



Have your say

Wirral Council Budget 2022/23 Proposal - Golf Public Consultation Report



Consultation: 31 January – 27 March 2022

Report: 20 April 2022

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1.0 Executive Summary

Wirral Council is facing significant financial challenges and is currently going through a detailed process to set a budget for the next year. This is part of a wider approach to address long term structural issues in the council's finances and deliver substantial savings to balance the budget.

The council is legally obliged to set a balanced budget or risk Government intervention, and the savings measures currently being proposed are intended to put the authority on a stable financial footing for the long-term.

A number of budget proposals were consulted on, this budget proposal is for Golf. This budget proposal seeks to generate savings through the closure of the two poorest performing 18-hole golf courses, two leisure based recreational New Brighton sites and introduction of a new pricing/membership model for municipal golf. Brackenwood and Hoylake golf courses will close, along with Wallasey Beach and Kings Parade leisure sites. The two remaining golf courses will still provide a sufficient golf offer to the residents of Wirral whilst substantially reducing the financial subsidy to the authority.

This proposal will generate a potential saving of £328,000 if taken in its entirety.

Through this consultation people were asked to provide their views of the golf budget proposal considering reduced budgets and options to invest in the remaining municipal golf facilities in Wirral. They were also asked for further ideas on savings in leisure services.

These consultation findings will be presented at the council's Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee at the meeting planned for June. The Committee will scrutinise the savings proposals taking into account the comments of the public including any suggestions on alternative ways of making savings and the budget allotted by the full Council. Decision will be made on the Golf proposal.

1.1 Key Findings

- 433 people participated in the online survey with no paper copies submitted.
- When asked how often they used Wirral's Municipal golf facilities, 65% of respondents were regular users and 35% were not regular users (Question 1).

- 32% of respondents used municipal golf facility within the last week and 22% had never used a municipal golf facility (Question 2).
- 62% of respondents used municipal golf facilities at least once per month. 38% of respondents used municipal golf facilities less than once per month (Question 3).
- 39% of respondents were members of the Invigor8 scheme, 61% were not (Question 4).
- When asked their opinion on reducing the number of municipal golf facilities if it will also allow the authority to focus investment in the remaining sites to ensure long term sustainability of a municipal golf offer' in total, 64.8% of responses disagreed, with 51.3% strongly disagreeing and 30% agreed (Question 5a).
- When asked their opinion of the closure of golf leisure sites at Wallasey beach and Kings Parade in New Brighton. In total 45.2% disagreed with this, with 26.3% strongly disagreeing, and 40.5% agreed with the statement (Question 5b).
- 68.4% of respondents disagree with the proposed closure of Brackenwood golf course with 58.7% of these strongly disagreeing, 24.8% agreed (Question 5c).
- An online petition in objection to the closure of Brackenwood golf course has 3,100 signatures as at 13:00 31 March 2022.
- 61.6% of respondents disagree with the proposed closure of Hoylake golf course with 50.6% strongly disagreeing, 28% agreed (Question 5d).
- An online petition in objection to the closure of Hoylake golf course has 868 signatures as at 13:00 31 March 2022.
- Most popular alternative ideas to generate budget savings were:
 - Savings should be made elsewhere (17%).
 - The golf facilities should be improved to generate more money (14%).
 - The council should allow the courses to be operated under different ownership (13%).
 - The pricing system should be changed to generate more money (13%).
- The most common additional comments on the budget saving proposal were:
 - Closure of the golf facilities would have a negative impact on their health and wellbeing (14%).
 - Value the greenspace and do not want to see the land built on (12%).
 - Accessibility issues if the facilities were to shut (11%).
 - Required more information about what would happen to the land if the facilities were to close, before being able to have an informed opinion (9%).

2.0 Methodology

Through the golf consultation people were asked to tell us their views of the golf budget proposal considering reduced budgets and options to invest in the remaining municipal golf facilities in Wirral. They were also asked for further ideas on savings in leisure services.

Following the consultation, the feedback will be considered at a meeting of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee in June 2022.

The consultation was carried out between 31 January – 27 March 2022. The approach used was an on online public consultation through the ‘Have your say’ consultation portal at www.haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk with a page dedicated to the Golf Consultation. Documents provided on the site included a summary of the Golf Budget Proposal and an Easy Read version of the questionnaire.

One online questionnaire was provided for residents to engage with. Respondents were also able to request paper copies of the survey, including an easy read version, or submit additional comments via a dedicated email address, which was published on the ‘Have your say’ website alongside the online tool. Completed Easy Read surveys were accepted until 10 April 2022.

2.1 Questionnaire

The consultation questionnaire was developed on the Golf budget proposal and enabled stakeholders to record their feedback. To enable further understanding, and in-depth analysis, respondents were invited to provide free-text comments to expand on their ideas or concerns.

Following closure of the consultation, the responses to each of the direct questions were collated and the responses included in this report. For the free-text comment question, a text coding approach was used based on the reoccurring themes. This data was then collated and summarised in the report. Free text results are provided as a count, rather than as percentages. This is because one comment or idea may cover multiple themes, therefore there are considerably more themes than contributions. Percentages derived from this as a denominator are not accurate so have been omitted

No paper or Easy Read questionnaires were submitted.

2.2 Analysis of Respondents

Respondents to the online tools were provided with the option to provide demographic information about themselves. It must be noted that this is an option and that not all respondents included this information. This data allows the demographic results to be included

in this report to enable analysis of the scope of responses and representation from different demographic groups.

2.3 Interpretation of Results

In terms of the results, it is important to note that:

- The public consultation is not representative of the overall population but provides information on the opinion of those residents who engaged.
- For specific tools where percentages do not add up to 100, this may be due to rounding, or the question is multi-coded. All free-text questions and ideas that offered respondents the option to provide written feedback could have covered multiple themes. Therefore, with free-text responses being categorised using a coding system, some comments will be multi-coded and therefore add up to more than 100 percent.

2.4 Communication

To raise awareness amongst as many residents, stakeholders, and businesses as possible, a consultation sub campaign was carried out which, linking with the overall budget narrative and service specific responses, urged target audiences to take part in the consultation.

A variety of communications channels and platforms were utilised. This included:

- Organic social media (mix of platforms) – 187,107 impressions and 10,319 interactions
- Targeted, sponsored social media – 160,107 impressions and 562 link clicks
- Resident Email (inclusion in 5 editions)
- Partner/ Stakeholder updates
- Availability of Easy read questionnaires
- Councillor Updates (including consultation specific URL and narrative to share with constituents)
- Creation of a dedicated Budget email inbox
- Digital campaign box adverts on council owned platforms (linking to HYS page)
- Press/ Content Media releases
- Budget updates posted to wirralview.com (Budget/ consultation specific news tab)
- Posts on Staff Facebook page
- Exec View (Staff Newsletter)

- Shared narrative for regular Workforce, Directorate and Team updates

In addition to the above, the service itself administered the issuing and recording of paper copies and responses, as well as direct engagement with friends/ interest groups.

3.0 Results

3.1 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was responded to by 433 people, with all responses coming from the Have Your Say website. No Easy Read versions were submitted. No questions were mandatory so respondents could choose which questions to respond to.

3.1.1 Question 1: Are you, or someone you care for, a regular user of Wirral Council municipal golf courses?

Of the 431 respondents, 281 (65.2%) regularly used Wirral’s Municipal golf courses. 150 (34.8%) were not regular users.

