and they need to live near that person to provide or receive care

Close family is intended as immediate family (i.e. parents, dependent and non-dependent adult children and siblings). Applicants must be able to show that they have a relationship with that person.

As well as having to prove a local connection, the council may exclude certain people from getting a Meanwhile Site pitch or joining the waiting list.

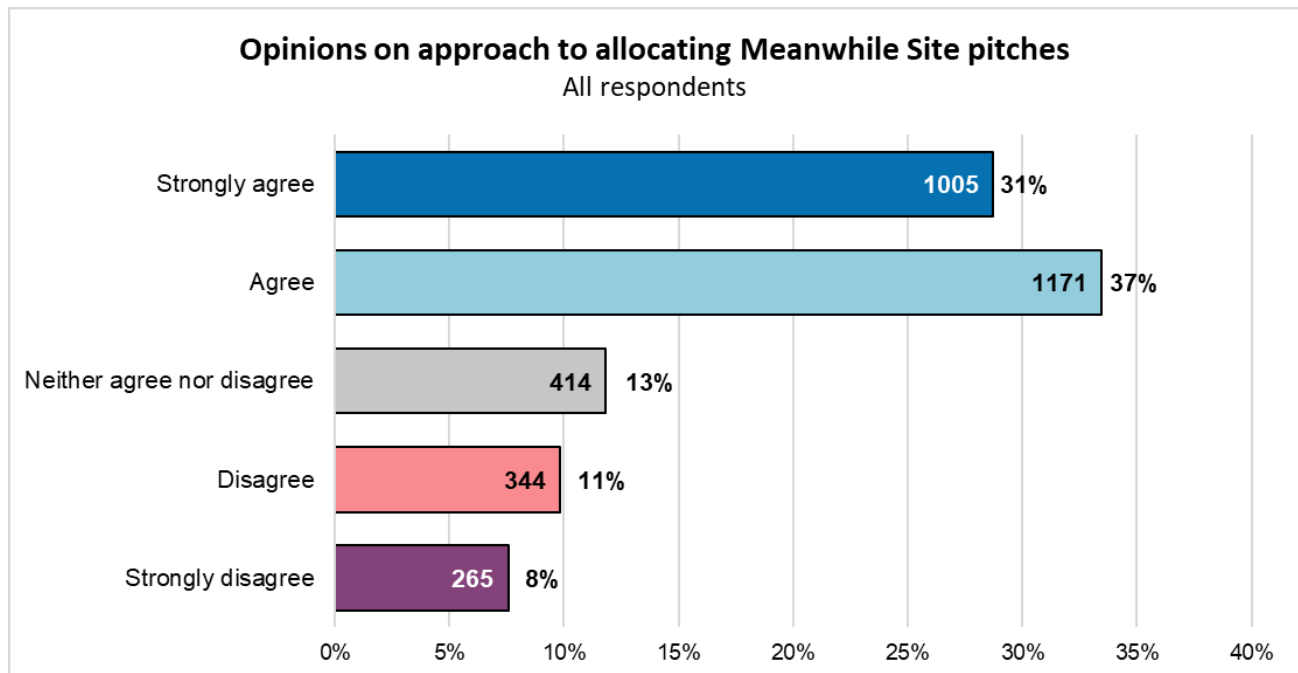
Reasons for exclusion include:

- previous eviction due to serious anti-social behaviour
- persistent failure to pay rent or other accommodation charges
- persistent noise nuisance
- illegal behaviour
- threat of or actual violence
- supplying false or misleading information to obtain a tenancy, Meanwhile Site pitch, or position on Meanwhile Site pitch waiting list
- racial or other harassment
- domestic violence and abuse
- loss of security of tenure due to breach of postponed order
- having been guilty of unauthorised subletting
- deliberate worsening of current 'housing' situation without reasonable cause
- moved onto a site without permission in advance

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposed approach to allocating Meanwhile Site pitches. 3,199 respondents answered this question.

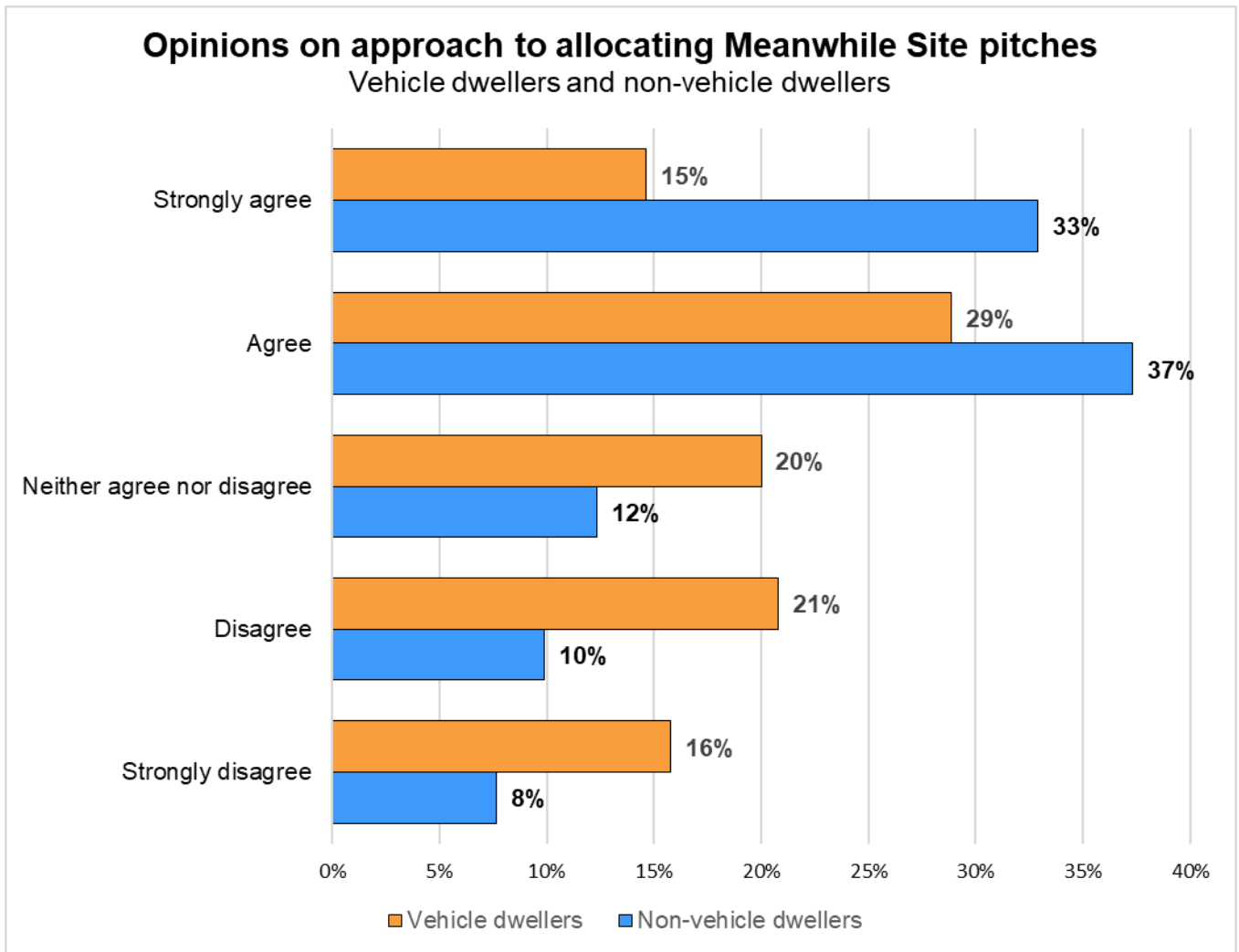
- The majority of respondents (68%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed approach to allocating Meanwhile Site pitches
- 19% disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 13% neither agreed nor disagreed

Figure 14: Opinions of all respondents on the approach to allocating Meanwhile Site Pitches



- Majority of non-vehicle dwellers (70%) agreed with the approach to allocating Meanwhile Site pitches
- Vehicle dweller response is more mixed, though more agree with the approach (45%) than disagree (35%)

Figure 15: Comparison of opinions on approach to allocating Meanwhile Sites by vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers



3.4.3. Comments and suggestions on proposals for Meanwhile Site pitches

Respondents were asked to provide comments or suggestions on the proposals for Meanwhile Sites. 1,605 respondents commented.

The comments about the Meanwhile Site proposals were categorised into the following themes.

- **More clarity needed on proposals**
 - **Plan for those excluded or who refuse:** Questions about what happens to those who do not qualify or refuse a pitch, with concerns about enforcement and relocation.
 - **Proof and eligibility rules:** Calls for clarity on how local connection and other criteria will be evidenced, especially for people without fixed addresses.
 - **Capacity and waiting lists:** Worries about insufficient spaces and long waiting times, with requests for clear numbers and timelines.

- **Location and duration:** Requests for details on where sites will be located and how long people can stay.
- **Planning and development of sites:** Requests for details on costs, proposed development plans and process, and whether views of local residents will be taken into consideration.
- **Enforcement**
 - Calls for compulsory relocation and penalties for non-compliance to prevent roadside living.
 - Belief that sites will only work if paired with strict action against roadside vehicle dwelling.
- **Concerns about Meanwhile Site proposals**
 - **Insufficient capacity:** Doubts that proposed sites will meet demand, leaving many on highways.
 - **Risk of permanence:** Concerns that temporary sites will become permanent settlements without strict time limits.
 - **Neighbourhood impact:** Worries about sites near residential areas and potential negative effects on communities.
 - **Anti-social behaviour concerns:** Concerns that excluded individuals will remain on streets, causing nuisance and safety risks
 - **Fees and affordability:** Concerns about costs for pitches and whether charges will deter uptake or create hardship
- **Suggestions for Meanwhile Sites**
 - **Fair allocation:** Calls to prioritise those most in need and prevent lifestyle users from taking spaces.
 - **Amenities and standards:** Support for well-managed sites with good facilities to encourage uptake.
 - **Permanent options:** Suggestions that some sites should become long-term to provide stability.
 - **Address safety concerns for women:** Concerns that current approach to Meanwhile Sites do not address safety concerns for women, and that all-female sites should be considered.
- **Requests for stricter applicant requirements**
 - **Increase local connection period:** Suggestions to raise residency requirement to more than two years.

- **Require work or family:** Calls for proof of employment or close family ties to qualify.
- **Immigration checks:** Demands for exclusion of people under immigration control.
- **Tougher exclusions:** Support for banning those with antisocial behaviour or criminal records.
- **Prioritisation:** Calls to prioritise those most in need and prevent lifestyle users from taking spaces.
- **Fairness and deterrence:** Arguments that strict rules will prevent abuse and discourage lifestyle van dwelling.
- **Requests for less strict applicant requirements**
 - **Relax local connection:** Objections to rigid residency rules as it will exclude many applicants. Calls to remove criteria, broaden the geographical area or to count ties such as friendships and support networks.
 - **Include volunteers and informal work:** Arguments that voluntary work should count towards eligibility as it benefits the community.
 - **Do not penalise arrears or subletting:** Criticism of exclusions based on rent arrears or past subletting, seen as unfair in a housing crisis and fails to recognise a tenant's legal right to withhold rent when in a legitimate dispute with a landlord.
 - **Protect vulnerable groups:** Concerns about excluding under-18s, victims of abuse and those under immigration control.
 - **Case-by-case flexibility:** Requests for discretion and trauma-informed approaches rather than blanket rules.
- **Opposition to Meanwhile Site policy**
 - **Waste of money:** Claims that sites are an unnecessary expense and will not solve the problem.
 - **Unworkable policy:** Assertions that van dwellers will refuse to move and sites will fail.
 - **Taxpayer fairness:** Anger at public funds being used for people perceived as choosing van life.
 - **Harm Bristol's image:** Concerns that sites will be unsightly with waste issues and harm Bristol's image.

3.5. Enforcement

Local Authorities and the police have a range of powers available to take enforcement action against individuals, or groups of people, living in vehicles on highways or council-owned land. [Appendix 2 of the policy](#) outlines these powers and the circumstances in which they might be used.

The policy is to act quickly where necessary, however the legal processes involved can take months.

Initial assessment

Once the council is made aware of people living in vehicles on a highway or council-owned land (without consent), an initial assessment will be made to determine the level of impact on the local community, environment, or location.

This will lead to either immediately starting enforcement action, or initiation of a 3-month period during which the support offer outlined in the previous section will continue to be prioritised.

Evidence-based

All decisions to take enforcement action, whether immediate, during, or after the three-month support period, will consider the circumstances of vehicle dwellers on a case-by-case basis and ensure the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998 guide our chosen response.

The council will, at its discretion, use statutory powers to resolve issues presented without resorting to eviction-type enforcement where there are reasons to do so.

All decisions taken by the council will have considered any obligations it has to a vehicle dweller under, for example, the Care Act 2014, Housing Act 1996, Children Act 1989, Mental Health Act 1983, and other relevant legislation.

3.5.1. Immediate action cases

Immediately starting enforcement action will be required where there is dangerous obstruction of a highway, or we identify a serious impact on the local community, environment, or location, directly linked to the person or people living in vehicles.

Our priority will be to use enforcement powers that remove the lived-in vehicles from the highway or council-owned land.

The council will endeavour to carry out a welfare assessment of the person or people living in vehicles before any enforcement action is taken.

What we consider to be serious impacts include the following:

Obstruction of a highway

- clear obstruction of emergency access routes, dangerous narrowing of highways, or visibility impact near bends or junctions
- as the highway authority, the council will determine whether an obstruction requires the vehicle or vehicle group to be removed in line with statutory duties

Crime and anti-social behaviour

Evidence of criminal activity or anti-social behaviour.

Examples include:

- breaches of the peace
- acts of vandalism or intimidation
- drug-dealing
- large gatherings causing sustained disturbances.

Health, welfare, and safeguarding

Evidence of urgent welfare concerns requiring immediate intervention.

Examples include:

- children or vulnerable adults in unsafe conditions or locations
- exploitation
- human trafficking
- modern slavery

Location

Vehicles are located either on, or in close proximity to, sensitive locations.

Examples of sensitive locations could include:

- schools
- children's play areas
- parks and green spaces
- locations where vehicle groups have been removed one or more times within the last 6 months

When assessing the impact of vehicles at any location, we will consider the number of vehicles and their density. For example, larger groups of vehicles may be considered more likely to cause disruption.

Waste and fly-tipping

Evidence of:

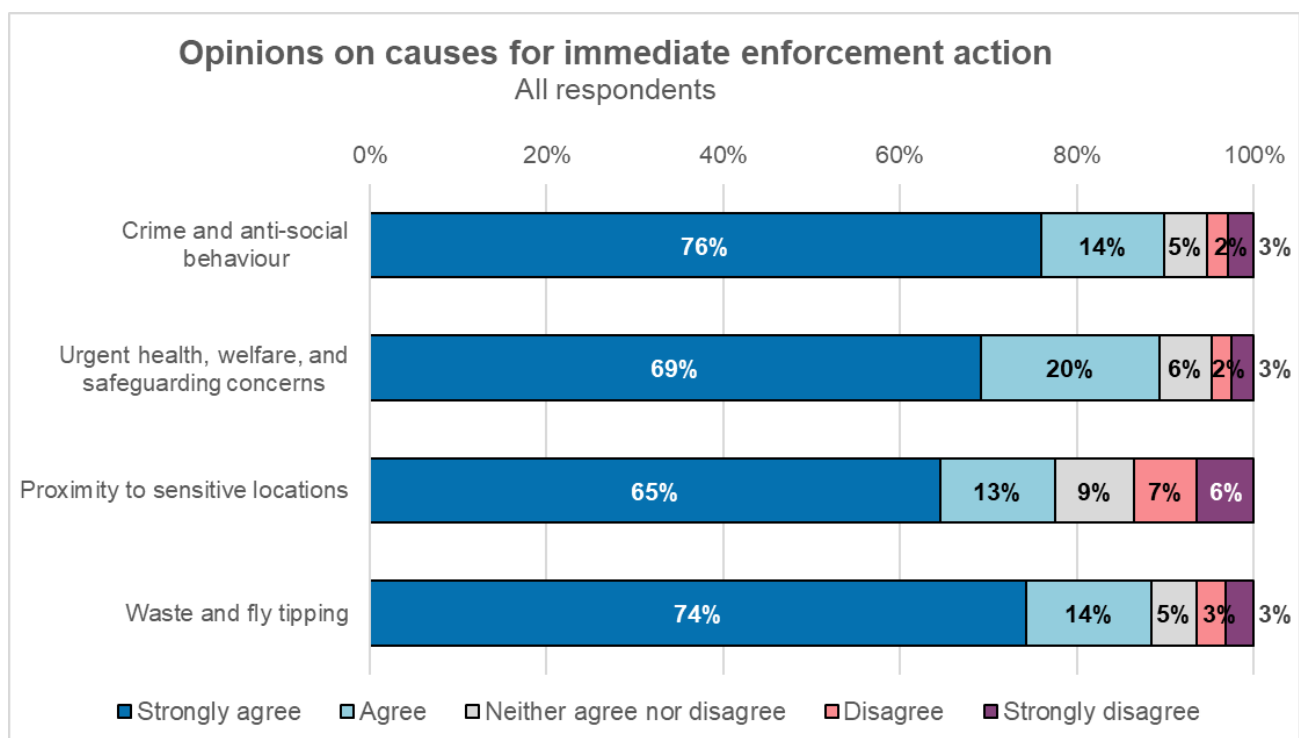
- noise
- fly-tipping
- human waste
- fires
- hazardous materials

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that immediate action should be taken due to those serious impacts. 3,208 respondents answered this question.

