What do the public think about devolution and community power?

February 2025

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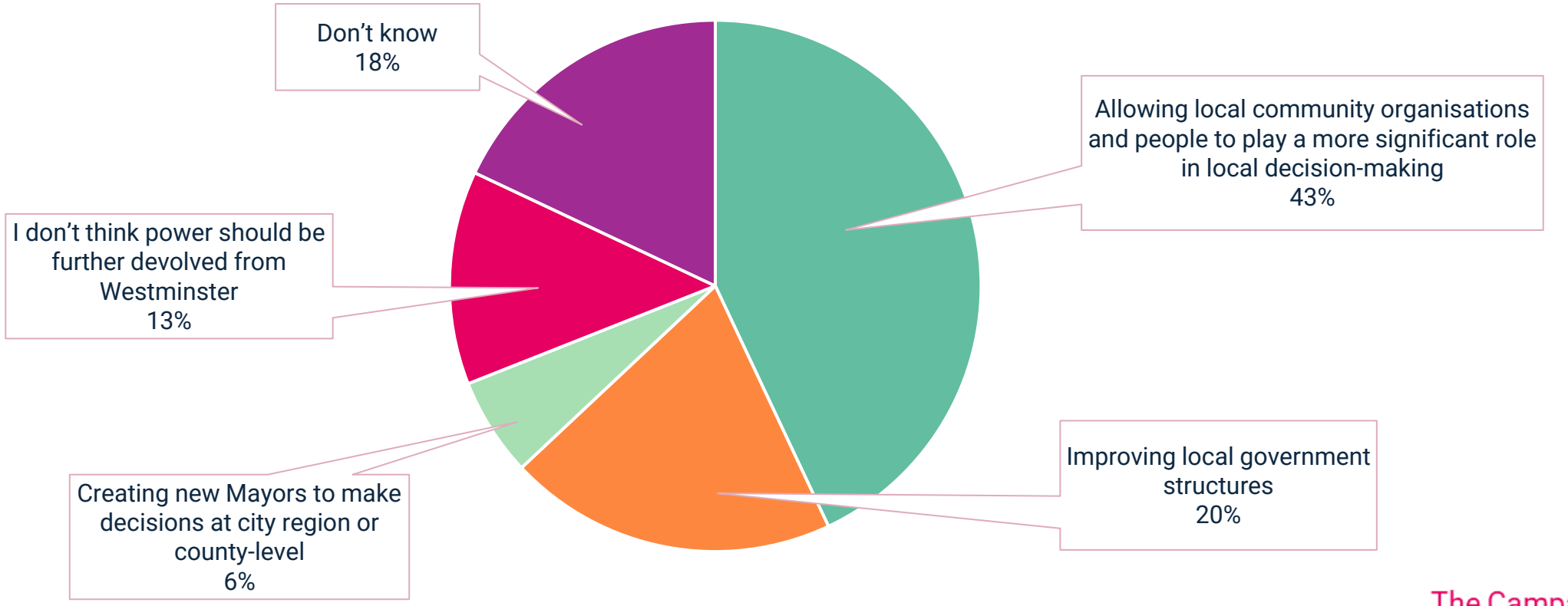
People believe that community power should be a core part of the government's devolution agenda

Which of the following, if any, do you think is the most important goal for government to prioritise when devolving power from Westminster?



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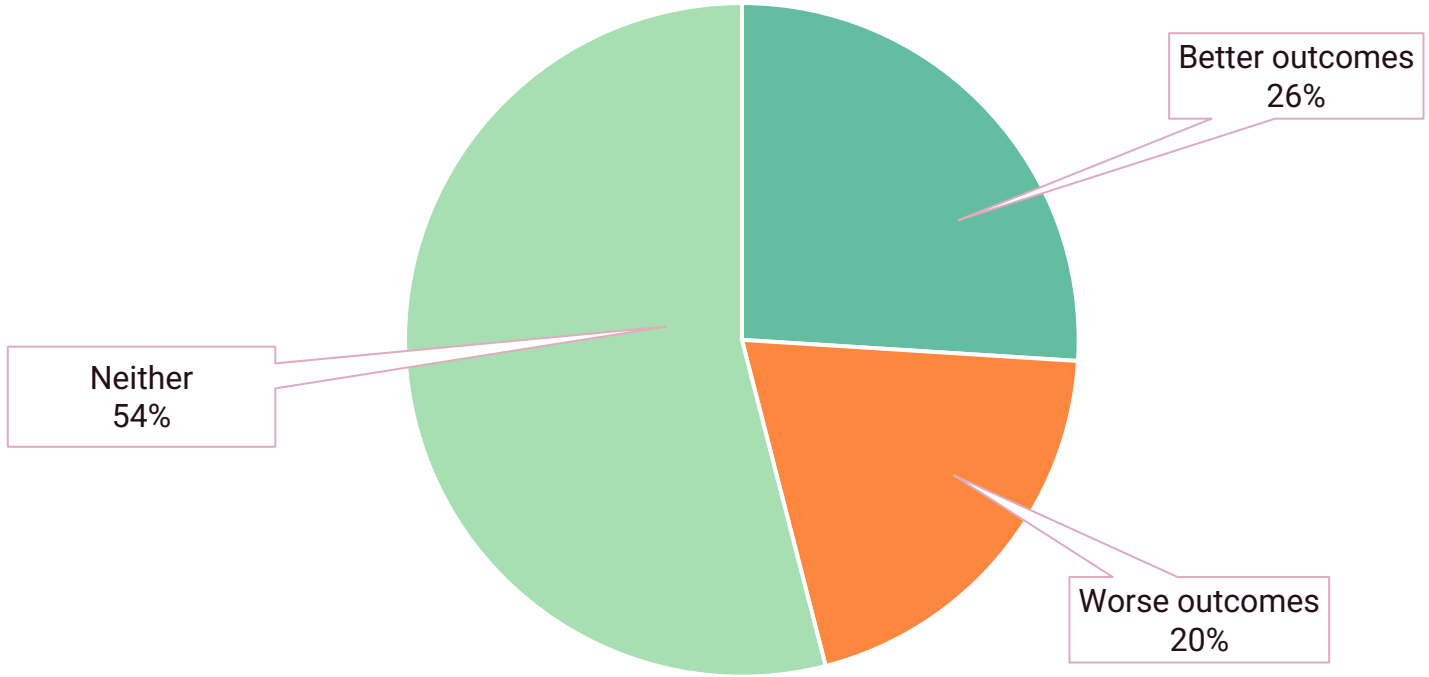
People are not opposed to Mayors

Do you think that having a Mayor for your city region or county has led or would lead to better or worse outcomes on important issues in your local community?



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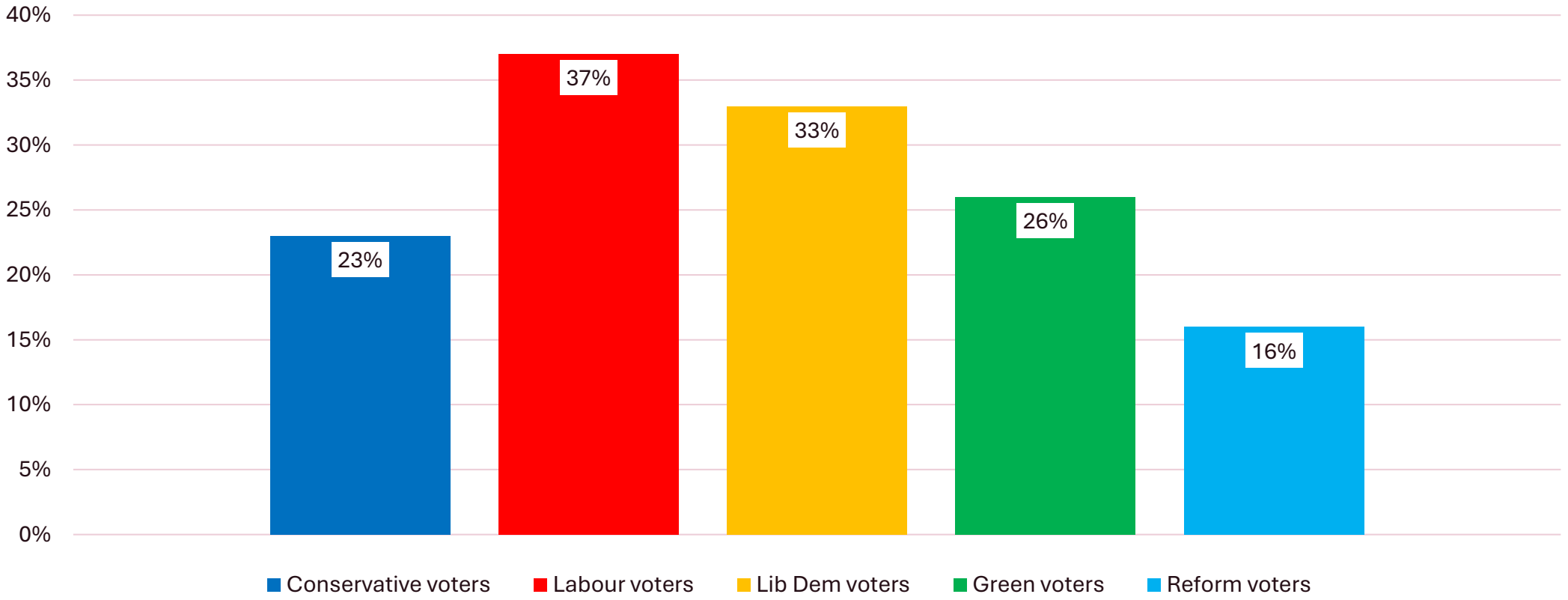
Some voter groups are relatively pro-Mayor

