

Councillors' views on Devolution White Paper

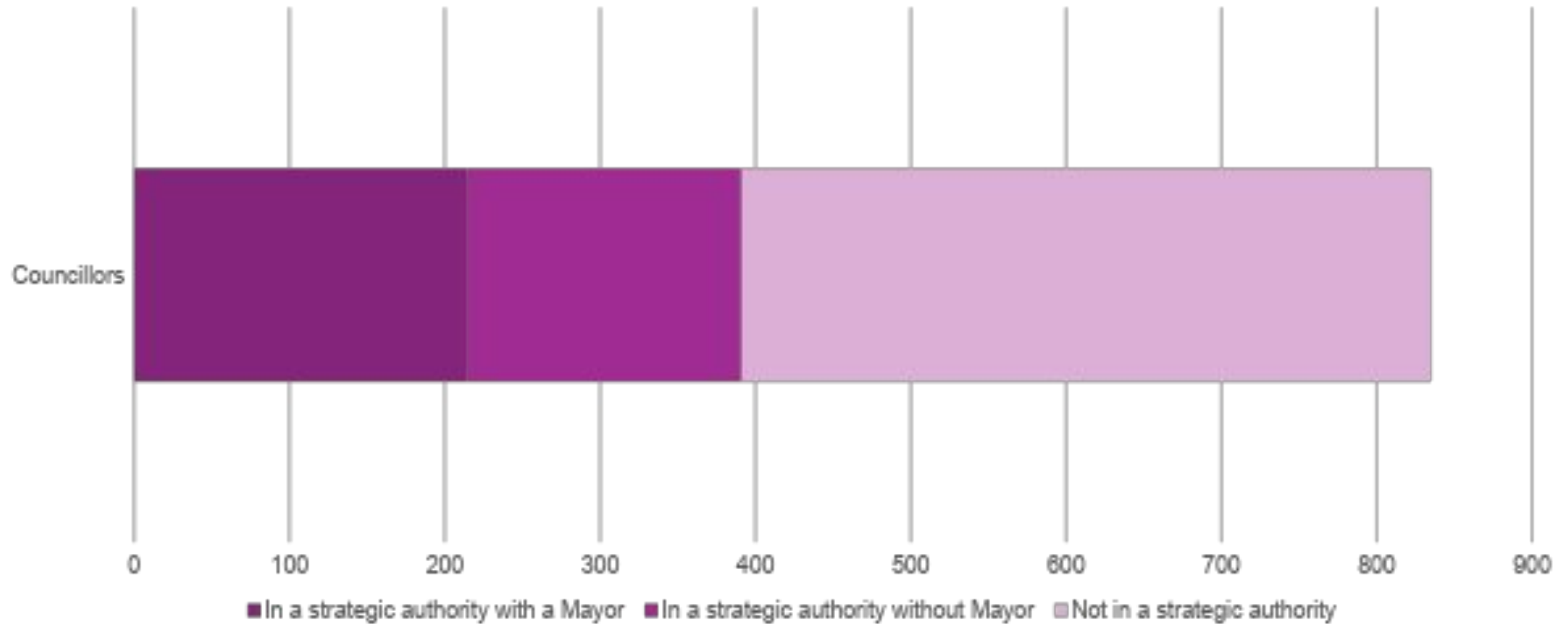
Date of survey: 07/01/2025

Sample size: 834

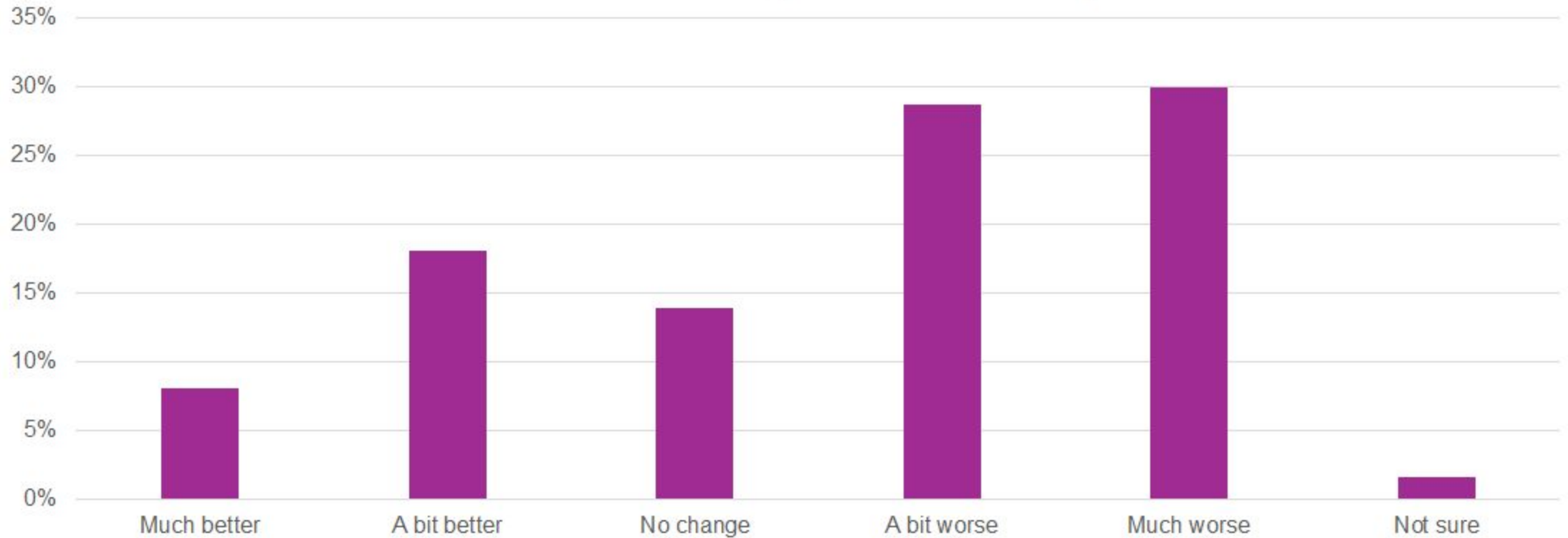
Executive Summary

- Only 20% of Councillors are optimistic that the Government's proposed reforms will improve local Government in England.
- Only 17% councillors believe that a minimum of 500,000 people is the right size for local councils in England.