The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all of the proposed causes for immediate enforcement action.

- crime and anti-social behaviour (90%)
- urgent health, welfare, and safeguarding concerns (89%)
- proximity to sensitive locations (78%)
- waste and fly tipping (88%)

Figure 16: Opinions of all respondents on causes for immediate enforcement action



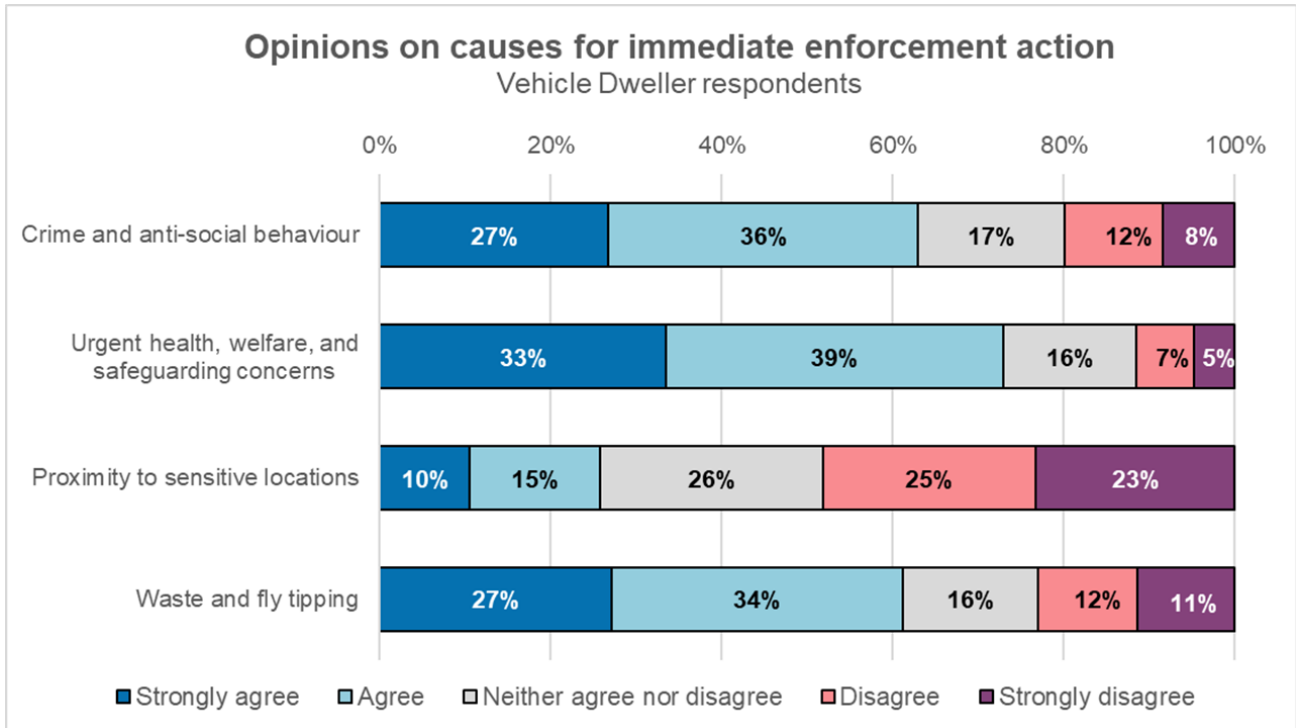
Majority of vehicle dwellers agreed or strongly agreed with 3 of the causes:

- crime and anti-social behaviour (63%)
- urgent health, welfare and safeguarding concerns (72%)
- Waste and fly-tipping (61%)

More vehicle dwellers disagreed with proximity to sensitive locations being a cause for immediate enforcement than agreed.

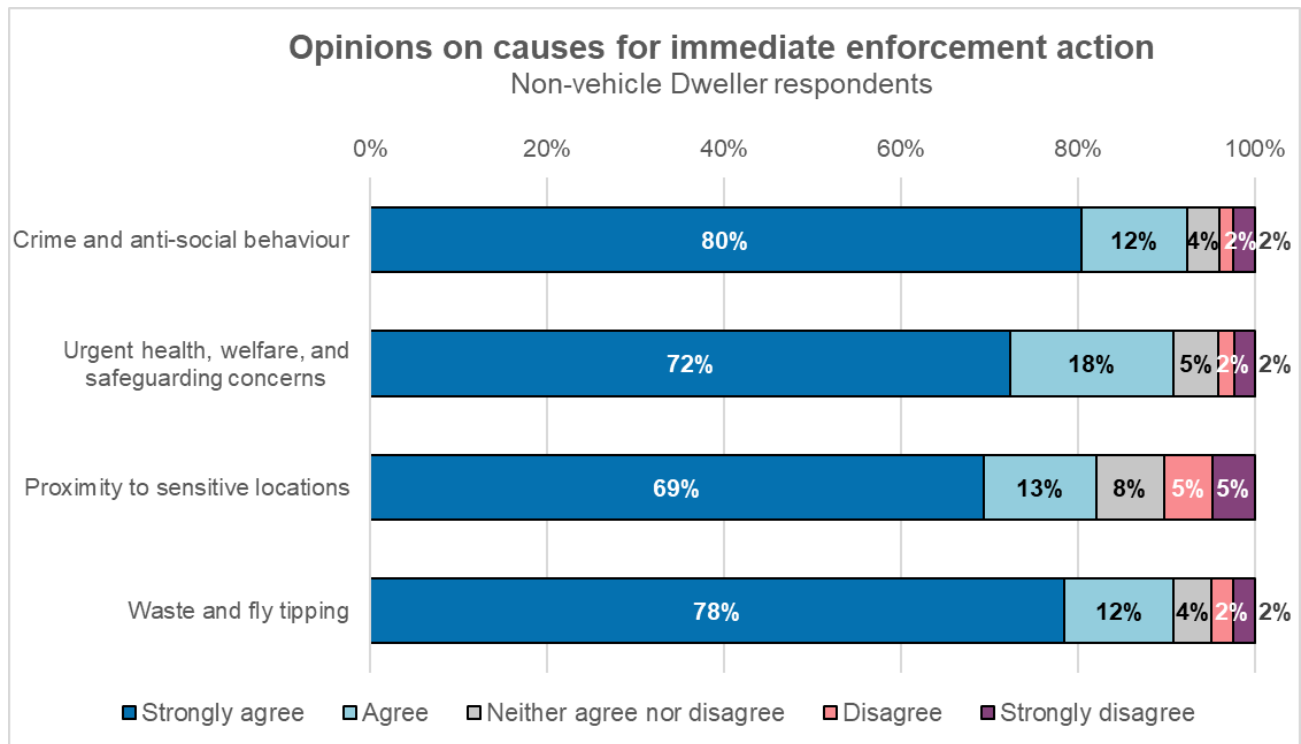
- 48% disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 25% agreed or strongly agreed

Figure 17: Opinions of vehicle dwellers on causes for immediate enforcement action



The majority of non-vehicle dwellers agreed or strongly agreed with every proposed cause for immediate enforcement action.

Figure 18: Opinions of non-vehicle dwellers on causes for immediate enforcement action



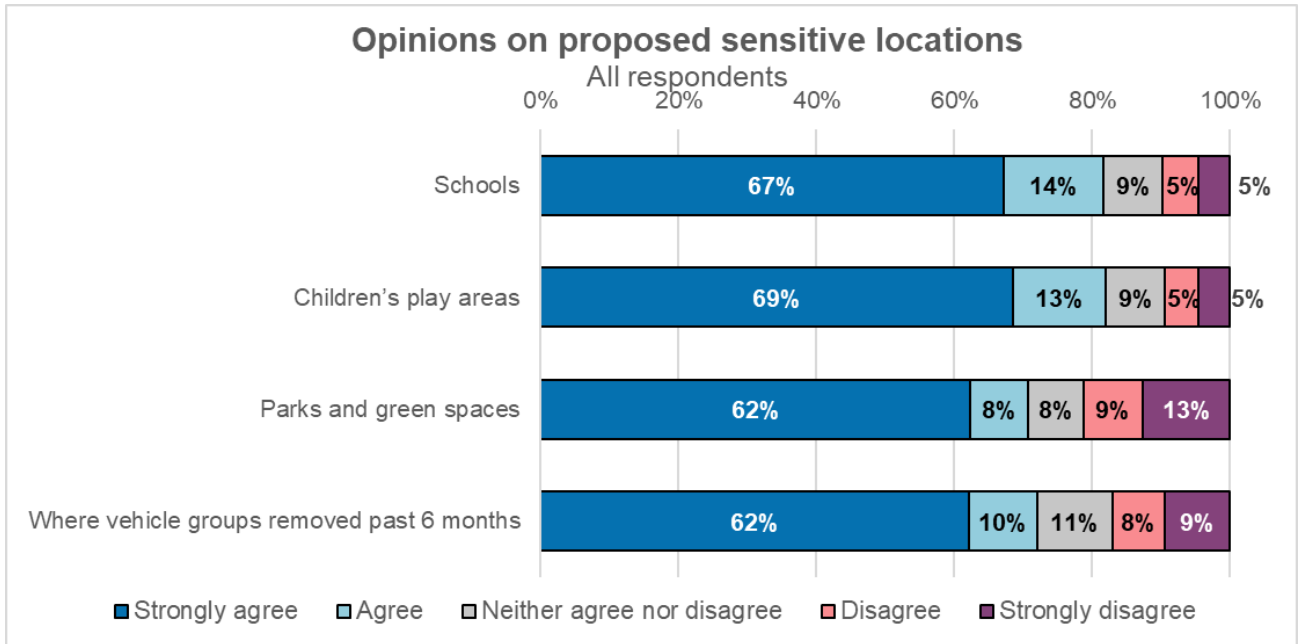
3.5.2. Sensitive locations

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposed sensitive locations. 3,210 respondents answered this question.

The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with each of the proposed sensitive locations.

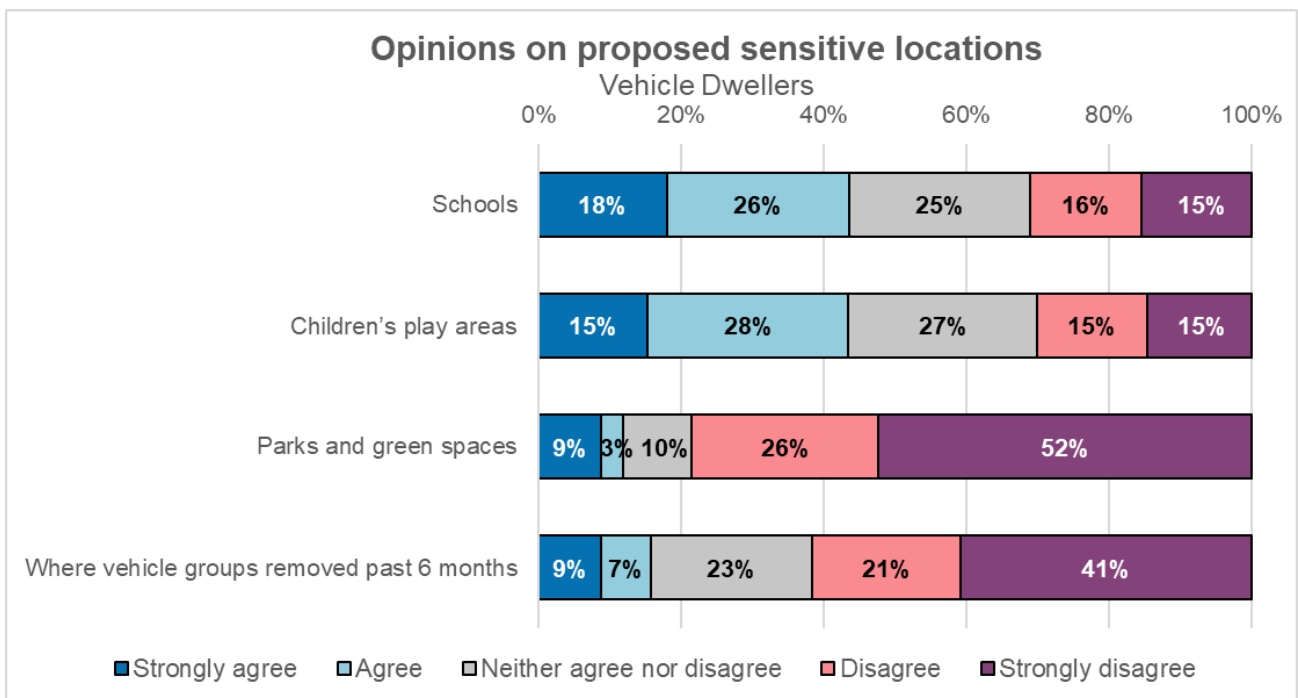
- schools (81%)
- children’s play areas (82%)
- parks and green spaces (70%)
- locations where vehicle groups have been removed one or more times within the last 6 months (72%)

Figure 19: Opinions of all respondents on proposed sensitive locations



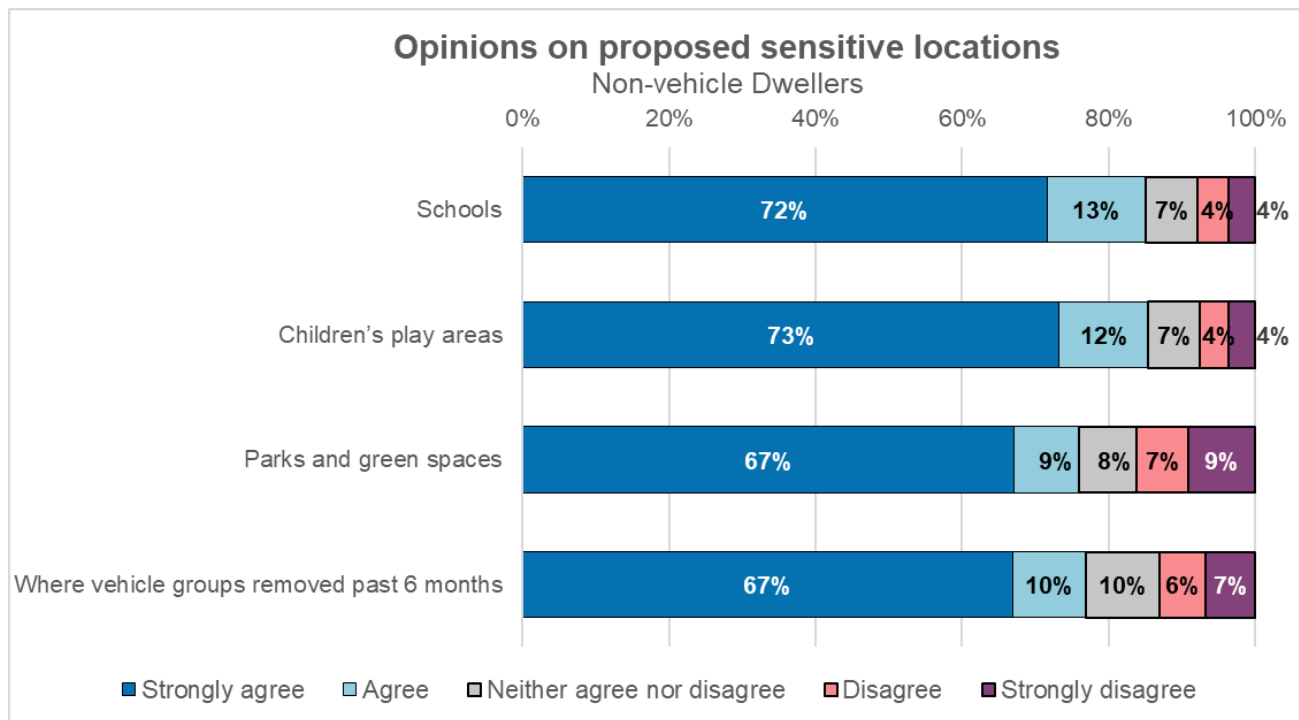
The majority of vehicle dwellers disagreed or strongly disagreed with parks and green spaces (78%) and locations where vehicle groups have been removed in past 6 months (62%) being sensitive locations.

Figure 20: Opinions of vehicle dwellers on proposed sensitive locations



The majority of non-vehicle dwellers agreed or strongly agreed with all of the proposed sensitive locations.

Figure 21: Opinions of non-vehicle dwellers on proposed sensitive locations



3.5.3. Additional sensitive locations

Respondents were asked to list any additional locations they would want to be included as a sensitive location. 1,391 respondents responded to this question.

