

Balliemeanoch, Argyll & Bute Pumped Hydro Storage Survey

April 2025

Prepared on behalf of





Introduction

- Pumped storage hydro research was undertaken on behalf of ILI Group to help identify what the Argyll and Bute community thought about this form of renewable energy storage in the Balliemeanoch area.
- Shared Voice conducted some research on renewable energy storage facilities. In light of plans for a new pumped storage hydro facility near Balliemeanoch, we spoke to residents about their attitudes to this form of renewable green energy storage.
- This report identifies the common themes from 102 respondents.



Key findings

Two in three people in the Balliemeanoch area **are supportive of ILI Group's proposal** to build a pumped storage hydro (PSH) at Balliemeanoch.

95% of those who responded think this form of energy storage is a **good idea**. The top three reasons were:

- Making the best use of clean energy
- Job creation
- Reducing reliance on fossil fuels

Over half (53%) of respondents think there is **a lack of clean and renewable energy** storage in Scotland.



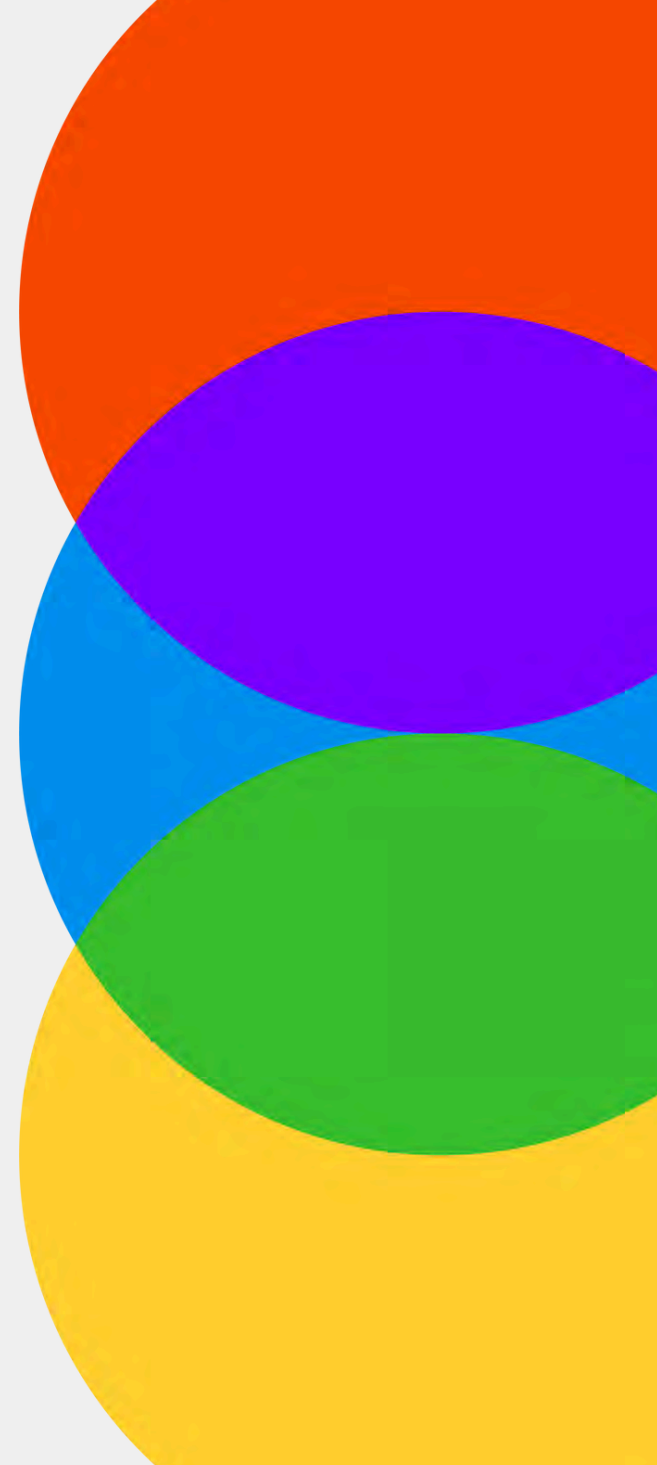
Key findings

Local **people are struggling with rising energy bills** and 85% said their energy had become more expensive in the last year.