Percentage of each 2024 voter group who agree that having a Mayor has led or would lead to better outcomes for their community



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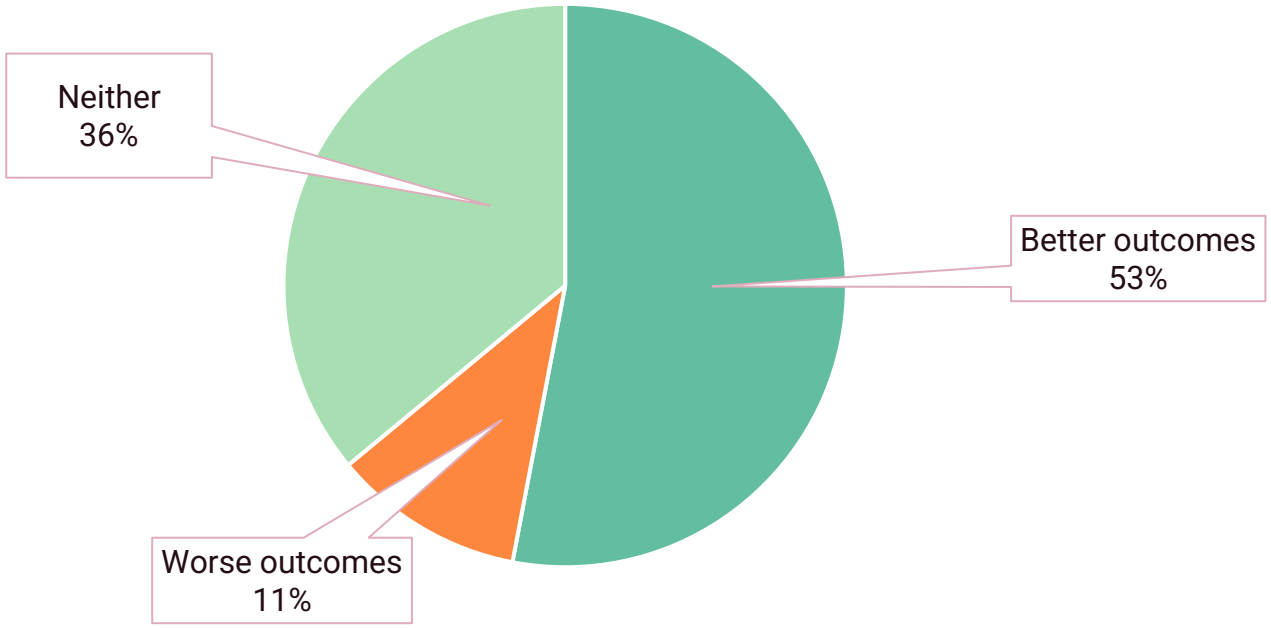
But people place more faith in community-level actors

Do you think that local community organisations and groups having more power over input into local decisions would lead to better or worse outcomes on important issues in your local community?



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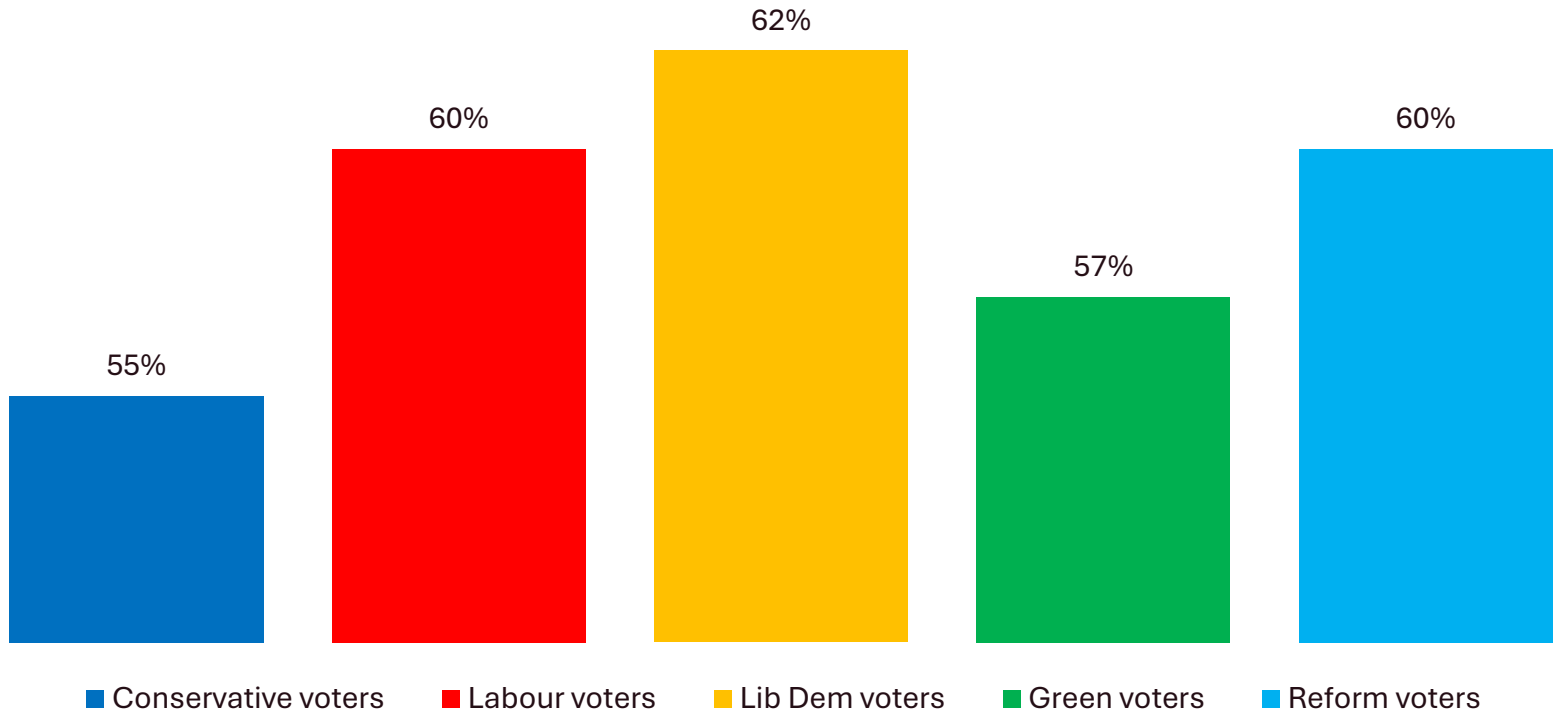
…across the political spectrum

Percentage of each 2024 voter group who agree that empowering community organisations and groups would lead to better outcomes