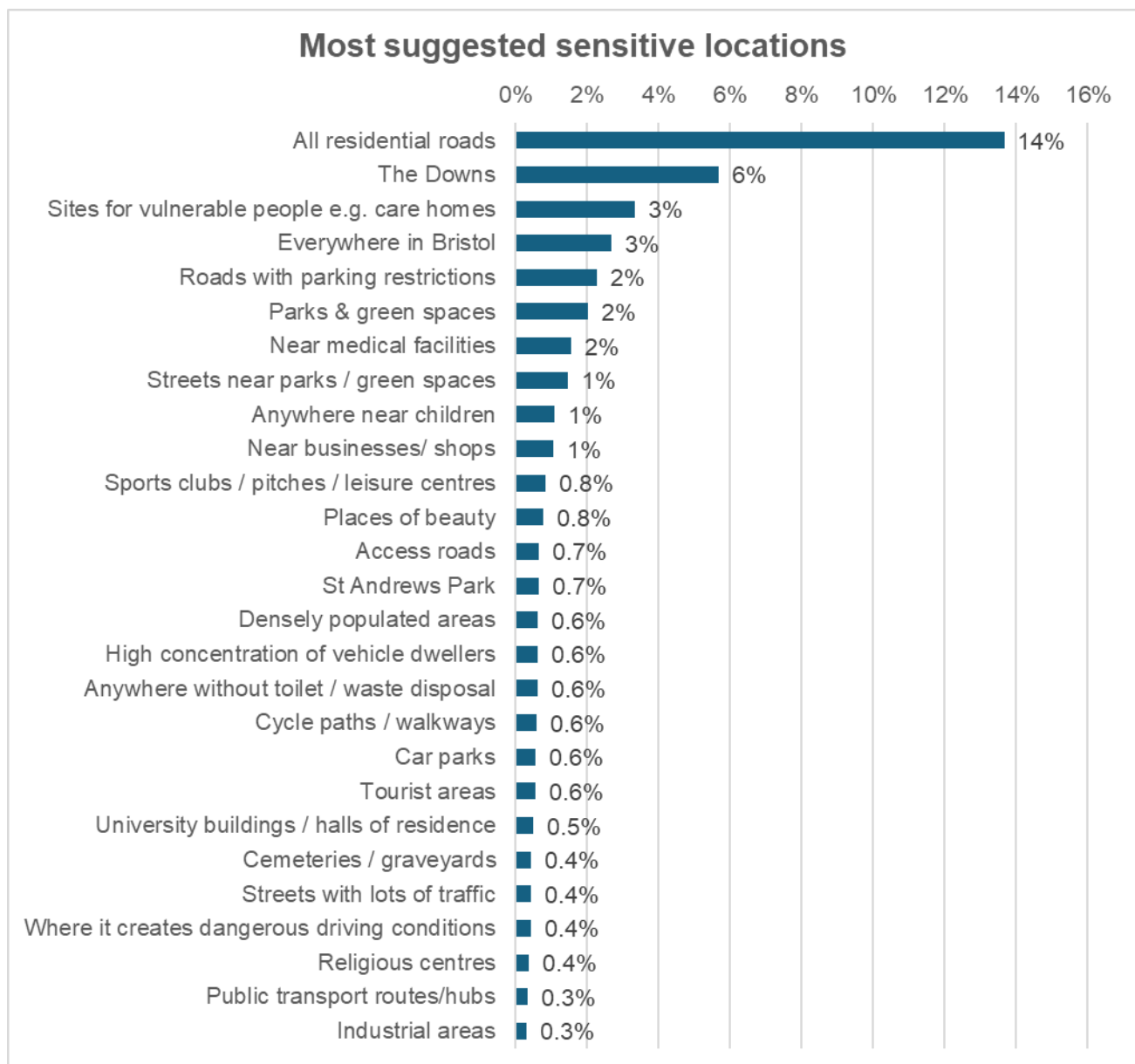
The most suggested sensitive locations were:

- All residential roads (14% of all respondents)
- The Downs (6% of respondents)
- Sites for vulnerable people (3% of respondents)
- Everywhere in Bristol (3% of respondents)
- Roads with parking restrictions (2% of respondents)
- Parks and green spaces (2% of respondents)
- Near medical facilities (2% of respondents)
- Streets near parks and green spaces (1% of respondents)
- Anywhere near children (1% of respondents)
- Near businesses or shops (1% of respondents)
- Sports clubs/pitches/leisure centres (0.8% of respondents)
- Places of beauty (0.8% of respondents)
- Access roads (0.7% of respondents)
- St Andrews Park (0.7% of respondents)
- Densely populated areas (0.6% of respondents)
- Anywhere without toilet/waste disposal (0.6% of respondents)
- Cycle paths/walkways (0.6% of respondents)
- Car parks (0.6% of respondents)

- Tourist areas (0.6% of respondents)
- University buildings/halls of residence (0.5% of respondents)
- Cemeteries/graveyards (0.4% of respondents)
- Streets with lots of traffic (0.4% of respondents)
- Where vehicles being parked creates dangerous driving conditions (0.4% of respondents)
- Religious centres (0.4% of respondents)
- Public transport routes or hubs (0.3% of respondents)
- Industrial areas (0.3% of respondents)

3% of all respondents commented that they disagreed with there being sensitive locations at all, with some commenters saying that it framed vehicle dwellers as inherently dangerous rather than treating them on a case-by-case basis and therefore is discriminatory.

Figure 22: Most suggested sensitive locations



3.5.4. Time limited support period

Where immediate action is not taken, it is proposed that a period of up to 3 months will begin from the date of the initial assessment.

3 months is the same period used for groups of rough sleepers on council-owned land.

Officers from the council enforcement team will encourage vehicle dwellers to leave the highway or council-owned land within 3 months.

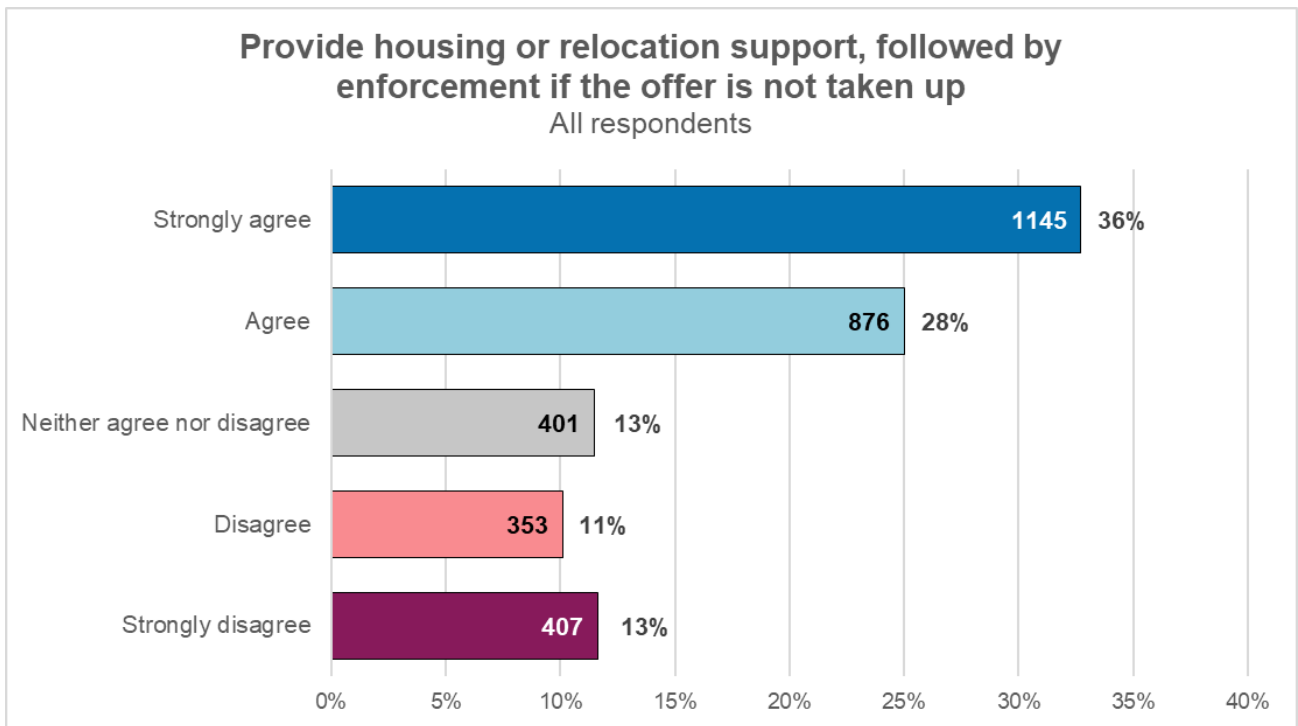
During this period:

- the council will continue to prioritise the proactive support offer described in the previous sections of the survey, which includes an assessment of welfare, advice and support to find secure accommodation, and Meanwhile Site pitches subject to eligibility and availability
- if the offer is accepted, we will support the individual or household to progress their housing or Meanwhile Site offer
- anti-social behaviour (ASB) interventions or other interventions may be used during this period to manage or contain the impact of the vehicle group without seeking their removal from the highway or council-owned land, in line with Bristol City Council's Corporate ASB Policy, Enforcement Policy, and other relevant council policies

Respondents were asked their views on the approach of providing housing or relocation support, followed by enforcement if the offer is not taken up. 3,182 respondents answered this question.

The majority of respondents (64%) agreed or strongly agreed with this approach.

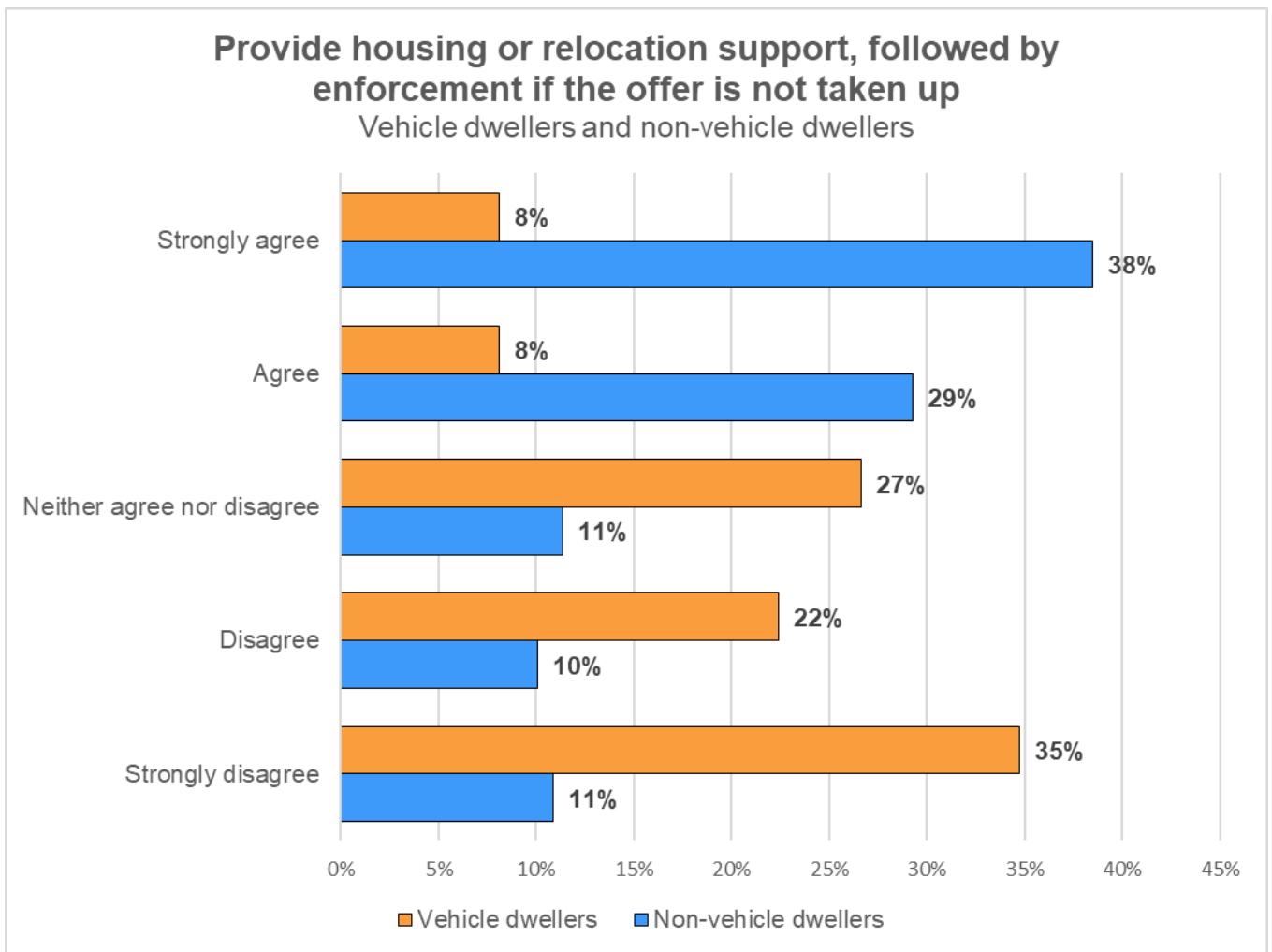
Figure 23: Opinions of all respondents on providing housing or relocation support, followed by enforcement if the offer is not taken up



Views on this were polarised between vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers.

- Majority of vehicle dwellers (56%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the approach
- Majority of non-vehicle dwellers (67%) agreed or strongly agreed with the approach

Figure 24: Comparison of views from vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers on providing housing or relocation support, followed by enforcement if the offer is not taken up

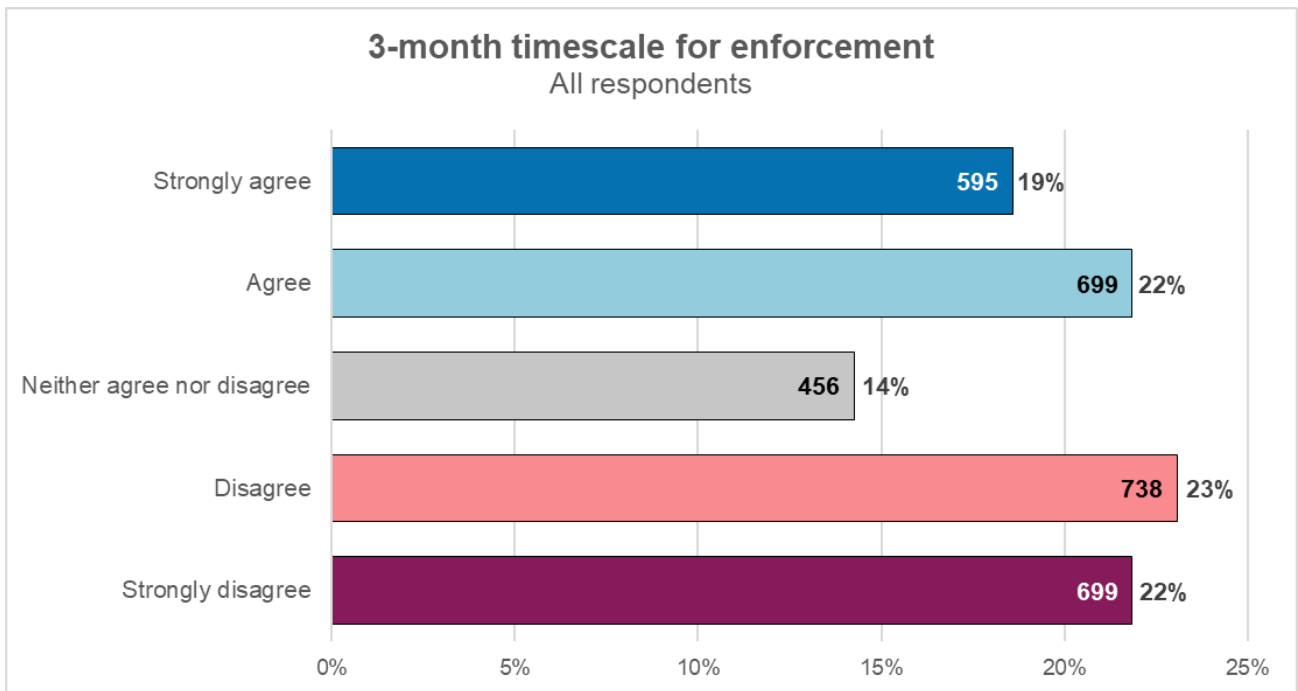


3-month timescale

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposed 3-month timescale for enforcement. 3,187 respondents answered this question.

