

# Consultation on North Somerset Council joining West of England Combined Authority - findings report

APRIL 2026



# Contents

Contents	2
List of figures	4
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	5
Consultation approach and sample	5
Key findings	6
Background	7
Purpose of the consultation	7
Proposed changes	7
Consultation approach and sample	8
This report	9
Consultation findings	10
“Do you believe that North Somerset Council should join the West of England Combined Authority?”	10
“Why do you believe that North Somerset Council should or should not join?”	13
“To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across a wider combined authority area will support economic growth?”	16
“To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across a wider combined authority area will improve public services?”	19
“To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across a wider combined authority area will support the diverse needs and interests of local communities?”	22
“What benefits do you think can be achieved through expanding the West of England Combined Authority into North Somerset?”	26
“Do you have any concerns about the proposal to expand the West of England Combined Authority into North Somerset? If so, what could be done to address those concerns?”	28
“What activities and projects would you identify as priorities for an expanded West of England Combined Authority?”	31
Appendix A: Methodology	33
Target population and sampling	33
Data collection method and timings	33
Communications	34

Response profile	34
Data processing	38
Analysis and reporting	39
Appendix B: Organisational responses	41
Appendix C: Consultation form	42

## List of figures

Figure 1: Whether respondents believe that North Somerset Council should join West of England Combined Authority (by age group)	11
Figure 2: Whether respondents believe that North Somerset Council should join West of England Combined Authority (by area of residence)	12
Figure 3: Whether respondents believe that working across a wider combined authority area will support economic growth (by age group)	17
Figure 4: Whether respondents believe that working across a wider combined authority area will support economic growth (by area of residence)	18
Figure 5: Whether respondents believe that working across a wider combined authority area will improve public services (by age group)	20
Figure 6: Whether respondents believe that working across a wider combined authority area will improve public services (by area of residence)	21
Figure 7: Whether respondents believe that working across a wider combined authority area will support the diverse needs and interests of local communities (by age group)	23
Figure 8: Whether respondents believe that working across a wider combined authority area will support the diverse needs and interests of local communities (by area of residence)	24
Figure 9: Consultation response by unitary authority area	35

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) and North Somerset Council (NSC) are actively exploring a proposed extension of the combined authority area to include North Somerset. A public consultation relating to the extension of the combined authority was launched on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026, running for eight weeks until Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

This report is based upon response to the consultation, covering responses received up to 9am on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April (n=1,275). Following the exclusion of a small number of responses, including those in which the individual responding was under 18 or did not provide consent for their response data to be processed, 1,268 responses were included in analysis and reporting.

## Consultation approach and sample

The consultation utilises a self-selecting sample (i.e., anyone with access to the consultation form can opt-in to respond), meaning the sample of respondents is not designed to be representative of the wider population. The following bullet points provide a short summary of the profile of consultation respondents:

- 56% of consultation respondents provided a postcode which was matched to North Somerset, compared with 43% whose postcode was matched to the existing combined authority area
- The majority of responses to the consultation are from individuals (97%), with the remaining responses sent on behalf of organisations
- 76% of respondents provided an age category when prompted, with responses breaking down as follows: 18-34 (12%), 35-54 (26%), 55-74 (47%), 75+ (15%)
- 69% of respondents provided information on sex at birth when prompted, with responses breaking down as follows: Male (58%), Female (42%)
- Using the Census definition of disability, the proportion of disabled respondents is 17%

## Key findings

- Across all respondents, over half reported that North Somerset Council should join the MCA (57%) with varied response across different age groups
- A majority of respondents living within the existing MCA area and North Somerset supported North Somerset joining the MCA (66% and 50% respectively)
- The most frequently cited reason as to why North Somerset should join the MCA was centred on integration, with respondents highlighting existing geographical, economic, transport, and collaboration linkages as well as potential benefits of further integration
- The most prominent reason for opposing North Somerset's MCA membership was respondents' concern about a potential loss of local control, followed by a concern around negative financial implications and / or the perceived "cost" associated with joining
- Respondents to the consultation were more likely to agree that working across a wider combined authority area will support economic growth (53%) than disagree (36%)
- Respondents were also more likely to agree that working across a wider combined authority area will improve public services (52%) than disagree (38%)
- A similar proportion of respondents agreed and disagreed that working across a wider combined authority area will support the diverse needs and interests of local communities (44% and 42% respectively); respondents who live in North Somerset were more likely to disagree (49%) than agree (40%)
- Of those respondents citing a clear, perceived benefit of North Somerset Council joining the combined authority, the topic of transport was most commonly mentioned, with potential noted for improving transport services and infrastructure within and across the region
- In terms of key themes raised by those with explicit concerns around the proposal, the most common theme related to perceived financial concerns, with responses coded to this theme primarily focused on perceived negative cost implications for residents and / or the region
- On which activities and projects respondents would prioritise in relation to an expanded MCA, transport-related priorities formed almost half of all codes applied to responses for this question, a far greater proportion than any other theme

# Background

## Purpose of the consultation

In December 2024, the UK government published the English Devolution White Paper<sup>1</sup>. The paper sets out to extend devolution across all areas of England. As part of this move towards greater devolution, West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) and North Somerset Council (NSC) are actively exploring a proposed extension of the combined authority area to include North Somerset.