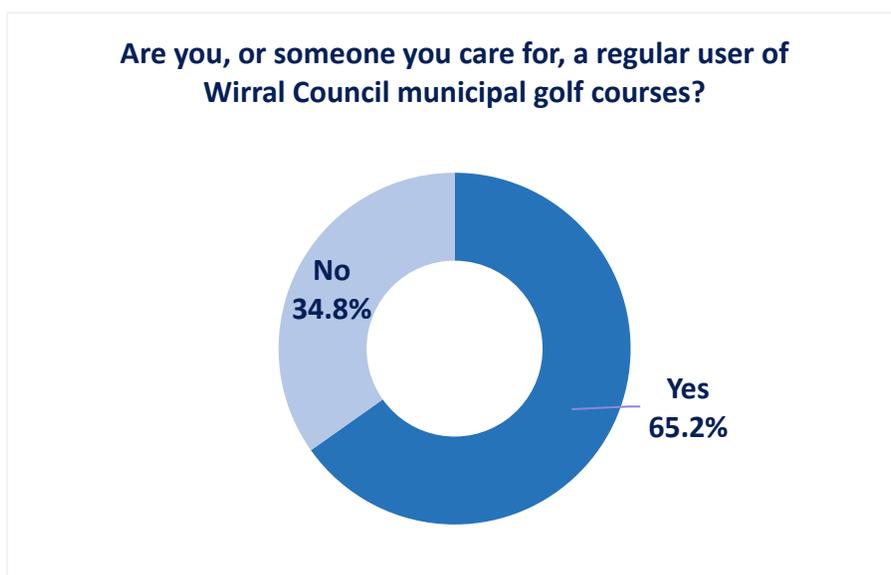


Figure 1: Chart showing the proportion of respondents who use Municipal courses regularly.

Are you, or someone you care for, a regular user of Wirral Council municipal golf courses?	Online	%
Yes	281	65.2%
No	150	34.8%
Total	431	100.0%

Table 1: Showing the total number of respondents who used and did not use municipal golf courses.

3.1.2 Question 2: When was the last time you used a council leisure municipal golf facility?

429 responded to this question. Very regular users were the largest group represented in this survey, with 137 (31.9%) respondents using municipal golf facility in the last week. 246 (57.3%) respondents had used a municipal golf facility in the last 3 months. 93 (21.7%) respondents had never used a municipal golf facility.

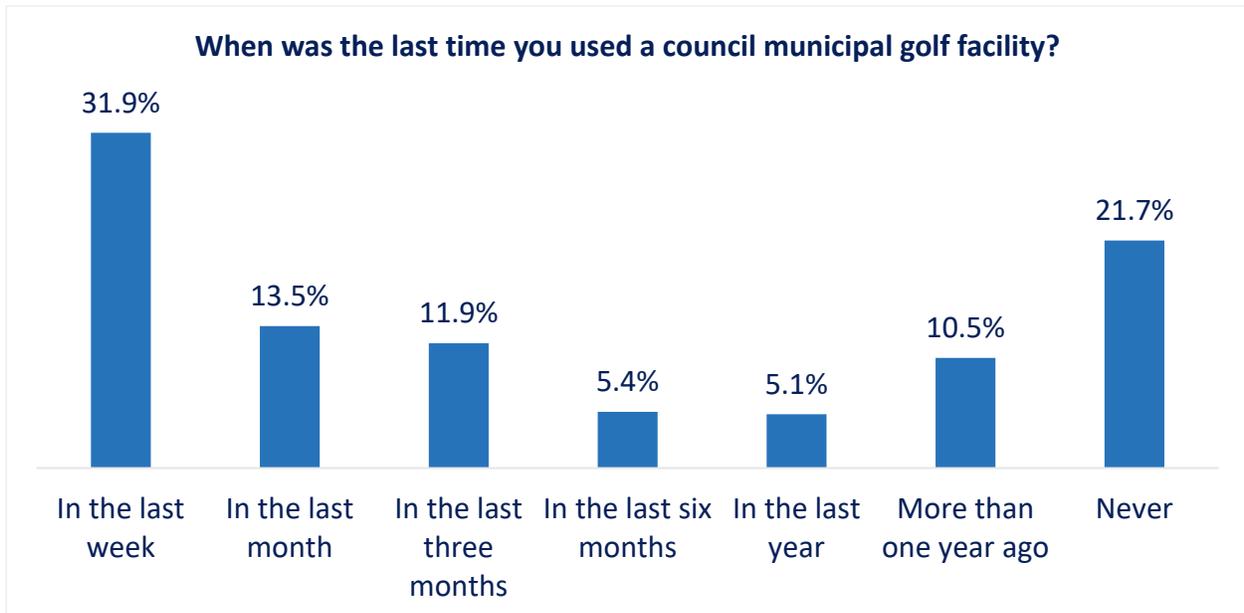


Figure 2: Chart showing the last time respondents used a council leisure municipal golf course.

When was the last time you used a council leisure municipal golf course?	Online	%
In the last week	137	31.9%
In the last month	58	13.5%
In the last three months	51	11.9%
In the last six months	23	5.4%
In the last year	22	5.1%
More than one year ago	45	10.5%
Never	93	21.7%
Total	429	100.0%

Table 2: Total number of respondents who used municipal golf courses in the specified time frames.

3.1.3 Question 3: How often do you use a council leisure municipal golf course?

418 responded to this question, with 159 (38%) choosing the most common answer ‘less than once per month.’ 259 respondents (62%) used golf facilities at least once per month.

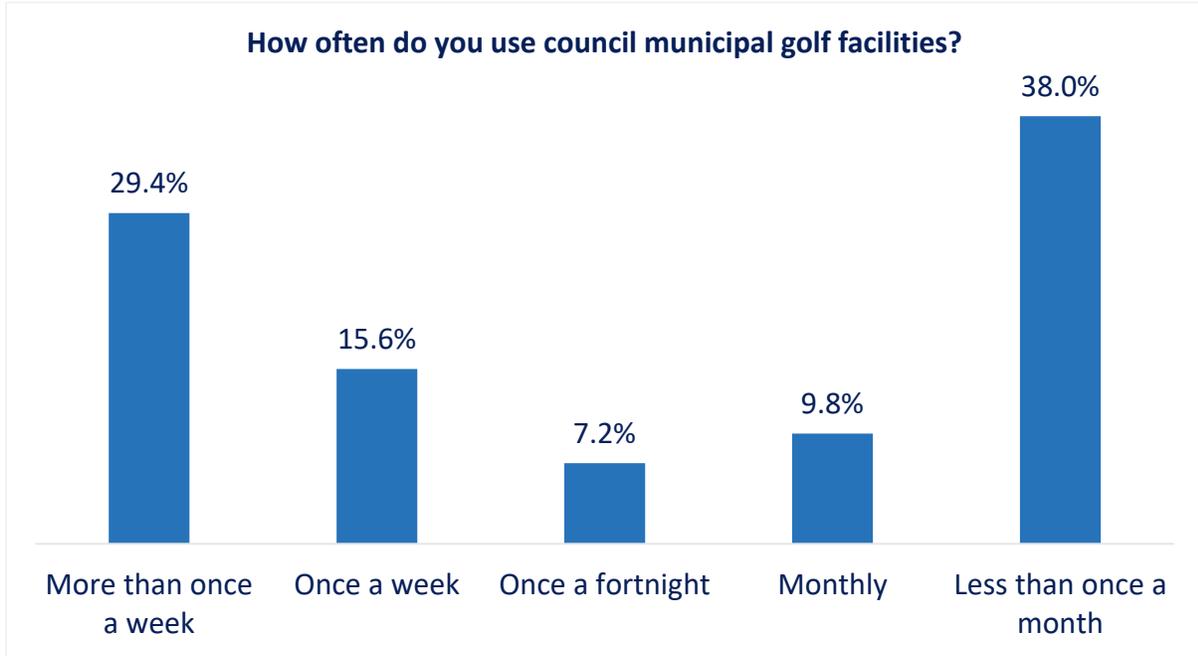


Figure 3: Chart showing how frequently respondents used Municipal golf facilities.

How often do you use a council leisure municipal golf course?	Online	%
More than once a week	123	29.4%
Once a week	65	15.6%
Once a fortnight	30	7.2%
Monthly	41	9.8%
Less than once a month	159	38.0%
Total	418	100.0%

Table 3: totalling the frequency of municipal golf facility use.

3.1.4 Question 4: Are you a member of Wirral Council's Invigor8 scheme allowing access to council leisure services?

425 people responded to this question. 166 (39.1%) were members of the councils Invigor8 scheme, while 259 (60.9%) were not members of the scheme.