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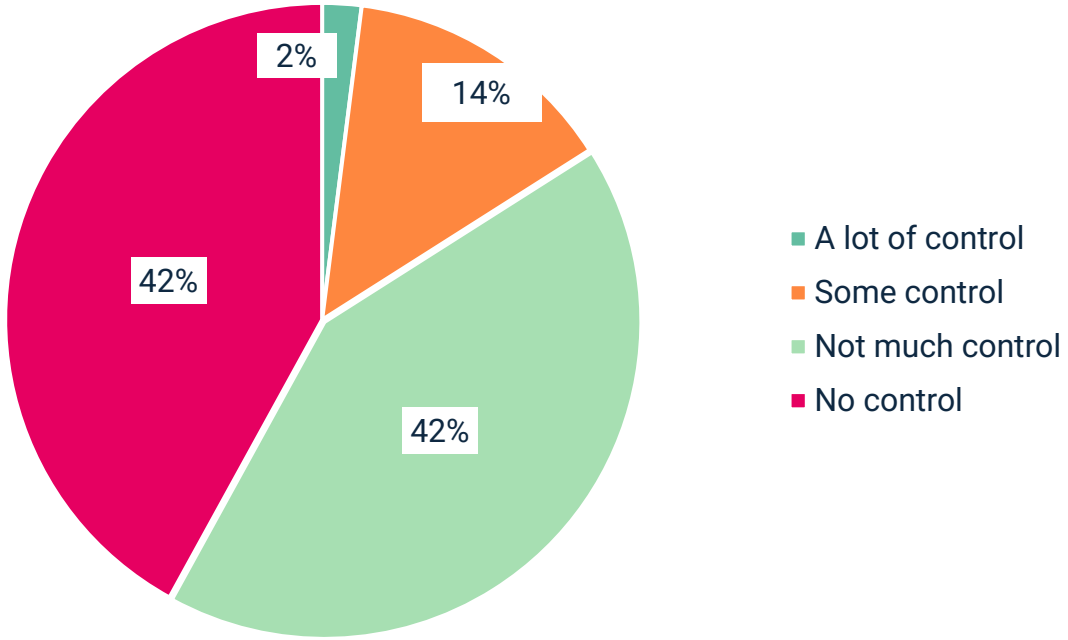
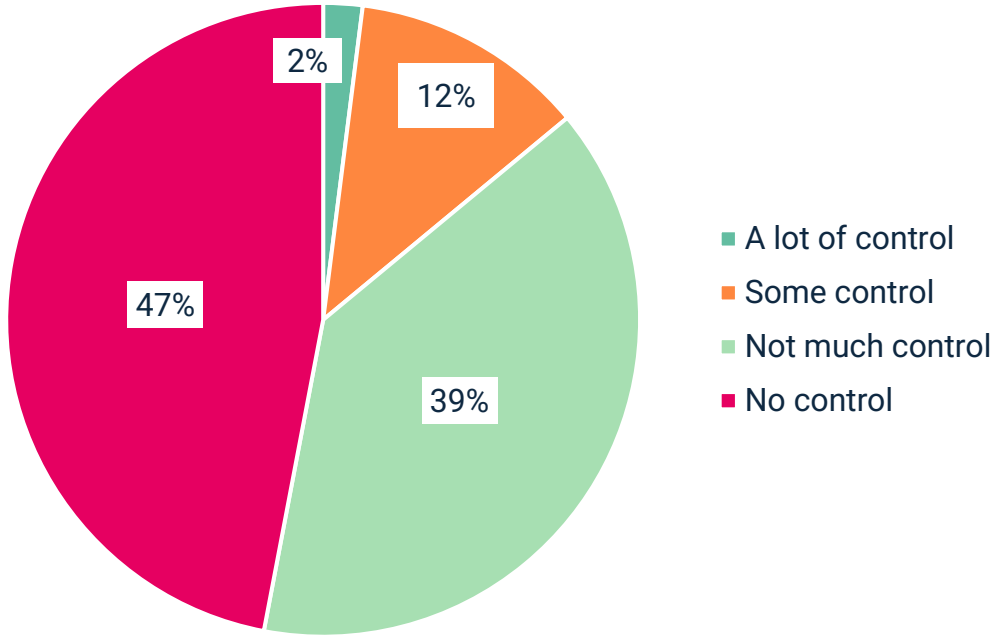
An overwhelming majority feel that they are not in control of their place

How much control do you feel you have over important decisions that affect your neighbourhood and local community?



How much control do you feel you have over how public services are provided in your area?



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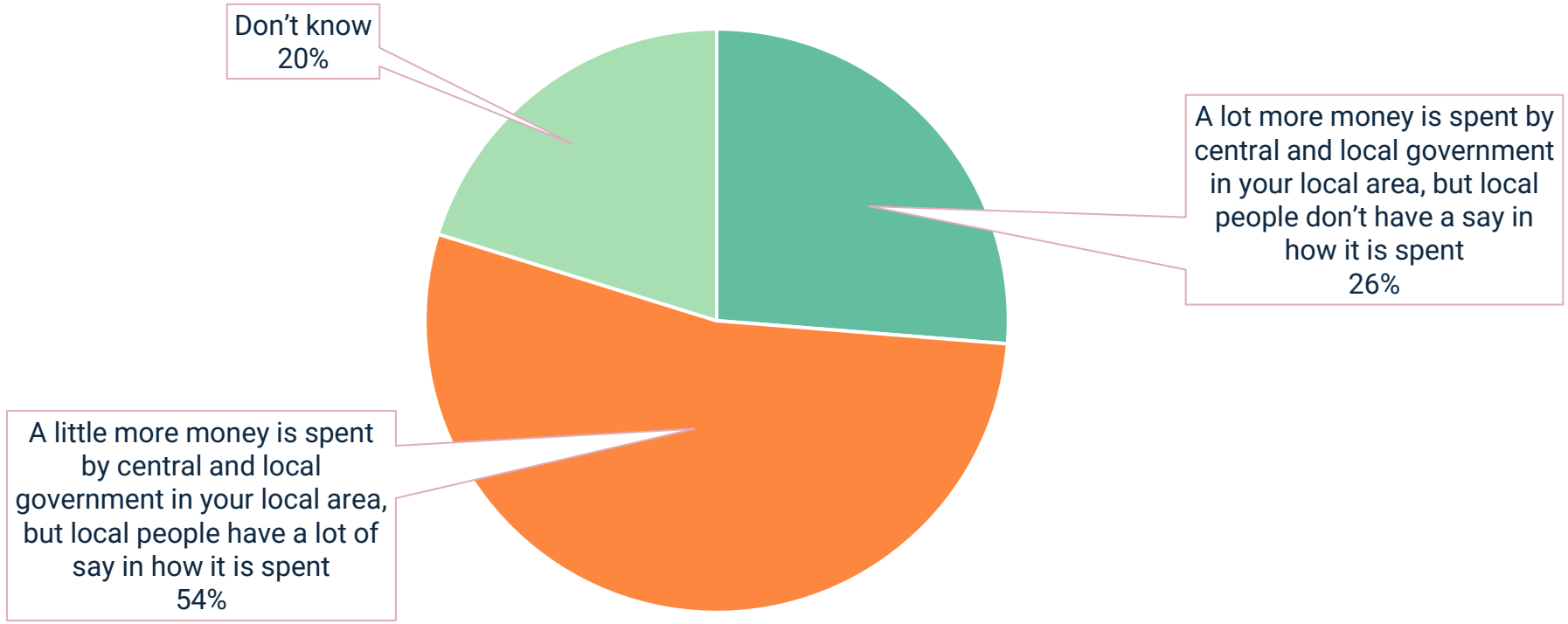
People really value control over the decisions that shape their places

Which of the following scenarios would you prefer?



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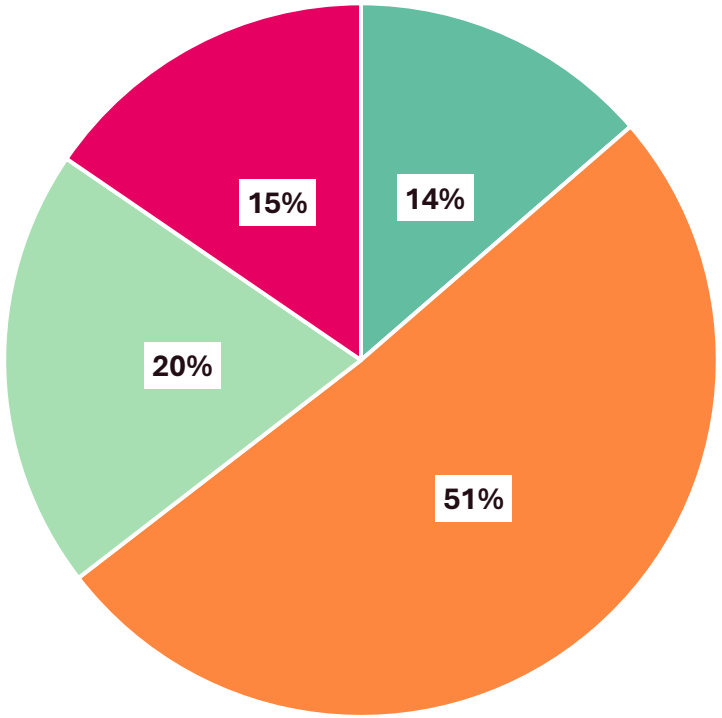
People believe that the upcoming local government reorganisation could make this problem worse

The government has announced plans to get rid of district and transfer their functions to larger, county-level councils. Thinking about local people's ability to shape their local area, do you think this will lead to people feeling…



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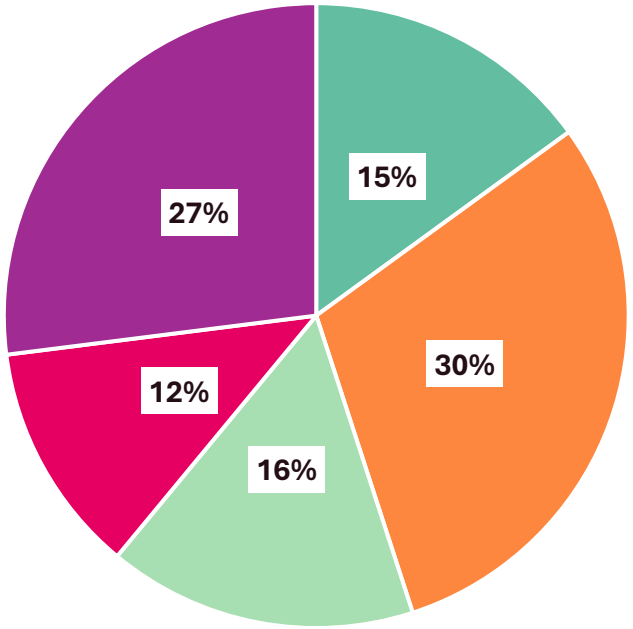
But they believe that building community power into the government's plans could offset this upward transfer of power

Would you support or oppose newly formed unitary councils being required to work more closely with community organisations?



