

Water, Wastewater & Drainage Policy

Analysis of consultation responses

July 2024

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Executive summary

The Scottish Government ran a written consultation between 21 November 2023 and 21 February 2024, [seeking views on water, wastewater and drainage policy](#). This report provides a summary of the consultation responses.

The Scottish Government would like to thank all individuals, businesses and organisations who took the time to consider and respond to this consultation. Your collective input is invaluable in helping to inform our next steps.

The consultation posed a total of 37 questions, including 23 closed questions (e.g. receiving yes / no / don't know responses) and 14 open-text questions (receiving free text responses). Questions addressed proposals for water, wastewater and drainage services in Scotland and was divided into five parts. The five parts were: (i) water resource planning, (ii) drinking water, (iii) drainage, (iv) wastewater and resource recovery, and (v) paying for services.

Responses to the consultation were accepted through three formats, including (i) the Citizen Space online platform, (ii) email (including PDF attachments), and (iii) by participating in public consultation engagement events.

A total of 492 responses were received. In addition, a total of 13 Scottish Government-led public consultation events were held, with approximately 900 attendees in total. Respondents included individuals, local authorities, public sector organisations, academic institutions, private bodies, and third-sector organisations.

Descriptive quantitative analysis was conducted on the closed-format questions, and thematic analysis was used to synthesise themes extracted from open-text questions and reports from public consultation events. Recurrent emerging themes in open-text questions were identified and are outlined below for each part of the consultation.

Recognising that respondents might want to respond to one or some of the proposals without wishing to express views on others, the consultation document was structured to allow respondents to answer questions independently.

Key findings

This section of the report includes a summary of key findings from the consultation responses, including quantitative (closed questions) and qualitative (open questions) responses for each section of the consultation. Percentages have been rounded up to the nearest decimal place. Sections 3-7 of this report will cover consultation responses for each section in more depth. Additionally, a full breakdown of the numbers and percentage response to each closed question is included in the Annex A.

Overall, there was broad support for the proposals put forward regarding water, wastewater and drainage services.

Water resource planning

In this section we outlined the pressures on our water resources and the need to secure the water supply for future generations through a collaborative approach to managing them. We also outlined the need to provide a resilient and sustainable water supply that delivers for the public, industry and the natural environment for years to come, at a cost acceptable to all consumers.

There is currently no legal requirement for us to plan for our water resources. As a consequence, there is a limited understanding of changing needs, future demands and continued availability of water. To protect the future of Scotland's environment and economy, this needs to change. We need to understand what we need to do to ensure that we have a balance between what supply is needed to meet the demands placed upon our water resources, where those demands are and have a system for allocating it fairly. Planning for our water resources can enable us to respond better in times when there are greater pressures, such as in times of warmer, drier weather.

Policy proposals can be separated into the following actions:

- create the legislative framework for an integrated planning approach to water resources across Scotland, supporting a climate resilient economy
- deliver environmental and social benefit through an affordable and resilient water resource system
- evolve and adapt to climate change, to protect and manage Scotland's water resources

Respondents broadly agreed with our proposals, including:

- that Scotland needs to set out a plan to manage our water resources, for now and into the future
- that taking a national view of catchment risks will help better protect drinking water sources from pollutants

Drinking water

In this section we outlined the need to manage and protect our water resources. This includes ensuring better use of water resources, continued protection of public health, and increased resilience of water supplies to climate change.

We need to make sure that we are able to provide a reliable supply of water during dry periods and act to protect the water supplies quickly during these times. We also need to make sure that the water that reaches our taps remains safe to drink, which requires us to consider all the possible risks. Whilst most of Scotland is served by a public supply of water there are some homes across Scotland that have private water supplies, which are especially vulnerable to climate change and we need to make sure that they are protected too.

Policy proposals can be separated into the following actions:

- create a framework to manage emerging risks to drinking water sources
- create measures to drive a net reduction in demand for drinking water via a suite of different levers

- target elements of water supplies that have potentially high levels of risk associated, such as private distribution systems and domestic distribution systems
- a risk-based regulatory approach for water supplies

The consultation analysis found that respondents broadly agreed with our proposals, including:

- that everyone in Scotland needs to use less water, particularly if it avoids building expensive new infrastructure
- education, behaviour change and utilising recycled water are essential to reducing how much water we use
- drinking water supplies, regardless of size or ownership, should be tested and inspected to ensure drinking water is safe
- all of Scotland's plumbing should be made lead free

Where responses diverted slightly from our proposals was in relation to metering. Respondents were in favour of metering as a means of charging for water use with many citing that this would incentivise a reduction in water consumption.

Drainage

In this section we outlined that the changing climate means we are seeing more extreme weather events such as periods of very heavy and/or intense rainfall which can lead to spills from sewer systems to the environment and cause flooding to homes and businesses. We need to make greater changes in the way we manage the consequences of extreme weather events as their frequency increases.

This requires taking a combination of actions, both large and small, to better manage rainwater. This includes reducing the risk of flooding and spills from combined sewer overflows into the water environment. This means installing bigger pipes (known as "grey infrastructure") where necessary, but also installing blue-green infrastructure, which can hold rain close to where it falls, such as in raingardens, ponds, basins, wetlands, and green spaces. This prevents rainfall from entering the wastewater system, as well as providing attractive features that enhance public amenity and support greater biodiversity.

Policy proposals can be separated into the following actions:

- enshrine principles of integrated drainage from sustainable flood risk management (FRM) guidance in legislation
- create the legislative framework and clarity of responsibilities for collaborative planning and delivery of rainwater drainage infrastructure
- enable the delivery of blue-green places (at all scales) that are adaptable to future climate conditions
- reduce the risk of surface water flooding through co-ordinated planning and delivery of investment
- support this through National drainage network mapping and analysis and Rainwater Drainage Network Planning and powers to protect the drainage network through better control of connections

The consultation analysis found that respondents broadly agreed with our proposals, including:

- that individuals and organisations have a role to play in managing rainwater differently, including installing sustainable rainwater management systems in homes
- there is a need to plan, build, maintain and make room for drainage infrastructure to better manage rainwater
- that Scotland's drainage system should be a combination of grey and blue/green infrastructure, with significant support for blue/green infrastructure
- planning, investment and partnership working will be required to deliver new drainage infrastructure

Wastewater and resource recovery

In this section we outlined the need to change our approach to managing our wastewater and sewerage network. Unless we respond to the changing climate by adapting our sewerage services now, the costs to households, businesses and the environment arising from floods from sewers will be much higher.

In addition to improved drainage, to further reduce the impact on the environment from spills we need to prevent blockages in our sewer systems by making sure that we correctly dispose of our household items in bins, such as wet wipes, cotton buds, sanitary products etc. rather than flushing them down our toilets. We also want to maximise the opportunity to use resources from wastewater to support a circular economy and to make it easier to adopt new and future technologies.

Policy proposals can be separated into the following actions:

- create the legislative framework for wastewater collection and treatment in the best interests of Scotland, aligning with strategic drainage networks policies
- contribute to reducing the risk of emerging contaminants
- minimise the impact and harm from spills on the water environment
- support a circular economy approach through resource recovery

The consultation analysis found that respondents broadly agreed with our proposals, including:

- that more should be done to stop items being disposed of down toilets and drains, including better public awareness of the issue and banning certain products
- that private wastewater treatment systems should be tested and inspected to ensure that they do not impact negatively on the environment
- that offences for discharging to the sewer for non-household properties should be extended to other pollutants (aside from fats, oils and greases), and extended to household premises. However, there were some questions about how this would be enforced
- that investment should be prioritised to address combined sewer overflows
- that resource recovery is something that Scottish Water should be undertaking and that this should be able to be funded through customer charges

Paying for services

In this section we outlined the need to invest more to protect and enhance our services. We also outlined that currently household water and wastewater services are billed separately but collected alongside Council Tax. The charges are based on Council Tax Bands not the amounts of water used, wastewater removed or rainwater drained. This means that charges are based on a rising scale depending on your house band and a range of discounts can be applied to protect certain groups of people, including those on the lowest incomes.

To ensure that there is greater clarity regarding the services provided by Scottish Water, we proposed that we define three services: water, wastewater and drainage of rainwater with each service cost being clearly shown. This would make the cost of providing services and how we are investing your money clearer.

Respondents broadly agreed with our proposals, notably that:

- changing our behaviour is essential to limit charge rises
- we should recognise that there are three services (water, wastewater and drainage)

Responses to this section of the consultation diverged slightly from our proposals in relation to Council Tax. Respondents did not agree that Council Tax Band is the fairest way to charge for services used by households, referring instead to household metering or charging by household occupancy as being fairer.

Introduction

The consultation set out the Scottish Government's proposed strategic principles, and considerations in developing policy for the future of the water industry in Scotland in response to the climate emergency. The policy proposals are designed to protect our water, wastewater and drainage services; better prepare for the impacts of climate change on these services; and, maximise the benefits that we can deliver for the people of Scotland.

The health of Scotland's economy, society and environment is increasingly reliant on how effectively we adapt to the impacts of climate change. As the climate continues to shift, life in Scotland in the future may look different to how it looks today. The demand for water will continue to grow as the weather gets warmer and this will affect many aspects of our lives including our crop management and food supply. There will also be pressure on our drinking water supply affecting not only the amount of water available, but also the quality of the water that we take from the environment to use for drinking water.

As the frequency and intensity of storms increases, so does the risk of flooding in people's homes, businesses and other essential services which will impact the way we live. As we have described above the climate has already changed. We need to adapt the way in which we plan, deliver and use our essential water, wastewater and drainage services to cope with these changes now. This will ensure that our environment is protected, drinking water is secured and rainwater is managed in a way that reduces the impact on society for future generations.

Our climate is becoming more unpredictable and the water sector must adapt in a way that provides best value for current and future customers, as well as supporting a climate resilient economy. We are proposing legislation that will allow Scotland to adapt to an uncertain future, providing the flexibility to quickly respond to existing and emerging risks. This will help protect Scotland's economy, environment and water resources so we can continue to enjoy them for generations to come.

Methodology

For closed questions, we calculated the total counts for each available option, as well as the respective percentages in relation to the total number of responses received for each corresponding closed question. Charts were produced to better present the distribution of responses to each closed question. A full breakdown of the numbers and percentage responses to each closed question is included in Annex A. The majority of the analysis focusses on the qualitative responses to the consultation and responses received during engagement sessions.

Open-text questions were categorised using a thematic analysis whereby responses were assigned key themes and coded accordingly. This involved manually reviewing responses to each question to identify common themes. It is not possible to detail every response in this report; some organisations and individuals provided lengthy submissions which reflect their specific subject matter expertise or views. Full responses to the consultation, where permission for publication was granted, can be found on the Scottish Government's website.

The main body of this report follows the consultation's question order, and themes for each open-text question are presented in order of frequency (descending by the number of respondents mentioning the respective theme). The three most frequently mentioned themes are presented in full, followed by a summary of some other emerging themes.

Respondents were self-selecting and may not represent wider public opinion across Scotland. Where appropriate, individual quotes have been used to illustrate the narrative around specific themes, with quotes selected only from respondents who provided permission for their views to be published. Any typos in selected quotes have been corrected to ensure uninterrupted readability of shared views.

Views on: Water resource planning

Quantitative responses

The results of the closed questions are as follows:

- 475 respondents (97%) agree that Scotland needs to set out a plan to manage our water resources, for now and into the future
- 284 respondents (58%) strongly agree and 146 (30%) agree that taking a national view of catchment risks will help better protect drinking water sources from pollutants

There were no qualitative/free text questions for this section of the consultation.

Engagement sessions

While there were no qualitative questions relating to water resource planning in the consultation, there was discussion of water resource planning during some of the engagement sessions.

Water resource planning includes making choices about whether we need to store more water or be more efficient with the water we have. It was clear from engagement sessions, and consultation responses, that participants believe that water should be used more efficiently. Many participants referred to the need for behaviour change in order to reduce the amount of water consumed in Scotland. This is explored in more depth in the 'Drinking Water' section.

Participants commented that there is a need to move from a linear process when dealing with waste of water towards a circular process. There was emphasis on a collaborative approach being necessary to put water resource planning in place, particularly the need to work with Scotland's Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA). Participants also highlighted the benefits of water resource planning in reducing drought and there was similar support for catchment management.

Views on: Drinking water

Quantitative responses

The results of the closed questions are as follows:

- 164 respondents (33%) strongly agree and 170 (35%) agree that everyone in Scotland needs to use less drinking water
- 314 respondents (64%) would like to know how much water they use in their home
- 353 respondents (72%) would seek to reduce their water usage if it avoids building expensive new reservoirs and water treatment works
- 217 respondents (44%) strongly agree and 168 (34%) agree that the process for responding to water shortages should be changed so that appropriate action can be taken as soon as it is needed
- 295 respondents (60%) strongly agree and 118 (24%) agree that all of Scotland's plumbing should be made lead free
- 250 respondents (51%) would not know where to get information on how to ensure that their pipes are not affecting their drinking water
- 235 respondents (48%) strongly agree and 170 (35%) agree that drinking water supplies, regardless of size or ownership, should be tested and inspected so that drinking water is safe

In addition to the closed questions, we posed four additional free text questions to gauge respondents views and suggestions on drinking water as a service. These free text questions received fewer responses than the closed questions.

Qualitative responses

Question 4: How do you think people and businesses could use less drinking water?

Of the 415 responses to this question, 108 (26%) referred to education as being the best means of getting people and businesses to use less drinking water. This included education in schools on water use and water efficiency as well as broader education directed towards the public on the impacts of climate change on Scotland's water environment and how to use less water. There was a sense that the public are not currently aware of the impact climate change is having on Scotland's water supply and that there is the need for water efficiency. An individual commented 'A fundamental element is education and awareness, so that people think about the fact that they are using a limited and expensive resource when using water'.