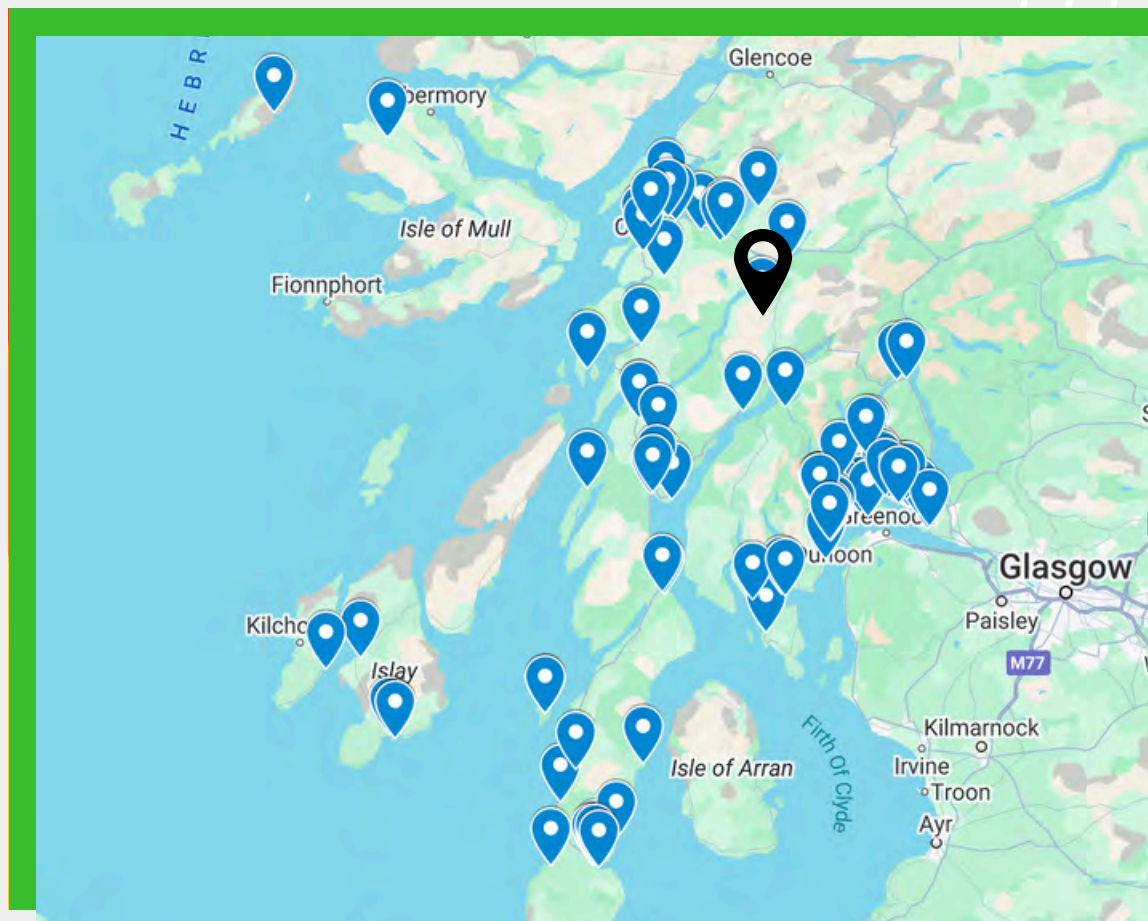
With **over half** saying they had to **reduce spending** on essentials such as groceries, clothing and leisure activities.

When asked to rank common concerns about PSH, almost two thirds of people cited the **impact on wildlife and habitats**, and the **local landscape** as the **most important considerations** for a project like this.

Two out of three people said the **impact on tourism, noise and disruption during construction**, and the **impact on them and their household** were **not important** issues for them.



Where respondents are

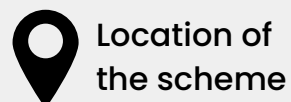


Argyll & Bute Council Wards:

Oban North & Lorn – 16
Lomond North – 14
Kintyre & the Islands – 12

Cowal – 11
Dunoon – 11
South Kintyre – 10
Mid Argyll – 10

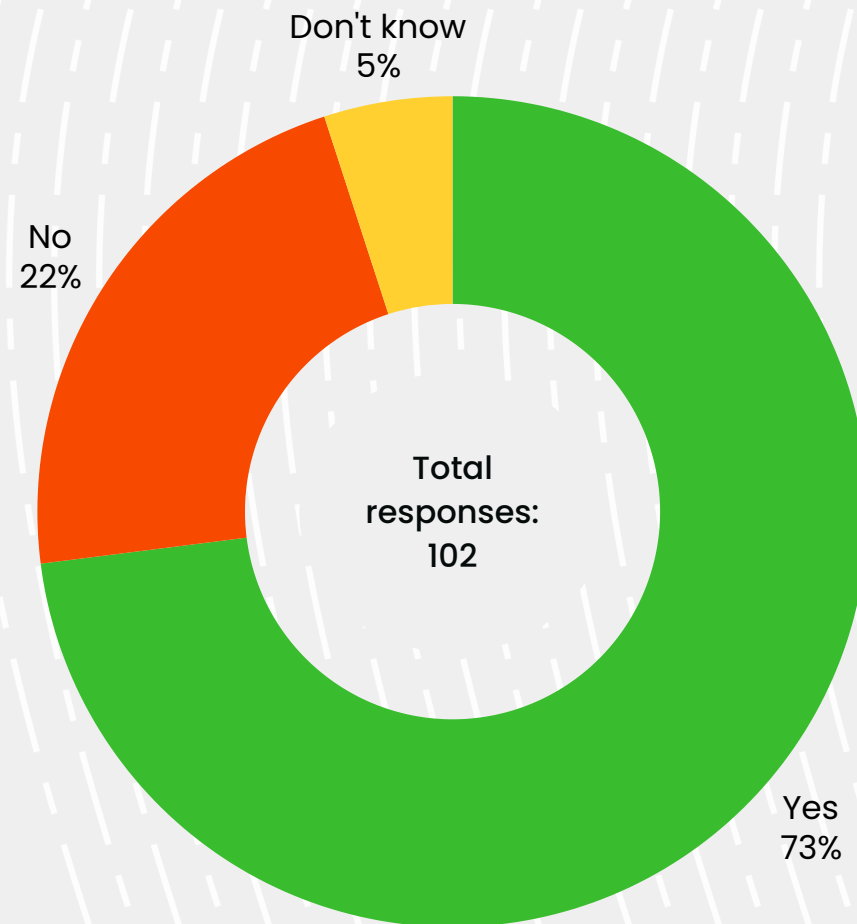
Helensburgh & Lomond South – 6
Oban South & the Isles – 5
Isle of Bute – 4
Helensburgh Central – 3