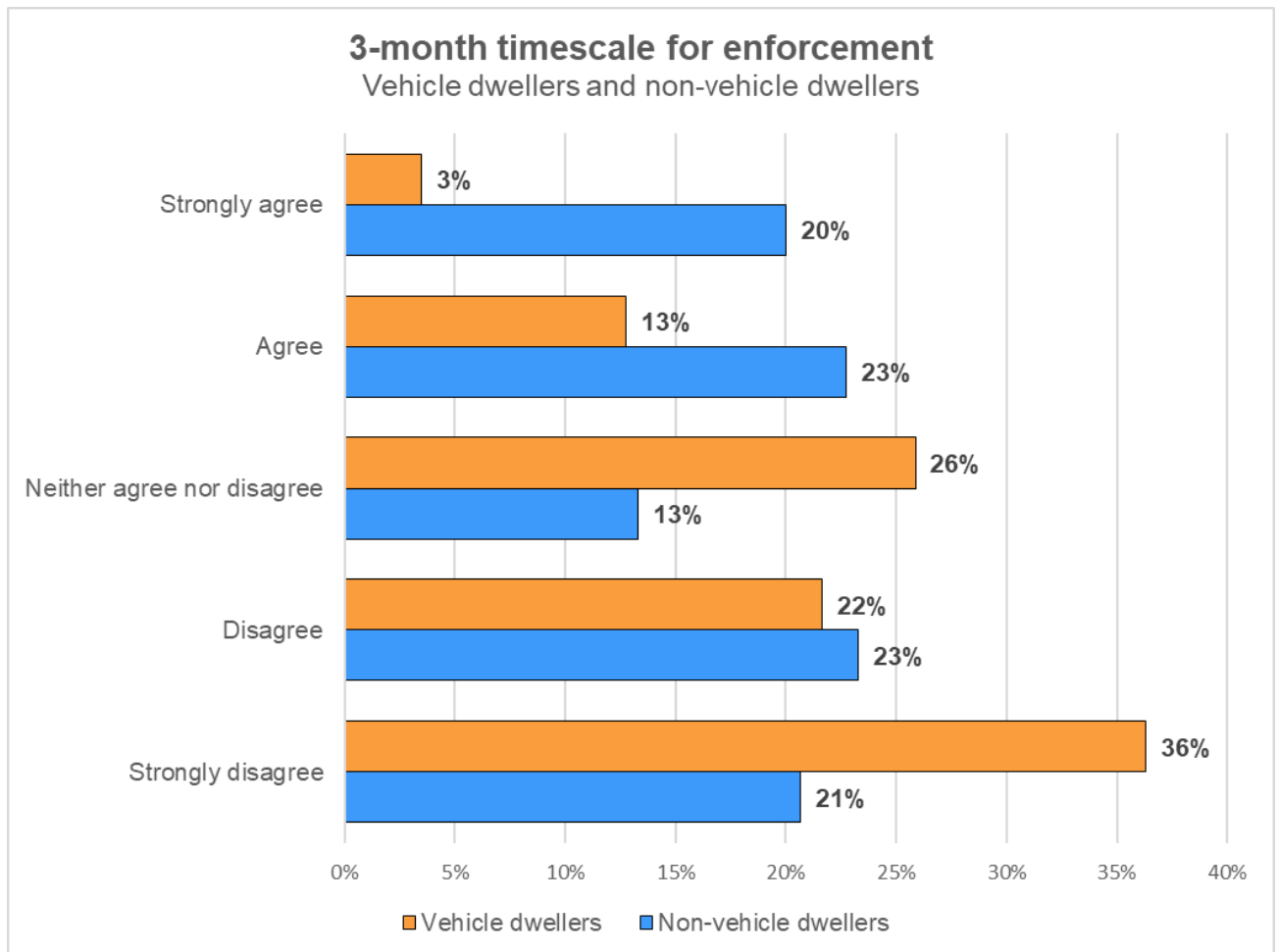
- Slightly more respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (45%) than agreed or strongly agreed (41%)
- 14% neither agreed nor disagreed

Figure 25: Opinions of all respondents on 3-month timescale for enforcement



- The majority of vehicle dwellers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the 3-month timescale (58%)
- Non-vehicle dwellers had very slightly higher levels of disagreement (44%) than agreement (43%)

Figure 26: Comparison of views of vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers on 3-month timescale for enforcement



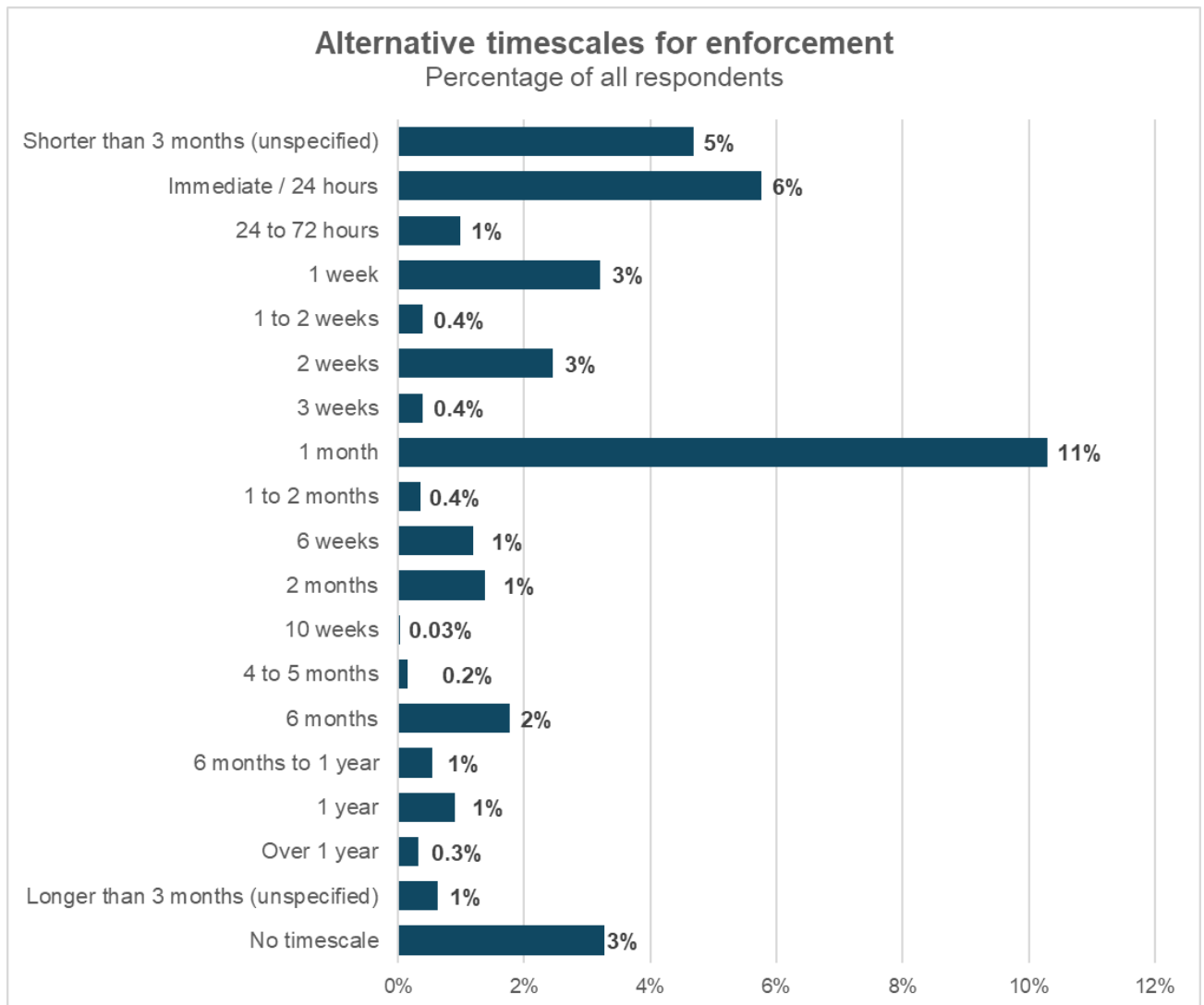
Alternative timescales

Respondents were asked to provide alternative timescales if they disagreed with the proposed 3-months.

Of the respondents who did not support 3 months:

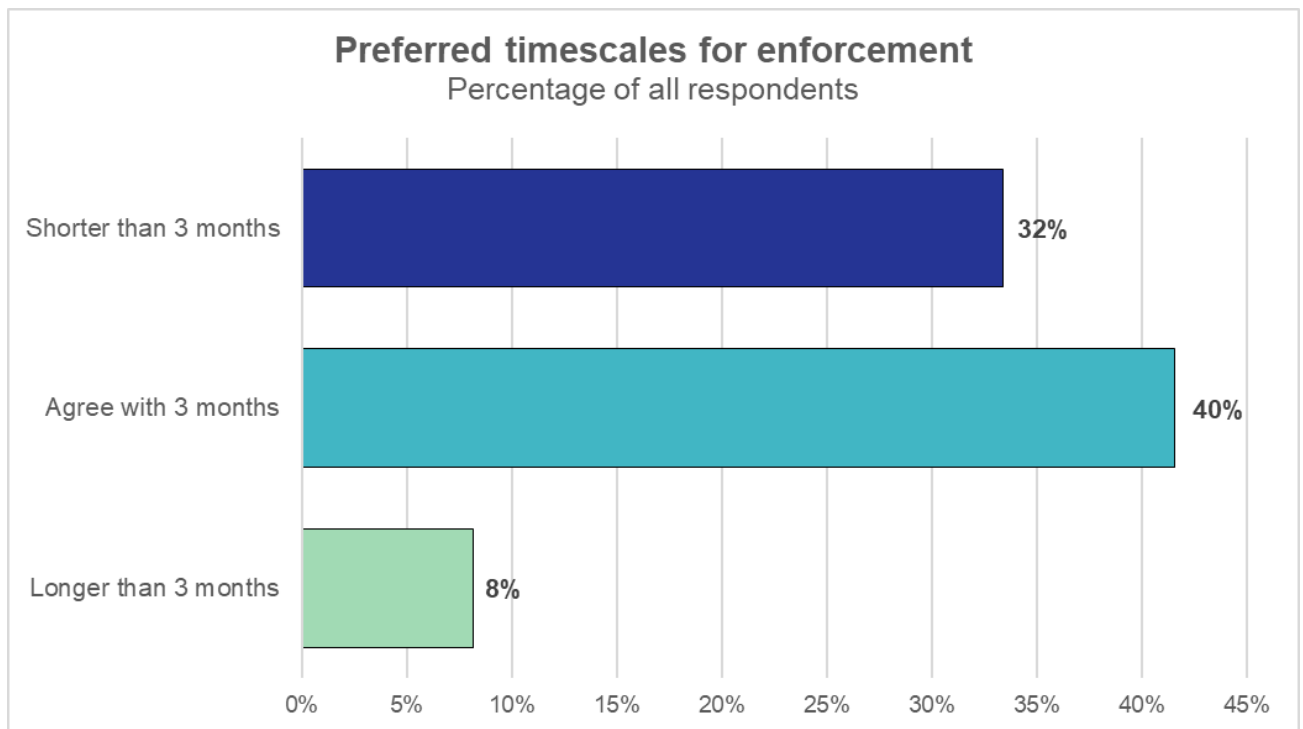
- the most suggested timescale was 1 month (11% of all respondents)
- the next most popular was immediate/24 hours (6% of respondents)

Figure 27: Alternative suggestions of timescale for enforcement



- 32% of all respondents suggested a shorter timescale than 3-months
- 8% of all respondents suggested a longer timescale
- This is compared to 40% of all respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the 3-month timescale

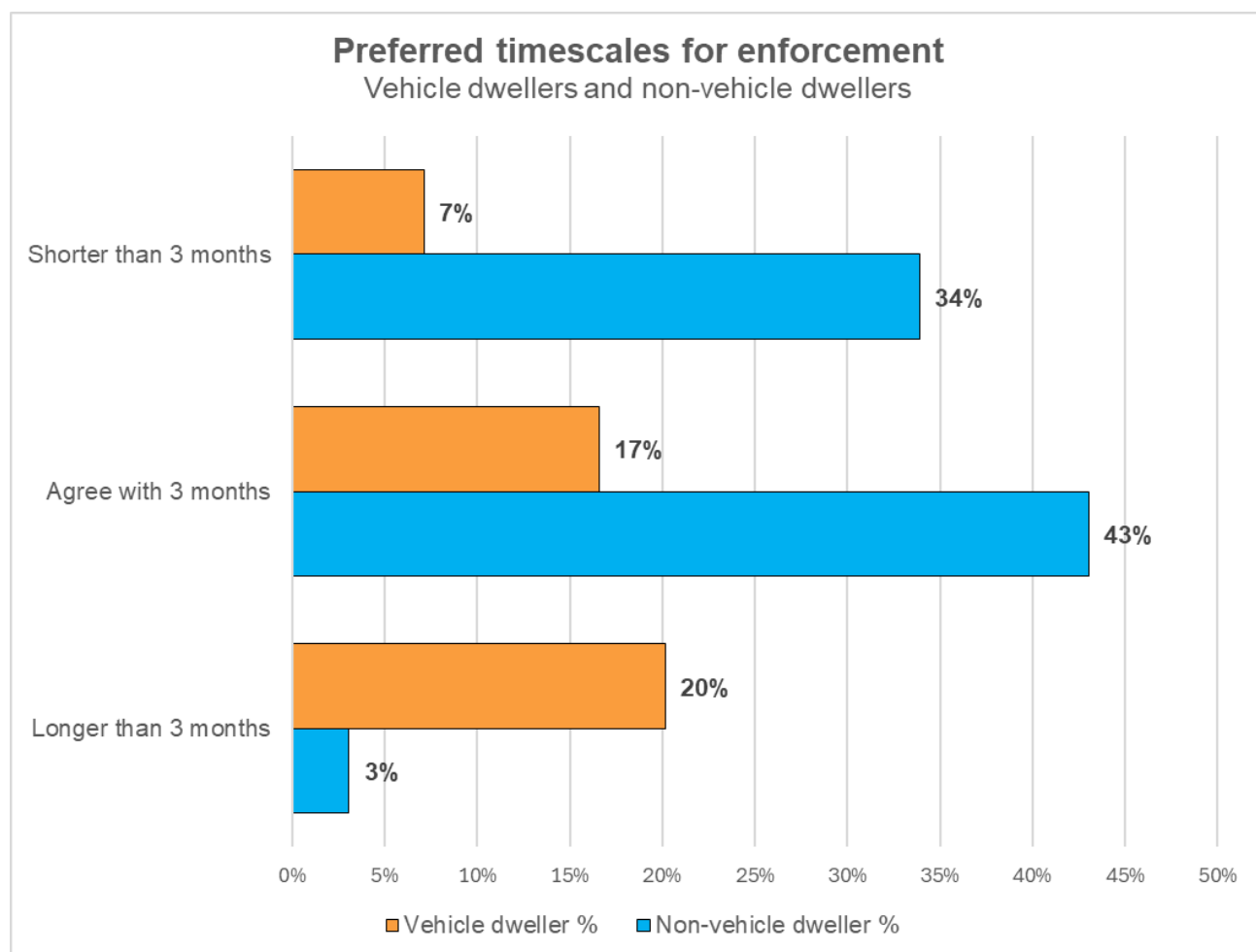
Figure 28: Preferred timescales for enforcement



Comparing the suggested timescales of vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers:

- 7% of vehicle dwellers wanted a shorter timescale compared with 34% of non-vehicle dwellers
- 20% of vehicle dwellers wanted a longer timescale compared with 3% of non-vehicle dwellers
- 17% of vehicle dwellers agreed with 3 months compared to 43% of non-vehicle dwellers

Figure 29: Comparison of preferred timescales for enforcement by vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers



3.5.5. Free text comments on enforcement

Respondents were asked to provide comments or suggestions on the proposed approach to enforcement. 1,335 respondents commented.

The comments and suggestions on enforcement were categorised into the following themes.

- Council enforcement timelines and effectiveness are questioned:** There is demand for quicker and more effective action, and the 3-month time limit is considered too long. There is scepticism over the 3-month time limit and ability for vehicle dwellers to start the clock again by moving to another spot. There is a lack of confidence in resource and capacity for the enforcement team to deal with situation
 - Sample comment:** “What will happen if people who have been sent away return? Will there be another 3 months of trying to get them to leave?”
- Enforcement must be balanced with welfare support:** Enforcement actions should be combined with meaningful welfare support and individual assessment, prioritising

flexible, person-centred approaches for vulnerable groups over blanket or punitive measures.

- **Sample comment:** “The enforcement is reliant on the ability to secure appropriate, sustainable move on options. Without this the problem is just moved around, not resolved, and people are further traumatised by the processes.”
- **Negative community and environmental impacts require enforcement:** Vehicle dwelling can cause obstruction, anti-social behaviour, and environmental harm, necessitating enforcement to protect residents and public spaces.
 - **Sample comment:** “Van dwellers who start taking over areas of grass on the Downs with furniture, barbecues, self dug toilets etc should receive enforcement immediately.”
- **Alternative lifestyles should be respected and stigmatisation avoided:** Vehicle dwelling should be recognised as a legitimate lifestyle choice, with policies avoiding stigmatisation, forced eviction, and conflation with social problems.
 - **Sample comment:** “just need to be careful to be treating travellers and nomadic communities fairly - they have a right to their lifestyle”
- **Strict enforcement of vehicle legality and parking rules is supported:** There is support for enforced parking, MOT, and licensing regulations, especially in sensitive areas, to address abandoned or unregistered vehicles and maintain order.
 - **Sample comment:** “If I overextend parking in a zone where restrictions apply I would not be surprised if my vehicle is moved within a very short time. Even the same day. Illegally and persistent offenders should likewise expect to be moved on within a similar short period and not be allowed to overstay.”
- **Clear criteria and transparency are essential for fair enforcement:** Explicit enforcement criteria, transparent procedures, and public accountability are needed to ensure fairness and maintain public confidence.
 - **Sample comment:** “Local community needs to be kept informed of proposed plan of action and when the 3 month period begins. Local community needs to have a way to report incidents in such a way that they can be evidenced under each case.”
- **Risk of discrimination and unfair targeting:** Enforcement policies risk unfairly targeting vulnerable groups, including the homeless, Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities, and those subject to immigration control, necessitating non-discriminatory practices and safeguarding.
 - **Sample comment:** “I would be wary of the clause about people with no Bristol connection as it may be someone fleeing domestic abuse or trafficking.”