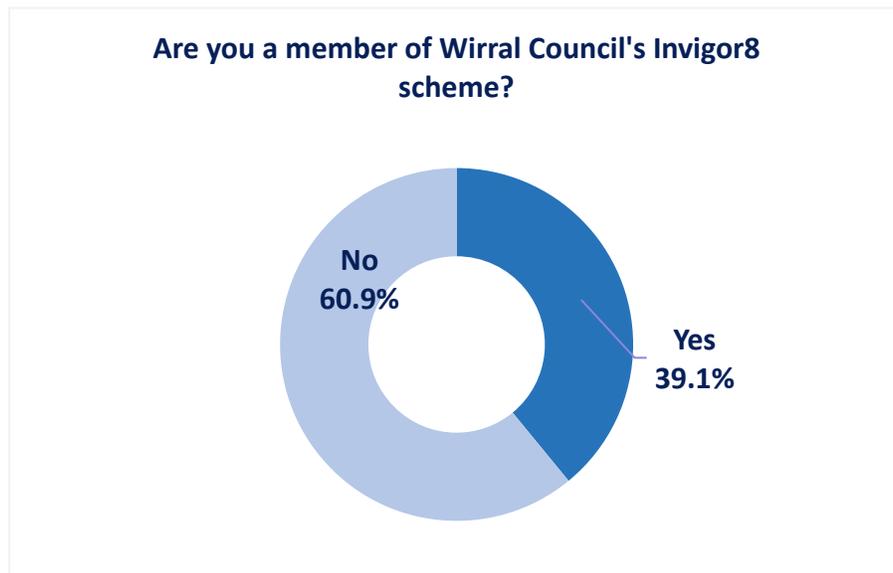


Figure 4: Chart showing the proportion of respondents who were members of the Invigor8 scheme.

Are you a member of Wirral Council's Invigor8 scheme allowing access to council leisure services?	Online	%
Yes	166	39.1%
No	259	60.9%
Total	425	100.0%

Table 4: totalling the number of Invigor8 members among respondents.

3.1.5 Question 5a: It is acceptable to reduce the number of municipal golf facilities if it will also allow the authority to focus investment in the remaining sites to ensure long term sustainability of a municipal golf offer.

429 people responded to this question. The most common answer was ‘Strongly disagree,’ with a total of 220 (51.3%) votes. In total, 278 (64.8%) disagreed, and 127 agreed (29.6%).

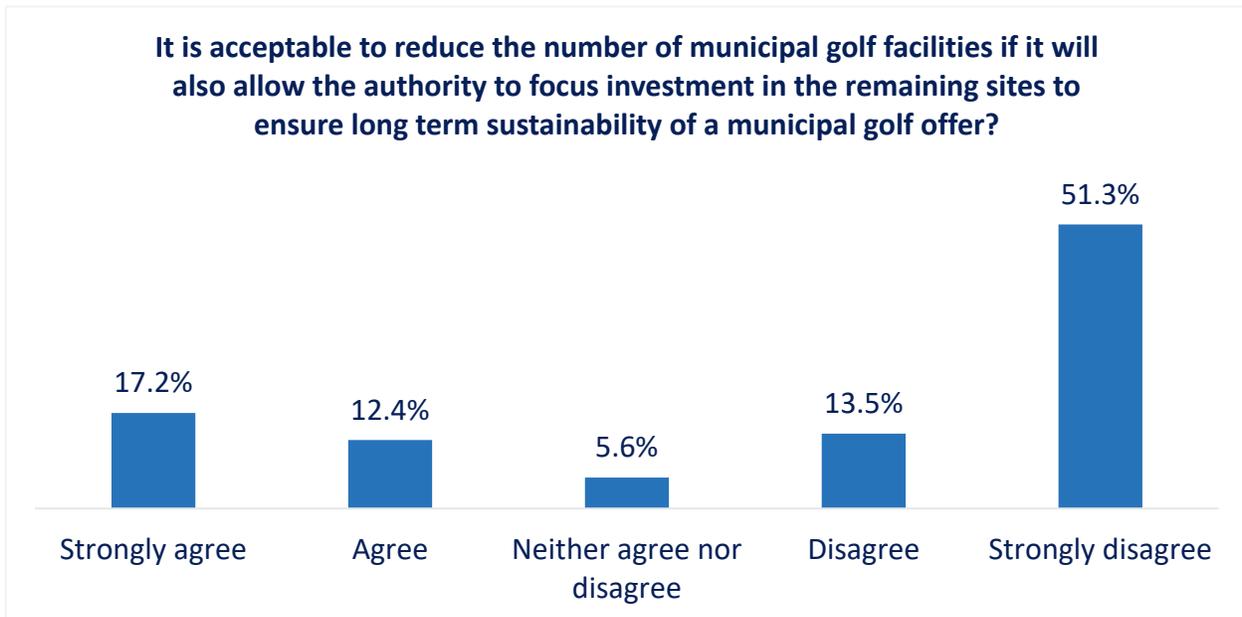


Figure 5: Chart showing the extent to which people agreed with the proposed reduction in municipal golf facilities.

It is acceptable to reduce the number of municipal golf facilities if it will also allow the authority to focus investment in the remaining sites to ensure long term sustainability of a municipal golf offer.	Online	%
Strongly agree	74	17.2%
Agree	53	12.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	24	5.6%
Disagree	58	13.5%
Strongly disagree	220	51.3%
Total	429	100.0%

Table 5: Totalling the number of responses by agreement level.

3.1.6 Question 5b: Closing down the leisure based recreational golf at Wallasey Beach and Kings Parade in New Brighton is acceptable if it will help protect and allow for investment in other golf facilities.

Of the 429 who responded to this question, ‘Strongly disagree’ was the most common answer – selected by 113 (26.3%). In total, 174 (40.5%) agreed with the statement and 194 (45.2%) disagreed.

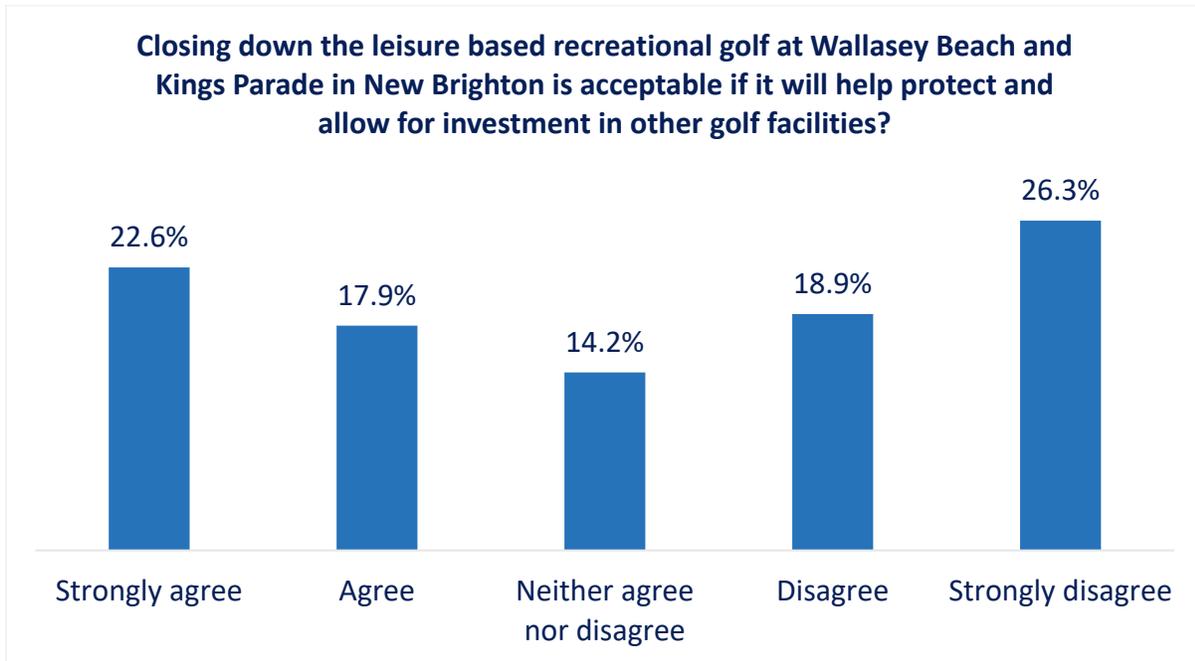


Figure 6: Chart displaying the extent to which respondents agreed with the closure of the recreational golf facilities at Wallasey beach and Kings Parade in New Brighton.

