

Help us shape how we engage - Our strategy

- **Project:** Help us shape how we engage
- **Period:** 14 January 2026 to 15 February 2026
- **Total responses:** 315

Introduction - Shaping how we consult and engage

We want residents to have a stronger role in local decision making and to feel confident their views are considered. To support this, we are developing a new Engagement and Consultation Strategy.

In the first phase of engagement, residents told us that trust, transparency and influence are key. They want clearer evidence that feedback makes a difference, as well as early involvement in decision making. Respondents also asked for better promotion of consultations and more direct notifications.

People said information should be clear, jargon free and accessible to everyone. They want inclusive processes that reach those most affected by decisions, including individuals with disabilities or limited digital access. They also asked for short, simple surveys and more opportunities for open-ended feedback.

This feedback informed the draft strategy. In the second phase, residents commented on the draft document and completed a survey to identify what worked and what needed improvement.

Hearing from diverse groups in the borough

We revisited several groups who took part in earlier engagement to test whether the draft strategy reflects their needs. This included people with learning disabilities, local partners and stakeholders.

Hearing from people with learning disabilities - Summary

The engagement and consultation team returned to CLASP to discuss the draft strategy, following an initial session with the group in October where members were asked how they would like to be engaged with and on which topics. For the second session, the group were asked about the six priorities set out in the strategy document.

Feedback was generally positive, with individuals agreeing with the principles and saying they were glad to share their views. The council's approach to Easy Read documents was explained and the group were supportive. Other views on the priorities included not wanting jargon and allowing time for understanding. Members also emphasised the importance of collecting views in good time before consultations and surveys close.

Common themes and how the strategy responds to them:

Trust: Respondents expressed concerns that consultation and engagement feedback is not considered and findings not used

- The strategy commits WBC to meaningful use of feedback and to publishing information about how this is done.
- The strategy sets out requirement for engagement and consultation to be honest about what can and cannot be influenced by feedback

Representative: Respondents called for engagement with all stakeholders and demographics

- The strategy outlines how the council will recruit a demographically representative Community Panel
- The strategy commits us to targeting specific groups and demographics appropriate to the subject
- The Officer steering group outlined in the strategy will oversee engagement and ensure sound representation

Accessibility: Respondents stressed need for consultations to be easily understood and accessible for all

- The strategy sets out the range of methods we will use to ensure wide participation, including Easy Read and dedicated sessions for less heard from groups
- The strategy commits the council to the principle of using clear language and to keeping surveys as short and simple as possible

Feedback: Respondents expressed need for the loop to be closed and respondents told how their comments are used

- The strategy commits the council to publishing summaries from all consultation and engagement and to demonstrate in public reports how findings have been used

Early engagement: Respondents called for engagement and consultation to take place before decisions have been made

- The strategy commits the council to consultation and engaging at appropriate time and to only seeking the community's input when it can have real influence