The second most common response to this question was metering with 98 responses (24%). Of those that provided this response the majority referenced

metering in general with a minority referring to metering only for information (11 responses) or metering with low-income support or medical exemptions where necessary (3 responses). Respondents referenced the need for behaviour change and to raise awareness of the amount of water used by households. Many referred to metering as being the best means of incentivising behaviour change and providing a fairer way of charging for water use. Those that suggested metering for information only, noted that this would help people to understand how much water they use and therefore reduce consumption. One respondent noted 'Customers should be provided with better visibility of how much water they use as this will ensure that they are better informed and can identify opportunities to reduce consumption'.

The third most prevalent theme was utilising greywater with 93 responses (22%). Respondents who highlighted this answer suggested that greywater could be used for purposes other than drinking, such as flushing toilets, watering gardens or washing cars. Most respondents referenced this as being something that individuals could use in their homes.

Apart from the three most frequent themes, there were a few other emerging themes. The most frequent among them were behaviour change at home (83 responses), rainwater collection (82 responses), water saving domestic appliances (52 responses) and reducing leaks (45 responses).

Question 7: Would you know where to find information on using less water?

Of the 384 responses to this question, 97 (25 %) referred to the Scottish Water website as the best place to find information on using less water. The next highest response, with 85 responses (22%) referred to looking 'online' for information. The third highest responses with 78 responses (20%) simply advised 'Yes' to whether the respondent knew where to find information. While the highest response indicates that some respondents know specifically where they can find information on using less water, most respondents did not refer to a specific location.

The rest of the responses feature a wide variety of websites and sources which were all referenced in the minority. These include, but are not limited to, websites for SEPA, Waterwise, Energy Saving Trust, Business Stream and Consumer Scotland.

Question 12: What support do owners and users of private water supplies require to ensure that drinking water is safe?

Of the 360 responses to this question, 150 (42%) referred to the need for testing of private water supplies. Most of the responses under this theme referred to testing in general, 28 specifically referred to the need for regular testing, 35 noted that testing should be affordable or free and 12 referred to the need for home testing kits specifically. Testing was a very popular response, with respondents emphasising the importance of testing supplies and the need to make testing more accessible, whether in terms of affordability or ease of access. One respondent noted that the 'Cost of water quality testing is high and onerous for private supplies'. Some also referred to the need to have support with testing, either through accompanying guidance on how to assess/improve water quality or access to experts who can provide testing.

The next most common theme was the need for more information and guidance with 87 responses (24%). This primarily centred around the need to access information to help ensure that drinking water was safe, through monitoring and improving supplies, as well as understanding where to go to access expert advice when necessary. The Drinking Water Quality Regulator noted that the Scottish Government should improve the support available to owners of private water supplies through, among other suggestions, 'An authoritative, impartial source of advice and guidance disconnected from the regulatory enforcement mechanism; Awareness and education for owners and users of PWS to raise awareness of risk and potential protective measures they can take'.

The third most prevalent theme referred to it being the responsibility of the owner/user of the private water supply to ensure that drinking water is safe with 22 responses (6%). Many referred to owning a private supply as being a 'choice' and it therefore being up to the individual to ensure their water is safe to drink.

Apart from the three most frequent themes, there were a few other emerging themes. The most frequent among them were the need for financial support (19 responses), a support service (19 responses), safeguarding of catchment areas (18 responses), education (17 responses) and support connecting to the mains supply (17 responses).

Question 13: Do you have any further views on public and private drinking water supplies?

Responses to this question featured a broad range of views. Of the 226 responses to this question, 16 responses (7%) referred to the need to educate the public on the demands placed on water services and the need to reduce water consumption. Many respondents suggested this would help to create behaviour change. Some respondents specifically mentioned education in schools but most referred to education of the broader public.

The second most frequent theme among the responses to this question was the view that infrastructure should be upgraded, with 10 responses (4%). Respondents referred to upgrading infrastructure such as pipes, in order to reduce leaks and bursts, and assets such as reservoirs, in order to address water shortages.

There were two responses to this question which each received 8 responses (4%), the first of these related to the need to protect catchment areas. Some respondents referred to their private water supplies being negatively impacted by changes to catchment areas with many respondents mentioning impacts due to forestry activities or wind farms. In relation to reducing leaks, which also received 8 responses (4%), respondents referred to the need to address public mains leakage and upgrade the water supply system.

There were a range of other responses to this question, including the need for behaviour change (6 responses), which was also a common theme for the above question in relation to using less water. Other responses included the need to keep Scottish Water in public ownership, the requirement for more information and

guidance mainly for private water supply users, the need to protect private water supplies, support for collecting rainwater and utilising greywater, support for connecting private supplies to the mains supply, and a suggestion that water fountains/top-up taps should be more widely available.

Engagement sessions

There were three engagement sessions specifically focussed on drinking water, including private water supplies. Comments on drinking water were also made at engagement sessions covering the entire consultation, including tailored sessions with key stakeholders. The main themes from the feedback received at these sessions have been detailed below.

One of the commonly raised themes regarding drinking water during the engagement sessions was the need for water efficiency. There were discussions on the need for the perception around water to change. It was suggested that the public are unaware that there can be water scarcity in Scotland and that this misconception can lead to water being used inefficiently. There was particular interest in why Scotland uses so much more drinking water than some other European countries. While there is not yet a definitive answer, this could be down to metering in other countries as well as the undervaluing of water as a resource in Scotland.

One of the main suggestions for combatting water inefficiency was raising public awareness of water scarcity and actions that they can take to reduce consumption. There was also extensive discussion of metering, particularly around its benefits as an incentive for reducing drinking water consumption. However, there was also debate about the potential upfront costs of implementing metering and the limitations of metering as a tool to reduce water usage. These views on promoting water efficiency and introducing metering were also reflected in the consultation responses.

Additionally, there were other suggestions for how individuals could use less water which were similar to some of the responses seen in the consultation, including behaviour change at home, collecting rainwater and reducing leaks in homes.

In relation to private water supplies, feedback addressed a number of concerns for owners and users. This included the need to protect catchment areas, particularly from wind farms and forestry, in order to protect water sources. Some participants detailed issues they have had with their supplies since the introduction of wind farms nearby.

There was also support for more information and guidance for owners and users of private supplies, with suggestions covering training courses, a means to share knowledge with other owners and users, as well as a central database or location for up-to-date information on how to manage water supplies. There was also support for an increased grant amount to help owners and users reach an adequate standard of drinking water quality.

In relation to connecting to public supplies, some participants did not want to connect to the public supply while others emphasised the high costs associated with

connection to the mains supply. Members of Local Authorities also expressed that funding can be an inhibitor to getting private supplies connected to the mains.

Additional note

Some respondents to this section of the consultation were unsure of the definition for 'drinking water'. Some respondents took this to mean water that is drunk rather than water that is collected, treated and distributed to homes and businesses for a wide variety of purposes including drinking, washing, cooking, watering our gardens, and hygiene. This was explained in the consultation paper but we would like to take this opportunity to clarify that the latter definition is the one we are working with.

Views on: Drainage

Quantitative responses

The results of the closed questions are as follows:

- when asked who has a role in changing how we manage rainwater in Scotland to adapt to the impacts of climate change, the top three responses were: Scottish Water (445 respondents, 90%), Scottish Government (441 respondents, 90%), and Local Authorities (440 respondents, 89%)
- 212 respondents (43%) strongly agree and 151 agree (31%) that they/their organisation have/has a role in changing how we manage rainwater in communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change
- 215 respondents (44%) would not know where to find information on how to best manage rainwater in their property
- 372 respondents (76%) strongly agree and 94 agree (19%) that there is a need to plan, build, maintain and make room for drainage infrastructure to better manage rainwater in our villages, towns and cities
- respondents were presented with options of what Scotland's drainage system should look like in the future. 402 respondents (82%) answered that Scotland's drainage system should be a combination of both grey and blue-green infrastructure

In addition to the closed questions, we posed three additional free text questions to gauge respondents views and suggestions on drainage. These free text questions received a moderate number of responses, with the closed questions generally receiving a higher amount of responses per question.

Qualitative responses

Question 14: Who do you think has a role in changing how we manage rainwater in Scotland to adapt to the impacts of climate change?

This question featured a multiple-choice option which listed a range of organisations as well as a free text field for respondents to add additional responses.

Of the 152 respondents who decided to provide additional information in the free text field, 72 responses referred to the need for collective responsibility with regard to managing rainwater. Respondents noted that there is a need for everyone to play a part in how we manage rainwater to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Respondents primarily referred to 'everyone' as having responsibility, with some referring to the need for all the organisations listed in the multiple-choice section of the question as being responsible.

The next three highest responses were 'Government' with 23, 'Local Authorities' with 13 and 'Scottish Water' also with 13. In relation to 'Government', respondents

referred to the need for government to take the lead on managing rainwater differently, particularly in relation to investment. Respondents that mentioned 'Local Authorities' and 'Scottish Water' often referred to the need for these organisations to have a role in leading on rainwater management.

It should be noted that 'Government', 'Local Authorities' and 'Scottish Water' were also all options in the multiple-choice field for this question. However, respondents felt the need to highlight these stakeholders again in the free text field. For completeness, the next two highest responses in the free text field, after 'Collective Responsibility', which were not featured as a multiple-choice option were 'Developers', with 10 responses and 'Teacher/Educators', with 8 responses.

Other responses to this question included, but were not limited to, SEPA, landowners, farmers, forestry, builders and organisations in general (with no specific organisations mentioned).

Question 16: What would you/your organisation be willing to do in your home/property to manage rainwater differently? For example, disconnect your down pipes from the sewer, have permeable driveways, install water butts and/or rain gardens.

Of the 401 responses to this question 122 responses (30%) advised that they would install water butts as a means of managing rainwater differently. Respondents were open to installing water butts to collect rainwater, with some specifically referring to installing these in their home.

The second most frequent response referred to creating more permeable surfaces with 81 responses (20%). Most of the responses referred to permeable surfaces as being a good means of reducing runoff and allowing rainwater to drain naturally. Some of the permeable surfaces mentioned were permeable paving, permeable driveways, grass and rain gardens. Some respondents also suggested reducing impermeable surfaces such as artificial grass.

The third most common response to this question was rainwater collection, with 50 responses (12%). Respondents referred to rainwater collection for household functions such as flushing toilets, washing cars and watering the garden.

There were a number of other frequently mentioned themes, including respondents who said that any actions would depend on the cost/funding available (47 responses), utilising rain gardens (43 responses), disconnecting downpipes (38 responses) and some respondents who suggested that there were limited opportunities to make changes (32 responses). Of those that referred to there being limited opportunities for them to make changes, many advised that they lived in flats/tenements and were therefore unable to make any significant changes to their building.

Question 20: Do you have any further views on how Scotland should manage rainwater in the future?

There was a broad range of responses to this question. Of the 321 responses to this question 37 responses (11%) referred to the need for blue/green infrastructure. Respondents referred to this as being a better solution than building more grey infrastructure and suggested we should avoid surface water runoff going into the sewer system.

The second most prevalent response with 30 responses (9%) was that funding would be required in order to implement changes to how we currently manage rainwater. There were comments that there would need to be investment in new rainwater management systems, including grants made available to homeowners to implement sustainable rainwater management at home. Some respondents also referred to making changes as being costly and referred to the need for significant investment. West Lothian Council noted that, 'Any future policy for existing properties which will rely on building occupier's good will to provide some alternative rainwater disposal method is unlikely to be supported unless heavily subsidised and must be carefully regulated to ensure that they do not result in other flooding issues locally.'

The next most common response with 23 responses (7%) was that partnership working would be key to carrying out changes to managing rainwater in Scotland. Responses referred to collaboration within and between multiple organisations as being necessary in order to carry out this work, including within Local Authorities and between organisations and bodies such as Scottish Government, Scottish Water and Local Authorities.

Other frequently mentioned themes included the need for planning controls (22 responses), reducing impermeable surfaces (22 responses), and the better management of drains (21 responses).

Engagement sessions

There was one engagement session specifically focussed on drainage, with comments on drainage also being made at engagement sessions covering the entire consultation, including tailored sessions with key stakeholders such as Local Authorities. The main themes from the feedback received at these sessions have been detailed below.

Discussions with members of Local Authorities during engagement sessions featured frequent discussion of drainage management. There was widespread agreement that legislation needed to be updated, funding for improving drainage would be required and a consistent approach applied. Participants shared that infrastructure needed improved, with particular mention of improving Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, but clarity was required on how this would be funded and delivered. Participants also highlighted that increased partnership working, particularly with Scottish Water, would be beneficial. Additionally, there was discussion on how to scale up blue/green infrastructure effectively, with emphasis on deciding who would be responsible for maintenance of infrastructure and how this would be funded.

During the drainage engagement session, there was broad support for surface water management. Participants noted that joined up thinking was required on surface water management when creating new developments, which would help it to become embedded, and that funding and more resources would be required. Participants also suggested that re-using water would restrict the amount that ends up in grey infrastructure, though there was also acknowledgement of the need for both blue/green and grey infrastructure. One participant noted that sewers (grey infrastructure) are not designed to hold the volumes that they are currently facing. There was also feedback that surface water management needs to be managed more holistically and that adding to existing surface water maps would be helpful.

Engagement sessions also included discussion of the negative effects of urban creep. Participants shared that there are challenges to retrofitting drainage infrastructure in existing urban areas. Drainage should be thought of at the outset so that development is strategically configured in terms of topography. There was also discussion of the variety of tools that can be used to better manage drainage, including education, incentives and legislation. These were themes that were similarly seen in the consultation responses.

Views on: Wastewater and resource recovery

Quantitative responses

The results of the closed questions are as follows:

- 446 respondents (91%) agree that investment should be prioritised to address overflows that have a negative impact on the environment
- 366 respondents (74%) strongly agree and 85 (17%) agree that more should be done to stop items being disposed of down toilets or drains
- 434 respondents (88%) agree that offences for discharging to the sewer for non-household properties should be extended to other pollutants (aside from fats, oils and greases), and specifically plastic
- 323 respondents (66%) agree that offences for discharging fats, oils and greases to the sewer should be extended to household premises
- 282 respondents (57%) strongly agree and 148 (30%) agree that we should extend our monitoring of wastewater to look for new pollutants, and monitor pathogens in the community
- 430 respondents (87%) agree that resource recovery is something that Scottish Water should be undertaking
- 214 respondents (44%) strongly agree and 174 (35%) agree that Scottish Water should be able to use the money it receives from customer charges to invest in resource recovery hubs
- 414 respondents (84%) agree that all wastewater treatment systems, regardless of size or ownership, should be tested and inspected to ensure that they do not impact negatively on the environment
- 142 respondents (29%) agree and 135 (28%) strongly agree that owners of existing private wastewater systems should be required to connect to the public system where connection is possible, beneficial and not expensive. However, 127 respondents (26%) neither agree nor disagree

In addition to the closed questions, we posed four additional free text questions to gauge respondents views and suggestions on wastewater and resource recovery. These free text questions received a smaller number of responses than the closed questions.