- 32% in councils with the Mayoral model believe it works well in their area. Of councillors in areas without a Mayor, only 14% believe the Mayoral model will work best for their area.

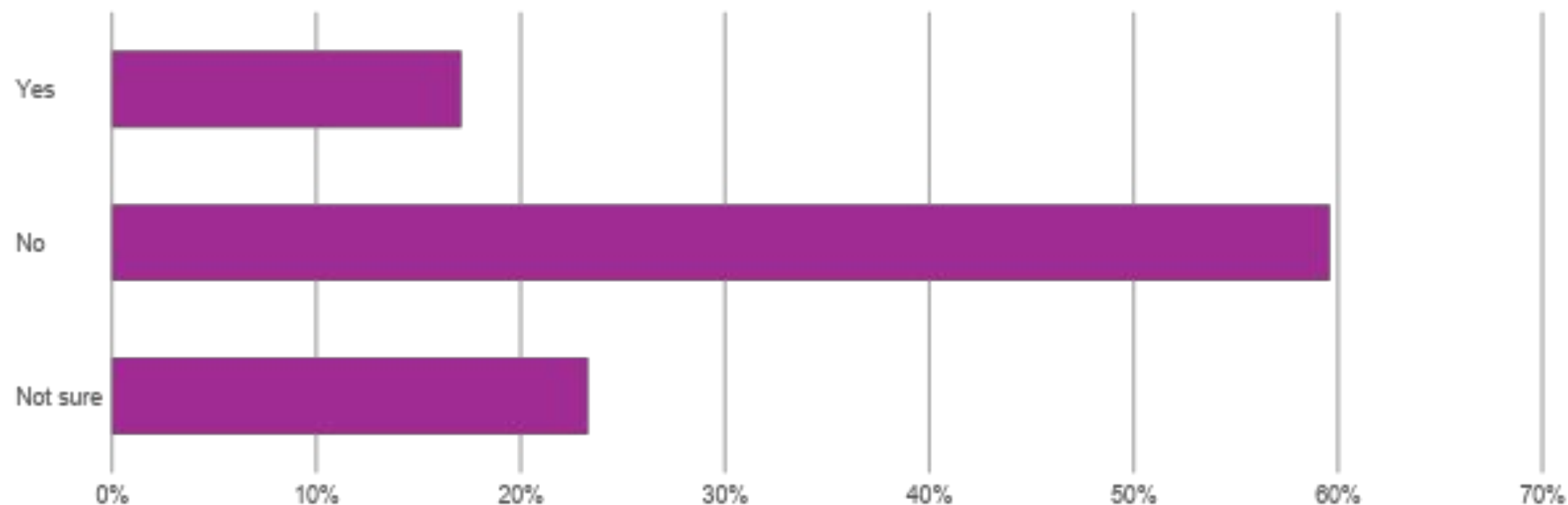
Sample size: 834 councillors from 255 local authorities



During the time you've been a councillor, do you think things have got better or worse for your local authority?