Question 1

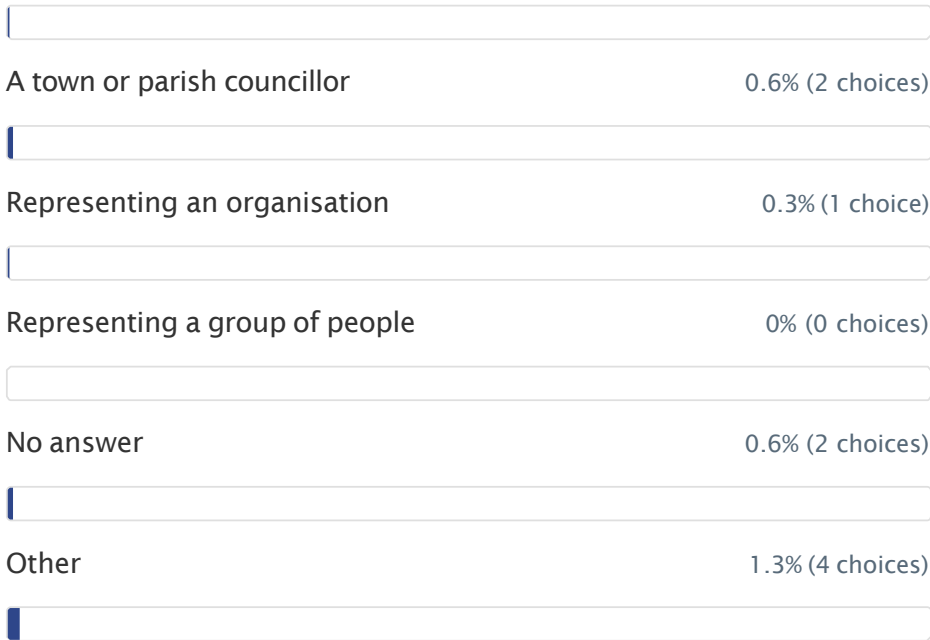
Are you responding as

313/315 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

A Wokingham Borough resident 96.8% (305 choices)



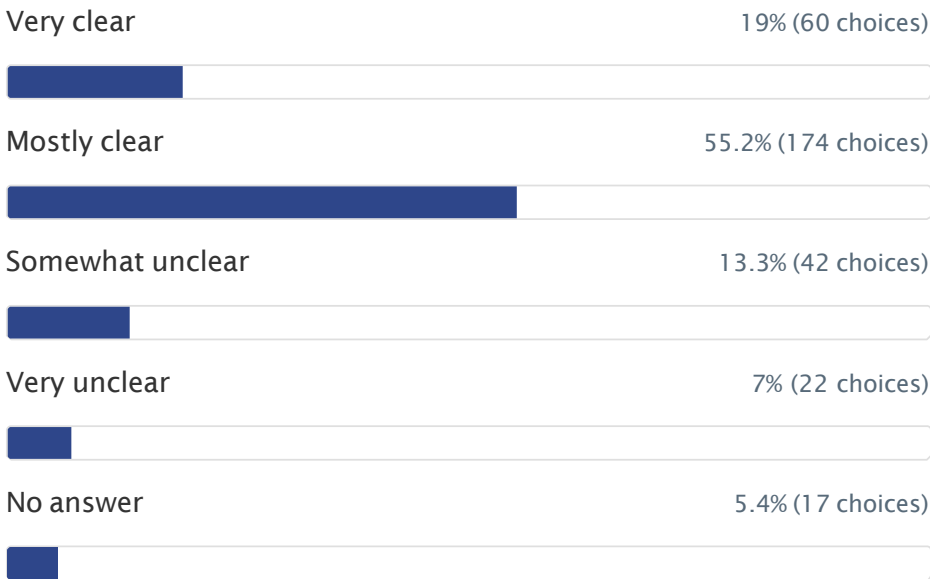
An elected borough councillor 0.3% (1 choice)



Question 3

How clear do you find the draft Engagement & Consultation Strategy?

298/315 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



Question 4

What do you think needs clarifying?

51/64 - Long answer - optional

There is a strong call for clearer, simpler language and more concise summaries and bullet points.

Several respondents questioned the fairness and transparency of the process, including how participants are selected for the community panel. This includes queries about the demographic mix and whether the process is unbiased and reflects the whole borough fairly.

Others asked for clearer information about what is being consulted on, how residents can take part and what impact their involvement will have..

Question 5

How much do you agree that putting the community at the centre of decision making is the right approach for Wokingham Borough?

308/315 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

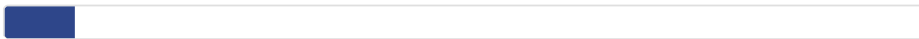
Strongly agree 59.4% (187 choices)



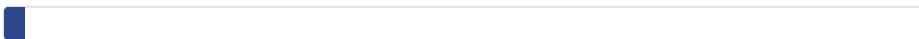
Agree 25.7% (81 choices)



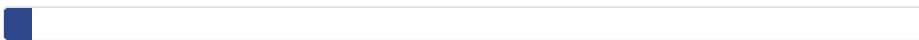
Neither agree nor disagree 7.6% (24 choices)