Qualitative responses

Question 23: How do you think we can change behaviours to avoid the disposal of substances or matter in the toilet/sewer (e.g. wet wipes, cotton buds, nappies and hygiene products etc.)?

Of the 411 responses to this question 175 responses (43%) suggested that better education would make a difference, with many respondents referring to education in schools. Respondents referred specifically to 'education' as a tool to help people understand the negative impact of disposing substances or matter in the toilet/sewer has on wastewater and sewerage networks as well as the environment. Respondents referred to curriculum changes in schools, community consultations and use of case studies as a means of creating behaviour change.

The second most common response with 165 (40%) was using public information campaigns to create behaviour change. Respondents referred to media such as television, radio, leaflets, social media and public notices as some of the ways awareness of the issues could be raised. Many respondents referred to the need to show the public the outcomes of disposing inappropriate items down the toilet or into the sewer. The Cosmetic, Toiletry and Perfumery Association noted that 'While there are valid concerns that it may be confusing to consumers that some wipes are flushable and others are not, this confusion can be mitigated by clear, consistent messaging and awareness campaigns. Public awareness, education and agreement is needed to help deliver the message on what is considered suitable, and acceptable, for flushing'. It should be noted that no wet wipes, whether described as 'flushable' or not, should be disposed of into the sewer as they can lead to blockages.

The next most prevalent response with 81 (20%) was banning or restricting use of these products, such as wet wipes, cotton buds and other plastic based hygiene products. Many respondents referred to replacing these products with biodegradable alternatives. Respondents drew parallels with other initiatives such as the reduction in plastic bag use and the increase in use of paper, rather than plastic, straws. Respondents suggested that a similar change could be implemented in relation to products that often get flushed down the toilet.

Apart from the three most frequent themes, there were a few other emerging themes. The most frequent among them were improved labelling on products, mainly to signal that they are not 'flushable', (58 responses) and penalising or prosecuting offenders (51 responses).

Question 24: It is already an offence for non-household properties to discharge fats, oils and greases to the sewer. Do you agree that offences should be extended to:

- include other pollutants, and specifically plastic?
- extend the offence to household premises?

This question featured multiple-choice options for two questions (seen in the bullet points above) and also included a free text section for respondents to add additional views. These additional views from the free text section have been included below.

Of the 288 respondents who decided to provide additional information in the free text field, 65 suggested that it would be hard to enforce offences. Respondents referred to a lack of funding and resourcing for policing this as well as difficulties with identifying the household or individual responsible, particularly in densely populated areas. Although in the yes/no section of this question respondents show that they support extending offences, many believe that this would be difficult to enforce.

The second most common theme, with 18 responses, was that alternative waste disposal methods should be provided. There was a sense that it needs to be easy for people to dispose of items appropriately. Some respondents referred to collection sites and grease/fat and oil collection specifically. One respondent noted that 'There needs to be better recycling options for households to deal with oils, fats and greases. Currently it is difficult to access places where these can be disposed of, such as recycling centres which are often difficult to access for those without personal transport.'

Another response to this question which received 18 responses, was a call for penalties to be extended. Respondents referred to fining those that carry out these offences as a possible deterrent.

Other frequently mentioned themes included the need for education on this matter (17 responses) and using public information campaigns to spread awareness (10 responses). Both of these responses captured similar comments to those raised in the question above, with suggestions that more needs to be done to help people make better decisions when it comes to disposing items down toilets/into sewers.

Question 29: What support do owners and users of private wastewater systems require to best protect the environment?

Of the 306 responses to this question, 122 (40%) referred to the need for more and/or better information and advice for private wastewater system users. Respondents noted that access to professional/expert advice would be helpful as well as having a central location for accessible advice, tools and support.

The next most common response, with 55 (18%) was the need for financial support. Many respondents referred specifically to the need for grants to upgrade systems as well as access to financial advice. The Scottish Rural & Islands Parliament noted that 'A grant for wastewater systems, in line with a revised PWS grant should be introduced to encourage users to improve existing treatment systems or initial installation in the case of direct discharge'.

The third most prevalent response, with 50 (16%), was education. Respondents highlighted that greater understanding of the responsibility of private wastewater supply owners would be helpful, as well as understanding of the negative impact that systems can have on the environment and surrounding water when not managed correctly.

Other responses to this question included testing, including this being more regular, affordable, free and/or accessible (26 responses), monitoring (23 responses) and enforcement of current regulations (13 responses).

Question 31: Do you have any further views on public and private wastewater systems?

There was a very broad range of responses to this question. Of the 204 responses to this question, 10 (5%) promoted resource recovery. Respondents pointed to the benefits of recycling waste in terms of the circular economy and the importance of this for Scotland's future.

The next two frequent responses, by a narrow margin, were limiting Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) and not forcing owner and users of Private Wastewater System to connect to the mains, both with 3 responses each (1%). There were a number of comments in relation to CSOs, with limiting the number of spills being the highest response. In relation to CSOs, respondents suggested that this should be prioritised as a matter of public health.

In relation to Private Wastewater Systems connecting to the mains, respondents noted that owners and users of private supplies should not be forced to connect to the mains supply if they are managing their wastewater correctly. Other responses about connecting to the public network, included that this should be free or financial support should be provided. Some respondents suggested that this should be mandatory though others disagreed.

Engagement sessions

There was one engagement session specifically focussed on wastewater and resource recovery, with comments on this subject also being made at engagement sessions covering the entire consultation, including tailored sessions with key stakeholders. The main themes from the feedback received at these sessions have been detailed below.

On resource recovery, funding and data were highlighted as key to identifying opportunities. In relation to emerging contaminants, there was support for the extension of monitoring activities. Some participants also noted that there is a need for people to understand the requirement for investment in surveillance monitoring (this refers to the monitoring of substances and viruses e.g. Covid 19).

On inappropriate items being disposed of down the sewer, participants mainly referred to the need for the onus to be put on the producer of these items, particularly in relation to plastics being removed from these products, and the requirement for behaviour change. Relying on extending offences could be a good incentive to change behaviour, although participants also remarked that it would be challenging to identify offenders and this is not the only available tool to stop incorrect disposal. There is also a need for the government to be seen to tackle this issue.

In relation to Private Wastewater Systems, some respondents discussed the need for septic tanks to be better regulated. It was also acknowledged that when owners and users of private supplies sign up for a package of treatment works many do not sign up for maintenance support. Additionally, there was discussion on cost as being

a barrier to change, particularly in relation to registering systems and carrying out risk assessments. Some participants advised that while it would be useful to have a register of all systems it should be more affordable for owners and users to register their systems.

Views on: Paying for services

Quantitative responses

The results of the closed questions are as follows:

- 237 respondents (48%) strongly agree and 161 (33%) agree that changing behaviour is essential to limit charge rises
- 414 respondents (84%) agree that we should recognise that there are three services (water, wastewater and drainage)
- 259 respondents (53%) do not agree that Council Tax Bands is the fairest way to charge for services used by households

In addition to the closed questions, we posed three additional free text questions to gauge respondents views and suggestions on paying for services. These free text questions generally received fewer responses than the closed questions.

Qualitative responses

Question 34: Do you agree that using Council Tax Bands is the fairest way to charge for services used by households?

This question featured a yes/no option for respondents, the results of which have been included in the quantitative data section. It also included a free text section for respondents to add any additional views. These additional views have been included below.

Of the 311 respondents who decided to provide additional information in the free text field, 85 suggested that metering would be a better way to charge for services. Respondents referred to the need to charge by use with some referring to the need for exemptions for certain groups, for example those on lower income.

The next most common response in the free text field with 34 was that household occupancy should affect charges. Respondents also considered this to be a fairer means of charging for services. One respondent wrote, 'It should be dependent on the number of people living in the property and not the council tax bands. If only one person (possibly elderly) is living in a property with a high council tax band they would be unfairly penalized'.

The third most prevalent response with 30 responses was that council tax is outdated. Many respondents referred to council tax as not accurately reflecting water usage. Respondents reflected that the current system needs to be revised.

Other responses to this question included that charging based on council tax bands is unfair (29 responses) and council tax bands don't reflect consumption (21 responses).

Question 35: In your view, how do we incentivise households/businesses to reduce water usage to levels that are sustainable for Scotland?

Of the 372 responses to this question 103 responses (28%) referred to metering as being a good way of incentivising reducing water usage. Many respondents commented that the public should be charged for what they use. This sentiment was similarly reflected in the above 'Drinking Water' section.

The second most prevalent response with 75 responses (20%) was education. Respondents referred to the need for education in schools and education for the broader public on the impact of high water usage and how to reduce this.

The next most prevalent response with 62 responses (17%) was public information campaigns. There was support for increasing awareness of the negative effects of consumption with some respondents citing a lack of information or awareness of the issue.

Other responses to this question included, financial incentives (59 responses), offering water efficiency advice (17 responses) and charging for water use over a particular threshold (15 responses).

Question 36: In your view, how could we incentivise households/businesses to manage rainwater differently to reduce rainwater entering the sewer system to levels that are sustainable for Scotland?

353 respondents provided views to this question. A wide range of views were given with 76 responses (22%) referring to the need for financial support for solutions. This included the need for financial support such as grants, for solutions such as rainwater collection, and subsidising other solutions, such as infrastructure to collect and use greywater in homes. The River Influence Project commented that, 'people are more likely to make positive changes if they don't have to pay for them'.

The second highest response with 47 responses (13%) was that there should be discounts on bills offered to individuals. Many respondents commented that if people put in place measures to reduce rainwater entering the sewer system then they should be provided with a discount on their bills. Respondents cited this as being a good incentive for putting such measures in place, particularly as these measures often require individual investment.

The third most common response with 37 responses (10%) was that there should be public information campaigns to incentivise change. Respondents specifically mentioned showing individuals their options for reducing rainwater entering the sewer system and highlighting the impact this is having.

There were a variety of other responses to this question including, education (36 responses), free water butts (29 responses), more stringent building regulations (23 responses) and provide more advice and information (22 responses).

Engagement sessions

How services are paid for is a topic that came up frequently at engagement sessions and has been covered in some detail in the 'Engagement Session' sections for drinking water, drainage and wastewater. As most of these points have already been captured above, we have summarised the main points that were made regarding paying for services below:

- metering to reduce water consumption – There was discussion about metering, particularly in relation to its benefits as an incentive for reducing water consumption, particularly in relation to non-essential use (e.g. leaks, hosepipes). Many respondents perceived charging by consumption to be the best way to reduce water usage. However, there was also debate about the potential upfront costs of implementing this
- financial support for private supplies – The cost of maintaining private water as well as the cost of connecting to the mains supply was raised during the drinking water engagement sessions. Cost was often seen as a barrier to connection to the mains supply and improving systems. There was particular support for an increased grant amount to help owners and users reach an adequate standard of drinking water quality. Similar comments were made in relation to support for those reliant on private wastewater systems
- significant investment in the drainage system required – There was extensive discussion in relation to funding for drainage infrastructure, particularly from Local Authorities. There was concern regarding where this initial funding would come from and how the drainage infrastructure would be maintained and funded in the long term. This was covered in the 'Drainage' section of this report

Conclusion

We are grateful for the large number of responses to the water, wastewater and drainage policy consultation and wish to extend our thanks to all those that provided their views. We received 492 responses which is a high number for a consultation of this nature on the topic of water, wastewater and drainage.

Climate change is affecting Scotland's water resources with increasing frequency and intensity of droughts and intense rainfall. Adapting to the impacts of climate change is therefore becoming increasingly urgent. Unless urgent action is taken to adapt, the costs and impacts of the lack of water and surface water flooding will increase.

The consultation considered how the water industry in Scotland can best adapt to the risks posed by climate change and, in doing so, protect our water, wastewater and drainage services for generations to come. In addition to setting out the changes required to be made by the water industry we also need to support the people of Scotland to play their part in taking care of the water resources upon which we depend.

The consultation responses show broad support for our proposals. Overall, there was wide agreement that we should recognise that the water industry provides three services: water, wastewater and drainage and that suitable infrastructure is required to support the delivery of each of these services. Given the growing likelihood of drought and water scarcity, respondents agreed that Scotland needs to plan its water resources to ensure water resilience. Furthermore, Scotland's households need to become more water efficient and reduce the current consumption levels of 180 litre per person per day to levels seen elsewhere in Europe. This is preferential to building new reservoirs and water treatment works which would be expensive.

In relation to wastewater, there was a recognition that wastewater networks need to be improved to reduce the frequency of sewage spills and to support a circular economy through resource recovery. Given the increasing likelihood of more intense rainfall, respondents agreed that building blue-green infrastructure to handle rainwater was preferable to building ever larger wastewater systems and sewers.

Furthermore, the removal of rainwater from sewers today would lessen the frequency and impacts of current sewage spills. Responses acknowledge that improvements must be funded.

Roughly half of respondents commented that charging systems for households are no longer fit for purpose and do not encourage either water efficiency or measures to remove rainwater from wastewater systems.

A common theme in the consultation responses was the need for better education on water, wastewater and drainage in order to create behaviour change, whether through reducing water consumption or stopping the disposal of inappropriate items down the toilet. Behaviour change, driven by education and public awareness campaigns, was seen as an integral part of ensuring we adapt to the effects of climate change.