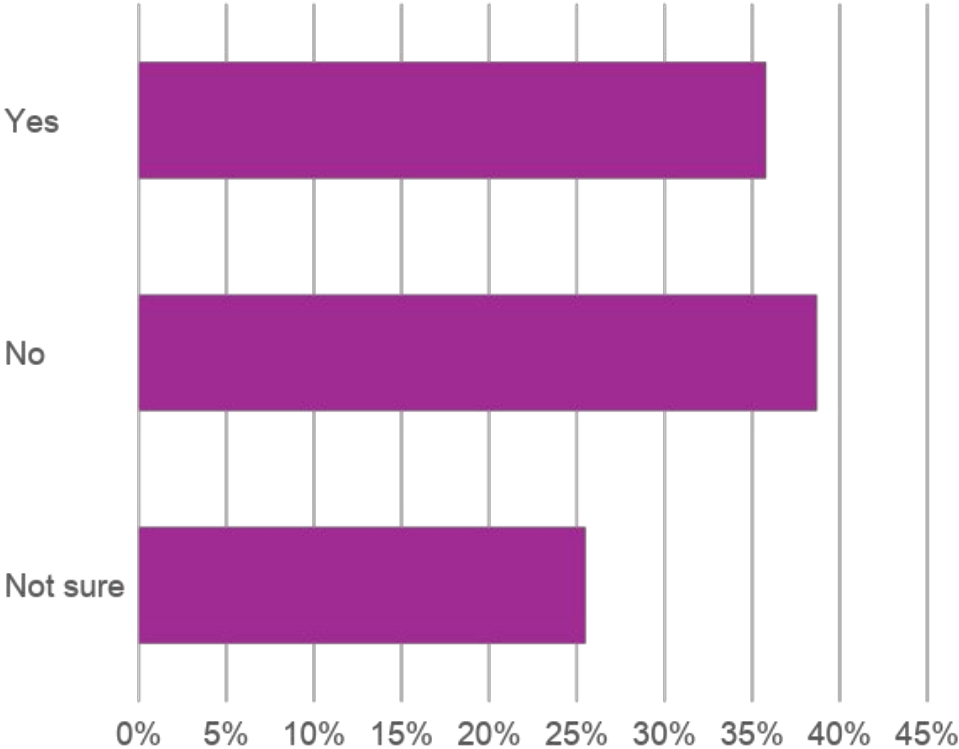


The Government believes that local councils need to have at least 500,000 residents to deliver efficient services. Do you think this is the right size for local councils in England?