Disagree 2.2% (7 choices)



Strongly disagree 2.9% (9 choices)



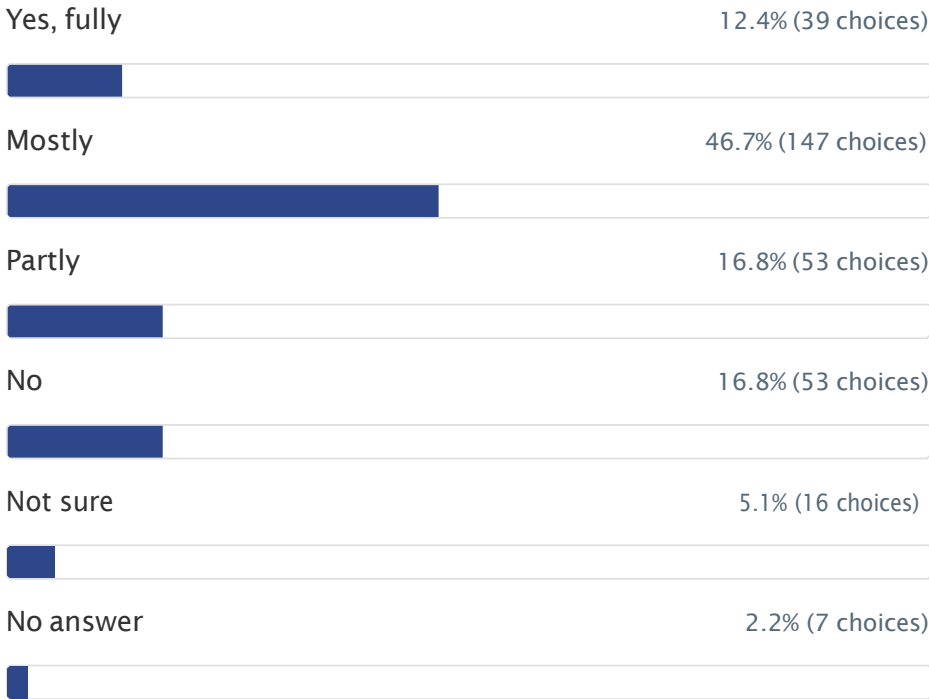
No answer 2.2% (7 choices)



Question 6

Do you think the strategy covers the right priorities for improving engagement?

308/315 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



Question 7

Is anything missing from the strategy that you think should be included?

106/315 - Long answer - optional

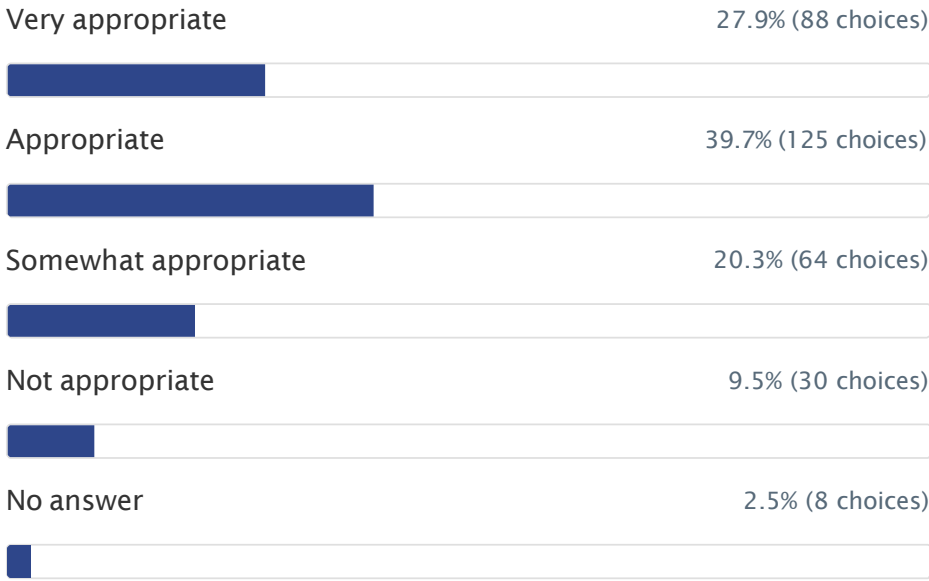
There was concern about how representative engagement activities are. Respondents asked for broad inclusion across the whole borough, not just Wokingham town, and for involvement of disabled people, older residents, young people and those who are not digitally engaged.