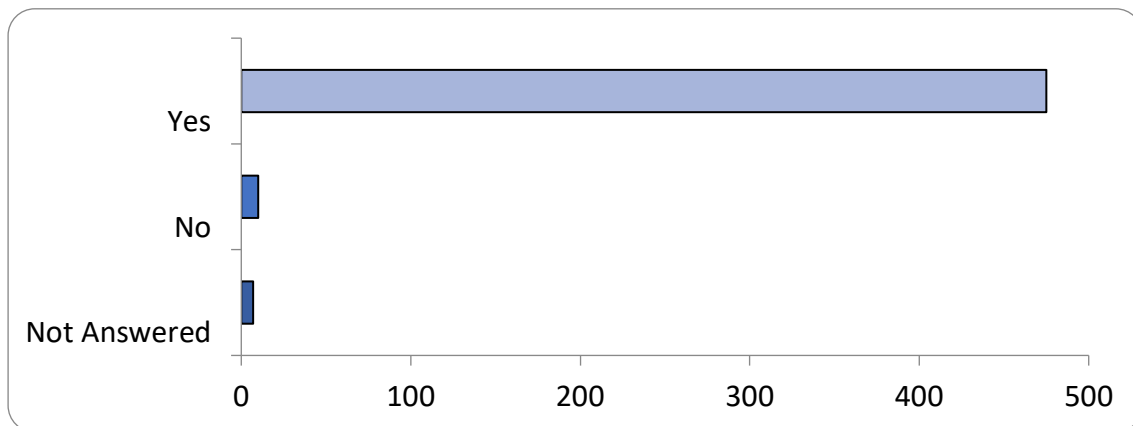
We will now use the responses to this consultation to inform our policy development process, which will continue into Autumn 2024.

Annex A – Quantitative analysis data

A full breakdown of the numbers and percentage response to each closed question is detailed below. This does not include responses to free text fields. The numbering used reflects the number used for each closed question in the consultation and as free text questions have been excluded the numbering below includes omissions.

Question 1: Do you agree that Scotland needs to set out a plan to manage our water resources, for now and into the future?

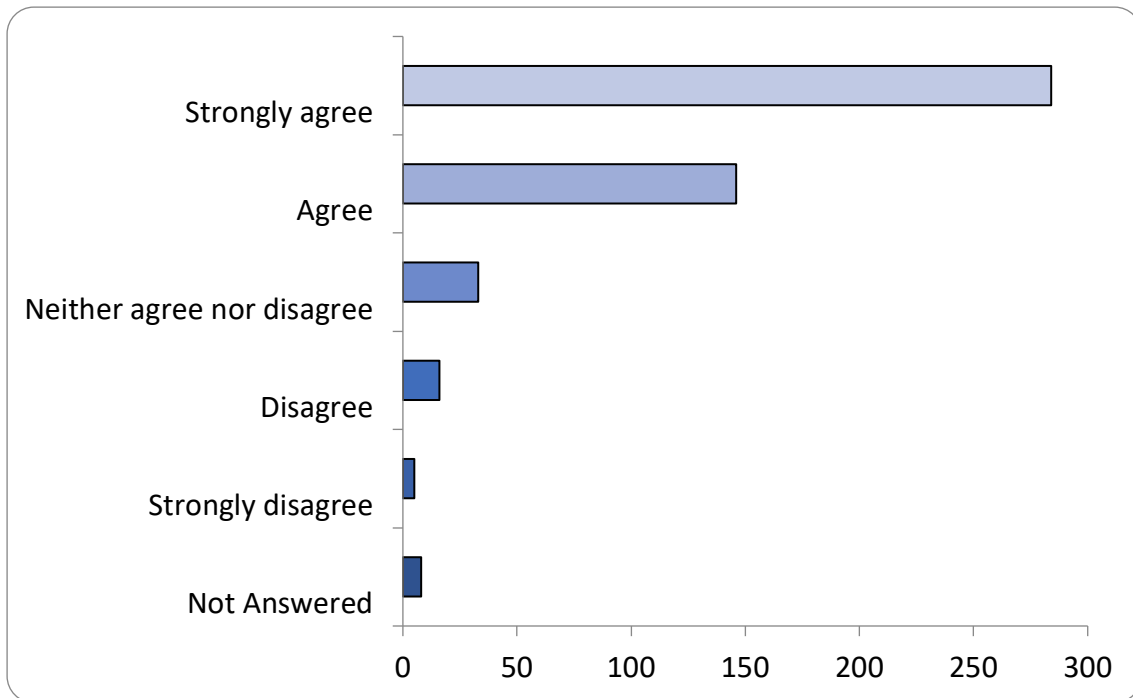
There were 485 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	475	96.54%
No	10	2.03%
Not Answered	7	1.42%

Question 2: To what extent do you agree that taking a national view of catchment risks will help better protect drinking water sources from pollutants?

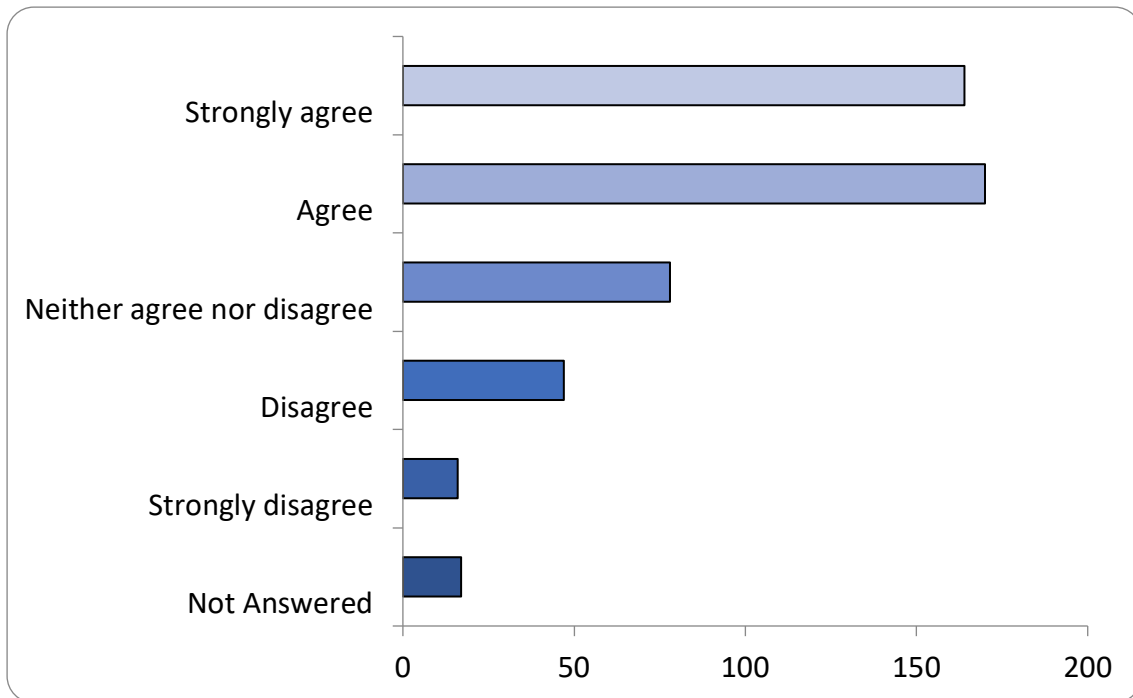
There were 484 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	284	57.72%
Agree	146	29.67%
Neither agree nor disagree	33	6.71%
Disagree	16	3.25%
Strongly disagree	5	1.02%
Not Answered	8	1.63%

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that everyone in Scotland needs to use less drinking water?

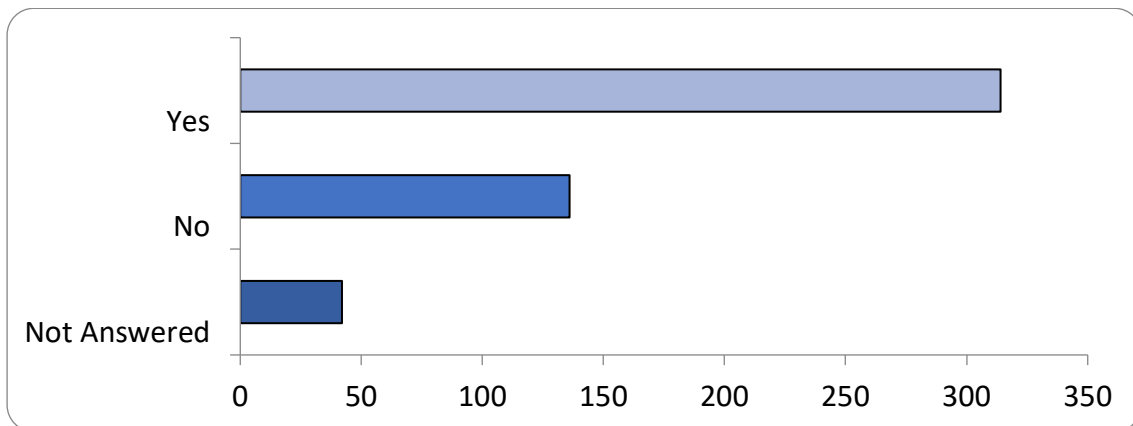
There were 475 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	164	33.33%
Agree	170	34.55%
Neither agree nor disagree	78	15.85%
Disagree	47	9.55%
Strongly disagree	16	3.25%
Not Answered	17	3.46%

Question 5: Would you like to know how much water you use in your home?

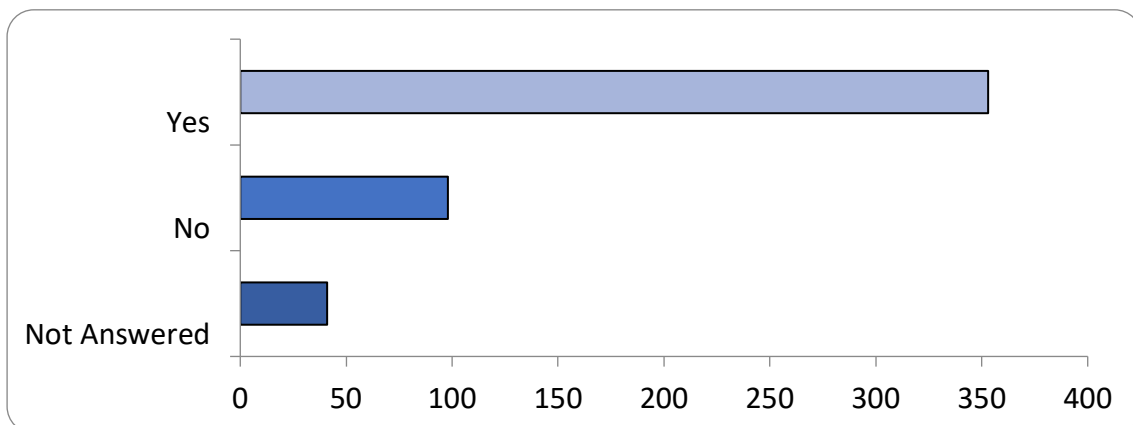
There were 450 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	314	63.82%
No	136	27.64%
Not Answered	42	8.54%

Question 6: Would you seek to reduce your water usage if this avoids building expensive new reservoirs and water treatment works?

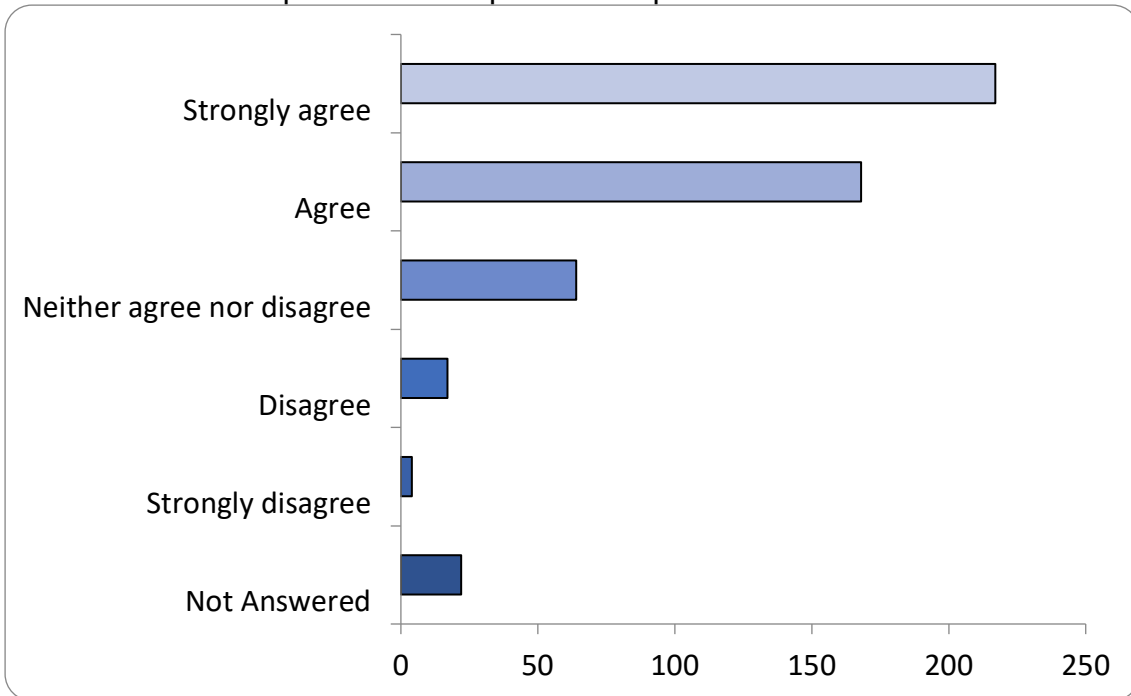
There were 451 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	353	71.75%
No	98	19.92%
Not Answered	41	8.33%

Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the process for responding to water shortages should be changed so that appropriate action can be taken as soon as it is needed?