Location of
the scheme

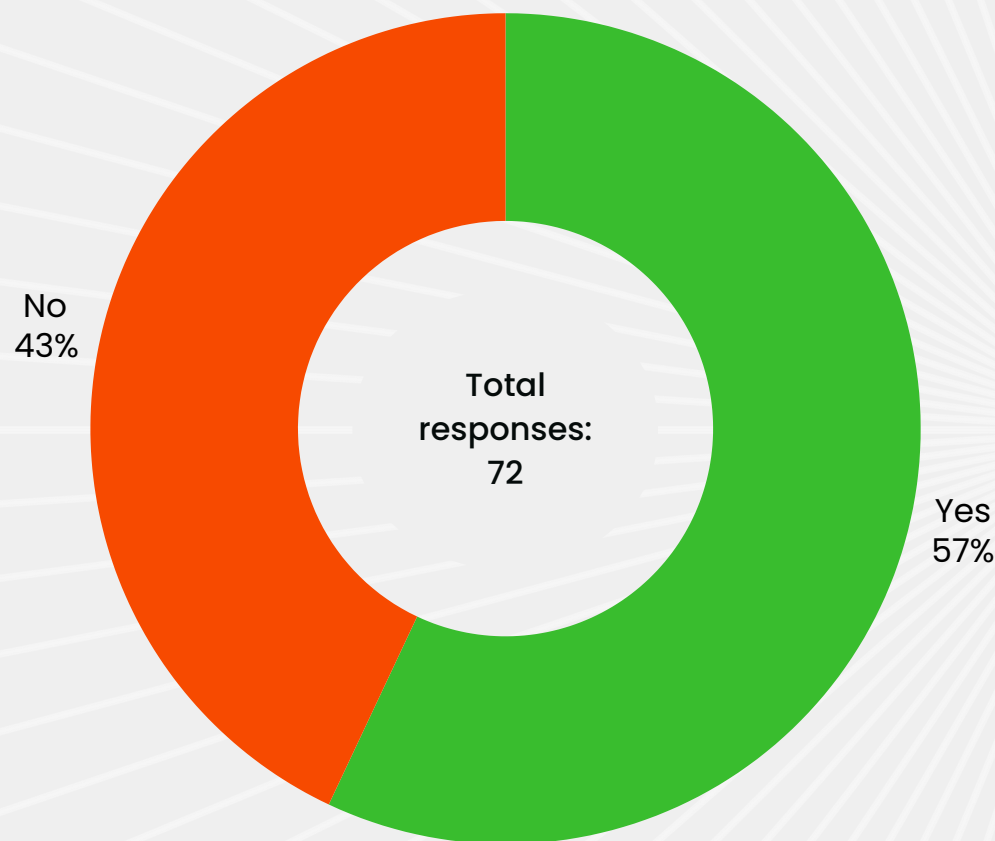
Q1. Have you personally found your energy bills have increased in the past 12 months?

Nearly 3 in 4 respondents have found their energy bills increase.