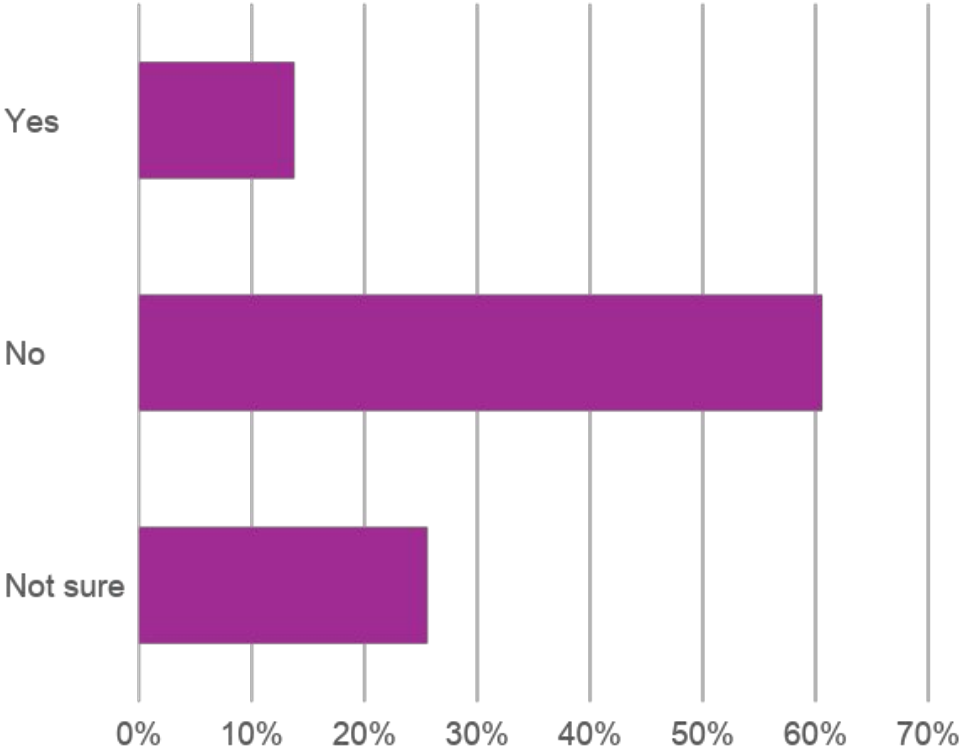
Councillors with a Mayor

Do you think that the Mayoral model works well for areas like yours?

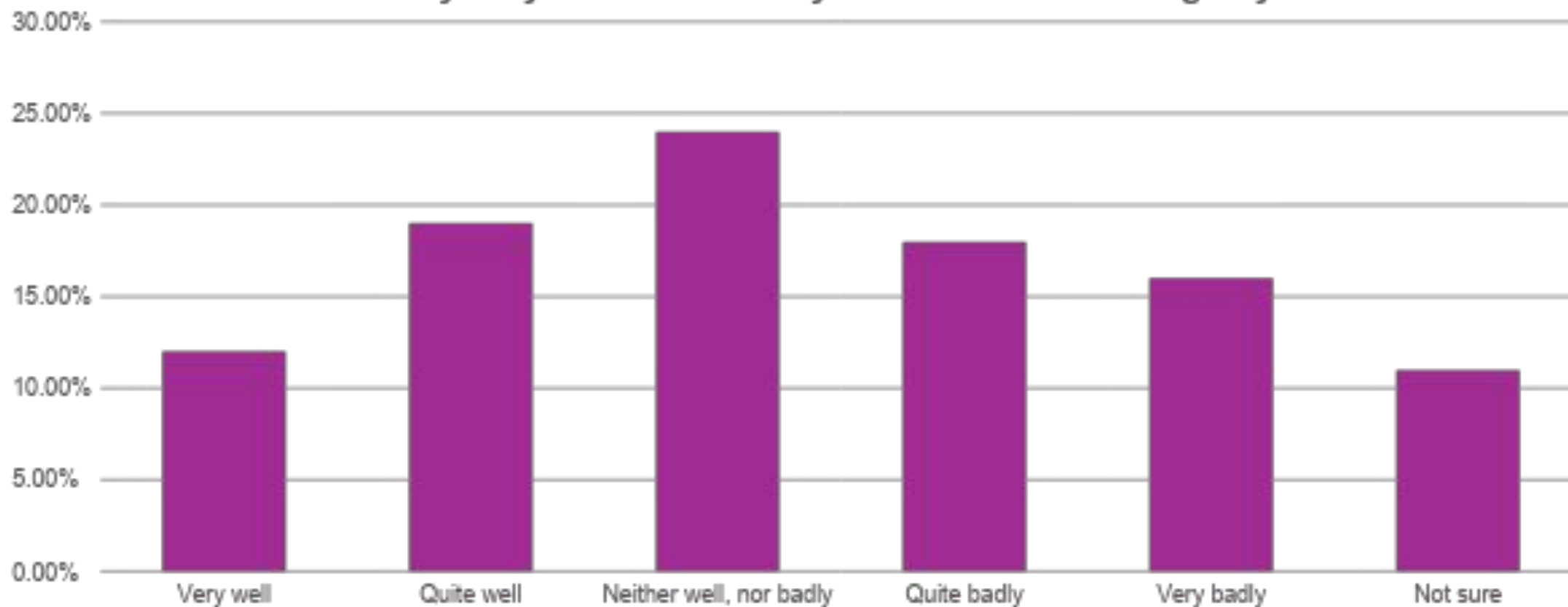


Councillors without a Mayor

Do you think that the Mayoral model will work best for areas like yours?