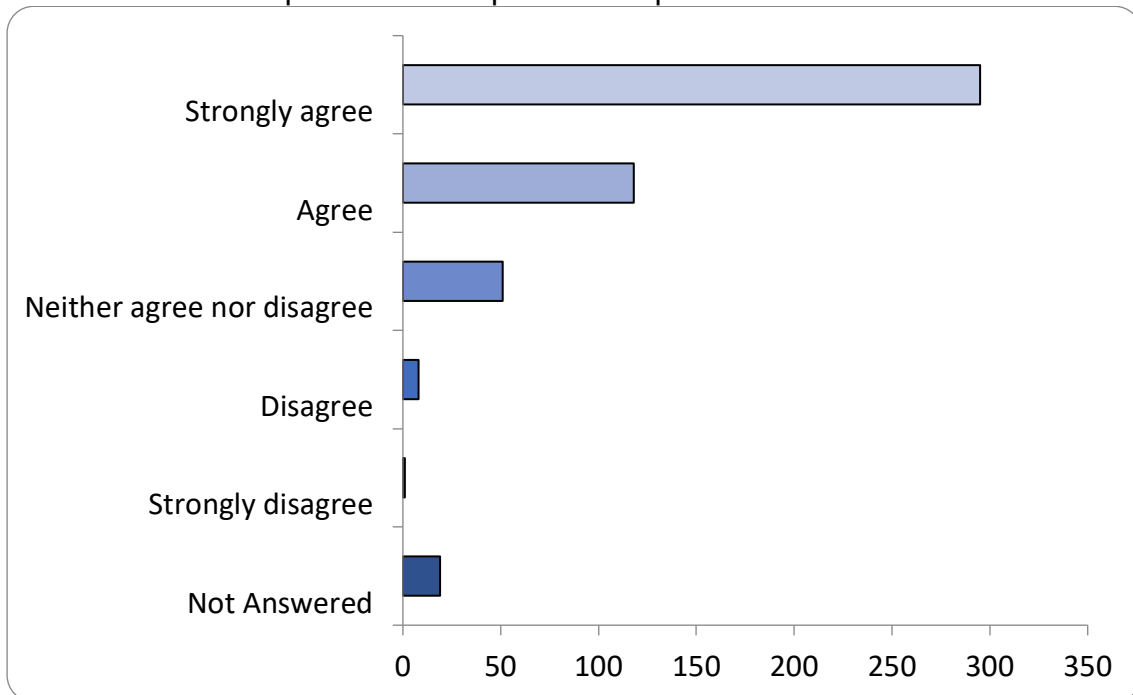
There were 470 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	217	44.11%
Agree	168	34.15%
Neither agree nor disagree	64	13.01%
Disagree	17	3.46%
Strongly disagree	4	0.81%
Not Answered	22	4.47%

Question 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that all of Scotland’s plumbing should be made lead-free?

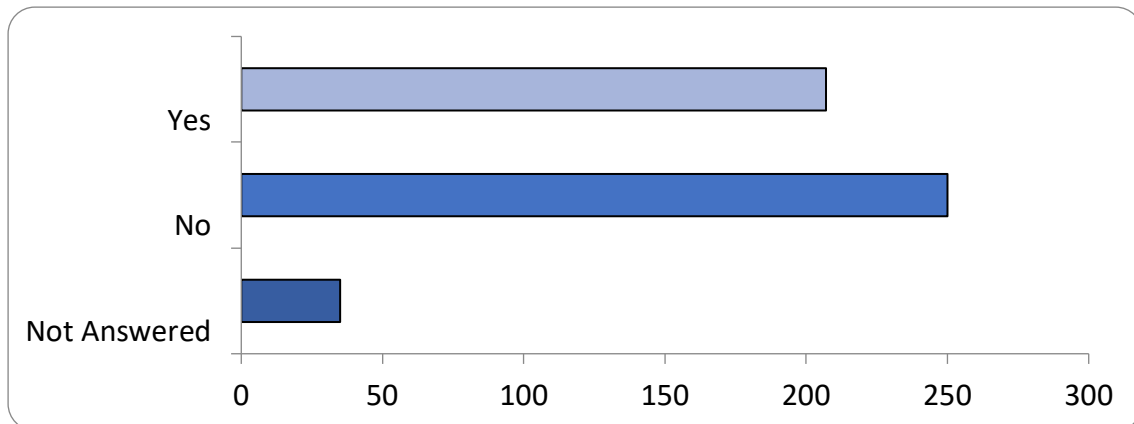
There were 473 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	295	59.96%
Agree	118	23.98%
Neither agree nor disagree	51	10.37%
Disagree	8	1.63%
Strongly disagree	1	0.20%
Not Answered	19	3.86%

Question 10: Would you know where to get information on how to ensure that your pipes are not affecting your drinking water?

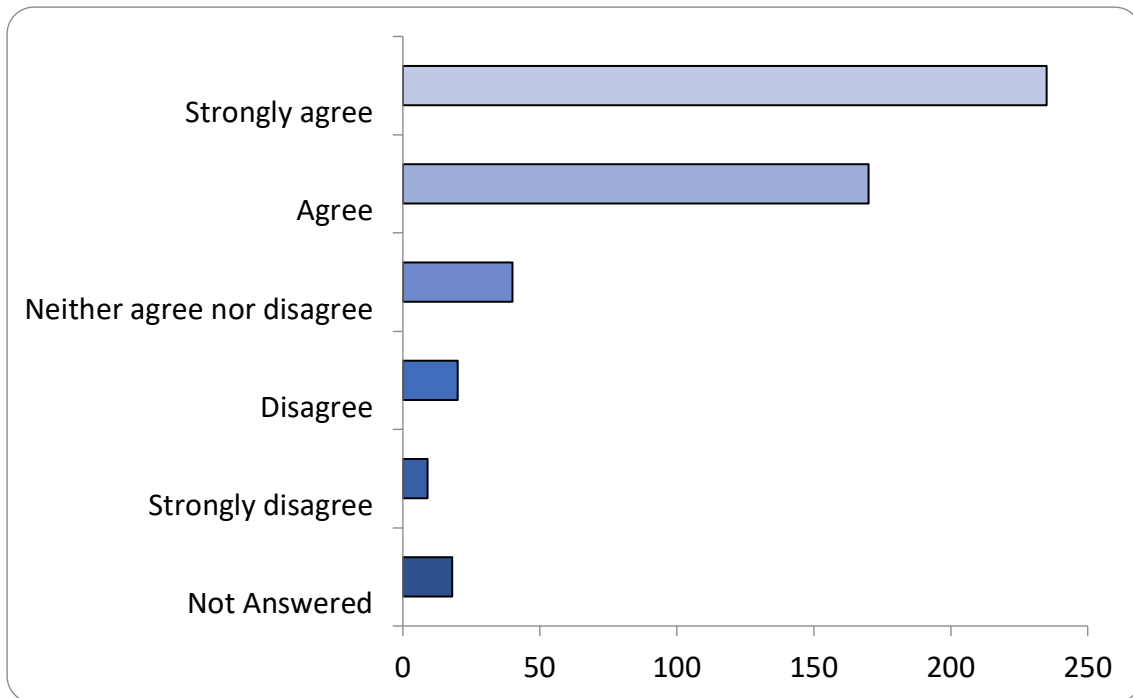
There were 457 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	207	42.07%
No	250	50.81%
Not Answered	35	7.11%

Question 11: Do you agree that all drinking water supplies, regardless of size or ownership, should be tested and inspected to ensure that drinking water is safe?

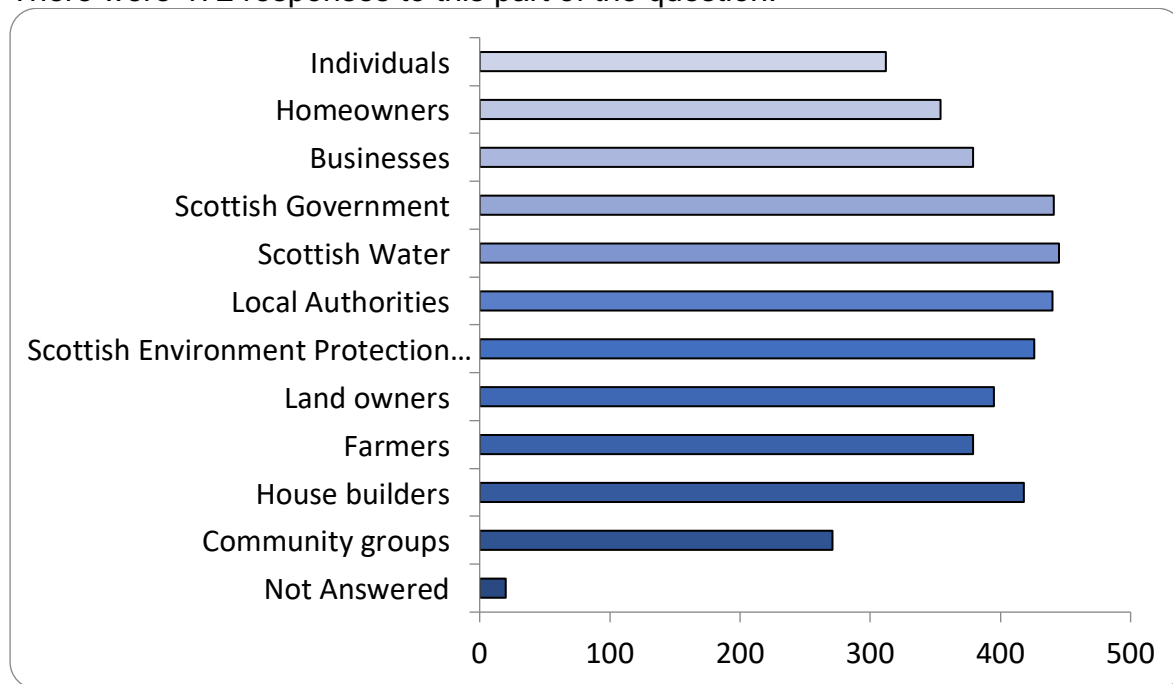
There were 474 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	235	47.76%
Agree	170	34.55%
Neither agree nor disagree	40	8.13%
Disagree	20	4.07%
Strongly disagree	9	1.83%
Not Answered	18	3.66%

Question 14: Who do you think has a role in changing how we manage rainwater in Scotland to adapt to the impacts of climate change? (Please select all that apply).

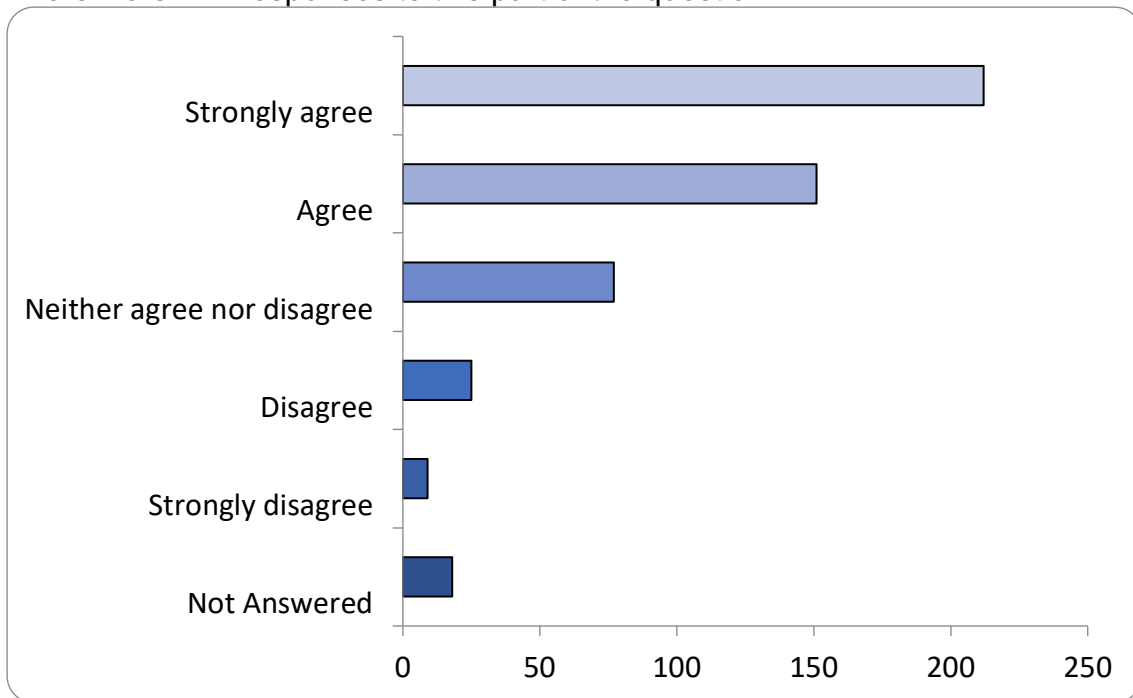
There were 472 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Individuals	312	63.41%
Homeowners	354	71.95%
Businesses	379	77.03%
Scottish Government	441	89.63%
Scottish Water	445	90.45%
Local Authorities	440	89.43%
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	426	86.59%
Land owners	395	80.28%
Farmers	379	77.03%
House builders	418	84.96%
Community groups	271	55.08%
Not Answered	20	4.07%

Question 15: To what extent do you agree that you/your organisation have/has a role in changing how we manage rainwater in communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change?

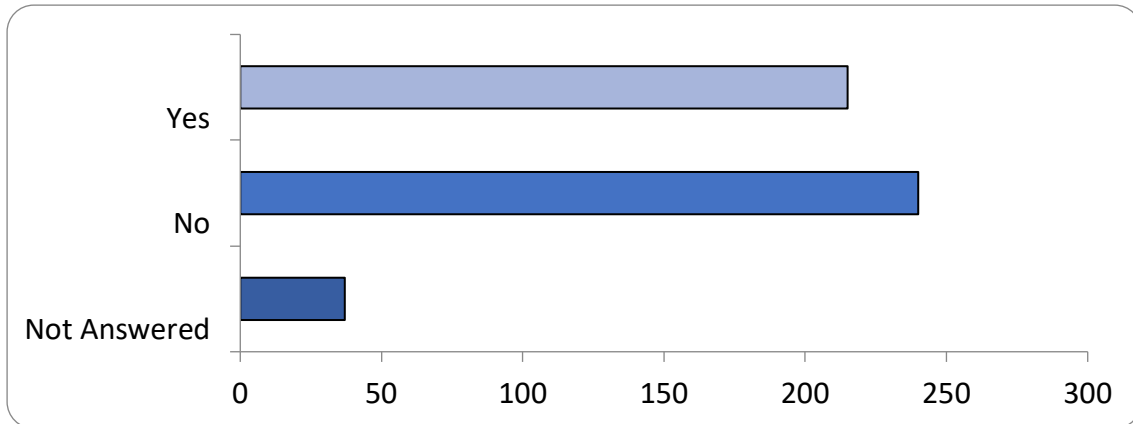
There were 474 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	212	43.09%
Agree	151	30.69%
Neither agree nor disagree	77	15.65%
Disagree	25	5.08%
Strongly disagree	9	1.83%
Not Answered	18	3.66%

Question 17: Would you know where to find information on how to best manage rainwater in your property?