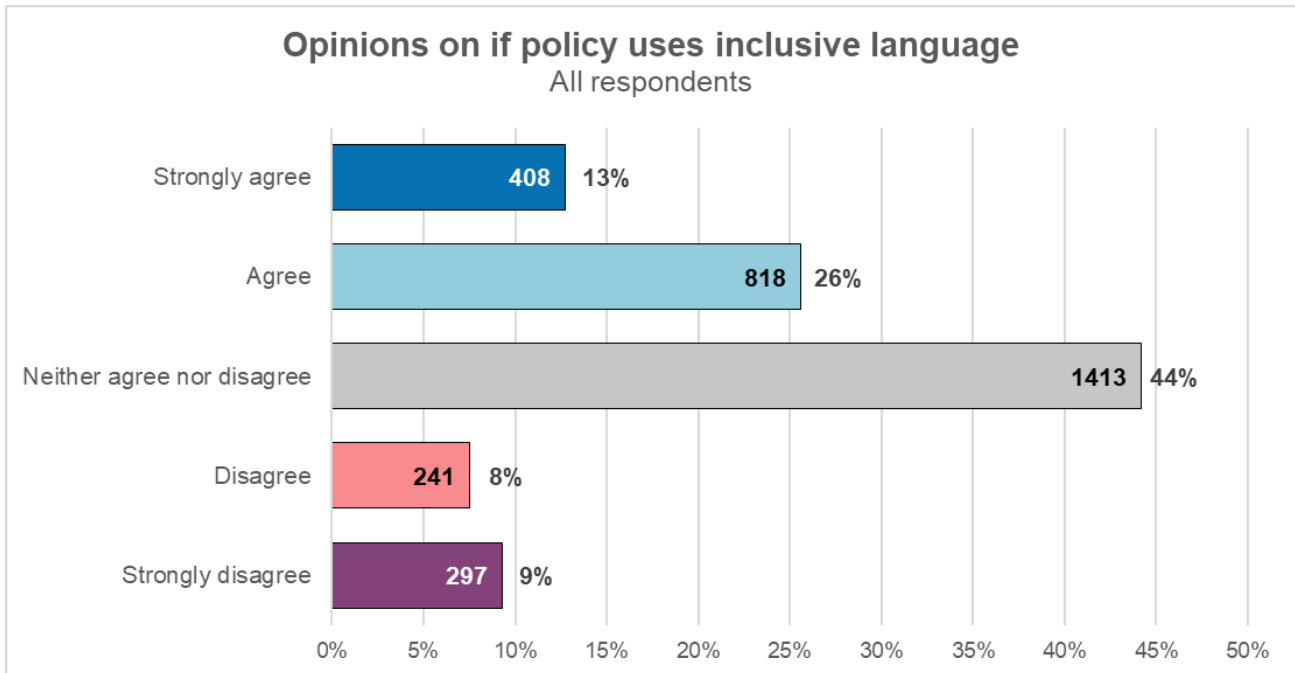
- **Policy should address root causes like housing crisis and inequality:** Enforcement alone is insufficient. Policies must tackle underlying issues such as housing affordability, poverty, and social inequality.
 - **Sample comment:** “Enforcement will not stop the root cause of this issue. Tackling the root causes of car sleepers is needed- rent reform”
- **Provision of facilities and designated sites can reduce enforcement need:** Supplying basic facilities and safe, low-cost sites for vehicle dwellers can mitigate negative impacts and lessen the necessity for enforcement.
 - **Sample comment:** “Providing services such as waste collection may mean you do not need to take enforcement action.”
- **Prevention and practical measures preferred before enforcement:** Preventative steps and practical interventions, such as parking restrictions, fines, and facilities, are favoured to manage impacts before resorting to enforcement.
 - **Sample comment:** “Parking restrictions and other measures to discourage parking eg planters should be used to discourage unauthorised parking in the first place”
- **Consultation with Traveller organisations is necessary for fair solutions:** Meaningful engagement with Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller organisations is required to develop fair and workable policies and build trust.
 - **Sample comment:** “Firstly you need more engagement and leason [sic] worker who are from GRT, Nomadic, "vehicle dweller" backgrounds to allow for a fair and well informed support system to be put in place and auctioned in accordance with common and council law and legislation.”

3.6. Inclusive language

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the policy uses inclusive language. 3,177 respondents answered this question.

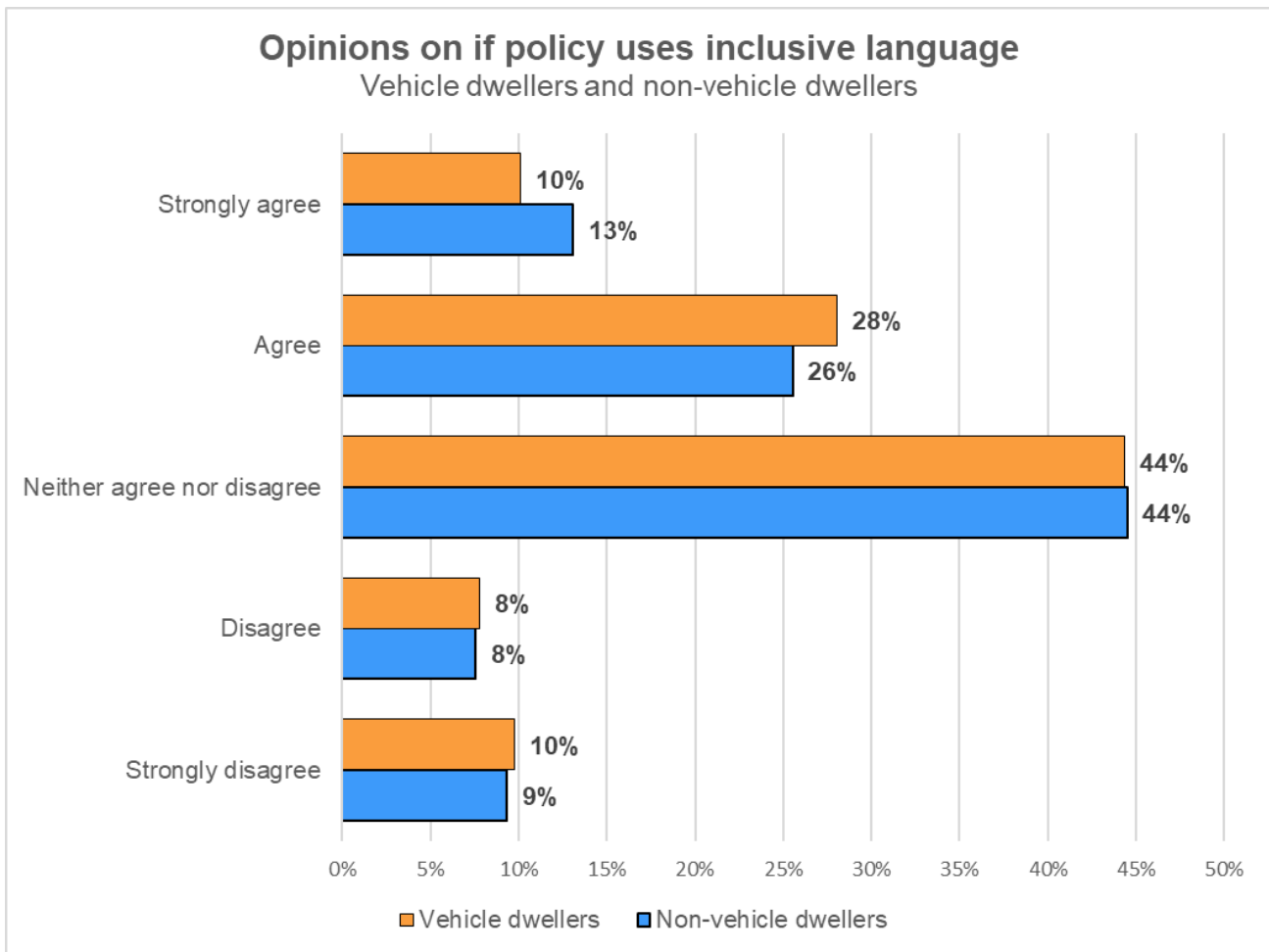
- Most respondents (44%) said they neither agreed nor disagreed that the policy used inclusive language
- 39% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed
- 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed

Figure 30: Opinions of all respondents on whether the policy uses inclusive language



The response was very similar from both vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers (see figure 31).

Figure 31: Comparison of opinions on whether the policy uses inclusive language by vehicle dwellers and non-vehicle dwellers



Respondents were asked to provide further details if they disagreed that the policy uses inclusive language. These comments were categorised into the following themes:

Concerns about focus on language over action

- A significant number of respondents expressed concern that the emphasis on inclusive language detracted from addressing the substantive issues associated with vehicle dwelling.
- Many felt that the removal of the word “encampment” was a symbolic gesture that did little to address the lived experiences of either residents or vehicle dwellers.

Desire for clear and factual language

- Many participants advocated for the use of clear, direct, and factual language in policy documents. Respondents emphasised that inclusive language should not compromise clarity or transparency, particularly in legal or enforcement contexts.
- The term “encampment” was widely viewed as a neutral and accurate descriptor of the situation, and its removal was seen by some as obscuring the reality of unauthorised vehicle dwelling.

- Several respondents highlighted the importance of using language that is legally precise and easily understood by the public. They argued that ambiguous or overly interpretive language could hinder enforcement, create confusion, and reduce public confidence in the council's ability to manage the issue effectively.

Perceptions of bias and stigmatisation

- There was a perception among some residents that the policy language and tone prioritised the needs and preferences of vehicle dwellers over those of local residents, including council tax payers, families, and disabled individuals.
- Conversely, some vehicle dwellers and their advocates felt that the policy continued to marginalise and stigmatise them, despite the use of more inclusive terminology. Some felt that the policy language continued to imply that vehicle dwellers are inherently problematic or undesirable.

3.7. Any other comments

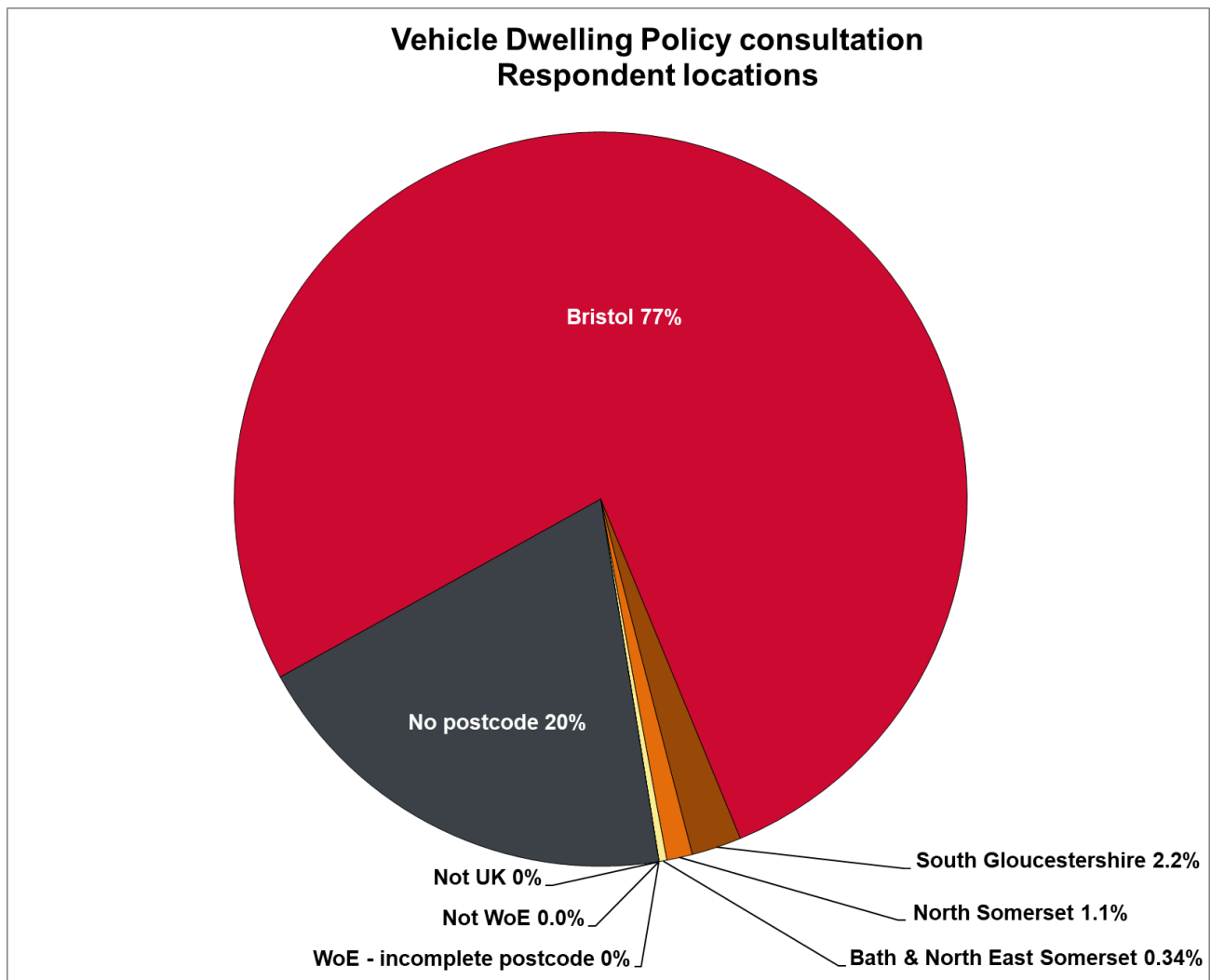
Respondents were asked if they had any other comments or suggestions about the policy. These were categorised into themes and included in the relevant free text sections of this report (sections 3.3.4., 3.4.3, 3.5.3., 3.5.4, 3.5.5, 3.6 and 4.15).

4. Characteristics of survey respondents

4.1. Geographic distribution of survey responses

2,235 responses (77%) were received from postcodes within the Bristol City Council area. 64 (2.2%) were from South Gloucestershire, 33 (1.1%) from North Somerset, and 10 (0.3%) from Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES).

Figure 32: Respondent locations



4.1.1. Responses by ward

The highest responding areas were those surrounding the Downs, which is an area with a large number of vehicle dwellers. Easton also had a high response rate.

Figure 33: Heat map showing response by ward

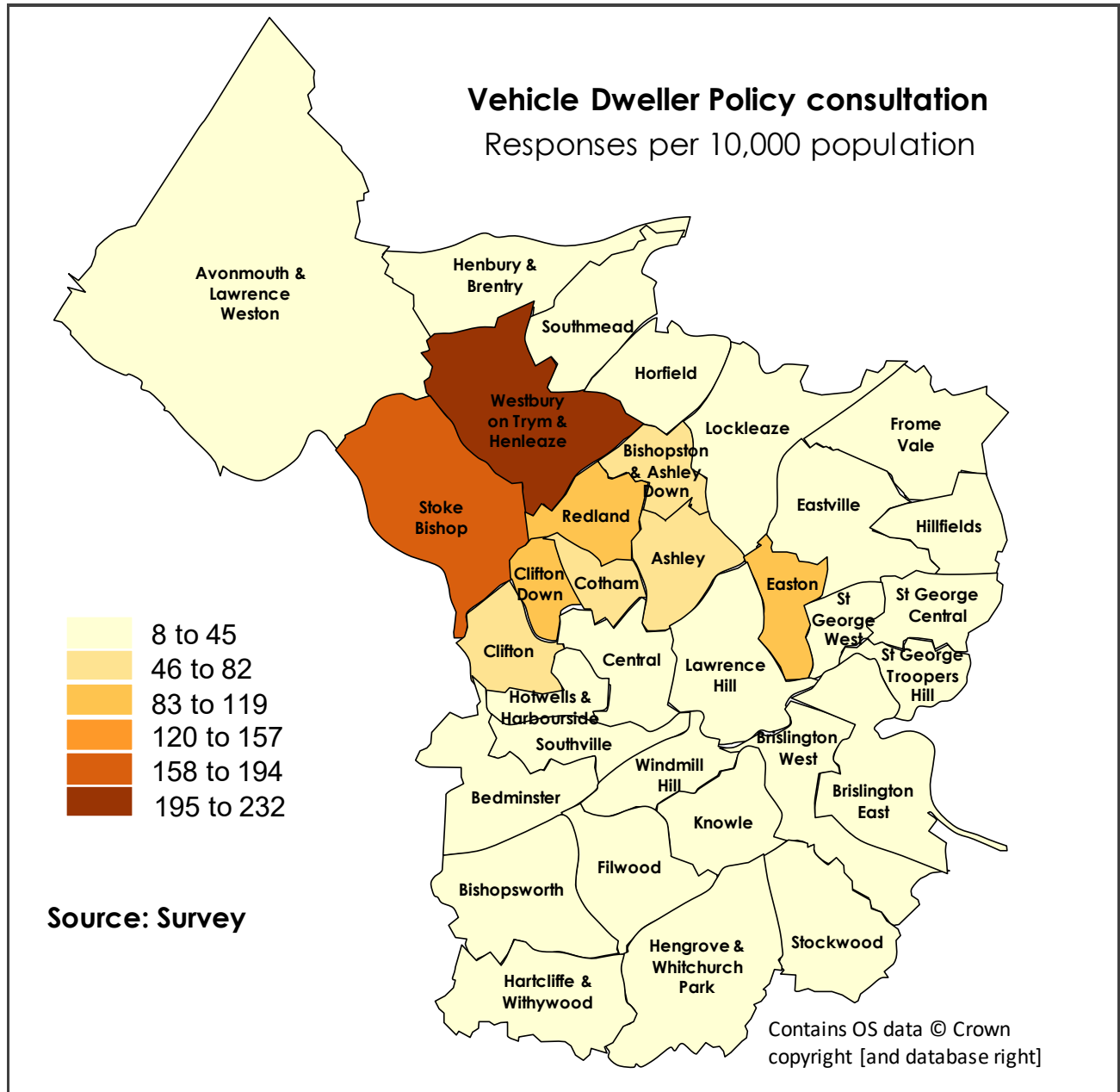
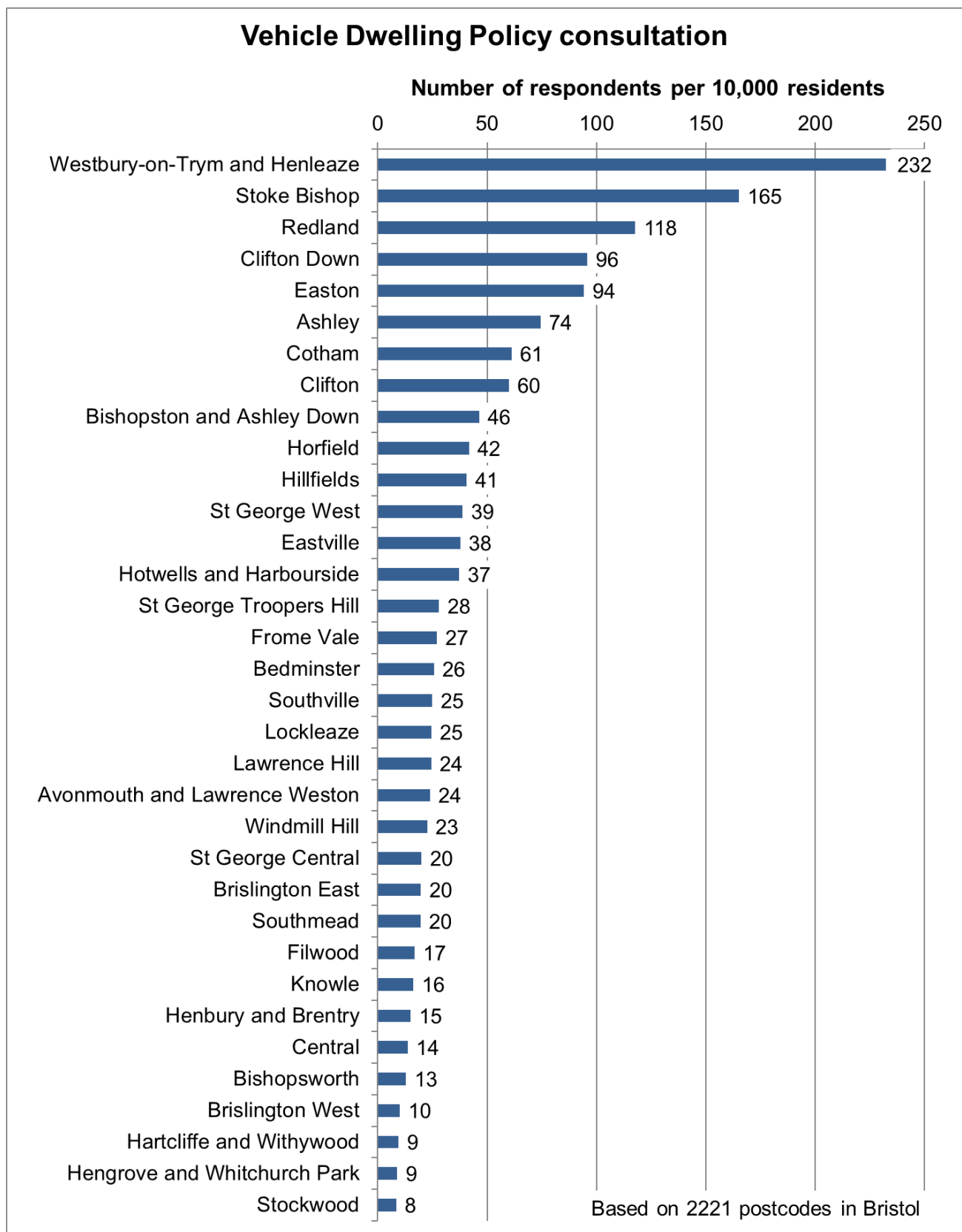