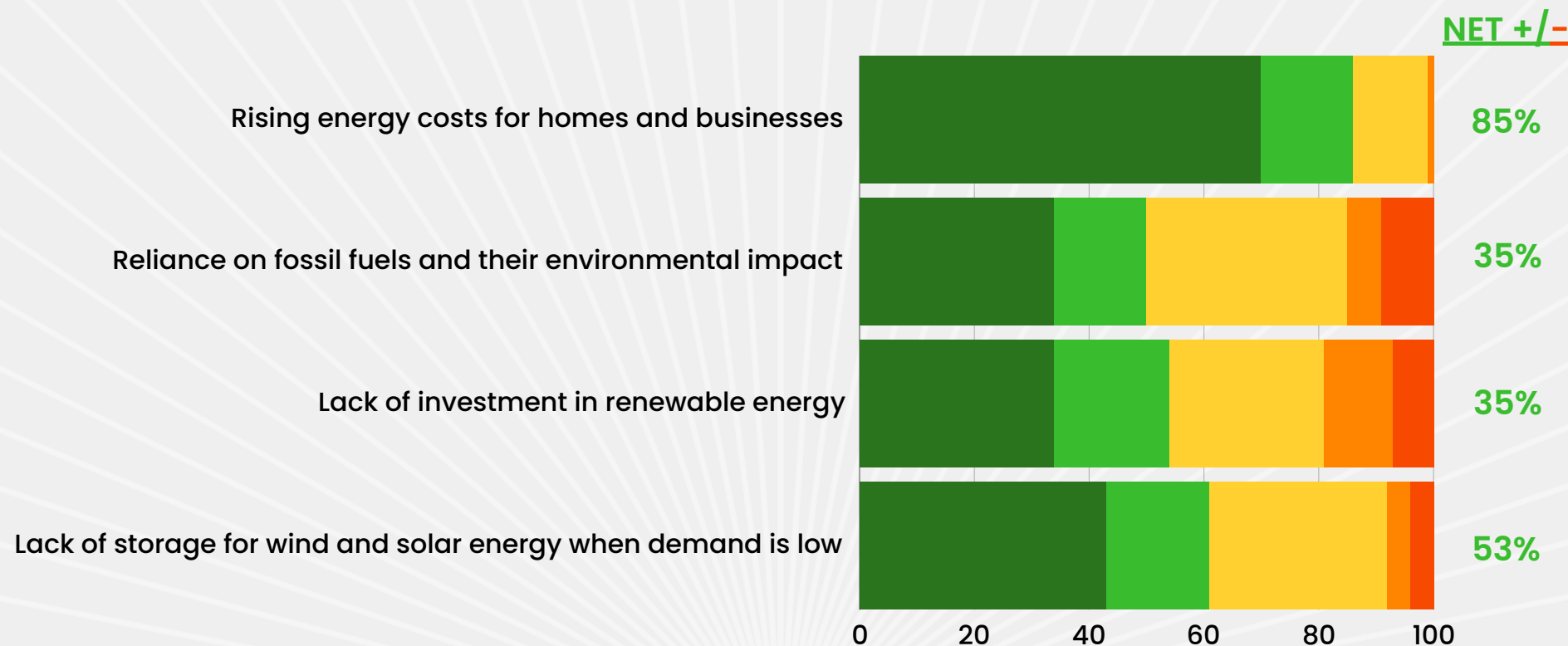


Q2. Have you had to reduce spending on other essentials such as groceries, clothing or leisure activities?

Over half of respondents have had to reduce spending.



Q3. On a scale of 1–5, with 5 being very important, and 1 being not important, how do you rate the following challenges to Scotland's energy?



Net score is the sum of Very Important and Important (5,4) minus the sum of not important or not at all important (1,2). Presented in % form