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Dear Mr. Gove,
We are a group of people – leaders of national and community organisations and active citizens – who know what it takes to level up the country. The answer is community power.
We've seen it at work during Covid. But we have always been here. And the truth is that it is like pushing a rock up a hill. For every successful, locally led effort, countless others fail. That is because our system is fundamentally mistrustful of local communities who try to shape their own futures. We're stuck in a system which is designed to do things to communities and not with them. That has to change.
We are proposing a new, transformative piece of legislation – a Community Power Act. This would make three things happen:
1. Establish three new community rights. These would give communities greater powers to take ownership of spaces, shape public services and control public spending in their area.
2. Create Community Covenants. These neighbourhood-level arrangements would bring local people, community organisations and local authorities together to share power and make decisions.
3. Establish a Community Power Commissioner. This independent office would be charged with ensuring action is taken across government to uphold the new community rights, support the formation of Community Covenants everywhere, and generally unlock community power.
We ask that you meet with representatives of our campaign to discuss how we might take forward these proposals together.
Looking for answers? We're right here.
Yours sincerely,
Rachael Maskell MP
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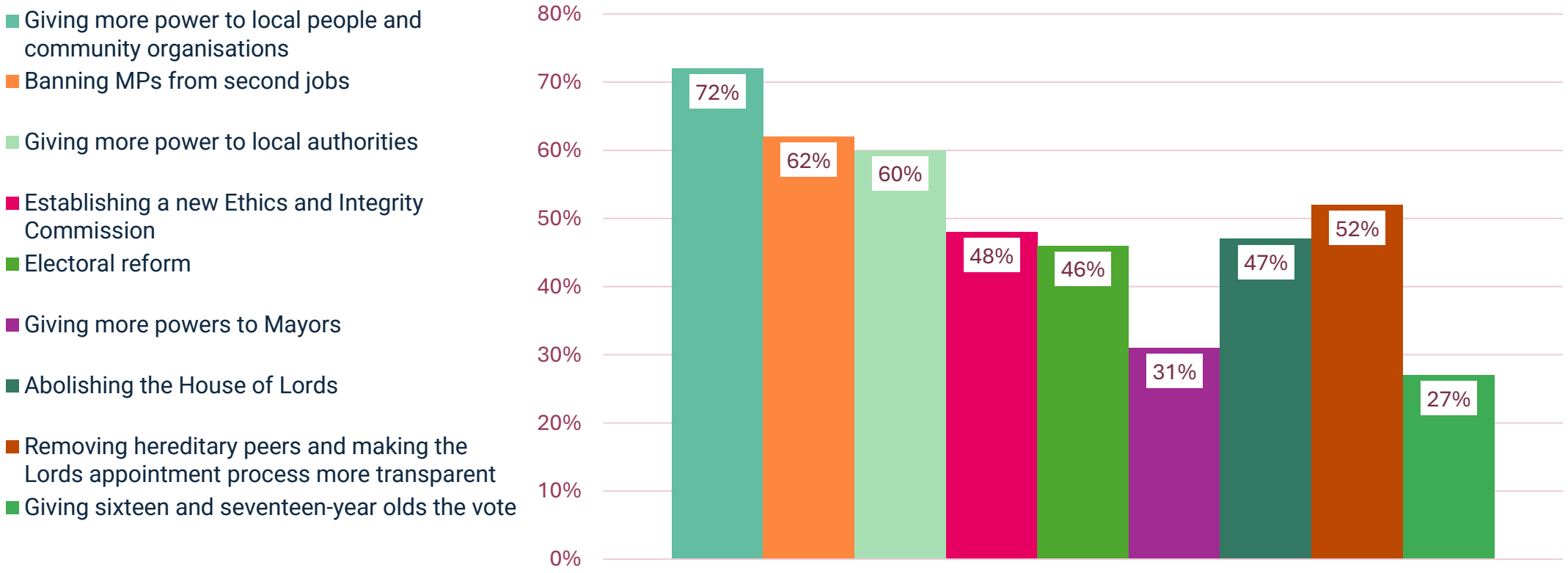
Unlocking community power could also be key to restoring trust in politics

Various proposals have been put forward to restore trust in politics. How effective do you think the following would be?



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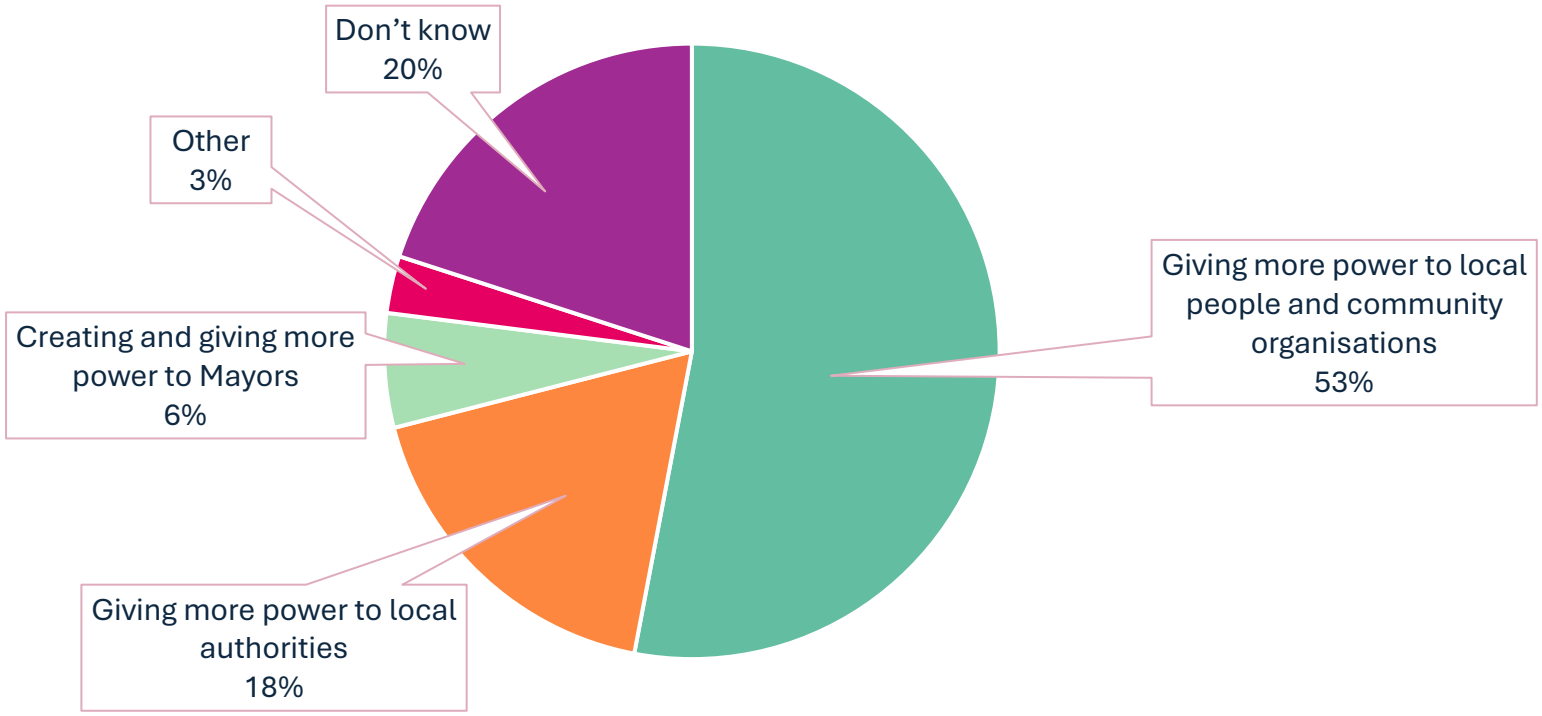
People understand community-level devolution to be important to delivering on the spirit of ‘Take Back Control’

Which of the following actions do you think would be most effective in achieving the goal of “taking back control” for communities?