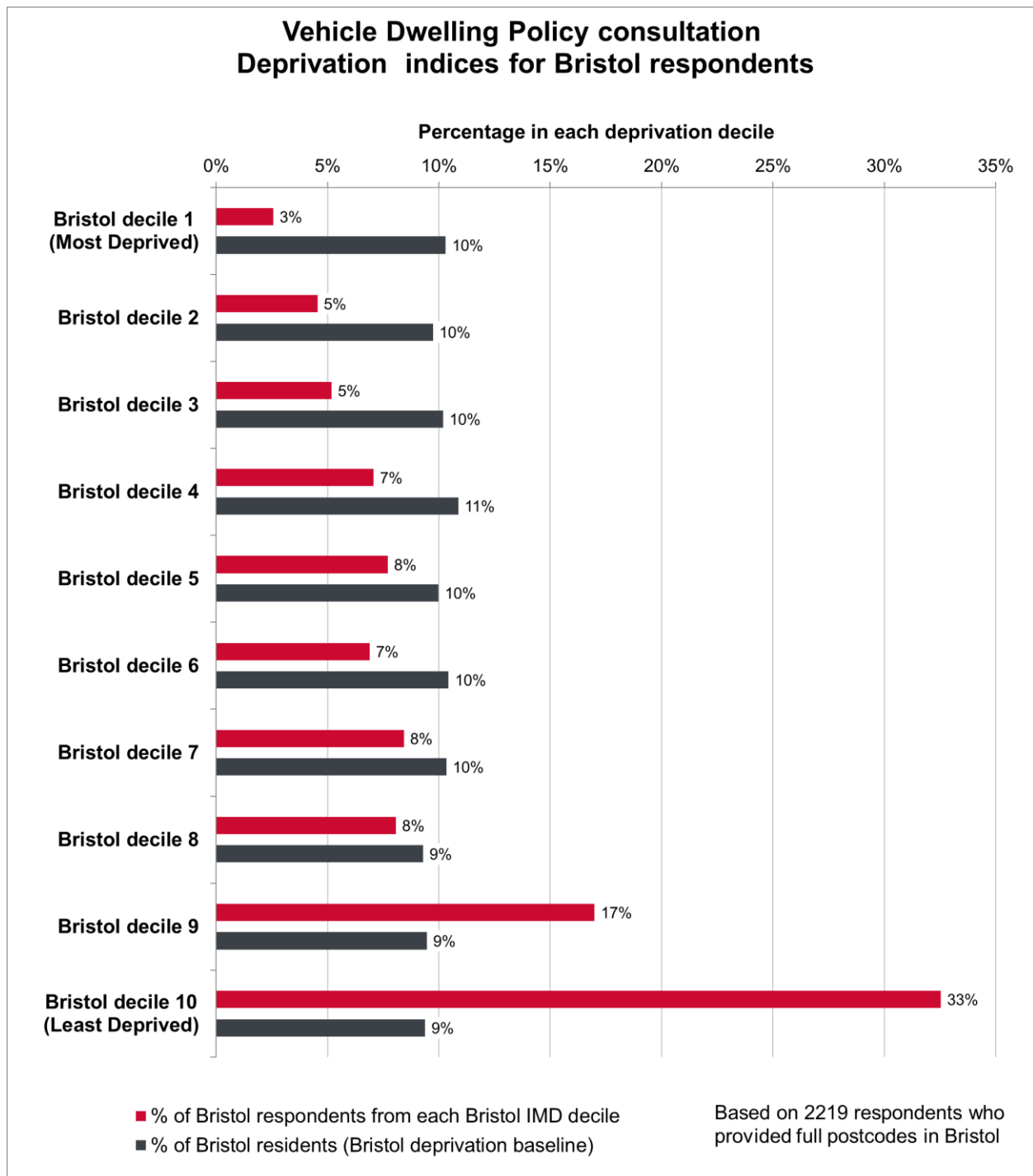
Figure 34: Chart showing response by ward



4.2. Deprivation

The Income Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income. The definition of low income used includes both those people that are out-of-work, and those that are in work but who have low earnings (and who satisfy the respective means tests). Further details are provided in the [IoD2019 technical report](#). The least deprived 2 deciles were heavily overrepresented in the responses. All other deciles were underrepresented.

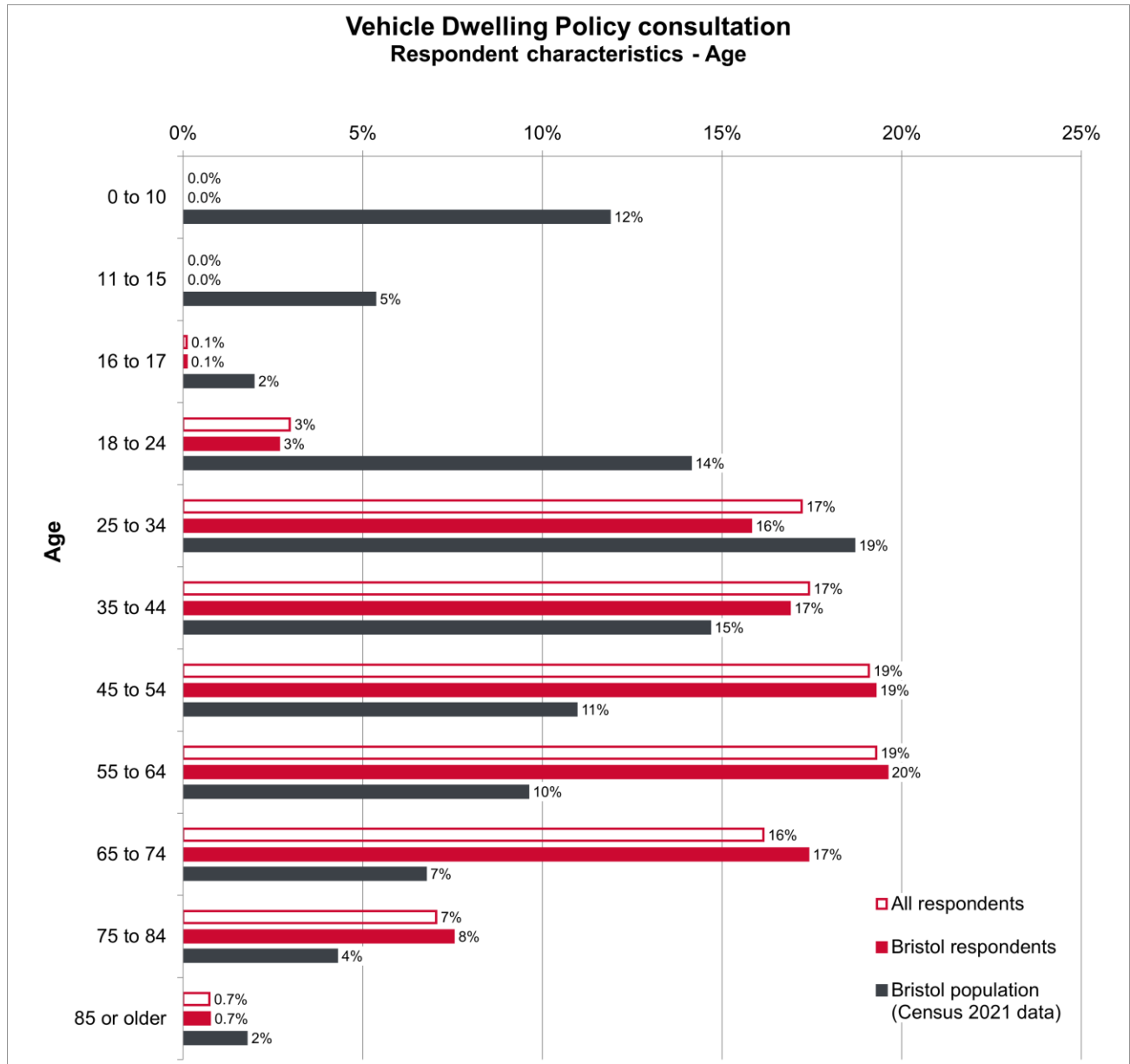
Figure 35: Deprivation indices of Bristol respondents



4.3. Age

Younger respondents aged 0 to 24 were underrepresented compared to the Bristol population. People aged 85 and over were also underrepresented. 35- to 44-year-olds were slightly overrepresented, while 45 to 84-year-olds were very overrepresented.

Figure 36: Respondent characteristics - Age

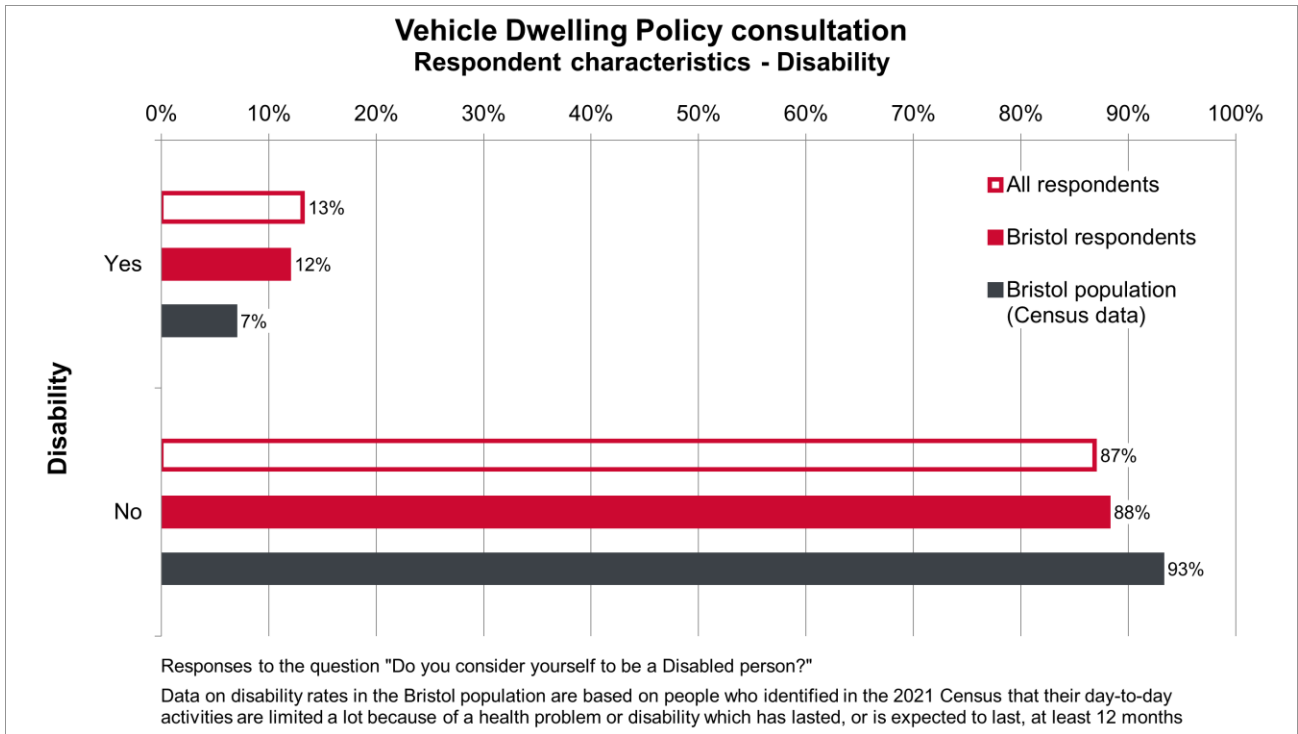


4.4. Disability

Disabled respondents were overrepresented compared to the Bristol population.

- 13% of all respondents considered themselves to be a Disabled person, compared to 7% of the Bristol population.

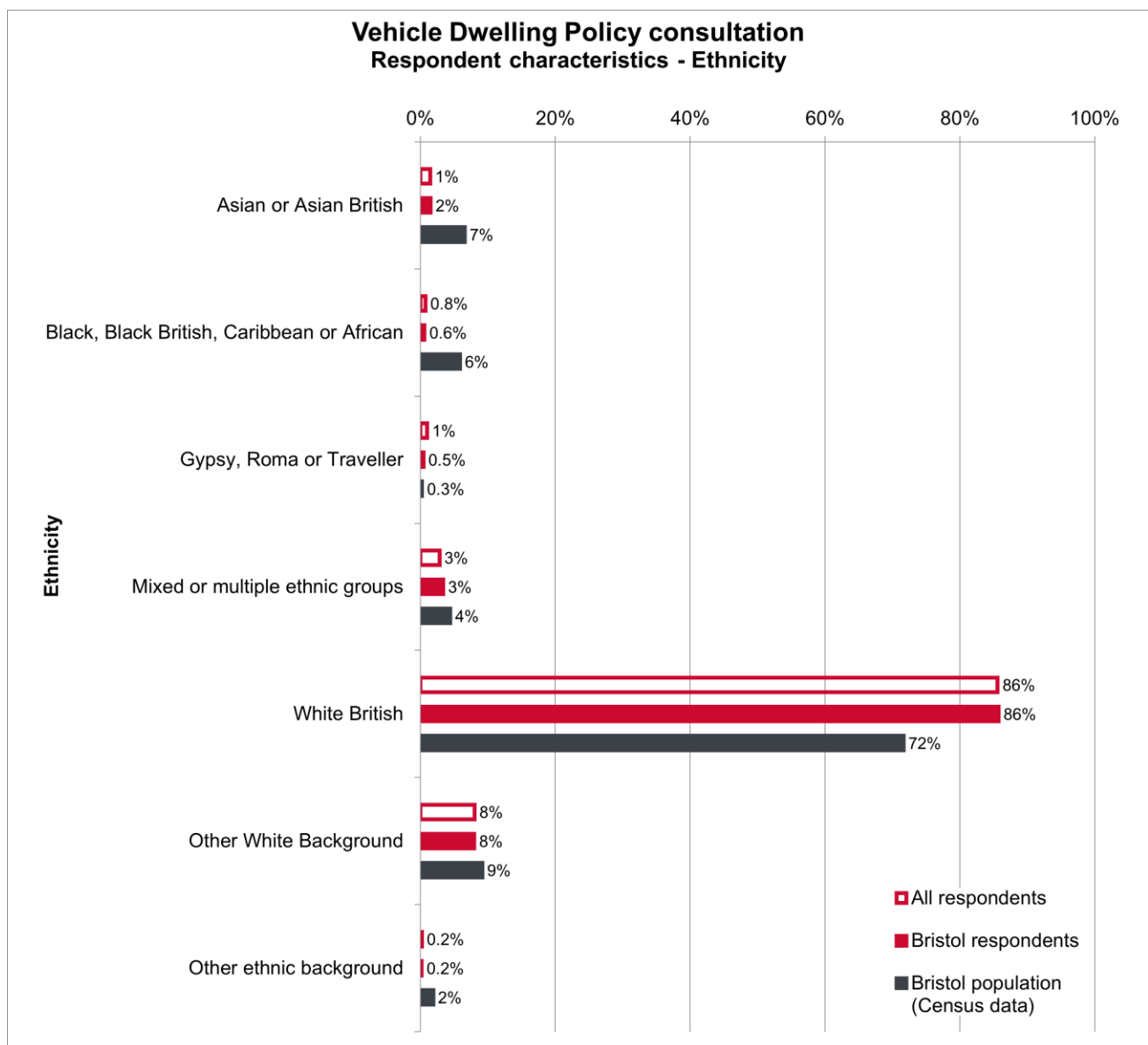
Figure 37: Respondent characteristics - Disability