Closing down the leisure based recreational golf at Wallasey Beach and Kings Parade in New Brighton is acceptable if it will help protect and allow for investment in other golf facilities.	Online	%
Strongly agree	97	22.6%
Agree	77	17.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	61	14.2%
Disagree	81	18.9%
Strongly disagree	113	26.3%
Total	429	100.0%

Table 6: Totalling the number of responses by agreement level.

3.1.7 Question 5c: Closing down Brackenwood golf course is acceptable if it will help protect and invest in the remaining municipal golf facilities in Wirral.

In total, 431 people responded to this question. The most common answer was ‘Strongly disagree’ with 253 votes (58.7%). 295 (68.4%) disagree with the proposal and 107 (24.8%) agreed.

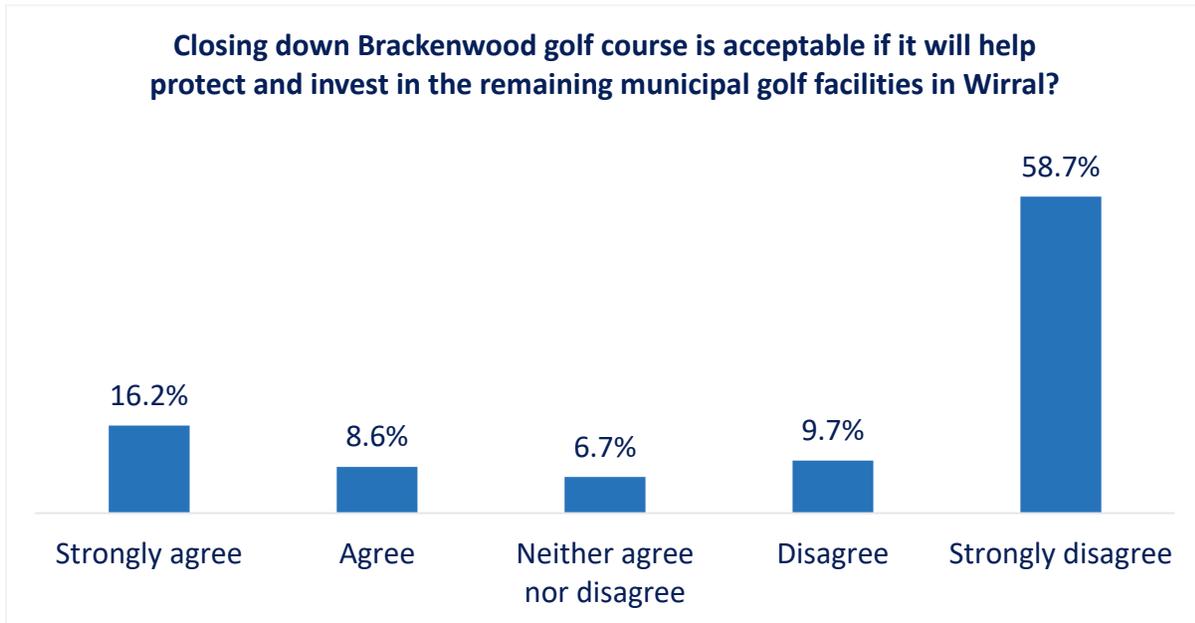


Figure 7: Chart showing the extent to which people agreed with the proposed closure of Brackenwood golf facility.

Closing down Brackenwood golf course is acceptable if it will help protect and invest in the remaining municipal golf facilities in Wirral.	Online	%
Strongly agree	70	16.2%
Agree	37	8.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	29	6.7%
Disagree	42	9.7%
Strongly disagree	253	58.7%
Total	431	100.0%

Table 7: Totalling the number of responses by agreement level.

3.1.8 Question 5d: Closing down Hoylake golf course is acceptable if it will help protect and invest in the remaining municipal golf facilities in Wirral.

In total, 428 people responded to this question. The most common answer was ‘Strongly disagree’ with 217 votes (50.6%). 264 (61.6%) disagree with the proposal and 122 (28.4%) agreed.

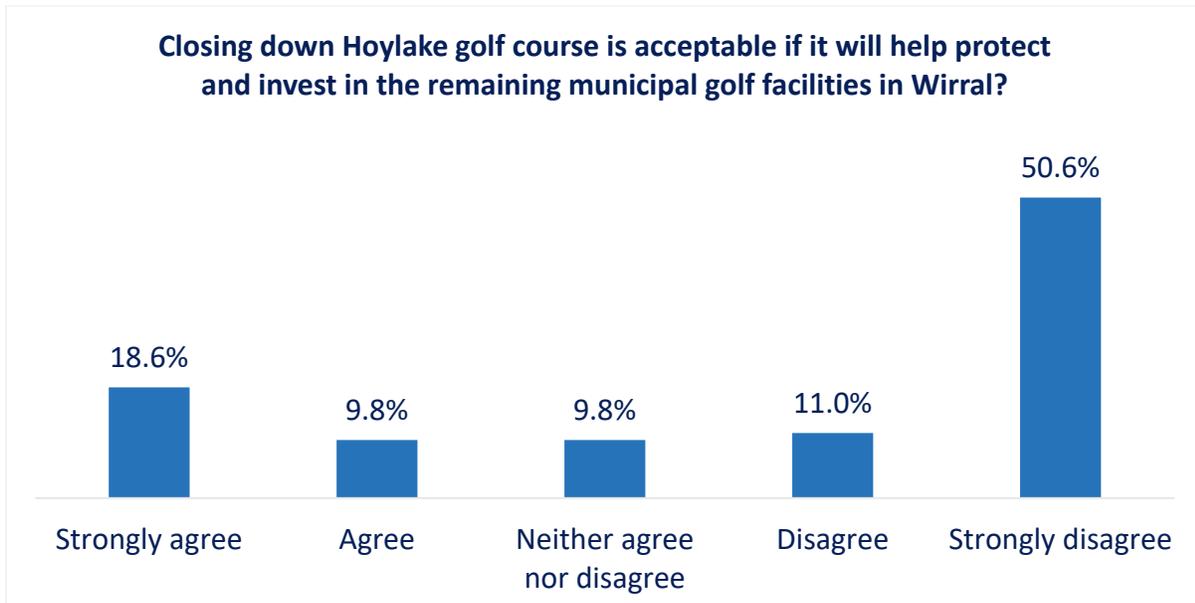


Figure 8: Chart showing the extent to which people agreed with the proposed closure of Hoylake golf facility.

Closing down Hoylake golf course is acceptable if it will help protect and invest in the remaining municipal golf facilities in Wirral.	Online	%
Strongly agree	80	18.6%
Agree	42	9.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	42	9.8%
Disagree	47	11.0%
Strongly disagree	217	50.6%
Total	428	99.8%

Table 8: Totalling the number of responses by agreement level.

3.1.9 Question 6: Do you have any alternative ideas to generate budget savings in leisure services?

Respondents were asked if they had any alternative ideas to generate budget savings in leisure services. There were 343 comments from online responses, which were categorised into themes; many comments contained multiple themes.