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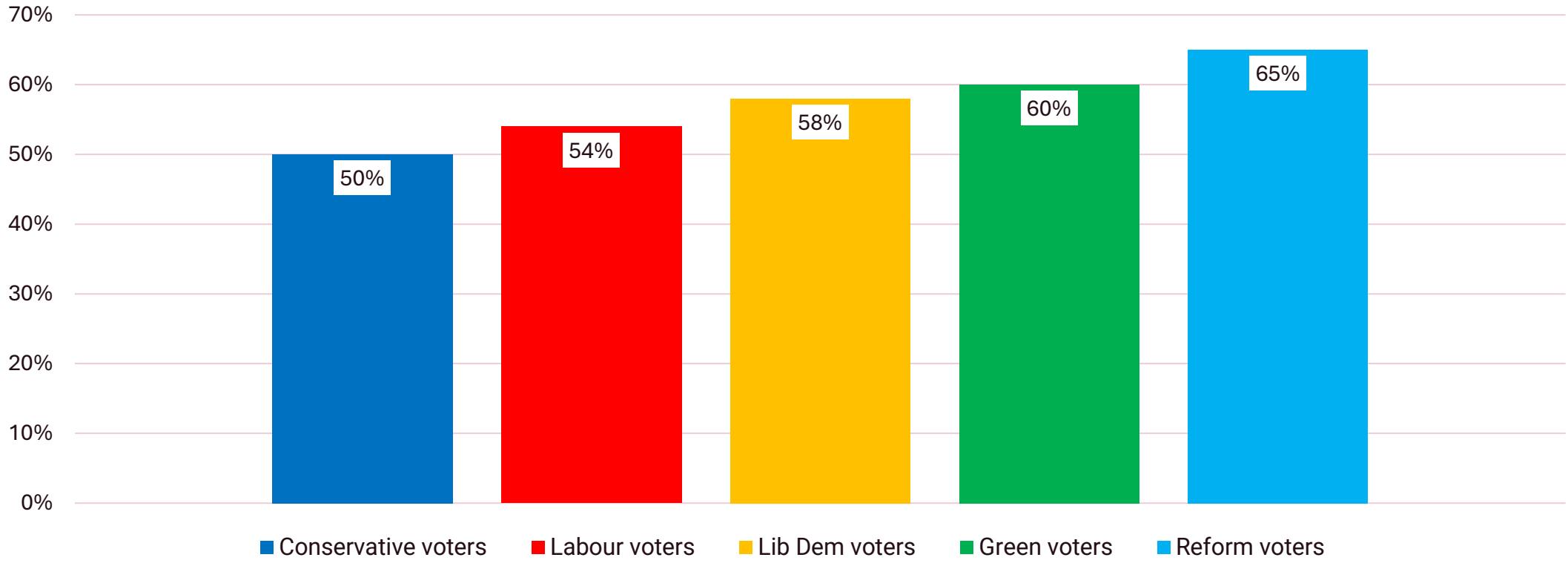
…and Reform voters are more likely to believe this than any other group

Percentage of each 2024 voter group who believe that empowering local people and communities would be most effective in “taking back control” for communities



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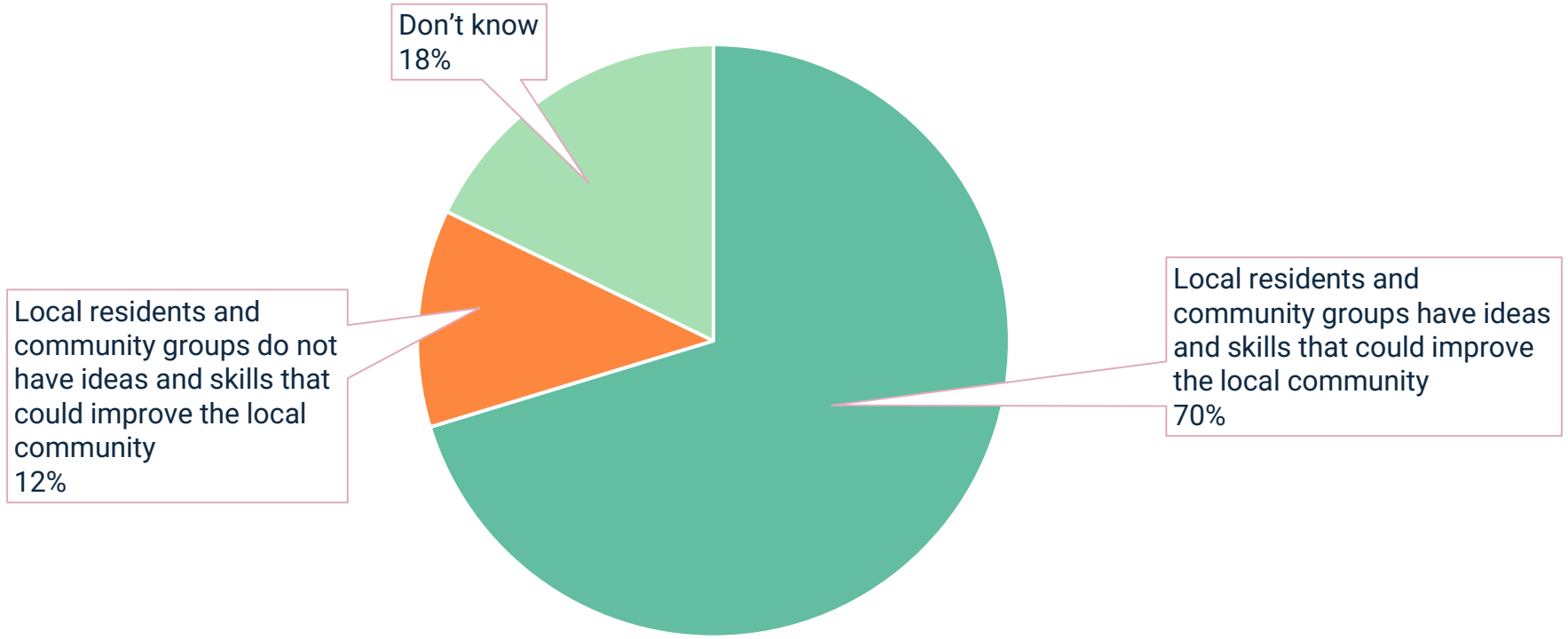
People think community organisations and local people are capable of improving their areas

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?



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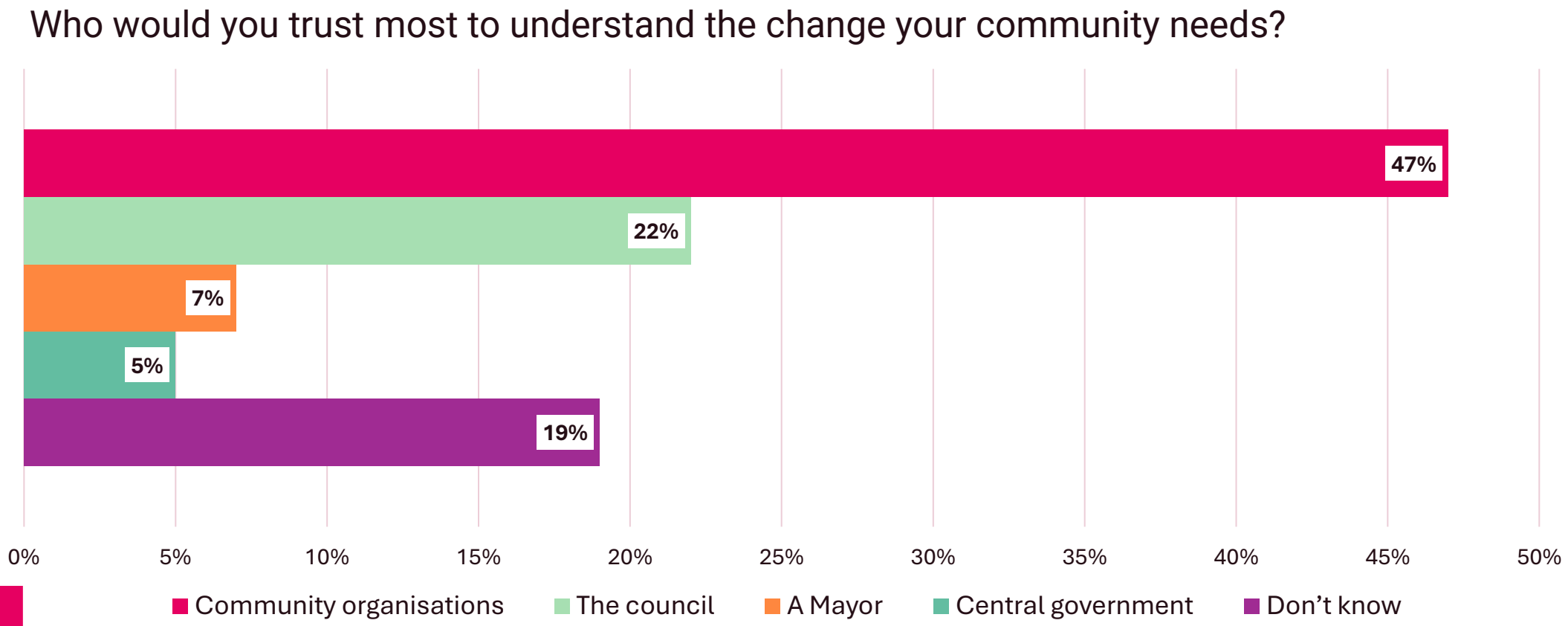
They trust community organisations to understand their community's needs