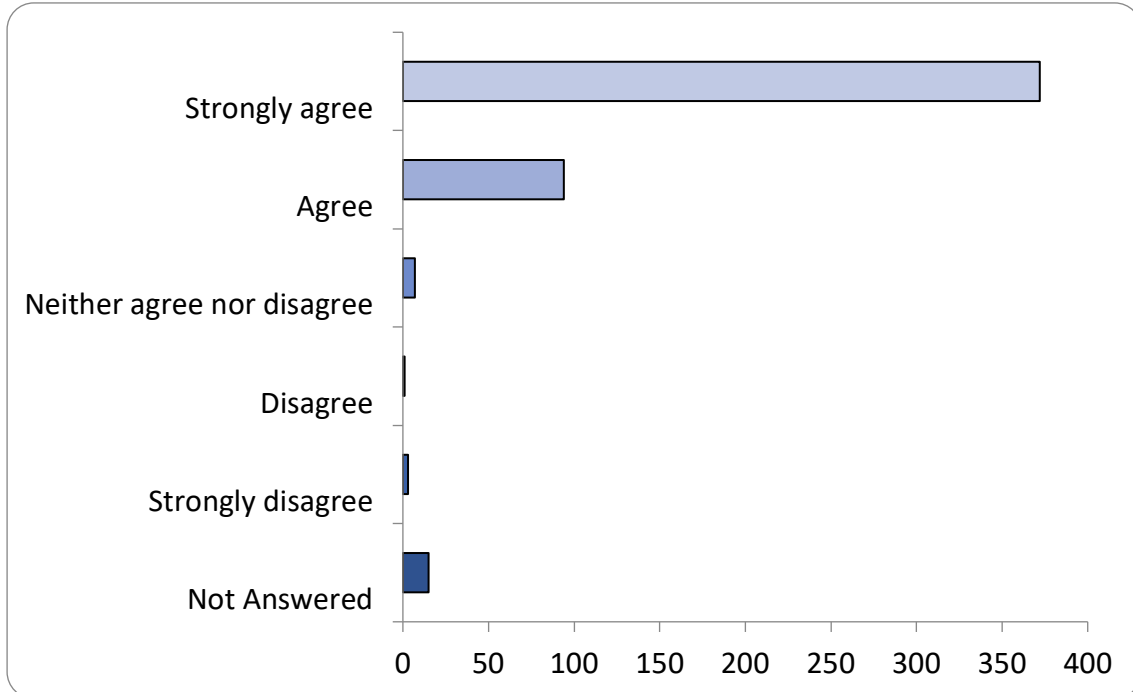
There were 455 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	215	43.70%
No	240	48.78%
Not Answered	37	7.52%

Question 18: To what extent do you agree that there is a need to plan, build, maintain and make room for drainage infrastructure to better manage rainwater in our villages, towns and cities?

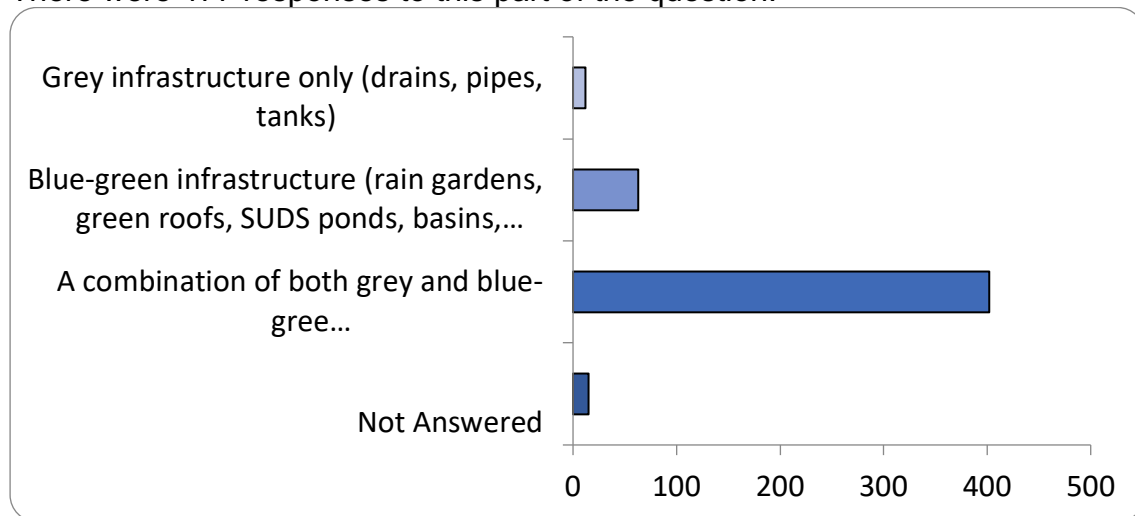
There were 477 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	372	75.61%
Agree	94	19.11%
Neither agree nor disagree	7	1.42%
Disagree	1	0.20%
Strongly disagree	3	0.61%
Not Answered	15	3.05%

Question 19: What should Scotland’s drainage systems look like in the future?

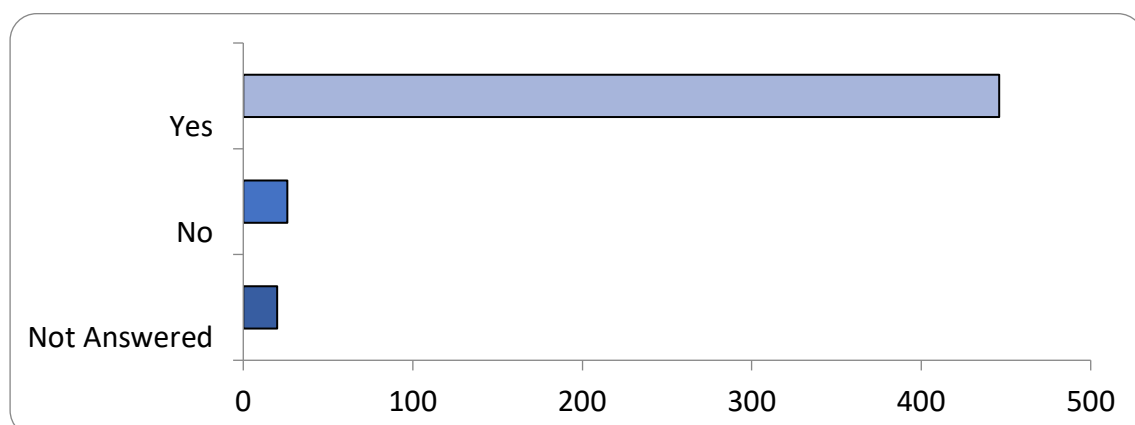
There were 477 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Grey infrastructure only (drains, pipes, tanks)	12	2.44%
Blue-green infrastructure (rain gardens, green roofs, SUDS ponds, basins, wetlands, swales, etc)	63	12.80%
A combination of both grey and blue-green infrastructure	402	81.71%
Not Answered	15	3.05%

Question 21: Should investment be prioritised to address overflows that have a negative impact in the environment?

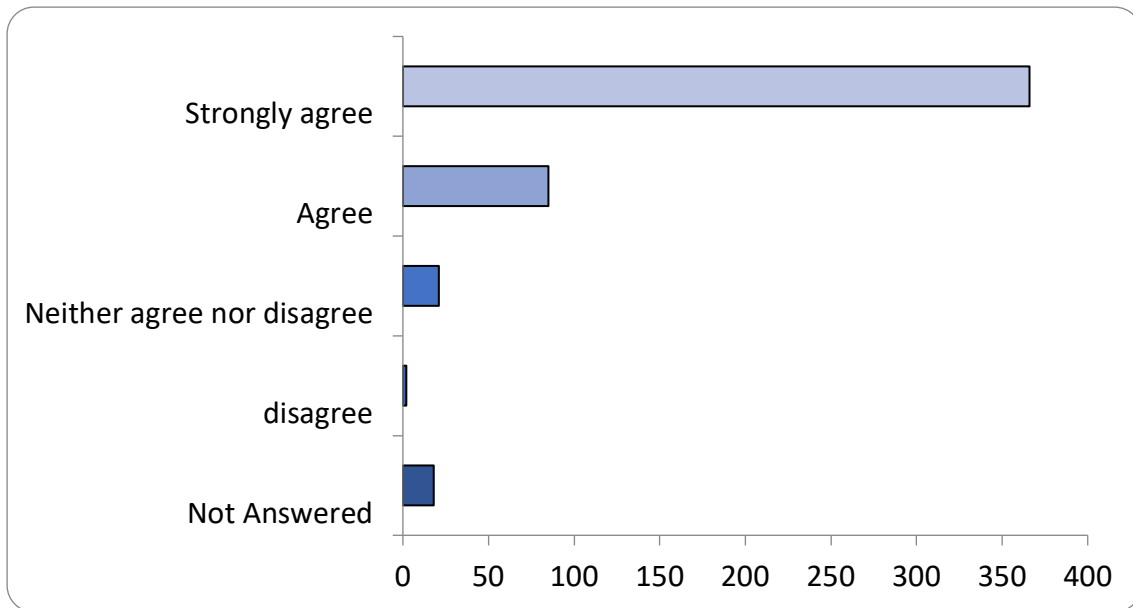
There were 472 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	446	90.65%
No	26	5.28%
Not Answered	20	4.07%

Question 22: To what extent do you agree or disagree that more should be done to stop items being disposed of down toilets or drains?

There were 474 responses to this part of the question.

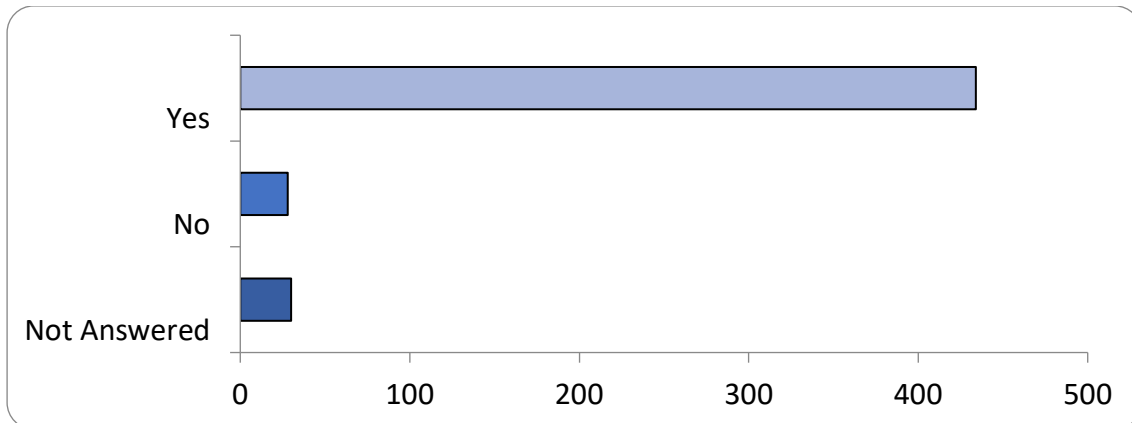


Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	366	74.39%
Agree	85	17.28%
Neither agree nor disagree	21	4.27%
disagree	2	0.41%
Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Not Answered	18	3.66%

Question 24: It is already an offence for non-household properties to discharge fats, oils and greases to the sewer. Do you agree that offences should be extended to:

- include other pollutants, and specifically plastic?

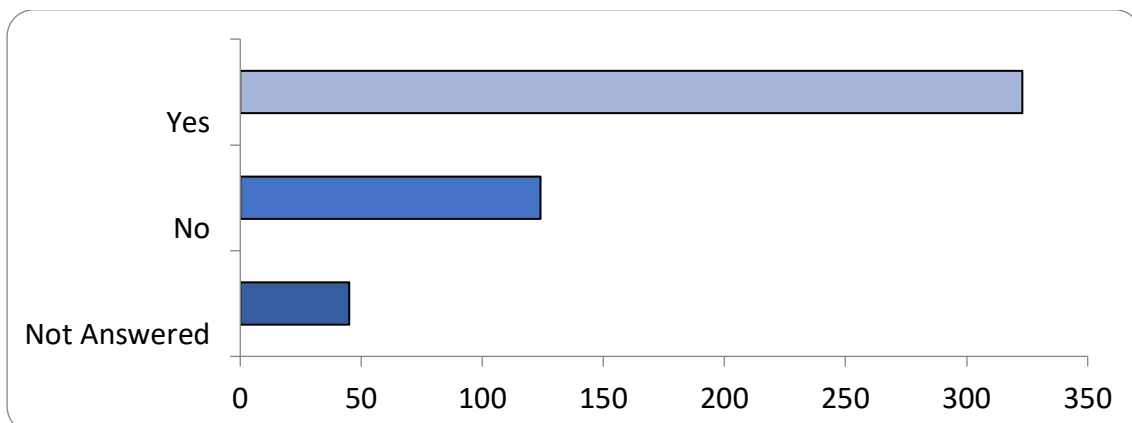
There were 462 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	434	88.21%
No	28	5.69%
Not Answered	30	6.10%

- extend the offence to household premises?