The chart below shows the themes:

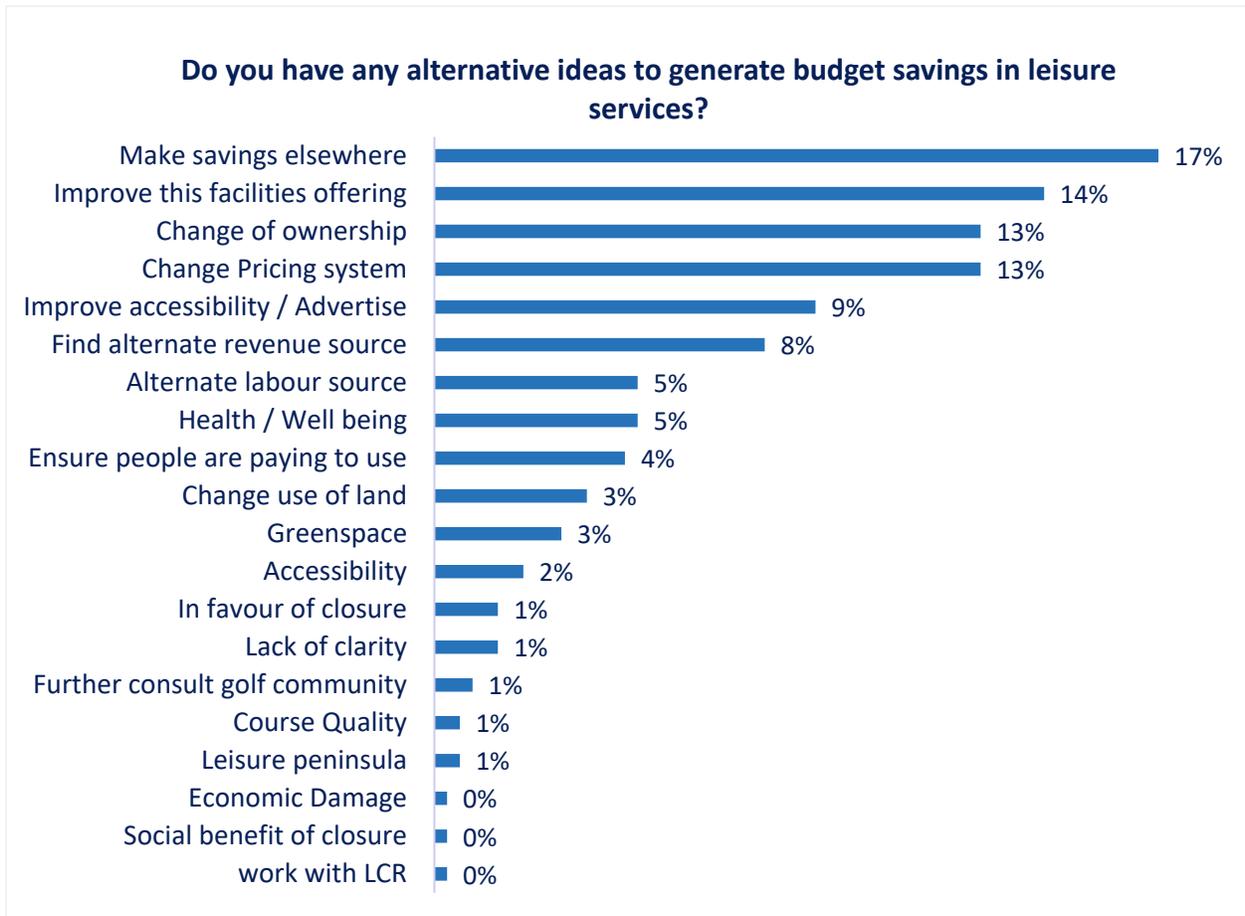


Figure 9: Chart showing the themes of alternative ideas to generate budget savings in leisure services.

Do you have any alternative ideas to generate budget savings in leisure services?		
Theme	Total	% of all themes
Make savings elsewhere	57	16.6%
Improve the facilities offering	48	14.0%
Change of ownership	43	12.5%
Change Pricing system	43	12.5%
Improve accessibility / Advertise	30	8.7%
Find alternate revenue source	26	7.6%
Alternate labour source	16	4.7%
Health / Well being	16	4.7%
Ensure people are paying to use	15	4.4%
Change use of land	12	3.5%
Greenspace	10	2.9%
Accessibility	7	2.0%
In favour of closure	5	1.5%
Lack of clarity	5	1.5%
Further consult golf community	3	0.9%
Course Quality	2	0.6%
Leisure peninsula	2	0.6%
Economic Damage	1	0.3%
Social benefit of closure	1	0.3%
work with LCR	1	0.3%

Table 9: Do you have any alternative ideas to generate budget savings in leisure services.

Make Savings Elsewhere

57 (17%) of the comments, suggested that savings should be made elsewhere. 20 of these suggested that council salaries should be cut; 9 of the comments suggested the council should scrap planned projects and 8 comments referenced the council reducing the number of external consultants used. The other suggestions included: closing other public facilities such as libraries, closing other leisure facilities such as swimming pools and closing other golf courses instead of those proposed.

Improve The Facilities Offering

48 (14%) comments suggested that golf facilities would be better able to create revenue if improved and therefore, should be invested into rather than closed. 8 commented that the courses are underutilised due to poor condition and footfall would increase if the course was better maintained, particularly in winter when the courses can suffer with waterlogging. Alternatively, in summer the clubhouse shuts while there is still daylight, enabling people to

walk on and play for free. Additionally, 4 comments recommended providing catering services to make additional revenue from groups of players. Other suggestions recommended enabling hotels and golf retail shops to open nearby and using the facilities to host competitions.

Change Of Ownership

43 (13%) comments suggested that rather than closing, the golf course should transfer ownership. 23 responses suggested leasing the courses to a private company who could take over the day-to-day running of the course. 10 respondents would like to see this course be transferred to a non-profit organisation who could run the golf courses in the community's interest.

Change pricing system

43 (13%) of the comments suggested changing the pricing system. Most of the comments suggested increasing charges for golf. Many would be interested in a golf only invigor8 membership that also offers concessions for younger players.

3.1.10 Question 7: Do you have any additional comments on this budget saving proposal?

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments on this budget saving proposal. There were 345 comments from Engagement HQ, which were categorised into themes; many comments contained multiple themes.

The chart below shows the themes:

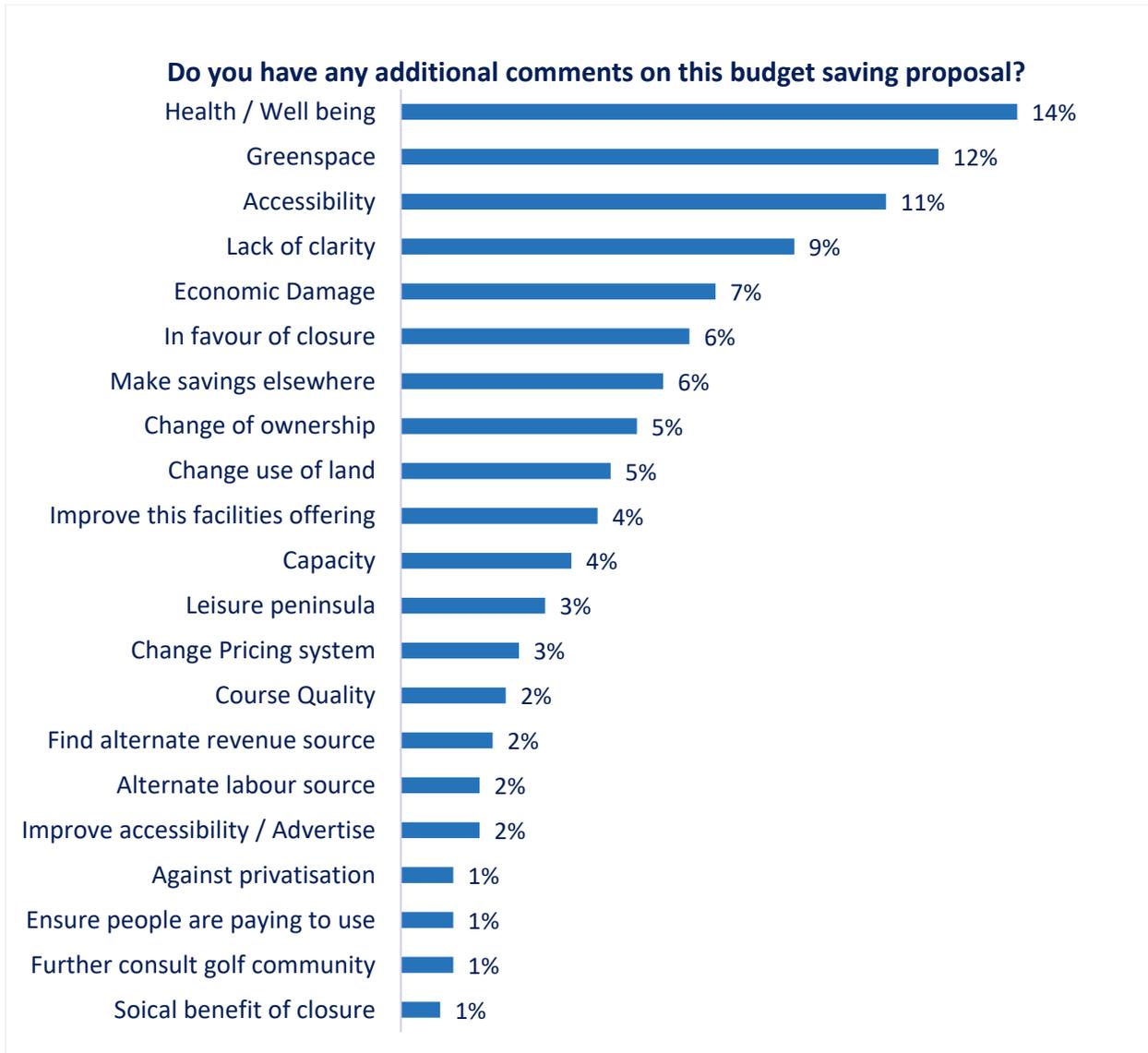


Figure 10: Chart showing the themes of additional comments on the golf budget saving proposal.

Do you have any additional comments on this budget saving proposal?		
Theme	Total	% of all themes
Health / Well being	47	13.6%
Greenspace	41	11.9%
Accessibility	37	10.7%
Lack of clarity	30	8.7%
Economic Damage	24	7.0%
In favour of closure	22	6.4%
Make savings elsewhere	20	5.8%
Change of ownership	18	5.2%
Change use of land	16	4.6%
Improve the facilities offering	15	4.3%
Capacity	13	3.8%
Leisure peninsula	11	3.2%
Change Pricing system	9	2.6%
Course Quality	8	2.3%
Find alternate revenue source	7	2.0%
Alternate labour source	6	1.7%
Improve accessibility / Advertise	6	1.7%
Against privatisation	4	1.2%
Ensure people are paying to use	4	1.2%
Further consult golf community	4	1.2%
Social benefit of closure	3	0.9%

Table 10: Tallying the categories assigned to comments.

Health / Well being

47 (14%) comments highlighted the benefits to Health and Wellbeing of playing golf, particularly as the population recovers following the Covid-19 pandemic. The comments also highlighted how if the golf offering reduced, lower levels of exercise may incur further costs due to a less healthy population.

Greenspace

41 (12%) comments valued the greenspace provided by golf courses and wish for public access not to be reduced. 14 comments proposed converting the courses into biodiverse greenspaces if the courses were to close, however many acknowledged that this also would come with high maintenance costs and may attract anti-social behaviour.



Accessibility

37 (11%) comments addressed the issues of accessibility if the municipal golf courses were to close. Most were concerned that reducing the councils golf provision would reduce access for less affluent golfers, by imposing additional time and transport costs, which could also have a detrimental environmental impact. Additionally, there were concerns that reducing the number of golf courses could impact the sustainability of the sport, as golf may become less attractive for younger generations due to the higher costs associated. A comment also mentioned that Hoylake golf course caters specifically for female players, by offering separate tee-times.

Lack of Clarity

30 (9%) commentors required further information regarding the alternative use of the land if the golf courses were to close, before they felt they could give their full opinion. Many of these commentors added that they would not like to see the land built on.

3.2 Direct Representations

Four direct representations were received via the dedicated email address supplied for the consultation process. These are provided in Appendix 1.

In relation to the Golf proposals two online petitions were created which can be found here:

Hoylake Golf Course [Petition · Save Hoylake Golf Course · Change.org](#)

As at 12:00 20 April 2022, 869 people had signed this petition.

Brakenwood Golf Course [Petition · Wirral Golf and our greenspace is worth saving · Change.org](#)

As at 12:00 20 April 2022, 3,143 people had signed this petition.

4.0 Demographics and Site Traffic

4.1 Demographics

Registration was required to engage in the online Budget Consultation. The registration form included questions regarding demographics including gender, age group, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, however not all questions in the registration form were compulsory and respondents could choose to select 'prefer not to say' or skip the question. The demographics results are summarised below.

Most of the respondents (91.8%) classed themselves as local residents.



Figure 11: What are you registering as?

The gender of respondents was 61.9% male, 35.6% female, with 1.8% preferring not to say and 0.8% preferring their own term.

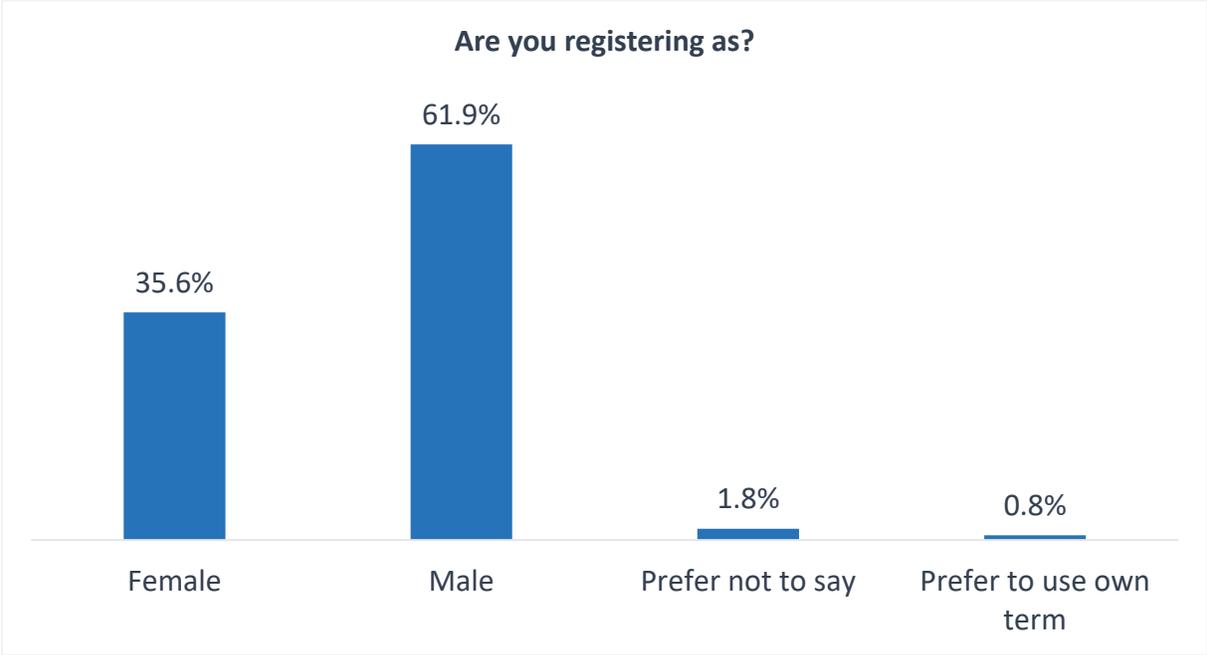


Figure 12: Gender of respondents.

The most common age group of respondents was 55-64 years (25.1%), followed by 65-74 years (24.6%). There was no representation for people aged 24 or under.