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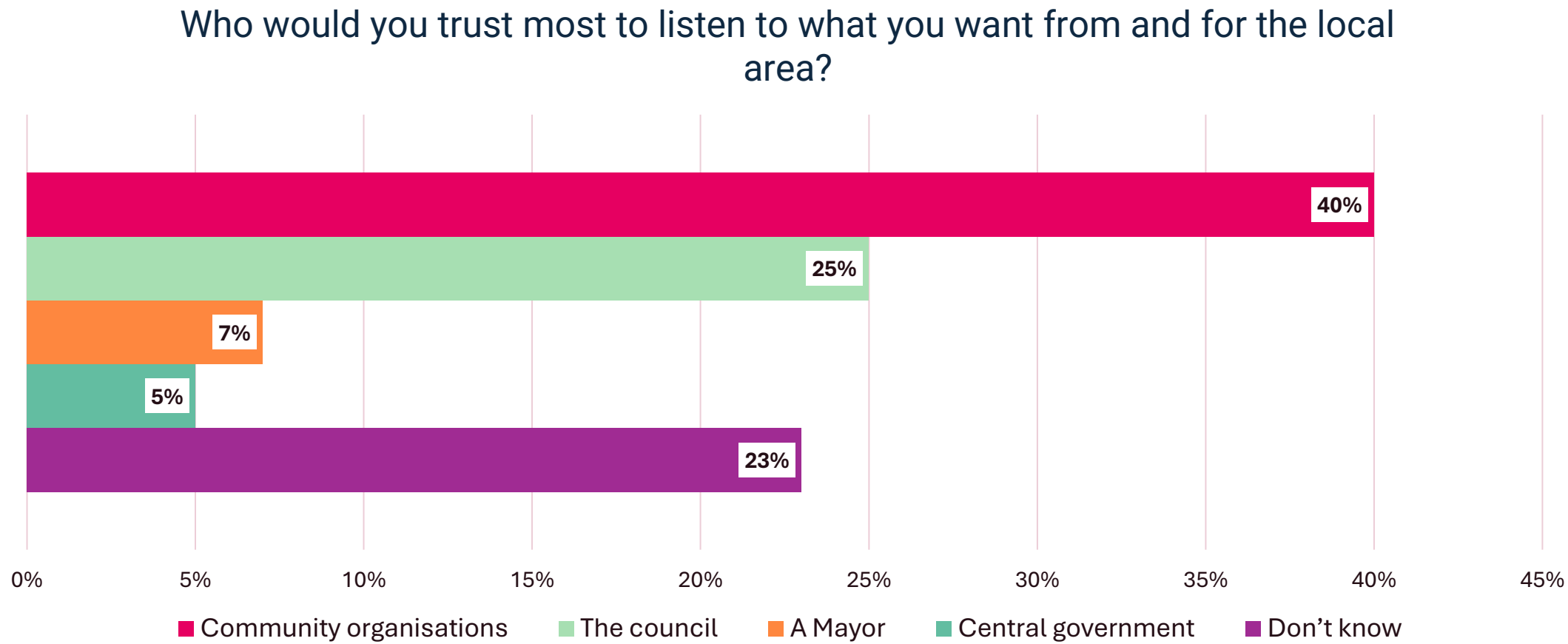
They also trust community organisations to listen to their views



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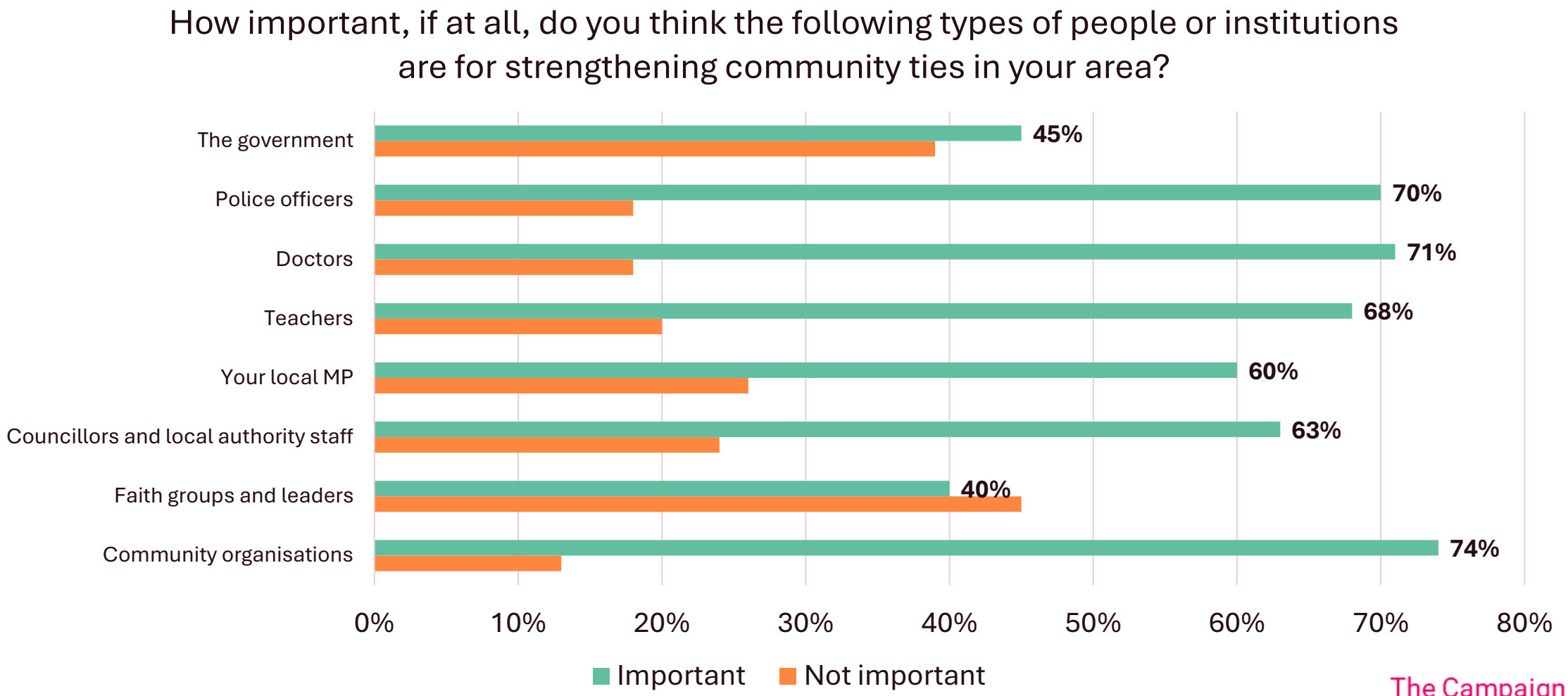
People believe community organisations and groups are integral to strengthening social ties in their area



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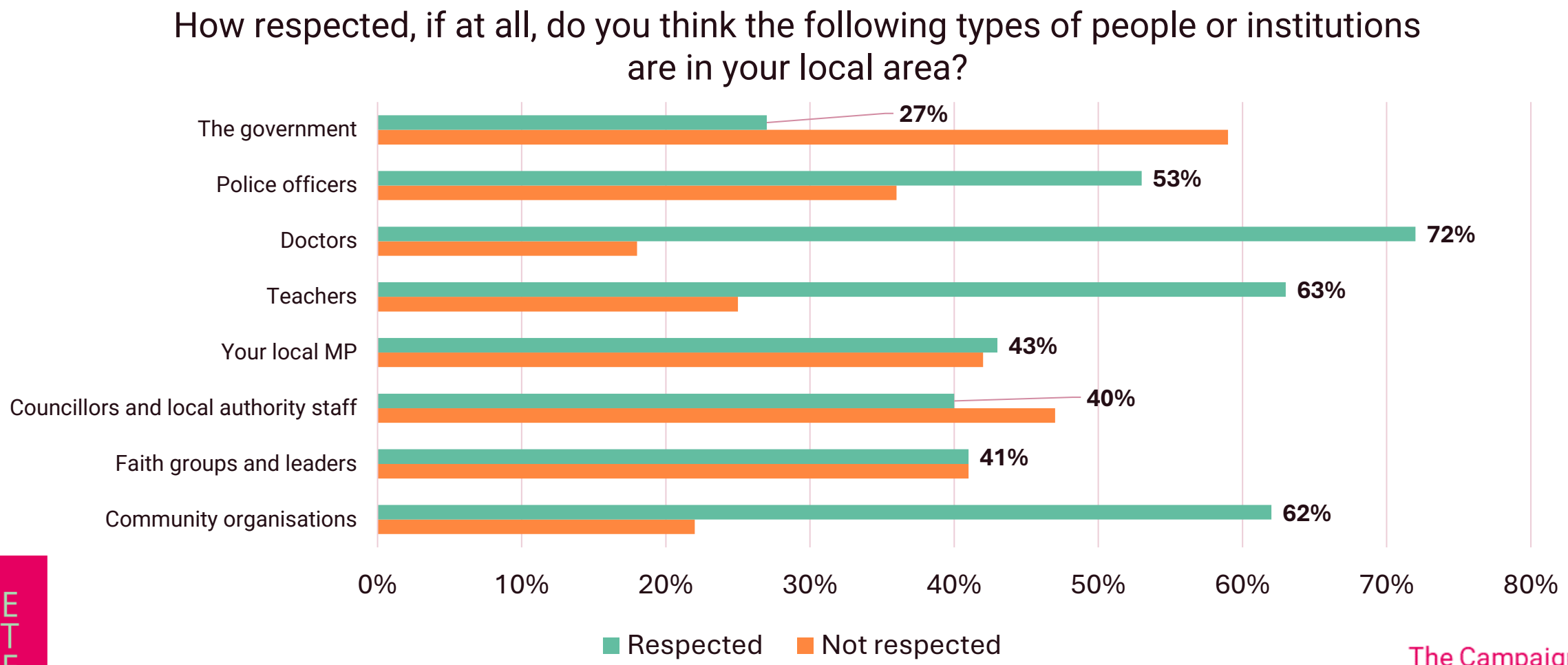
They also believe that community organisations and groups are highly respected locally