Others highlighted the need to involve local businesses and industry specialists, not just residents.

Question 8

How appropriate are the six engagement principles for guiding how we work with residents?

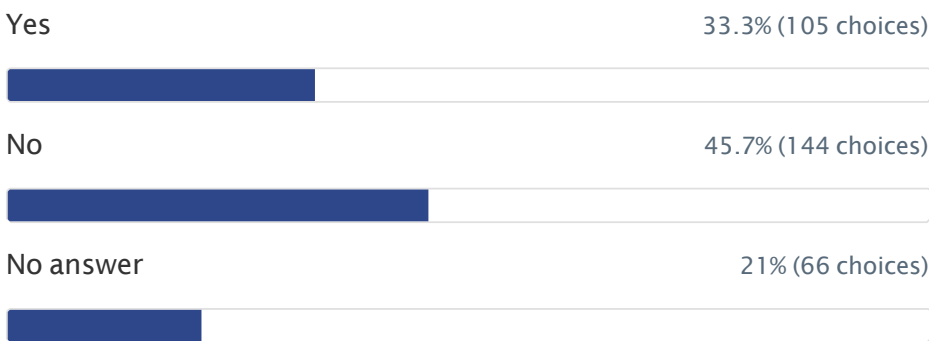
307/315 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



Question 9

Are any principles unclear or in need of improvement?

249/315 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



Question 10

Please tell us what is unclear or in need of improvement.

91/105 - Long answer - optional

Respondents called for clearer communication, more specific language and explicit reporting of outcomes..

There were calls for more meaningful engagement, with respondents wanting to see evidence that their input leads to actual changes.

Other issues raised included concerns about the frequency of surveys, financial waste if

feedback does not influence outcomes, and the need for honesty and transparency.

Question 11

Which engagement method is your most preferred?

312/315 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

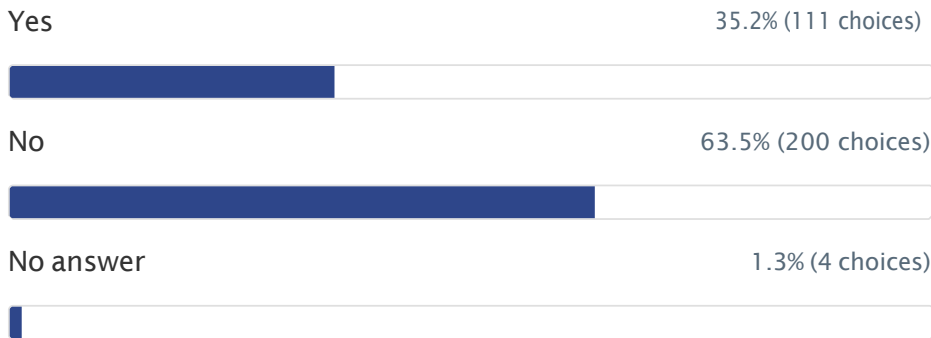


Of the 'other' responses, many said they prefer a mix of engagement methods tailored to the subject matter or nature of the consultation. Some respondents noted that online surveys alone are insufficient and do not provide opportunities for dialogue.

Question 12

Are there any barriers that would prevent you from taking part in engagement or consultation activities?

311/315 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



Question 13

Please describe what barriers prevent you from taking part in our consultations and engagement exercises.