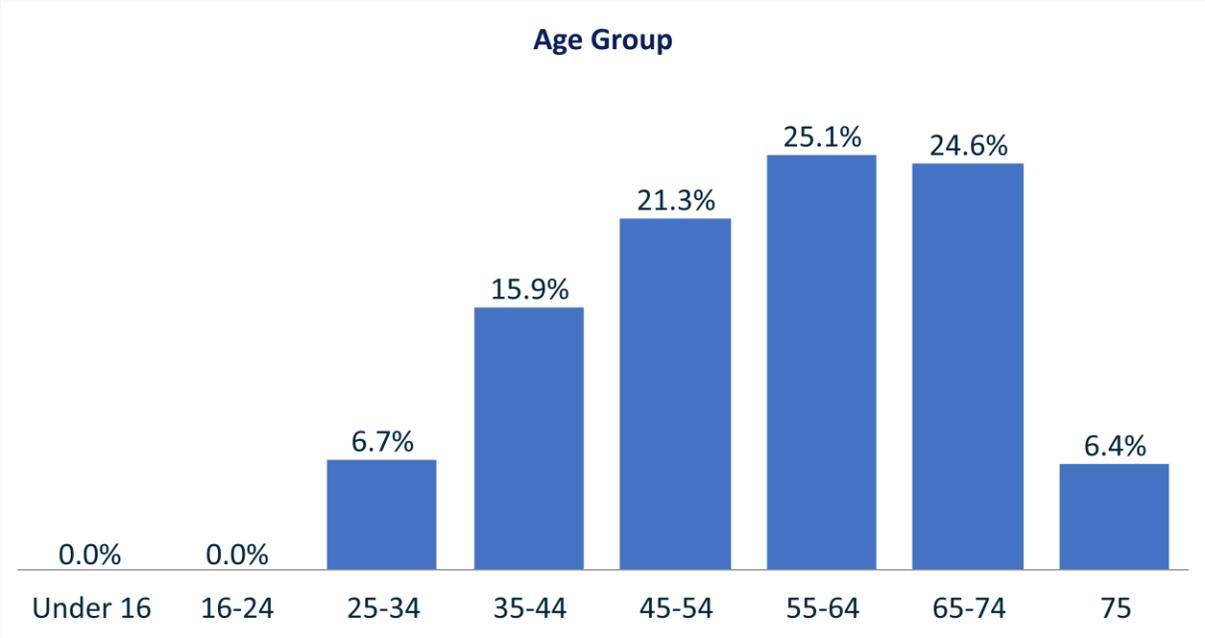


Figure 13: Age group of respondents.

93% of respondents were white British, 2.4% of respondents were of a non-white background and 1.8% were of other ethnicity.

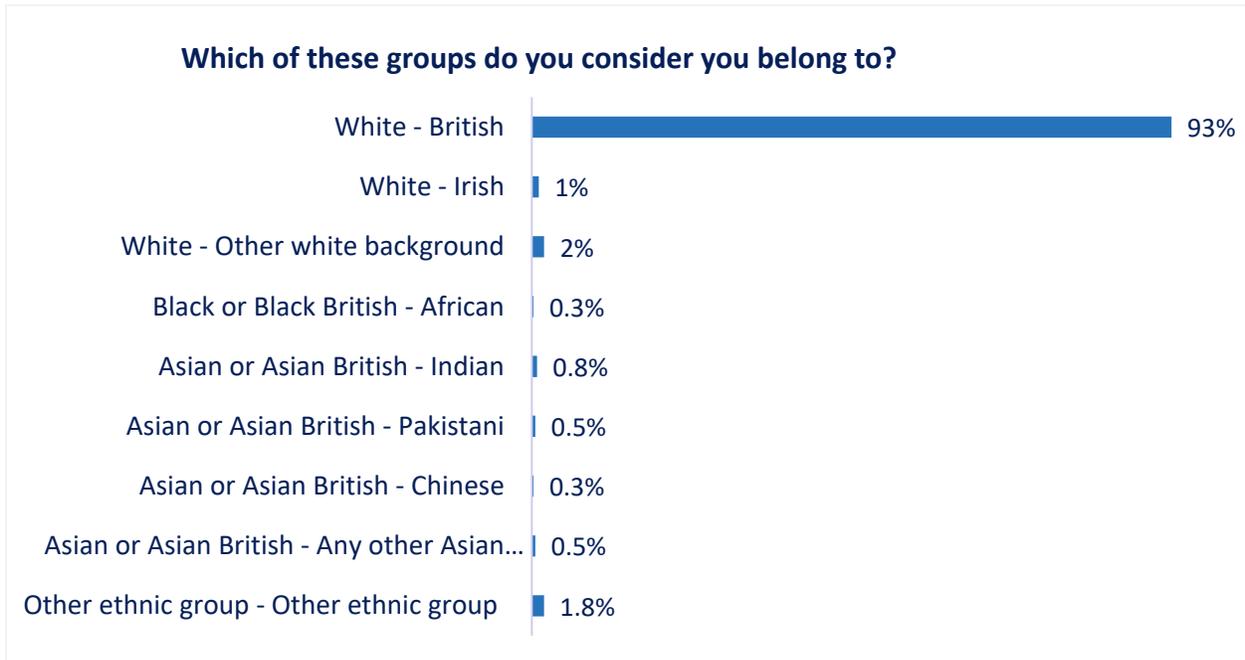


Figure 14: Ethnicity of respondents.

86.5% of respondents were heterosexual, 2.1% were gay/ lesbian, 0.8% bisexual and 10.6% preferred not to say.

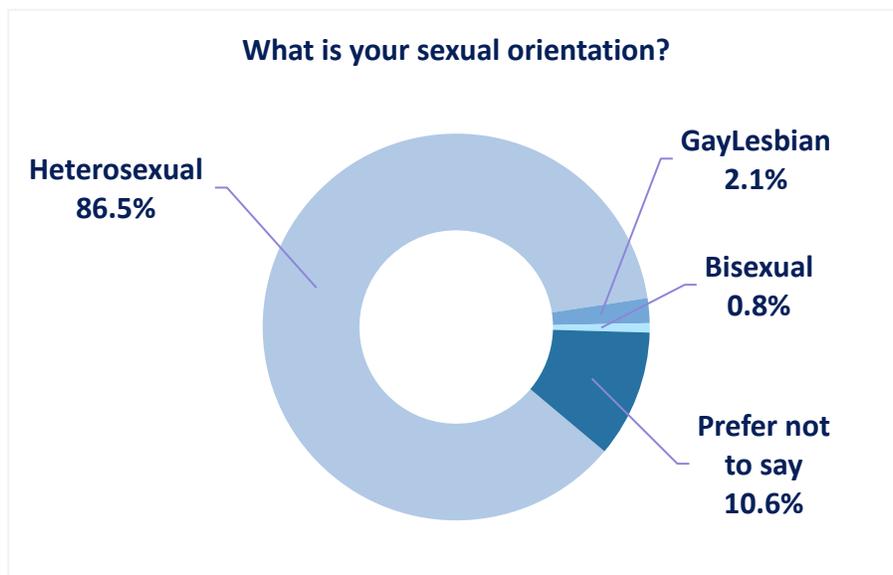


Figure 15: Sexual orientation of respondents.

4.2 Have your say - Site Traffic

Reviewing the site activity, visits, and how people visit the site can be useful to evaluate if people are aware of the site, as well as to ensure engagement activities are deployed effectively, and to a wide range of different people – enhancing public engagement in the future.

Site registration allows us to confirm the number of engaged participants through the completion of a quick poll; 433 people completed the Poll online.

2,429 visited the Budget 2022-23: Golf Consultation page of the Have Your Say site, of these 259 downloaded a document and 433 people completed the questionnaire.

These figures cannot be viewed as definitive as they are based on site tracking through ‘cookies’ and there are a number of factors that can impact on this. These include that cookies may be disabled or deleted, individuals may access the site multiple times through different devices or different browsers. However, the figures can be used to gauge how much interest has been generated in individual projects through the rate of engaged participants.

The route that people access the site is known as the traffic source. The ‘Have your say’ portal allows analysis to be carried out on traffic source, and if they lead to engagement in the site tools such as the questionnaire. This analysis allows a greater understanding of which communication and promotional tools to use to optimise engagement.