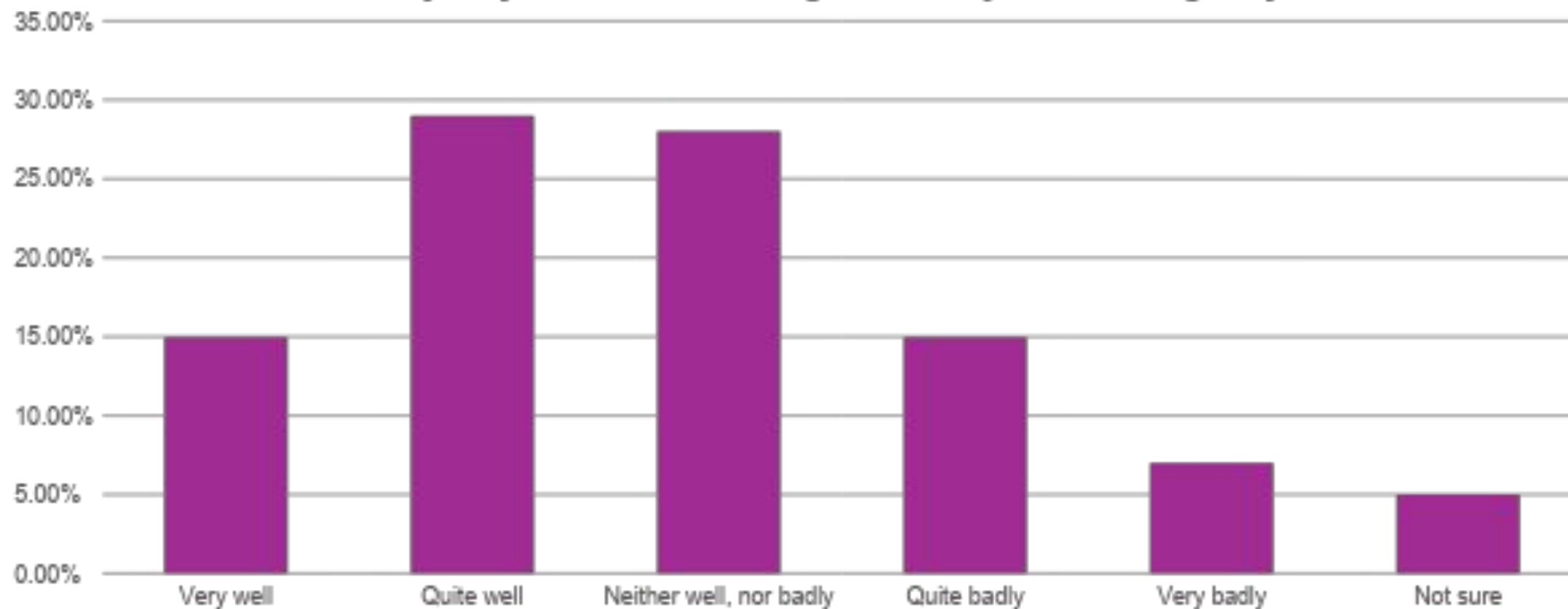


How well or badly do you think the mayoral model is working in your area?