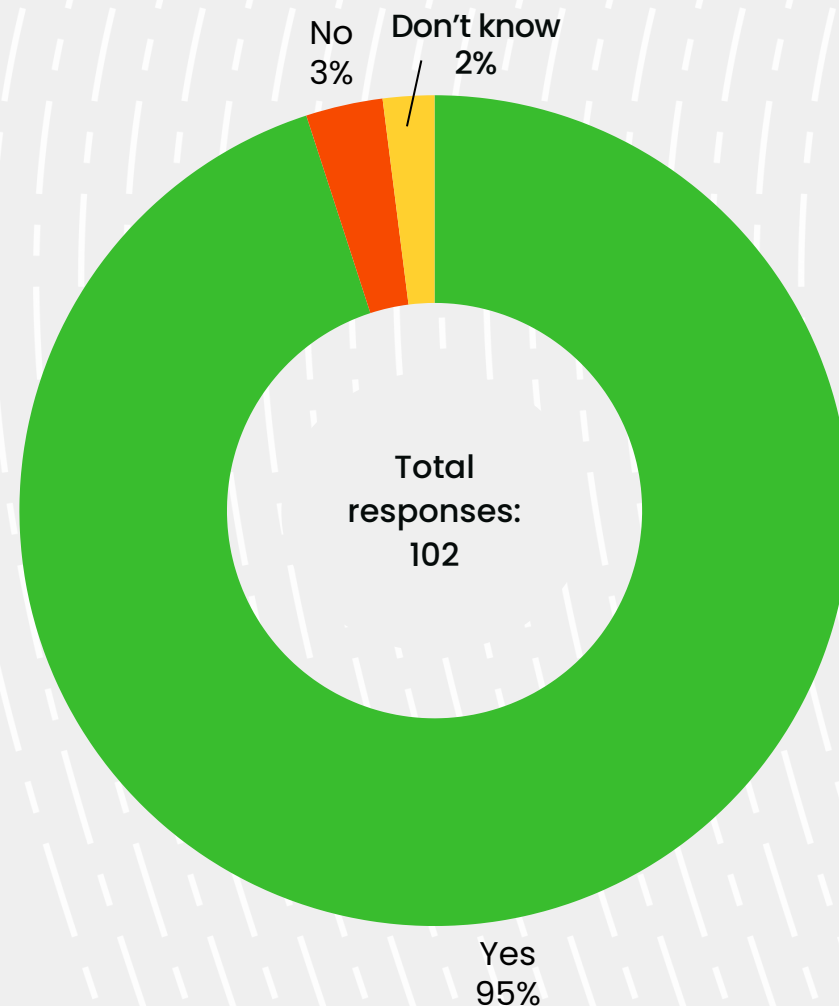


Pumped hydro storage: an explanation

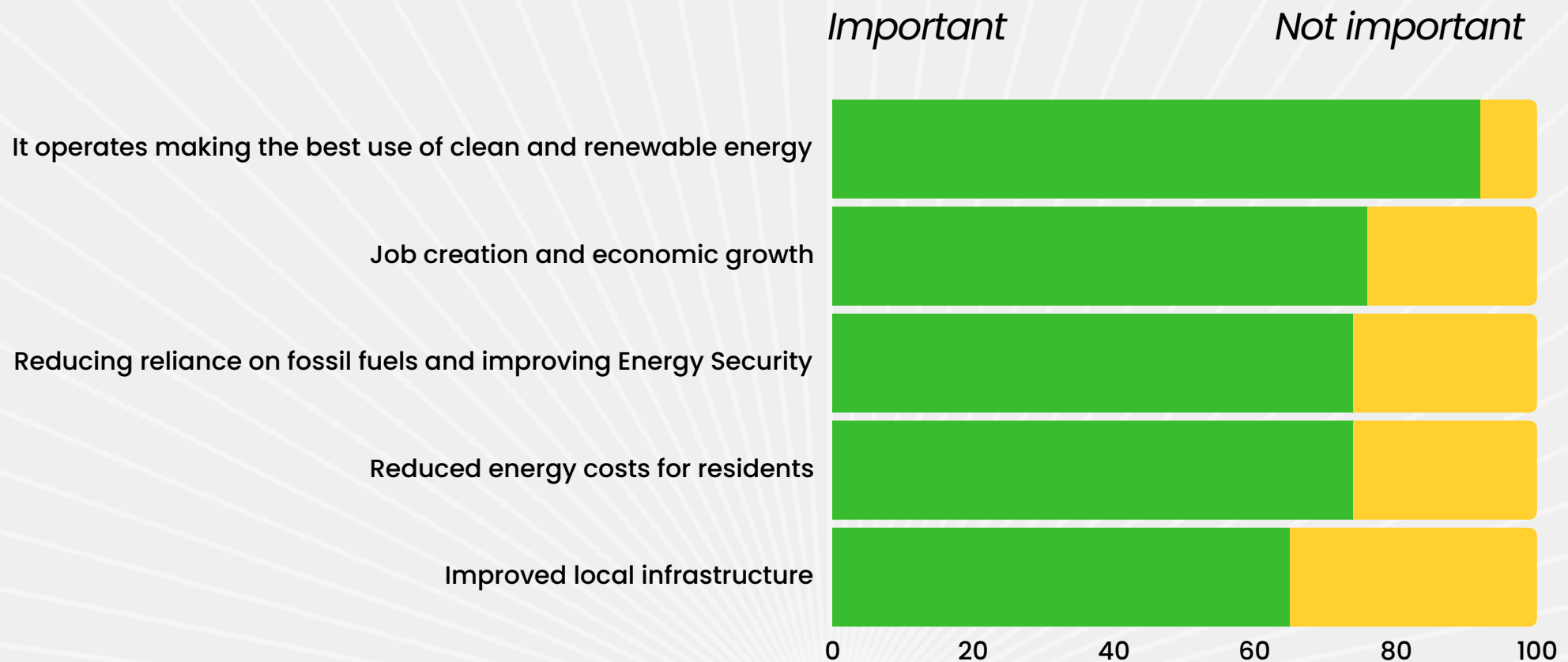
- Pumped storage hydro is an important energy source in Scotland, thanks to its hilly terrain. It offers a low-carbon way to store and generate energy based on demand.
- When demand is high, water flows from a reservoir downhill in underground pipes through turbines to produce electricity. When demand is low, the water is pumped back uphill to be stored for future use, acting like a giant rechargeable battery.
- Respondents were reminded of a similar PSH scheme at Loch Awe, Cruachan, which many local people have visited as part of tours and school trips.

Q4. Do you think this form of energy storage is a good idea?