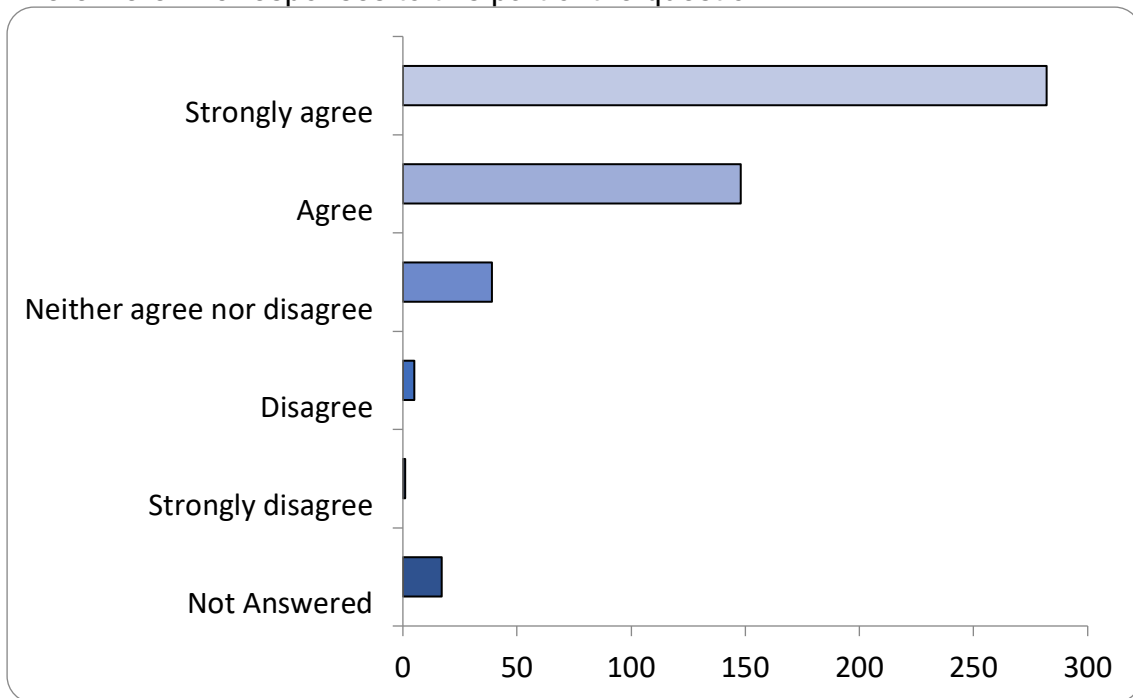
There were 447 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	323	65.65%
No	124	25.20%
Not Answered	45	9.15%

Question 25: We currently undertake some monitoring of pollutants, do you agree that we should extend our monitoring of wastewater to look for new pollutants, and monitor pathogens in the community?

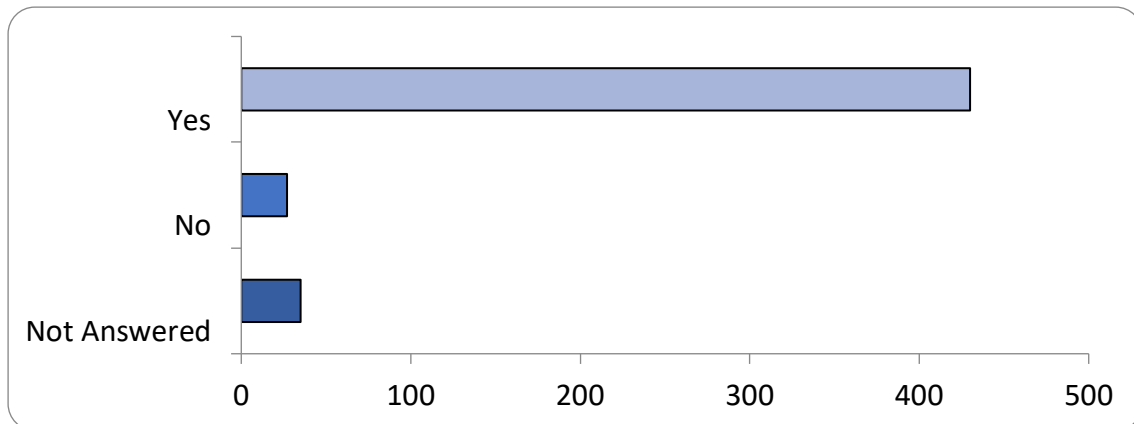
There were 475 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	282	57.32%
Agree	148	30.08%
Neither agree nor disagree	39	7.93%
Disagree	5	1.02%
Strongly disagree	1	0.20%
Not Answered	17	3.46%

Question 26: Do you agree that resource recovery is something that Scottish Water should be undertaking?

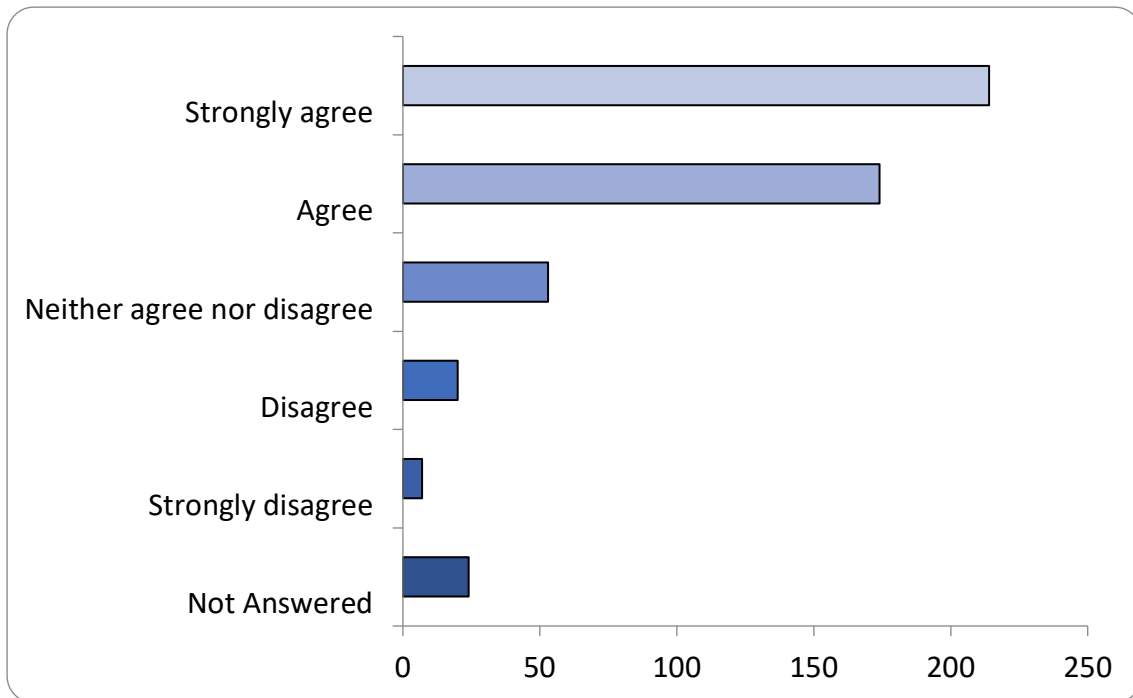
There were 457 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	430	87.40%
No	27	5.49%
Not Answered	35	7.11%

Question 27: To what extent do you agree that Scottish Water should be able to use the money it receives from customer charges to invest in resource recovery hubs?

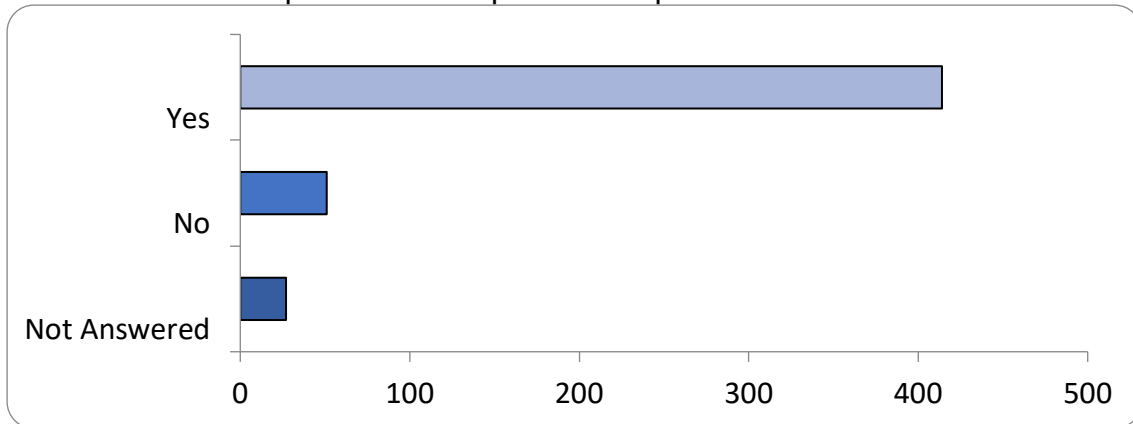
There were 468 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	214	43.50%
Agree	174	35.37%
Neither agree nor disagree	53	10.77%
Disagree	20	4.07%
Strongly disagree	7	1.42%
Not Answered	24	4.88%

Question 28: Do you agree that all wastewater treatment systems, regardless of size or ownership, should be tested and inspected to ensure that they do not impact negatively on the environment?

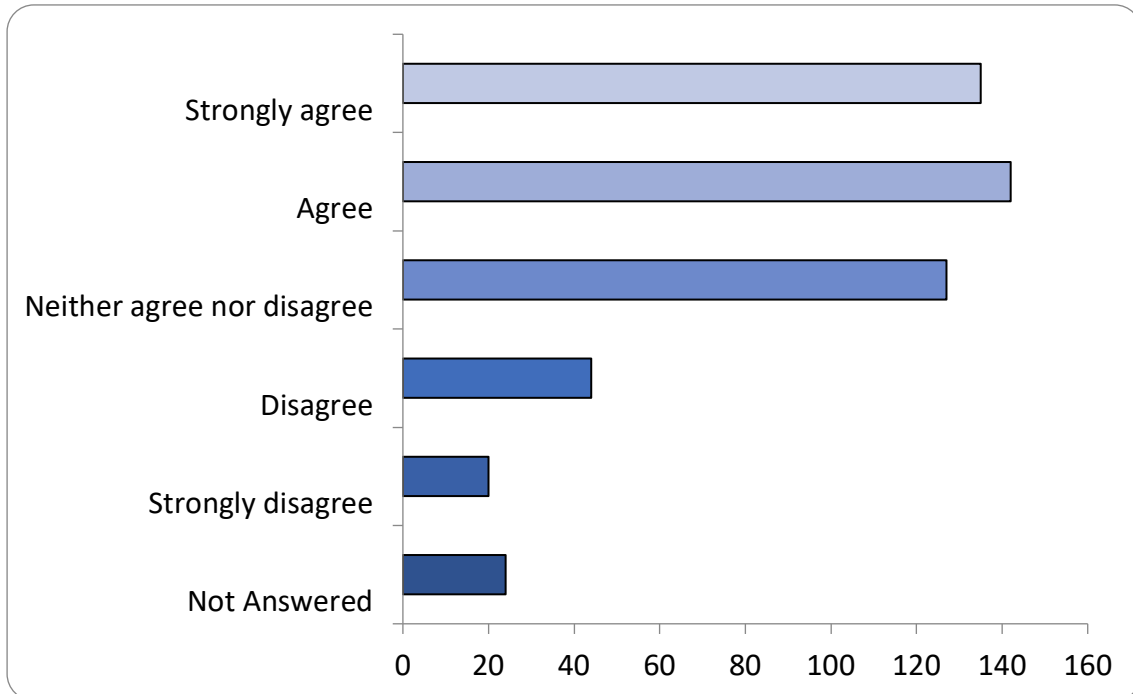
There were 465 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	414	84.15%
No	51	10.37%
Not Answered	27	5.49%

Question 30: Do you think that owners of existing private wastewater systems should be required to connect to the public system where connection is possible, beneficial and not expensive?

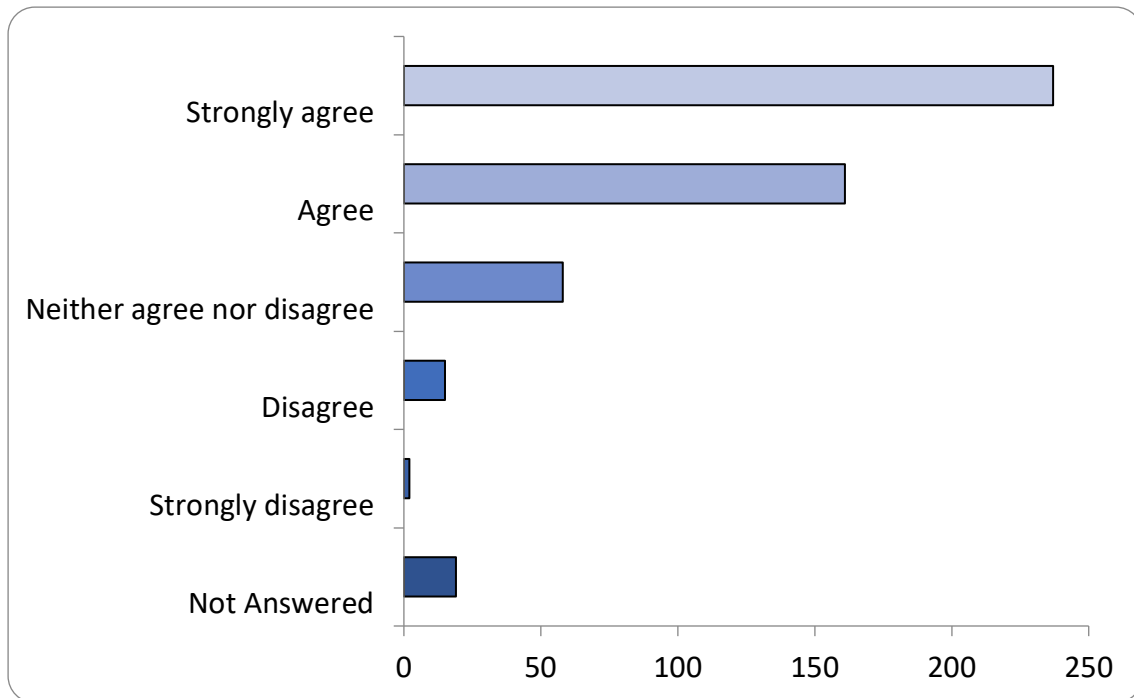
There were 468 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	135	27.44%
Agree	142	28.86%
Neither agree nor disagree	127	25.81%
Disagree	44	8.94%
Strongly disagree	20	4.07%
Not Answered	24	4.88%

Question 32: To what extent do you agree that changing our behaviours is essential to limit charge rises?