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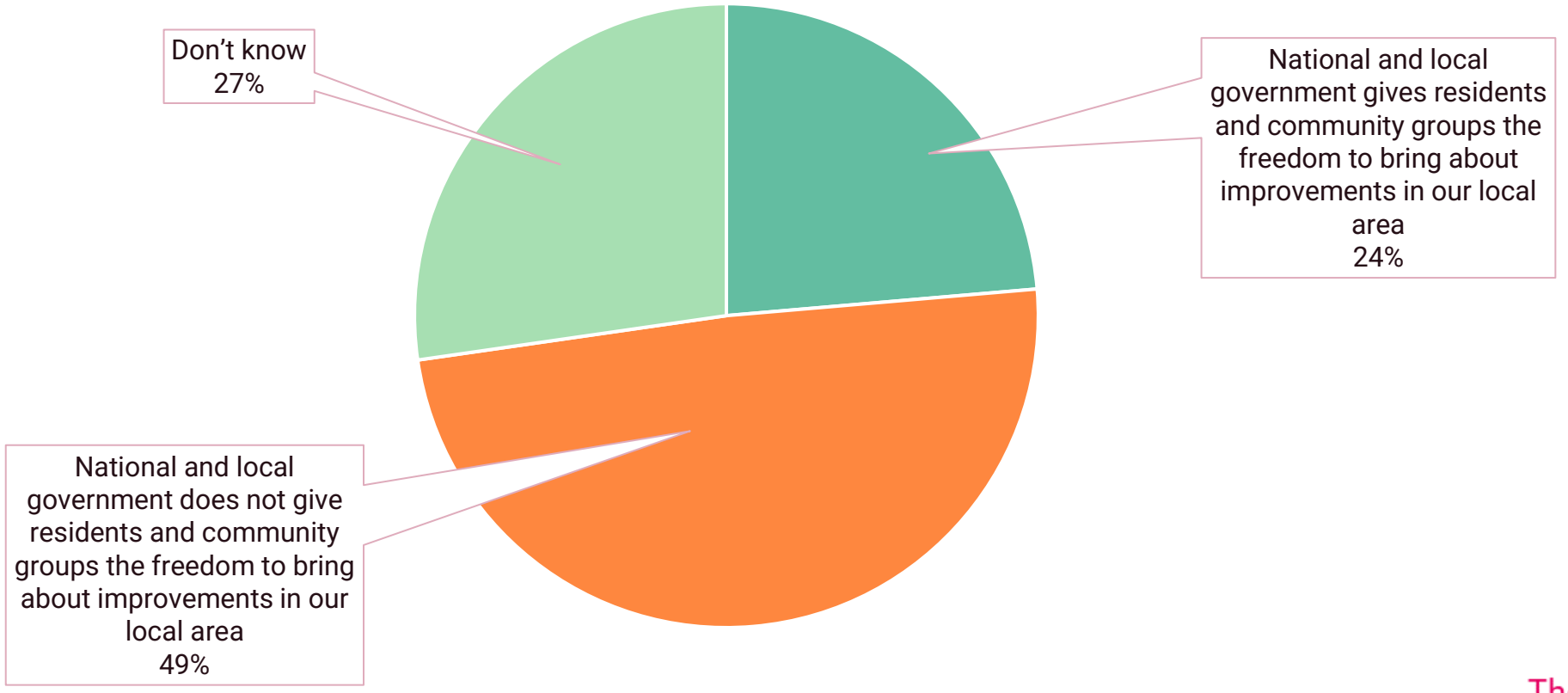
But people believe the status-quo doesn't allow communities to do all they could for their place

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?



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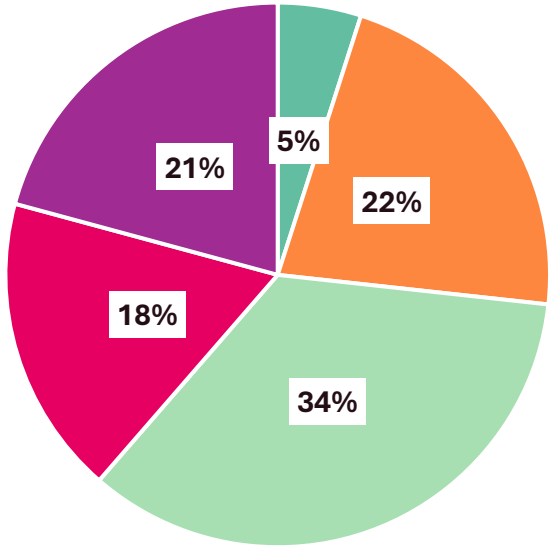
Perhaps relatedly, they don't think spending decisions reflect their areas' needs

How closely, if at all, do you feel money spent in your local area reflects the needs of your community?



Very closely | Somewhat closely | Not that closely | Not at all closely | Don't know

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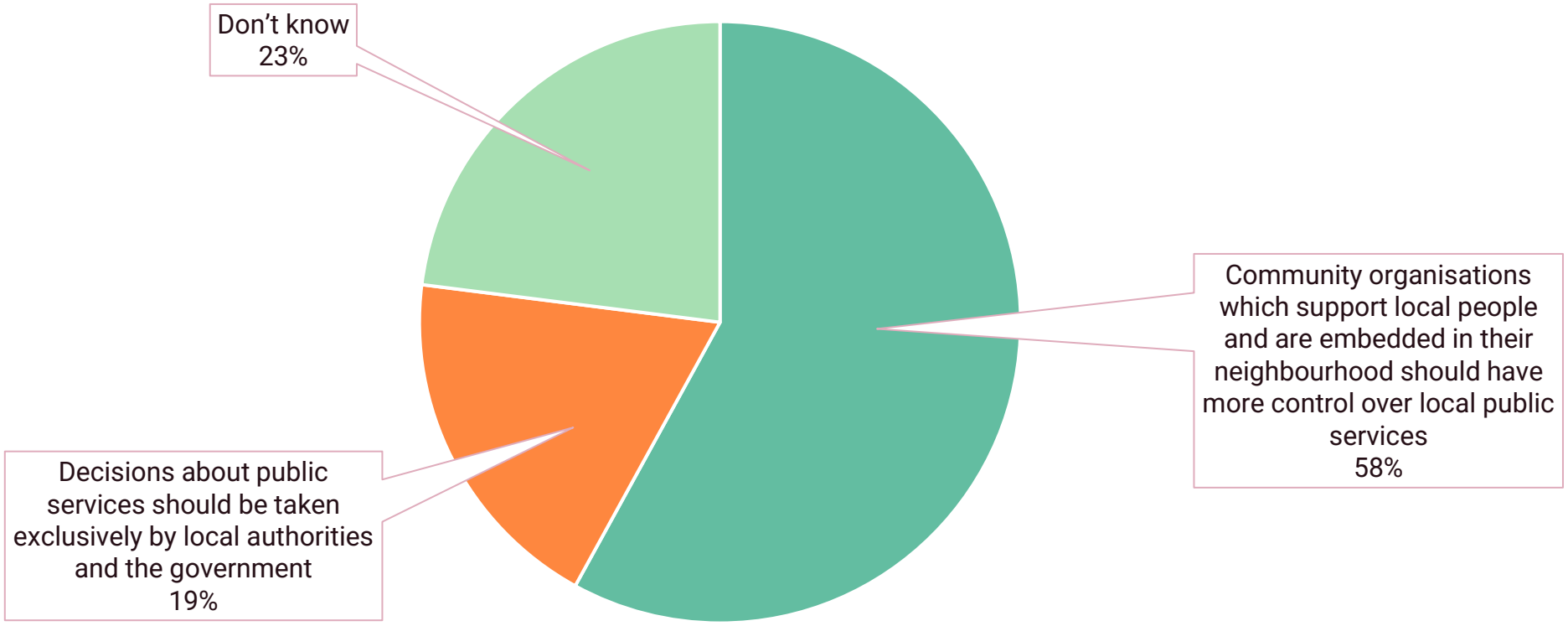
People are in favour of community organisations playing more of a role in public service provision

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?