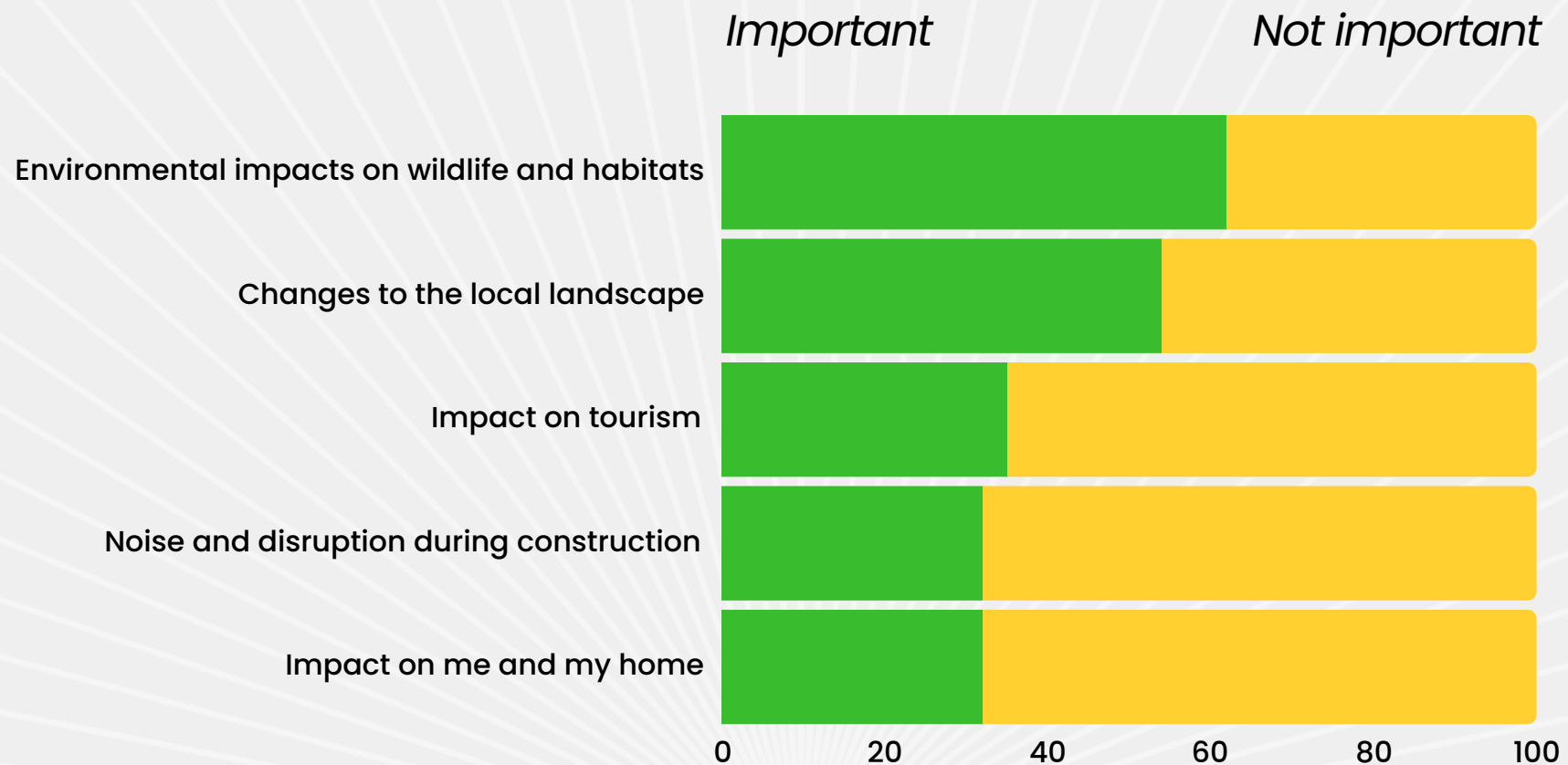
Nearly all of respondents think this form of energy storage is a good idea.



Q5. I'm now going to read out some benefits of a pumped storage hydro facility. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being very important, and 1 being not important, please can you rank each of the following:

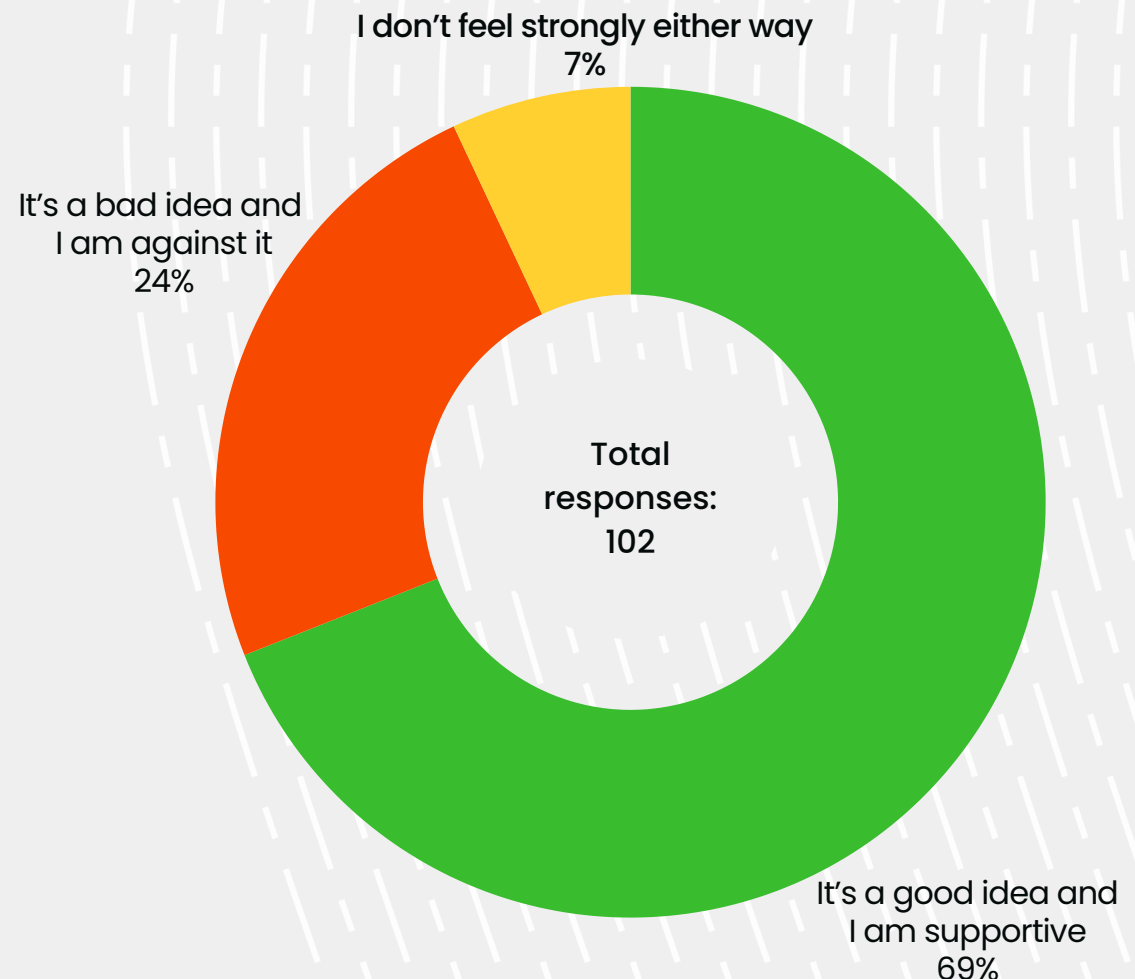


Q6. I'm now going to read out some common concerns about pumped storage hydro. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being very important, and 1 being not important, please can you rank each of the following:

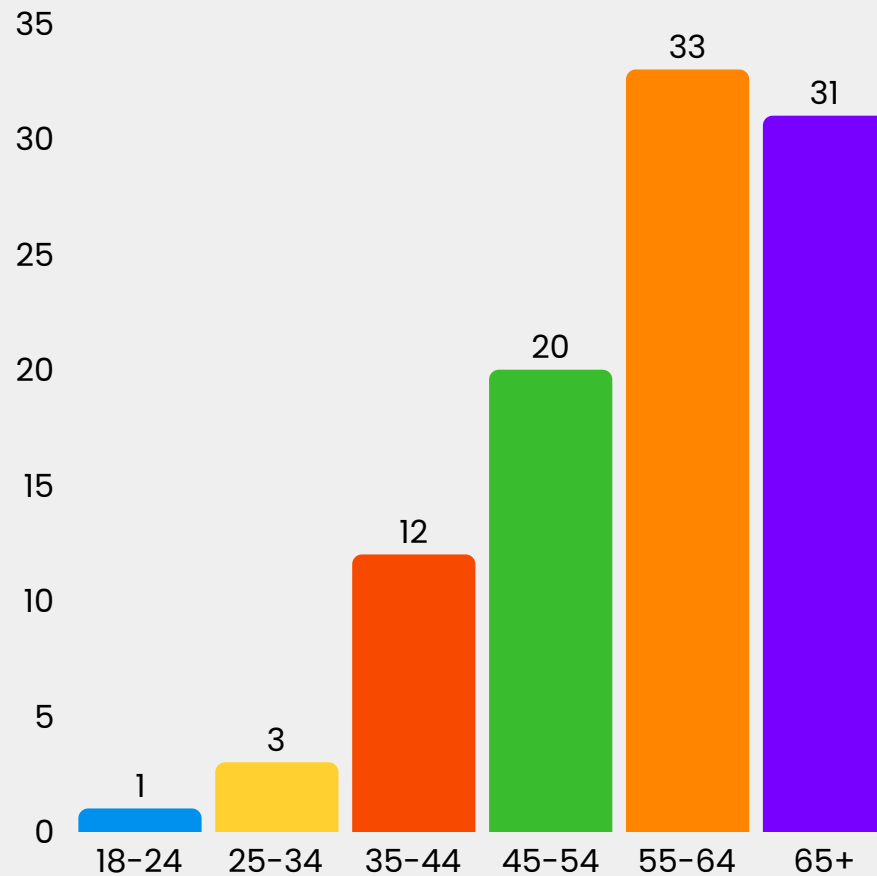


Q7. ILI Group is proposing to build a new pumped storage hydro project which will include a new reservoir near Balliemeanoch. This will provide energy storage and massive savings in CO2e emissions. Based on everything you have heard, which of the following best captures your thoughts on the proposed project

Over 2 in 3 respondents are supportive of the proposal.