4.5. Ethnicity

- Asian and Asian British were underrepresented compared to the Bristol population (1% of all respondents compared to 7% of Bristol population)
- Black, Black British, Caribbean or African were underrepresented compared to the Bristol population (0.8% of all respondents compared to 6% of Bristol population)
- Gypsy, Roma or Traveller respondents were overrepresented (1% of all respondents compared to 0.3% of Bristol population)

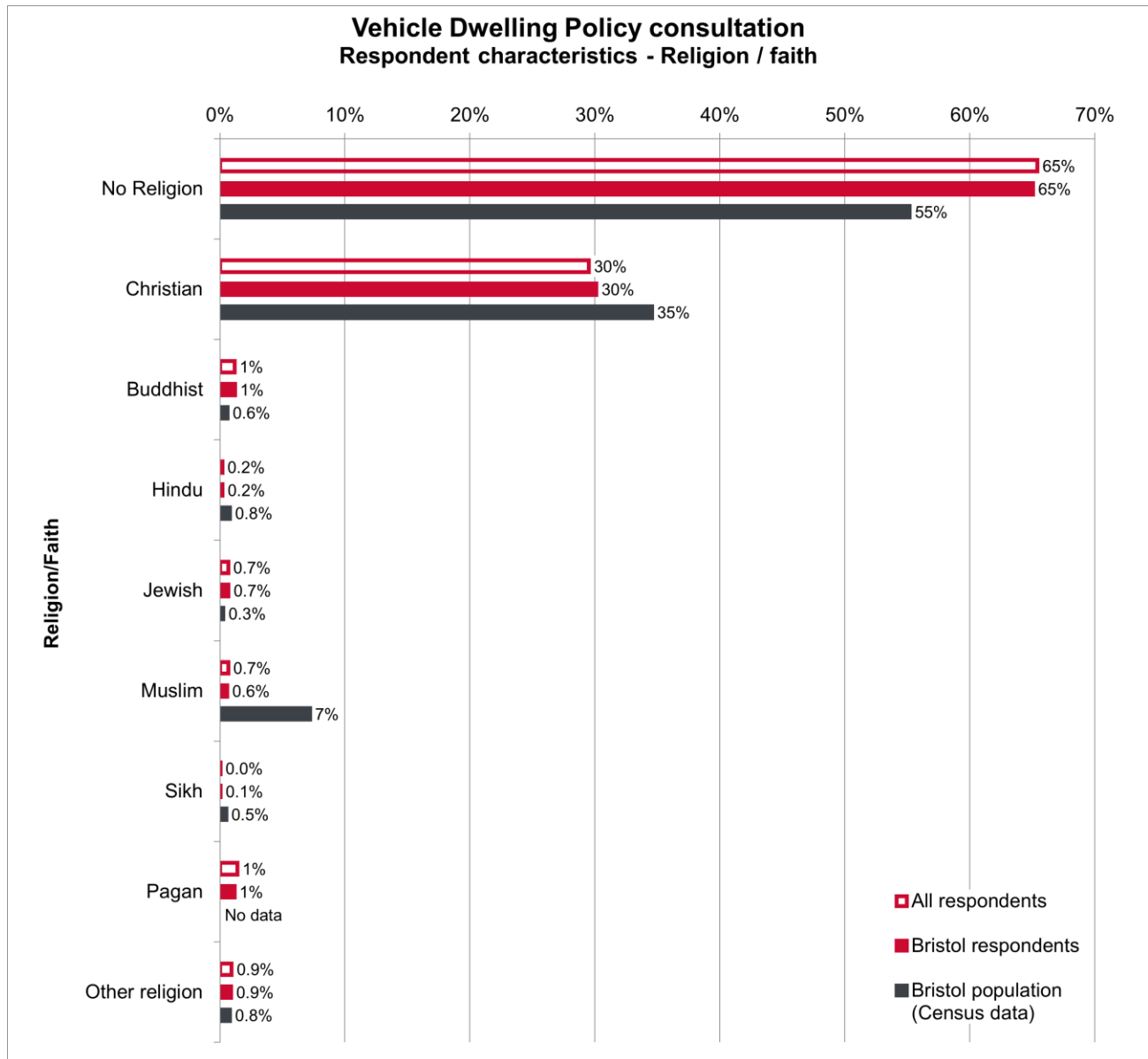
Figure 38: Respondent characteristics - Ethnicity



4.6. Religion/Faith

Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were underrepresented in the responses compared to the Bristol population.

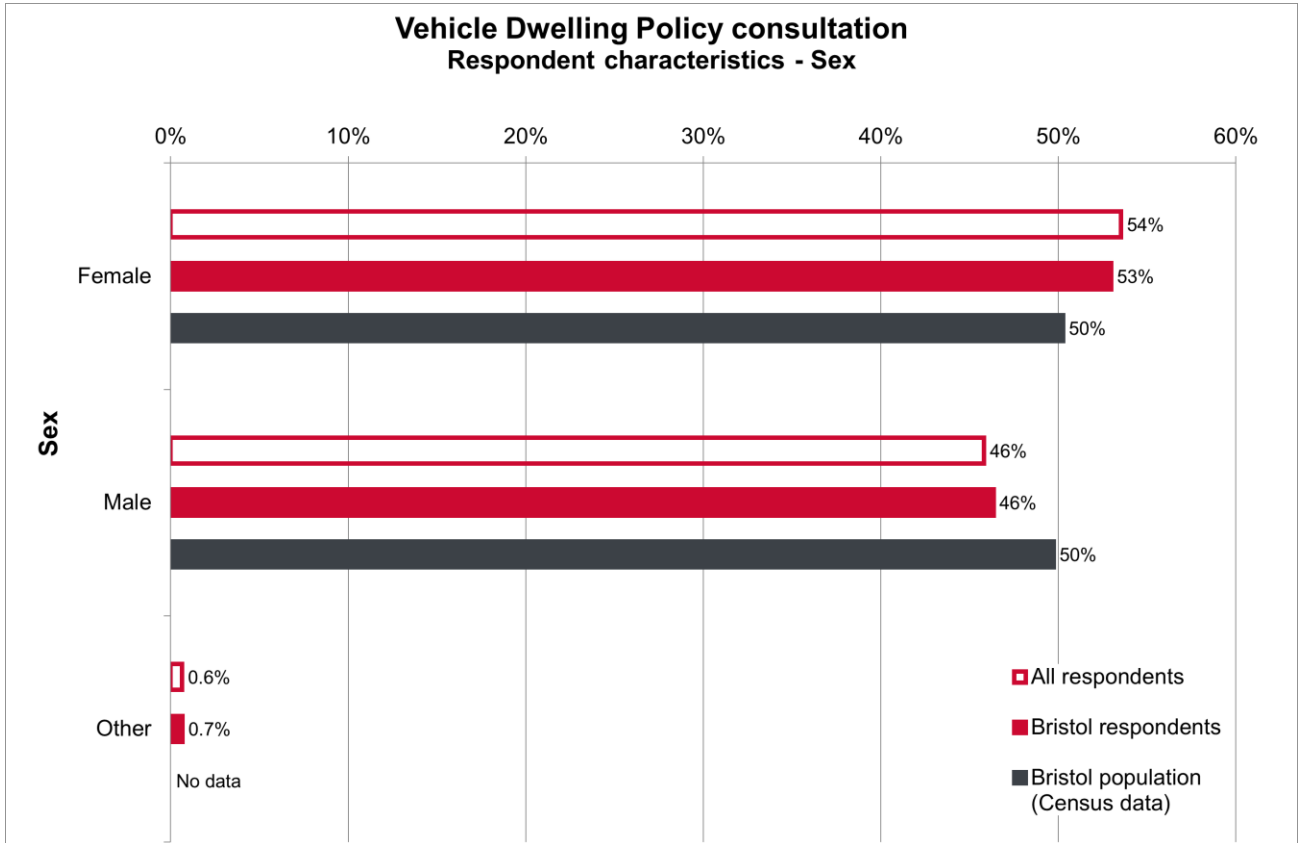
Figure 39: Respondent characteristics – Religion/faith



4.7. Sex

Female respondents were slightly overrepresented (54% of respondents), while male respondents were underrepresented (46% of respondents).

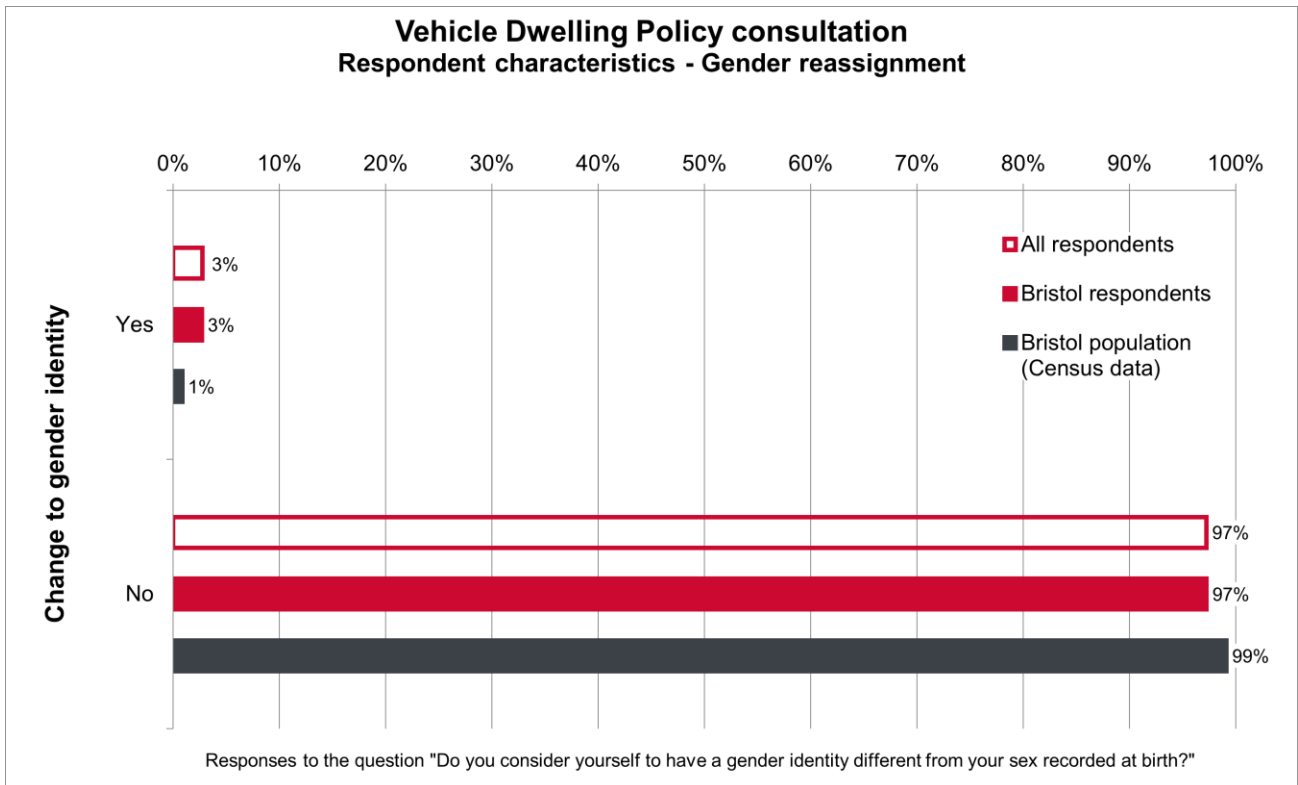
Figure 40: Respondent characteristics – Sex



4.8. Gender reassignment

Respondents who consider themselves to have a gender identity different from their sex recorded at birth (3%) were overrepresented compared to the Bristol population (1%).

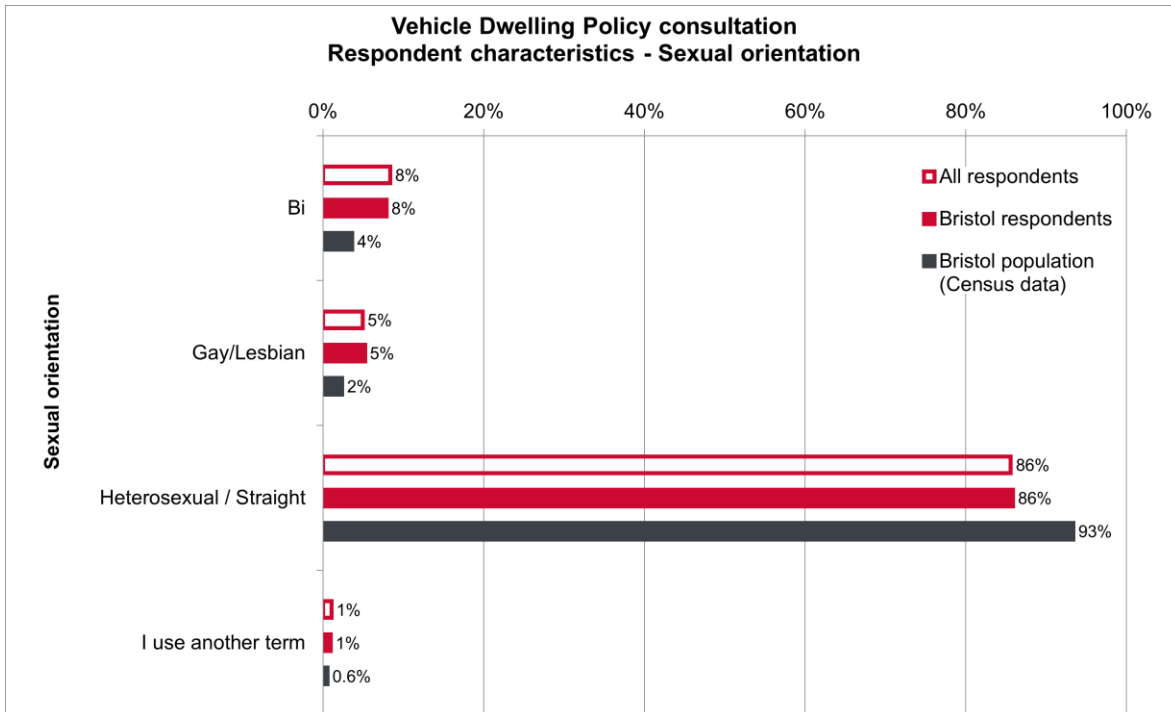
Figure 41: Respondent characteristics – Gender reassignment



4.9. Sexual orientation

Responses from bi and gay and lesbian respondents were overrepresented compared to the Bristol population.

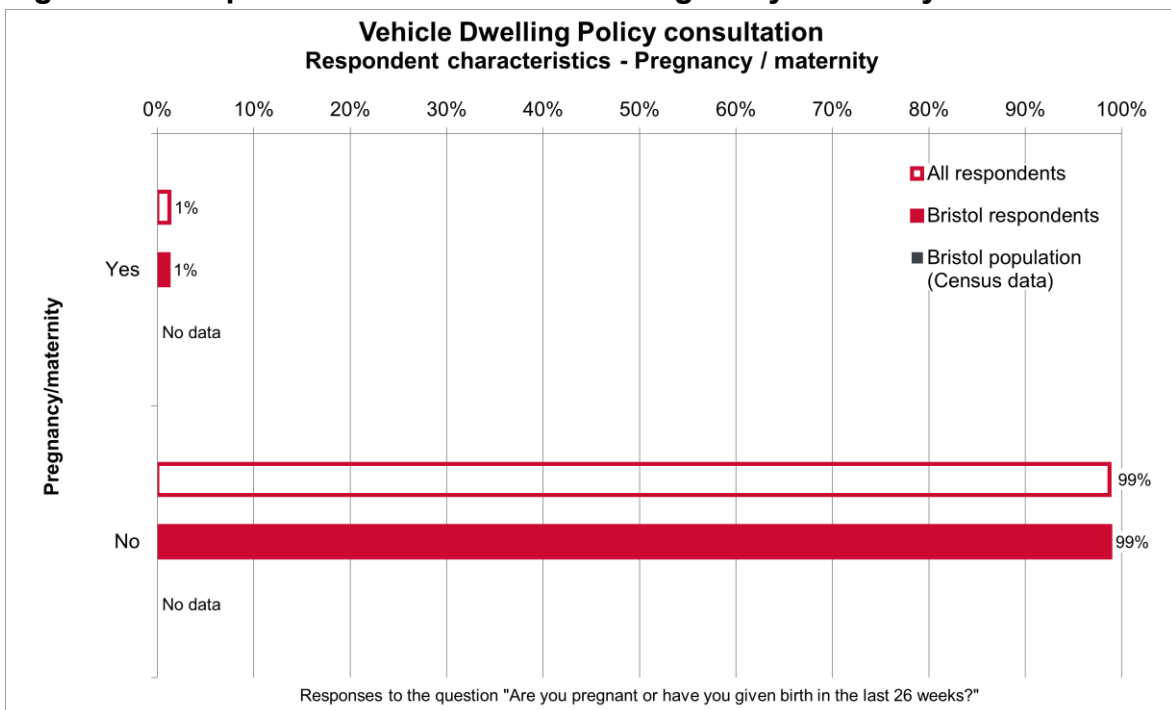
Figure 42: Respondent characteristics – Sexual orientation



4.10. Pregnancy/maternity

1% of respondents said they were pregnant or had given birth in the last 26 weeks.