108/111 - Long answer - optional

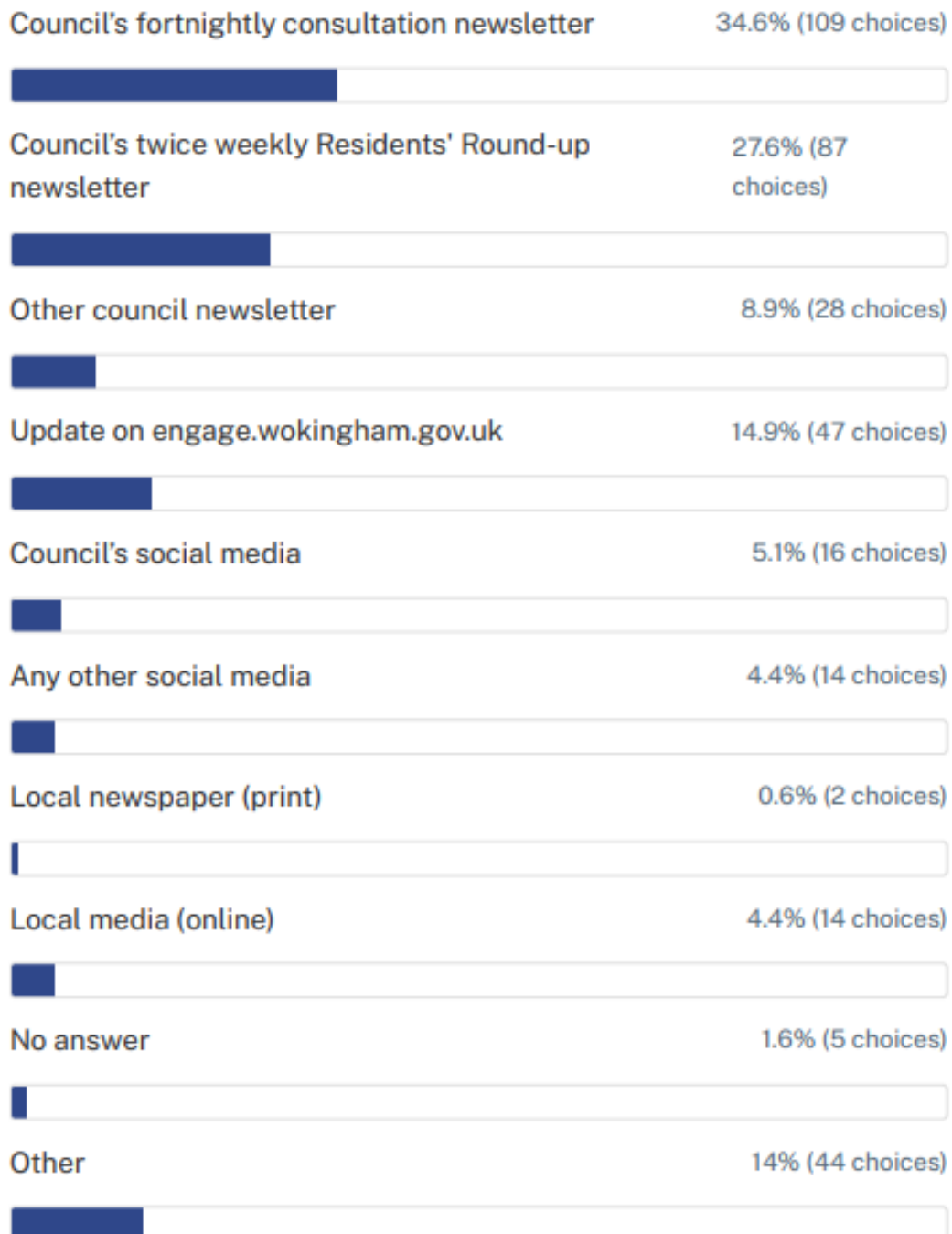
The most frequently mentioned barrier is a lack of trust that views will be listened to or acted upon. Respondents said this feeling of not being heard makes them disengage from decision making, while others said they would like to see what impact their views have had.

Timing and accessibility were further barriers, including consultations being held during working hours or without sufficient notice, as well as barriers affecting disabled people or those with caring responsibilities.