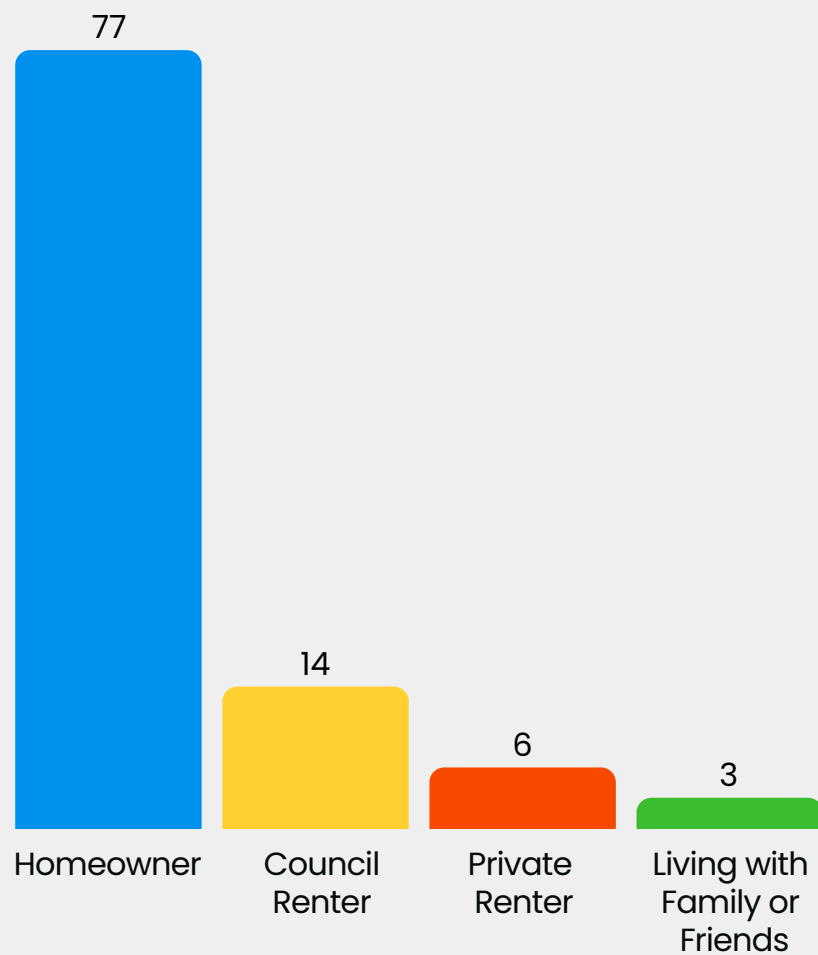


Age



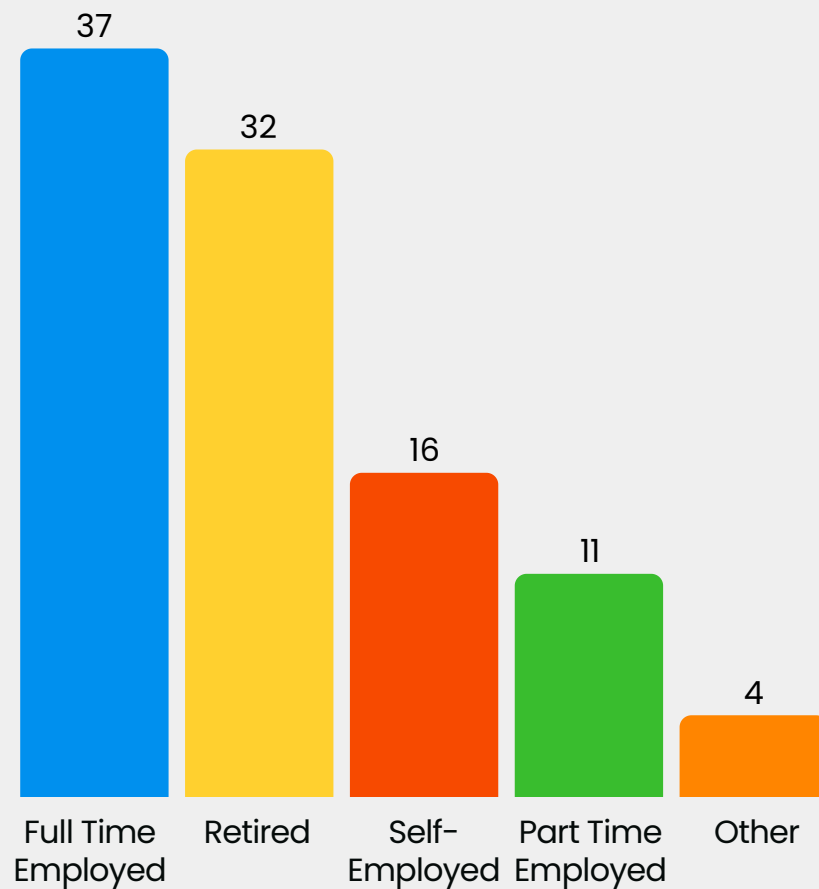
All respondents **under the age of 54** think this form of energy storage is a **good idea**.

Housing Tenure



69% of homeowners found that their energy bills had increased over the last 12 months.

Employment



83% of respondents who are **working** believe that **job creation** and **economic growth** is an **important benefit** of pumped hydro energy storage.

About us

Shared Voice is a research and digital led communications agency that helps businesses engage and activate supportive audiences to achieve their goals.

More information about Shared Voice is available [here](#).

We would like to thank ILL Group who commissioned this report.





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