For this project a range of traffic sources have been reviewed and summarised in the table below. Most visits to the site were either visits via links in email (1164 visits) or direct visits (1047) where people have either pasted or typed the URL in to their browser. Direct visits generated a rate of engagement of 18.8%, meaning 18.8% of these visits resulted in completion of the poll. Referrals also had an engagement rate of 18.8%

TRAFFIC CHANNEL	AWARE VISITS	INFORMED VISITS (%)	ENGAGED VISITS (%)
DIRECT	1047	424 (40.5%)	197 (18.8%)
SOCIAL	264	112 (42.4%)	45 (17%)
EMAIL	1164	388 (33.3%)	77 (6.6%)
SEARCH ENGINE	111	45 (40.5%)	20 (18%)
.GOV SITES	3	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)
REFERRALS	495	265 (53.5%)	93 (18.8%)

Table 11: Site traffic sources.

Appendix 1: Direct Representations

This appendix includes feedback directly sent to the contact email address:

budgetconsult@wirral.gov.uk

I am disgusted that Wirral Borough Council are considering closing, Hoylake, and Brackenwood Golf Courses, I have been playing at Hoylake for over 40 years, the James Braid designed Course, is an excellent course, all golfers love playing Hoylake for its challenging design. The council are looking to take the easy, but wrong option and close the course, it is obviously losing the council money. They should be asking why it is losing money, it is a Chicken and Egg situation the Course has massively deteriorated over the last seven years, when the majority of people play Hoylake now, they don't return, the reason is the very poor condition of the course. The reason for the very poor condition is Bad Management, staffing issues over recent years has been the problem, these problems have NOT been dealt with, continual long term (fully paid) Sickness, with no cover for when staff are off work, when staff are at work they have not had the ability to prioritise work, then carry out said work to completion, the attitude of the staff has been of very low motivation, there is no accountability for their poor performance, as is the same with the Senior Management, back to the Chicken and Egg situation, the Staff that have been working at Hoylake, over the last few months are different staff than usual, they are doing a good days work, not like the two Staff who have been suspended, no doubt on full pay. There has been a marked improvement in the Course, even in this short time. To have Hoylake properly Managed and in good Condition, would attract many more players, obviously this would increase income, I am a Member of Hoylake Golf Club and play most Saturdays, our club gives massive support at Hoylake Municipal Golf Course, I would love to invite all my golfing friends from previous courses I have been a member of, unfortunately due to the poor condition over the last seven years, I would have only embarrassed myself. I was Chairman of Marketing a local private club, so I talk with some experience as to what is achievable. This course should make the Council Money, if its Managed correctly, but Managers need to be accountable.

The Open is coming back to Hoylake next year, is our Labour Council going to be the Party responsible for the Failure of Hoylake Golf Course? All I ask is to give our course a chance to survive, If WBC turn this situation around it would be a positive and a Feather in their Cap.

I am both surprised and disappointed to see the proposal to close Hoylake Golf course among the proposed savings from within non-statutory services.

It doesn't seem long ago that the Council was in lengthy and ultimately costly discussions with the Celtic Manor organisation to dramatically improve the golf provision in Hoylake.

It is not surprising that the income generated by the Hoylake course has waned over a number of years. This James Braid designed course has been consistently understaffed or staffed with personnel and management with little or no greenkeeping experience or qualifications, with

higher levels of staffing being allocated to Arrowe Park. All aspects of the course have become worse, and a significant number of players not affiliated to clubs or societies have, as a result, chosen to play their golf elsewhere or joined a private club. The Hoylake course is a good course and simply needs appropriate resource provision, labour, and effective management to bring it back up to being the most popular municipal course in Wirral. Road, rail, and public transport links to the Hoylake course are exceptional, as has been admirably demonstrated when THE OPEN Championships are held at Royal Liverpool Golf Course

I am also confused as to the rationale behind your officer's proposal which state that "the two remaining golf courses will still provide a sufficient 'golf offer' to the residents of Wirral". It would appear to me that to achieve the savings envisaged there is a false premise that golfers currently playing at both Brackenwood, and Hoylake will move to playing at either the The Warren or Arrowe Park. The Warren, being a nine-hole course would be virtually impossible to get on!

Hoylake Golf Club and Hoylake Seniors Golf Club are both thriving clubs with 117 members in the main club and 51 in the seniors. All the members of these clubs currently pay via their Invigor8 memberships. The only reason that I have an Invigor8 membership is to enable me to play at Hoylake. The clubs will not transfer to any of the other municipal courses if Hoylake were to close. Loss of these Invigor8 memberships would reduce the Council's golf income significantly and more than likely lead to further proposals to close the remaining courses in the near future.

There are currently six golf clubs and one golf society based at and playing on Hoylake Golf course: Grosvenor Grange Ladies, Hoylake Men's, Hoylake Ladies, West Hoyle Men's, West Hoyle Ladies, Irby Golf Club and Bill Jones – Trotters Society. (The oldest of these being Grosvenor Grange Ladies, formed when Royal Liverpool purchased the land for a nine-hole course in 1898 which enabled the ladies to play. Thirty years later Hoylake Parish Council purchased the land, wanting to increase access to public amenities. The new 18-hole course was then designed by James Braid.) Clearly, income from members of these clubs and societies could also be lost!

Hoylake Golf course is an essential element in the R&A's planning to hold "THE OPEN" Championship at Royal Liverpool Golf Course. 2023 is the next date for "THE OPEN" to be held at RLGC. Discussions are currently being undertaken with the R&A to include RLGC in its next 25-year OPEN calendar. Hoylake Golf course provides the televised practice area for the international golfers as well as parking for some 6000 vehicles during the event (as in 2014). This event as well as being of worldwide importance does much to promote Wirral on the world stage. THE OPEN Golf Championships generate significant income for the area, with well over three hundred thousand people attending over the course of the event. It was estimated that the 2014 OPEN delivered a total economic benefit of £76.3m across the Wirral council area and to the wider economy of the Northwest. Then there is also the legacy income derived from golfers coming to the area to play at Royal Liverpool during the intervening years. I recognise the pressures on the Council to find dramatic savings in the coming financial year, the majority of which will necessarily have to come from non-statutory services, but I would ask for your support in removing the closure of Hoylake Golf Course from the 2022-23 budget saving proposals because of the reasons above.

I am writing to ask you not to include the closure of Hoylake Municipal Golf Course in the forthcoming non-statutory services "cuts".

This course has played a major role in the staging of the Open Golf Tournament, held at The Royal Liverpool Golf Club, since 2006 when it returned to this iconic venue. It repeated that again in 2014 and is scheduled to do the same next year 2023.

The municipal course's role has covered providing parking facilities for 6000 vehicles as well as a helicopter pad for the use of officials and players.

It has proved most useful for the players to "warm-up" within easy logistical reach of the Open Course and has enabled visitor spectators to watch these world-class players "up-close".

Logistically, this must be a great benefit to the organisers of the event which generates an estimated £76.3 million benefit across the Wirral Council area and especially gives a major boost to the Hoylake & West Kirby economies.

It would appear, to me, to be short-sighted and somewhat narrow-minded to consider throwing away an asset which has helped to bring this much needed boost to Wirral.

The staging of the Open at Hoylake has helped to put Wirral in the spotlight both nationally and internationally.

On a personal basis, I have played on this course for 29 years and have observed a "running-down" of the investment, quality of management, staff, maintenance and equipment which I attribute to the decision by the Council to create a "golf resort" which would have meant a total redevelopment of the site thus causing a minimum of maintenance to be required, if that was to be the end result.

We are now in the situation where that proposal is now dead-in-the-water and it has ended up costing, at least, £490,000(the settlement figure).

I respectfully seek your valued support in keeping this "asset".

Once it has gone, it will be gone forever.

This proposal, seems to be very underthought. As opposed to closing the facilities, it would be much better to propose additional services to make each facility profitable. Some possible ways these could be made profitable are; wedding venue hire, venue hire, foot-golf, rugby golf and/or golf tournaments.