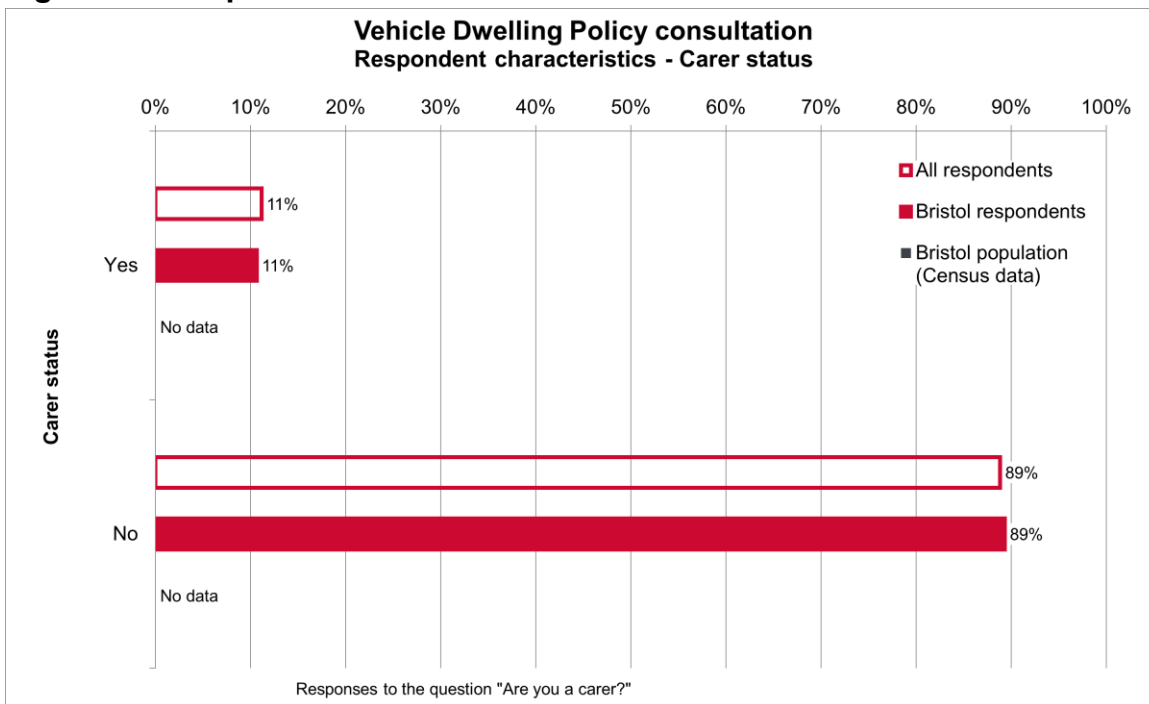
Figure 41: Respondent characteristics – Pregnancy/maternity



4.11. Carers

11% of respondents identified themselves as carers.

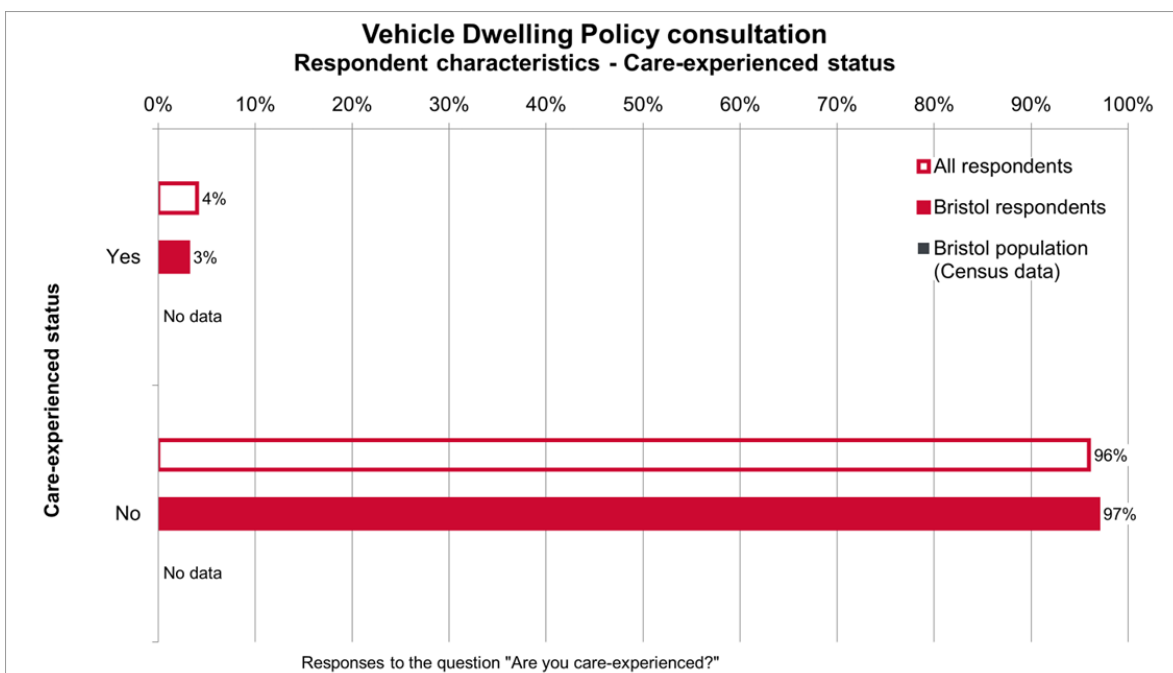
Figure 42: Respondent characteristics – Carer status



4.12. Care-experienced

4% of all respondents said that they were care-experienced, having spent time in foster care, residential care, or received support from a leaving care service.

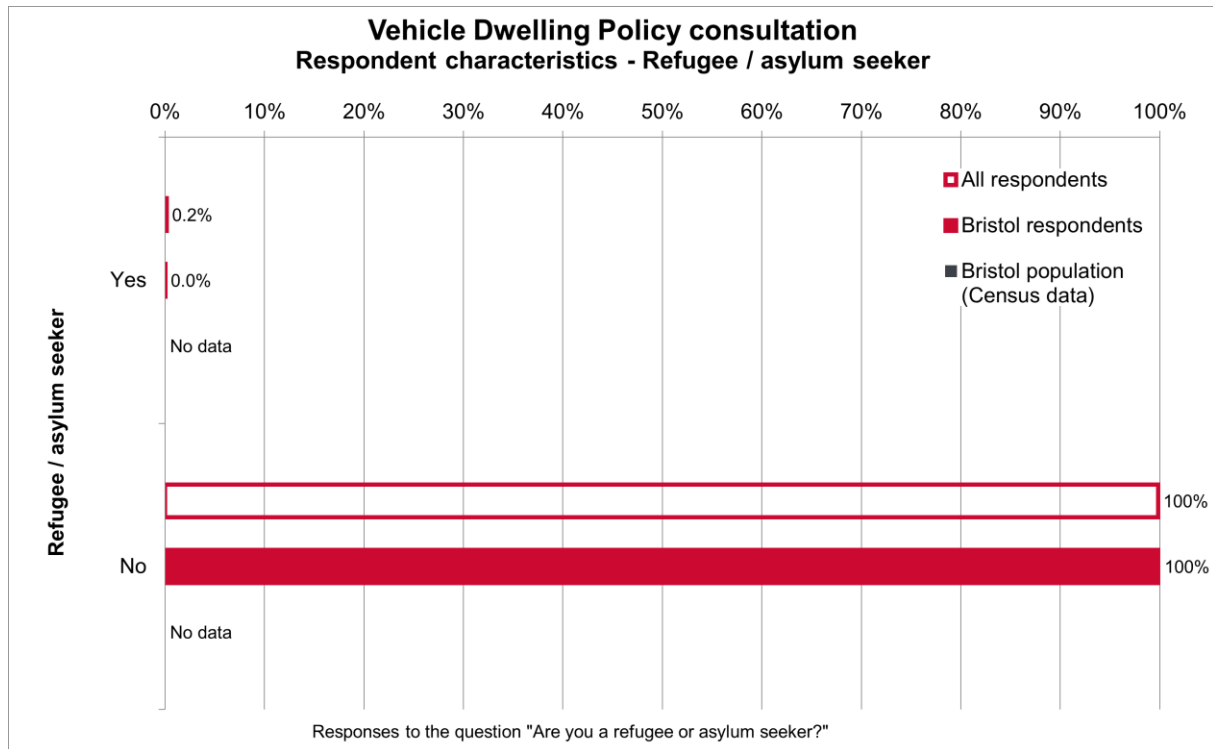
Figure 43: Respondent characteristics – Care-experienced status



4.13. Refugee/asylum seeker

0.2% of respondents identified themselves as refugees or asylum seekers.

Figure 44: Respondent characteristics – Refugee/asylum seeker



4.14. Other respondent characteristics

3,216 respondents provided other details of their personal situation. Because respondents could select more than one option, the percentages below exceed 100%.

- 94% of respondents identified themselves as Bristol residents
- 3% represent or own a local business
- 3% work in Bristol but live elsewhere
- 2% were Bristol City Council employees
- 1% responded on behalf of a voluntary or community or social enterprise/interest group
- 0.2% were councillors
- 0.2% were responding on behalf of a health or social care provider
- 0.1% were MPs

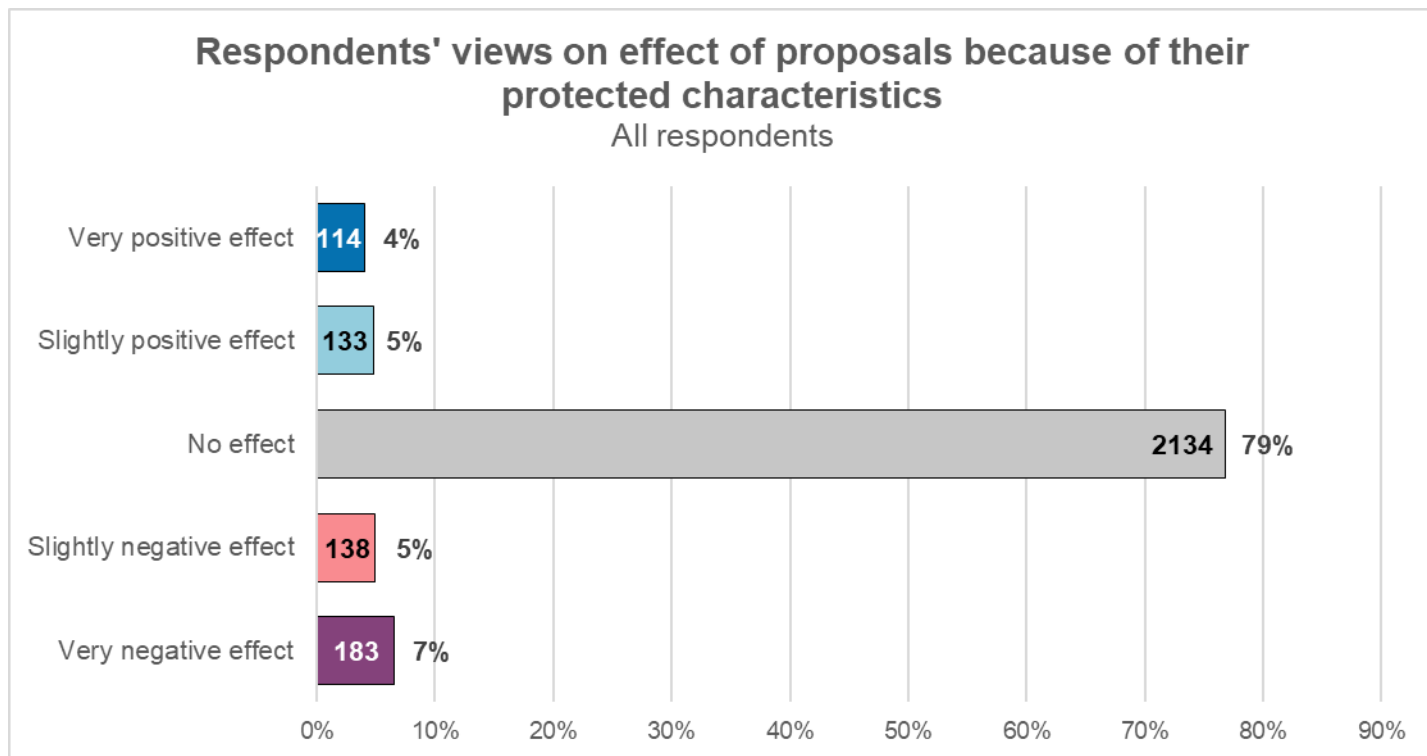
4.15. Effect of proposals because of protected characteristics

Respondents were asked what effect, if any, the proposals would have on them because of their protected characteristics. Respondents were asked to state the scale of any effect -very negative, slightly negative, no effect, slightly positive, or very positive - for each of the nine protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010¹.

2,702 respondents answered this question:

- 4% of respondents said very positive effect, and 5% said a slightly positive effect
- 79% of respondents said it would have no effect
- 5% said it would have a slightly negative effect and 7% said a very negative effect

Figure 44: Respondents' views on effect of proposals because of their protected characteristics



351 respondents provided free text comments explaining how the proposals would affect them because of their protected characteristics.

The reasons given are summarised below.

¹ The protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 are age; Disability; race including colour; nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sex; gender reassignment; sexual orientation; being married or in a civil partnership; being pregnant or on maternity leave.

Personal safety and security

- Protected characteristics affected: Sex (particularly women), Age (older people), Pregnancy/Maternity
- Many women, including those with children or who are pregnant, reported feeling unsafe in areas with high concentrations of vehicle dwellers. Concerns included harassment, anti-social behaviour, and fear of violence.
- Older people expressed vulnerability and fear of using public spaces, particularly the Downs, due to perceived threats and lack of enforcement.
- Some vehicle dwellers had concerns that increased enforcement could potentially make them unsafe and can be traumatising, with concerns around how policing can have negative impacts on people with protected characteristics.
- Concerns that the current proposals Meanwhile Sites do not address safety concerns for women, and that all-female sites should be considered.

Accessibility and mobility

- Protected characteristics affected: Disability (physical, sensory, neurodivergent), Age, Pregnancy/Maternity
- Disabled individuals and older people reported difficulties accessing green spaces and navigating pavements due to obstructive parking by vehicles used as dwellings.
- Neurodivergent individuals (e.g. those with autism or OCD) described distress caused by disorderly and unpredictable environments.
- Parents with prams and those with limited mobility highlighted the need for clear pavements and accessible parking.

Health and wellbeing

- Protected characteristics affected: Disability (mental and physical), Age, Sex
- Many residents reported negative impacts on mental health, including stress, anxiety, and depression, due to loss of access to green spaces and feelings of unsafety.
- Older people and those with chronic conditions described reduced physical activity and social isolation.
- Conversely, some vehicle dwellers (including those with mental health conditions) reported that van living had improved their wellbeing and financial stability, housing security, personal safety, and provided a community.
- Some vehicle dwellers stated that they would not feel comfortable or their mental health would be impacted by being moved onto a Meanwhile Site.

- Other said that Meanwhile Sites would make life easier for Disabled vehicle dwellers, giving them easier access to a GP and a consistent environment.

Housing insecurity and alternative living

- Protected characteristics affected: Age (younger people), Disability, Sex (women), Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (LGBTQ+), Race/Ethnicity (Traveller communities)
- Respondents from marginalised groups described vehicle dwelling as a necessary or preferred housing option due to affordability, safety, or cultural identity.
- Women and LGBTQ+ individuals cited van living as a safer alternative to shared housing or homelessness.
- Traveller and Roma respondents expressed concern that the policy could discriminate against their way of life and cultural heritage.

Equality, discrimination and fairness

- Protected characteristics affected: All (particularly Race/Ethnicity, Disability, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity)
- Some residents felt the focus on protected characteristics was divisive or irrelevant, calling for equal enforcement of laws regardless of identity.
- Others warned that the policy could disproportionately harm marginalised groups, including ethnic minorities, disabled people, and LGBTQ+ individuals.
- Concerns were raised about the council's Public Sector Equality Duty and the need to balance enforcement with support and inclusion.

5. Next steps

5.1. How will this report be used?

The consultation feedback summarised in this report has been taken into consideration by officers when developing final proposals for the policy for managing vehicle dwelling. Feedback not related to the policy but to service design has been passed onto the service, particularly in relation to Meanwhile Sites.

The final proposals are included in a separate report which, together with this consultation report, will be considered by the council's Home and Housing Delivery Policy Committee on 19 December 2025.

5.2. How can I keep track?

You can find the latest consultation and engagement surveys online on the council's Consultation and Engagement Hub (www.bristol.gov.uk/ask). You can also sign up to receive automated email notifications about consultations and engagement at www.bristol.gov.uk/askbristolnewsletter

You can find forthcoming meetings and their agendas at democracy.bristol.gov.uk.

Any decisions made by Full Council and policy committees will also be shared at democracy.bristol.gov.uk