Question 14

How did you find out about this consultation?

310/315 - Multiple choice - choose many - optional



Question 15

How would you like to learn about new engagement opportunities and find out about results?

300/315 - Multiple choice - choose many - optional

Council's fortnightly consultation newsletter 53% (167 choices)



Council's twice weekly Residents' Round-up newsletter 34.9% (110 choices)



Other council newsletter 5.4% (17 choices)



Update on engage.wokingham.gov.uk 15.6% (49 choices)



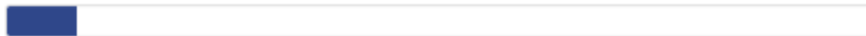
Council's social media 10.2% (32 choices)



No answer 4.8% (15 choices)



Other 7.9% (25 choices)



Question 16

How important is it to see how your feedback has influenced decisions?

255/315 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Very important 50.2% (158 choices)



Important 21% (66 choices)



Somewhat important 6% (19 choices)



Not important 3.8% (12 choices)



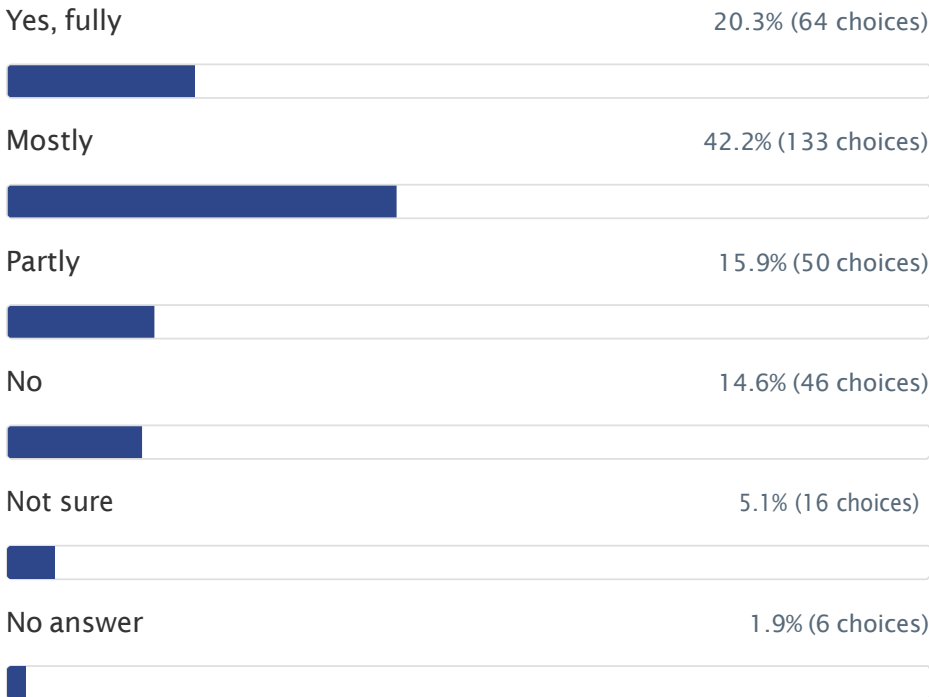
No answer 19% (60 choices)



Question 17

Do you think the strategy covers the right ways to measure progress?

309/315 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



Question 18

Is there any other way you think we should measure progress?

92/315 - Long answer - optional

There was a strong demand for transparency, , showing how feedback has influenced decisions and explaining when resident views are not followed. This would help people understand how final decisions were reached.

Several respondents emphasise the importance of measuring real-world outcomes and impact, not just activity. Others wanted more detailed demographic information to ensure consultations are balanced and representative.

Question 19

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the draft strategy?

123/315 - Long answer - optional

Many respondents want the council to be honest about what can and cannot be influenced.

Many want the process to be simpler, more concise and less wordy.. Others said survey questions sometimes feel biased and that word limits can act as a barrier.

A few wanted more digital engagement, while others stressed that an online-only approach would exclude less confident users.