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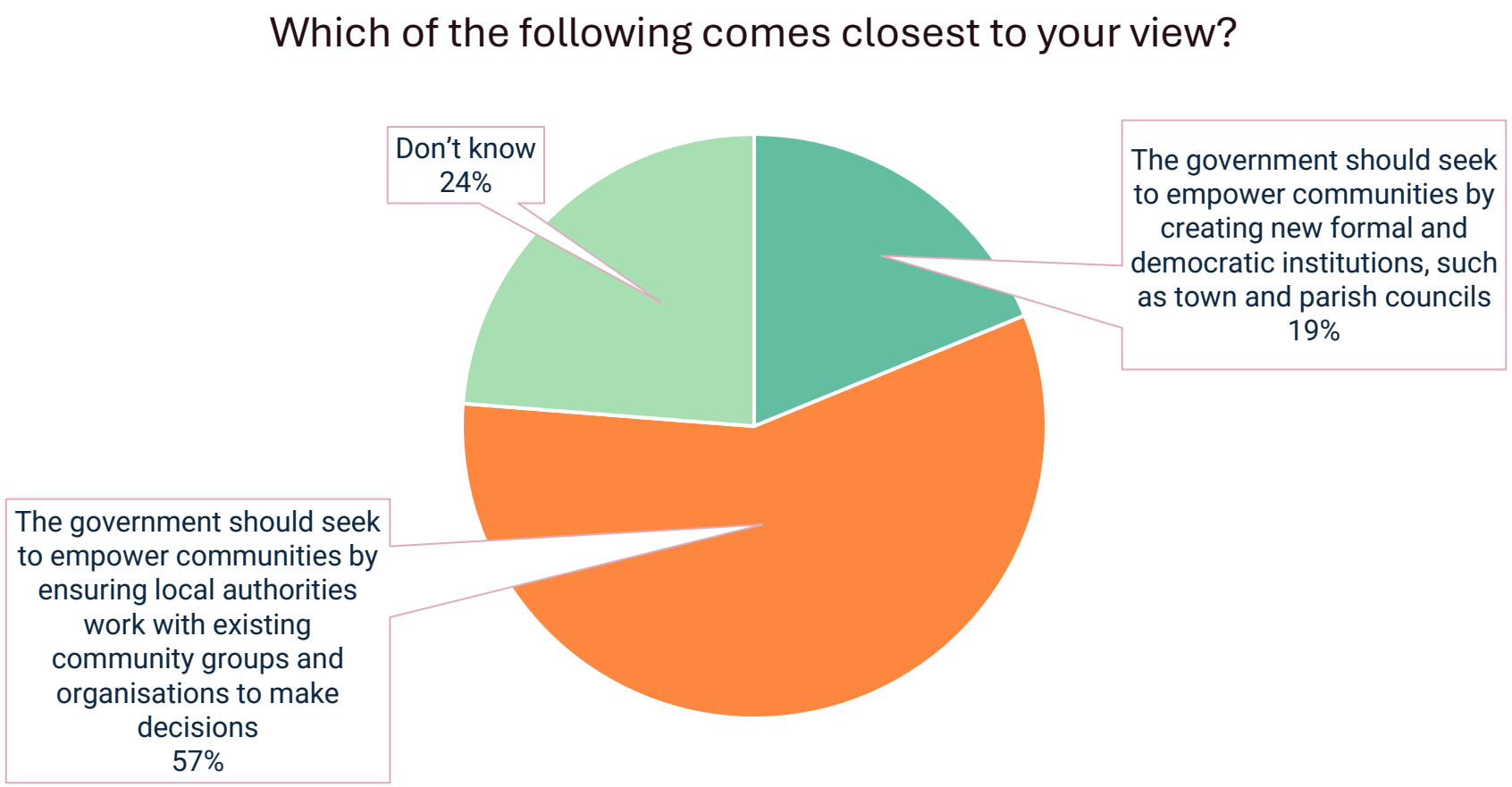
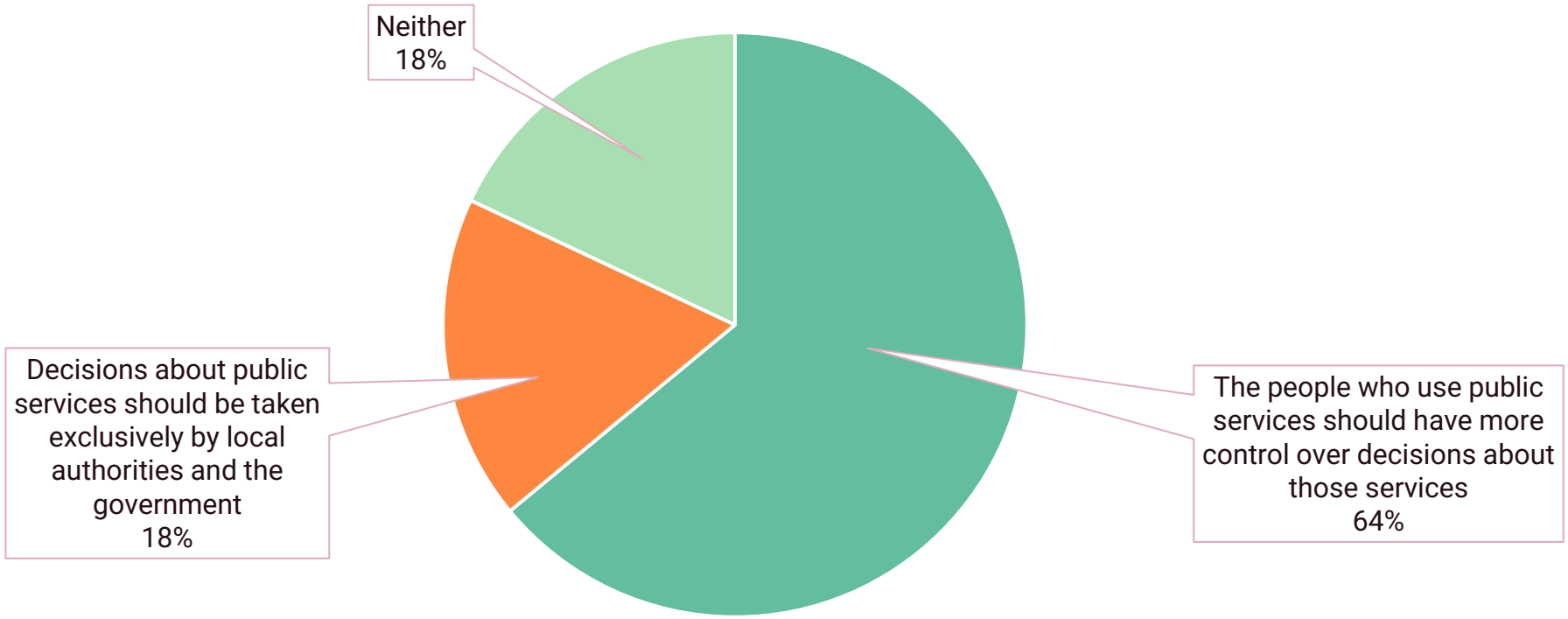
They believe community-level devolution should encompass civil society and community-run organisations



They also believe public service users should have a say over service provision

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?



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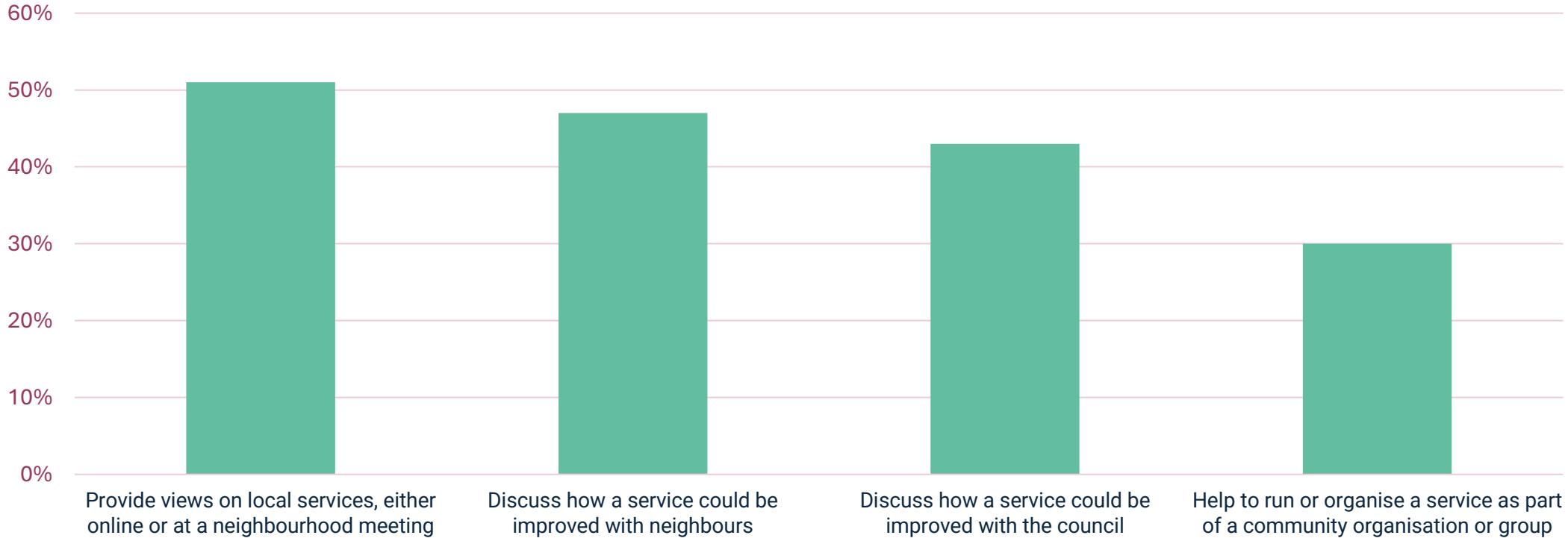
A significant number of people would make use of a new Community Right to Shape Public Services

Imagine the government gave people more control over public services in your area. How likely, if at all, would you be to participate in the following activities?



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This polling was conducted by Opinium for We're Right Here in February 2025.

The poll was of 2,000 UK adults. Results are weighted to be nationally and politically representative where relevant.

For more information, please contact:
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richardgnbell@gmail.com 07853901745.

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