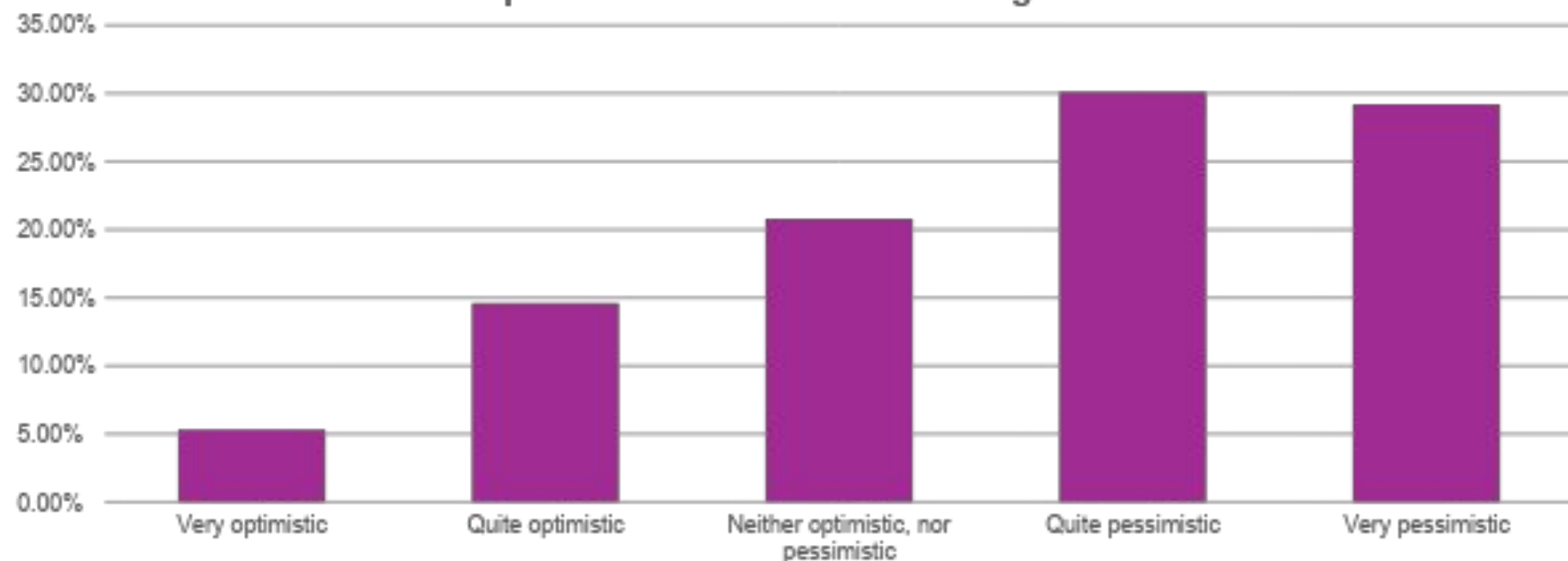
Councillors in areas with an elected Mayor

How well or badly do you think the strategic authority is delivering for your area?



Councillors in areas with strategic authority without an elected Mayor

How optimistic are you that the Government's proposed reforms will improve local Government in England?



Views on devolution plans

A good idea. Creation of unitary authorities will deliver economies of scale and value for money.

A rehash of the Osbourne and Cameron model which has not worked as good as it should have.

Based on profound errors about the purpose of local government and a lack of understanding of how it should work.

I like the idea of devolving power from the government to combined authorities...But I am in general against moving authority up from councils to combined authorities.

A positive way forward for English devolution. Boundaries and identities need to be considered carefully, but a great step forward in cleaning up the mess that is local government currently.

Democracy on the cheap, puts local democracy at a distance

On the creation of large strategic authority with a Mayor

A strategic authority has the potential to improve the region but there's no guarantee it will do so. It depends on funding, powers, how it is set up etc. etc.

Aims and objectives are politically driven

As a Cllr in an existing unitary, I see this as another layer of government.

As a councillor, my area will go from 2.50 councillors, to 1 who has a lot more responsibility - this will limit who can take the role, as it will be for the rich and the retired, and drive normal working people away.

Combined authorities are very welcome, the directly elected Mayor much less so. Quite why we value the Cabinet system nationally and insist on weakening it regionally is beyond me.

Demand on services are increasing without the funding to match

On 500,000 unitary council size

500,000 can in no way be described as "local government". There is an obsession with size at the expense of genuine communities.

Costs are too high to sustain the level of staffing in smaller authorities. Buying power will be enhanced too.

Far too big, especially for parts of the country that are not densely populated and/or have dominating urban areas

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I don't think you can have a one size fits all approach lots of things need to be taken into consideration

Will this improve local Government?

I think devolution is good. As usual it's all in the implementation.

Genuine devolution is about decentralisation. This is the opposite.

Extraordinary powers in the hands of one individual with an oversize remit.

It has sucked powers and decisions up, also no accountability or real scrutiny

It remains to be seen how much power and funding they are given. If they end up centralising power, away from the member unitaries, that will not be good for democracy.

In urban areas with one collective identity the mayoral model is brilliant but in semi-urban and rural areas consisting of multiple towns and cities is just too big.

Biggest challenge facing your Council

Adult social
care

Balancing the
budget

Cuts. Cuts.
Cuts.

Housing and
Homelessness

SEND, social care,
and the employers'
NI increase.

Devolution has taken over
almost every other focus.
Keeping staff in uncertain
times will be difficult.