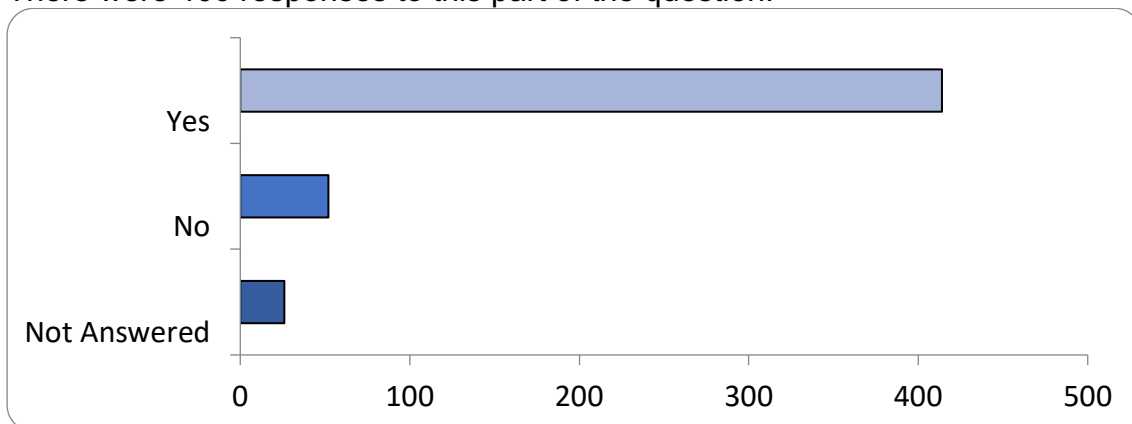
There were 473 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	237	48.17%
Agree	161	32.72%
Neither agree nor disagree	58	11.79%
Disagree	15	3.05%
Strongly disagree	2	0.41%
Not Answered	19	3.86%

Question 33: Do you agree that we should recognise that there are three services (water, wastewater and drainage)?

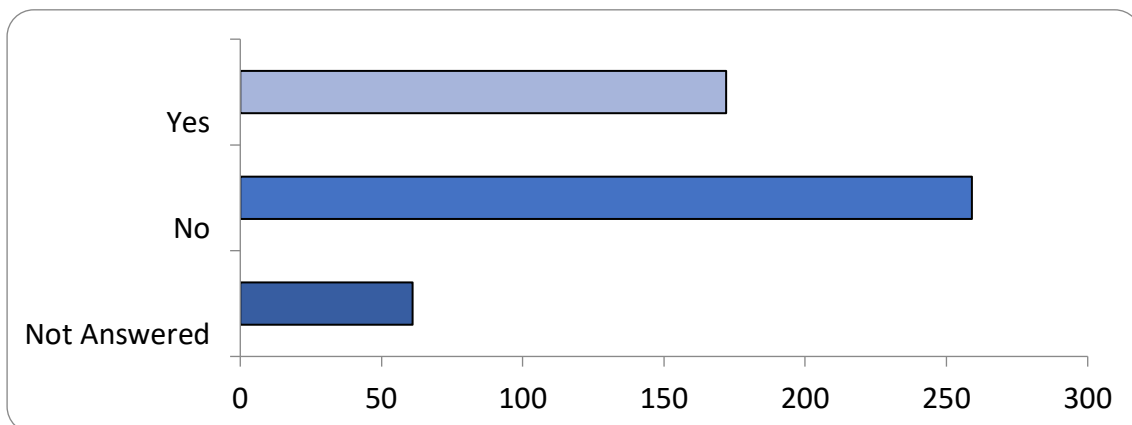
There were 466 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	414	84.15%
No	52	10.57%
Not Answered	26	5.28%

Question 34: Do you agree that using Council Tax Bands is the fairest way to charge for services used by households?

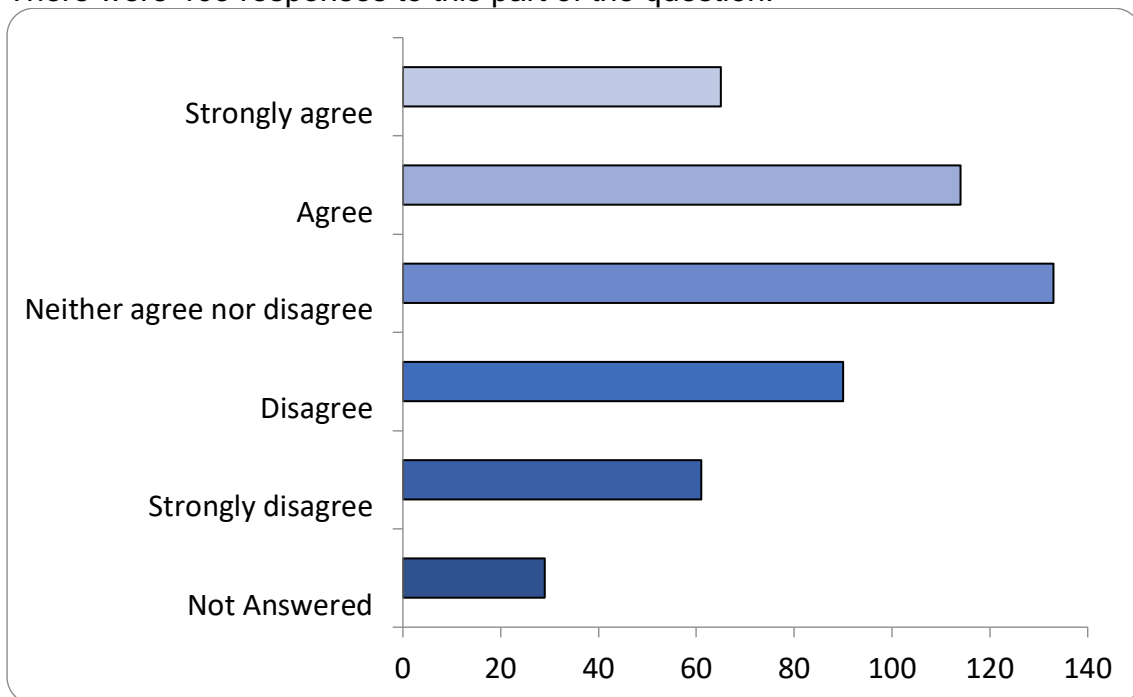
There were 431 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	172	34.96%
No	259	52.64%
Not Answered	61	12.40%

Question 37: To what extent do you agree that all households and businesses should pay for roads to be drained?

There were 463 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	65	13.21%
Agree	114	23.17%
Neither agree nor disagree	133	27.03%
Disagree	90	18.29%
Strongly disagree	61	12.40%
Not Answered	29	5.89%

Annex B – Consumer Scotland deliberative research summary

We have included the below section which summarises Consumer Scotland's deliberative research on climate change, water and Scotland's future. Consumer Scotland is a non-ministerial office of the Scottish Government. This research was a separate piece of work carried out by Consumer Scotland that shares many similarities with the water, wastewater and drainage policy consultation. We have included it below as a supplemental piece of research which reaches many of the same conclusions as our consultation.

Climate Change, Water, and Scotland's Future – Deliberative research undertaken by Ipsos for Consumer Scotland

Background and context to the research

As the statutory body for consumers in Scotland, Consumer Scotland exists to represent and advocate on behalf of all consumers, including in the water sector. Since 2022 Consumer Scotland has participated in the Scottish Government's water sector policy development process. As part of this we identified a research need to better understand the views of domestic consumers on how Scotland's water, wastewater and drainage services should be adapted to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

To this end, as part of our 2023-2024 work programme, we commissioned the research agency Ipsos to deliver a programme of deliberative research that would provide insight into how consumers and others can and should be part of Scotland's transition to a more resilient and sustainable water sector that contributes to a just transition to net zero. The research focused on three key areas:

- managing water resources and strategies for reducing water demand
- wastewater management as it relates to the water environment
- the sustainable management of rainwater in Scotland's local communities

Aims and objectives

The research aims and objectives were to explore the following key issues:

- the extent to which consumers are aware of climate change impacts in the Scottish water sector and whether they understand the need for adaptation
- what information is needed by consumers, and in what format, to support informed decision making
- understanding consumers' views on a range of policy options and solutions relating to water resources and services, sewerage and drainage
- exploring consumers' views on where responsibility should lie for tackling the impacts of climate change on water in Scotland, how urgently this needs to be done, and what considerations should be taken into account
- understanding the motivations, opportunities and support required by consumers to change their water behaviours to be more sustainable

Research approach

A deliberative methodology was identified as being most appropriate for the research given the complex and multi-faceted nature of the research aims and objectives. The specific approach taken was a “public dialogue”, whereby members of the public receive detailed information from experts with specialist knowledge on specific topics. The intention was for the research participants to consider collectively a broad range of evidence and deliberate on future policy options and/or decisions.

The research involved 41 individuals from across Scotland being recruited by an independent recruitment agency to take part in 5 three-hour online workshops between October and November 2023. The sample was recruited to be broadly reflective of the population in Scotland.

The overarching question the public dialogue explored was: “How should we deal with the impacts that climate change is having - and will have - on water in Scotland?”

During the deliberative dialogues, a range of experts presented evidence and detailed information to inform participants on key issues facing the Scottish water sector in relation to climate change. Participants then discussed and deliberated over possible strategies and solutions to help address the impacts of climate change.

In total the research participants took part in 15 hours of deliberation across 5 workshops, considering a different set of issues at each one while continuously building on their own learnings. The approach taken gave the dialogue participants the time and opportunity to learn about complex and often unfamiliar issues, before working together to develop considered conclusions to answer the overarching research question.

In addition to the summary of cross-cutting themes presented below, [the research report by Ipsos and Consumer Scotland's associated policy briefings](#) have been published separately. These documents contain a more detailed analysis of the research findings and our key policy recommendations, based on the evidence we have gathered.

Cross-cutting themes to emerge

A range of cross-cutting themes emerged from the research that encapsulate well the collective views of the participants.

- growing alarm at the scale of the challenge – At the outset of the research there was some general awareness among participants of the issues associated with surface water flooding. In comparison, most participants felt they knew little or nothing about the impacts of climate change on water resources and wastewater services in Scotland. As the research progressed and participants learned more about the issues, they expressed alarm at the scale of the challenges faced by the sector and the need for clear and urgent action to enable adaptation became clear to them. A view consistently expressed was a desire for the water sector as a whole to put long-term and

sustainable solutions in place for adapting to climate change, and to invest in innovative approaches that deliver additional environmental, social and health benefits to local communities

- affordability of water charges with safeguards in place – Affordable water services was raised throughout the public dialogue as a key issue. While future price rises were expected to pay for improving Scotland's water supply and wastewater infrastructure, participants were generally looking for reassurance that any investments would be "future-proofed" and provide value for money in the longer term. A significant theme cutting across the research was that any negative impacts on consumers who can least afford to pay more should be avoided. Participants wanted to see an equitable approach, where vulnerable consumers and those on the lowest incomes are protected
- behaviour change will be key to adapting to climate change – From early in the learning phase of the deliberative research, participants felt there was a fundamental need to change how people in Scotland value, use and conserve water and how they interact with drainage and wastewater systems. The contribution of behaviour change from consumers and businesses was recognised as an important factor in tackling the impacts of climate change on Scotland's water resources, including by reducing demand for water, lessening strain on the sewerage system and by minimising the risk of surface water flooding. Participants generally held a view that there would be an openness among the public to doing things differently. Education and raising awareness were seen as an important enabler to changing behaviours, as was actively involving local communities in decisions around climate adaptation. However, participants also recognised that change can often be challenging, so while awareness-raising is a necessary pre-condition for change, for it to be a success it will need to be coupled with different forms of tailored support that make behavioural change easy, accessible and affordable for all consumers
- everyone has a role to play in tackling the impacts of climate change – By the end of the dialogue, participants came to a collective view that everyone has a role to play in tackling the impacts of climate change on Scotland's water sector. This includes the Scottish Government, Scottish Water, small and large businesses, developers, local authorities, individual consumers, and the communities where they live. Central to this is the Scottish Government and Scottish Water showing leadership and creating an enabling environment that will allow consumers and businesses to also do their part.

Summary and reflections

Over the course of the 5 workshops, there was a clear shift in perspective from the research participants. While participants generally started from a position of lack of awareness about the issues, once they learned more there was broad agreement that Scotland's water sector needed to be ambitious in its approaches to tackling climate change impacts. Alongside this, there was a recognition that individual consumers will also have a key role to play in reducing the strain on the system,

whether through reducing personal water consumption, avoiding disposing of inappropriate items down sinks or toilets, or by better managing rainwater at a property level. There was a clear appetite from participants for more information on the topics discussed throughout the deliberative process, and a desire to see behavioural change supported by wider, systemic action on the part of Scottish Government, Scottish Water, business and industry.

Research participants were also able to take a holistic and integrated approach to the issues. For example, participants felt that there was a mutually reinforcing relationship between communities being involved in decisions about how their local areas can best adapt to climate change, on the one hand, and further behaviour change, such as saving water, on the other. There was a strong view that fostering a sense of shared ownership amongst communities of their local water environment would better help to educate them about the value of water and the impacts of climate change.

The nature of the public dialogue demonstrates that, when provided with relevant information and given time and space to reflect on the issues in detail, research participants are able to take a considered collective view of the potential solutions and to be positive about the capacity for change and adaptation both at an individual and a systems level.



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