Prior to any decision-making on whether to extend the combined authority area to include North Somerset, the MCA is seeking views from interested parties, including those who live, work or own businesses which operate within the existing West of England area and North Somerset Council area. The MCA Committee and North Somerset Council each agreed to launch a formal public consultation on expanding the combined authority area to include North Somerset. The consultation was launched in February 2026<sup>2</sup>.

## Proposed changes

The MCA was founded in 2017 and was originally designed to include all four local authorities, with North Somerset Council a full member alongside Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, and South Gloucestershire. North Somerset decided not to join the MCA ahead of its formal creation in 2017. Since then, the MCA has covered three constituent authorities, with North Somerset Council considered a close partner. At the point of the launch of the consultation, North Somerset Council do not currently have a vote in the formal decision-making committee of the MCA<sup>3</sup>.

The primary proposal being consulted on is whether North Somerset Council should join the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority. As a result of any extension of the combined authority, North Somerset Council would have equal decision making and voting power on the MCA Committee as the other constituent authorities. The public consultation was designed to enable the MCA and North Somerset Council to receive feedback on the proposed changes ahead of any decision-making.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/about-us/democracy-funding-transparency/expanding-weca-into-north-somerset/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/about-us/democracy-funding-transparency/expanding-weca-into-north-somerset/>

## Consultation approach and sample

A public consultation relating to the extension of the combined authority was launched on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026, running for eight weeks until 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026. Further details relating to the consultation process can be found in Appendix A.

The consultation utilised a self-selecting sample (i.e., anyone with access to the consultation form could opt-in to respond), meaning the sample of respondents is not designed to be representative of the wider population. The use of a self-selecting sample limits the ability of analysts to generalise the findings to the wider population, while it is not practical to test any differences between sub-groups for statistical significance when utilising a self-selecting sample. As a result, comparisons between sub-groups should be treated with caution.

Using a self-selecting sample also means that the likelihood of some groups of the population being over-represented or under-represented is high. As an example, 18-34 year olds are responsible for 9% of the responses included in this report despite making up 27% of the region's population, ranging from 17% in North Somerset to 33% in Bristol<sup>4</sup>. This should be noted throughout, particularly where comparisons are being made based on age.

To identify differences between respondents living in North Somerset and those living in the existing combined authority area, respondents were also asked to provide their full postcode. Using ONS data on postcodes and Local Authority District (LAD)<sup>5</sup>, each respondent's postcode was matched to North Somerset or the existing combined authority area (i.e., Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol or South Gloucestershire). Open-ended ("free-text") responses have not been analysed according to where respondents live.

A small proportion of respondents (2%) were included in the 'Total' response but were not considered to be in either the existing combined authority area or North Somerset. These respondents typically did not provide a postcode, provided a postcode which belonged to an area outside the proposed combined authority area or provided an unrecognised postcode. It is worth noting that some respondents are likely to work in North Somerset and live in the existing combined authority area, while others are likely to do the opposite. Those representing organisations were asked to provide a postcode for their organisation.

Further detail on how the mix of respondents to the consultation differs from the population at large can be found in Appendix A.

---

<sup>4</sup> ONS mid-year population estimates, 2025

<sup>5</sup> ONS Open Geography Portal <https://geoportal.statistics.gov.uk/>

## This report

Findings in this report cover responses received up to 9am on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April (n=1,275). Any responses in which the individual responding was under 18 were excluded from analysis and reporting on the basis of the MCA being unable to obtain informed consent for these individuals. Likewise, any responses from individuals who did not provide consent for their response data to be processed were excluded. Following the exclusion of six responses which met these criteria, as well as an additional written response, 1,268 were included for the purposes of analysis and reporting.

Data were collected across each of the consultation questions:

- Do you believe that North Somerset Council should join the West of England Combined Authority?
  - Why do you believe that North Somerset Council should / should not join?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across a wider combined authority area will support economic growth?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across a wider combined authority area will improve public services?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across a wider combined authority area will support the diverse interests and needs of local communities?
- What benefits do you think can be achieved through expanding the West of England Combined Authority into North Somerset?
- Do you have any concerns about the proposal to expand the West of England Combined Authority into North Somerset? If so, what could be done to address those concerns?
- What activities and projects would you identify as priorities for an expanded West of England Combined Authority?

In this report, percentages are rounded to zero decimal points. As a result, figures may not sum to 100%.

Note that all reported base sizes in the report include those who selected the option 'Don't know', in order for these views to be accounted for in any decision making. Base sizes may differ for each question. Figures based on a base size of less than 30 are not presented.

Further technical details and details relating to methodology can be found in Appendix A. The appendices also contain a short summary of organisational responses (Appendix B) and a copy of the consultation form (Appendix C).

## Consultation findings

### **“Do you believe that North Somerset Council should join the West of England Combined Authority?”**

All respondents to the consultation were asked whether they believe North Somerset Council should join the combined authority. Respondents could choose ‘Yes’, ‘No’, or indicate that they did not know whether they supported the proposal (‘Don’t Know’).

Demographic monitoring questions were in place to collect information about the age of respondents, but these questions were not mandatory. This means that the overall number of responses to this question (n=1,268) exceeds the number of respondents ordered by age group (n=962). As a result of the relatively high proportion of respondents not providing information relating to age (24%), findings may differ between respondents overall and those across the age categories.

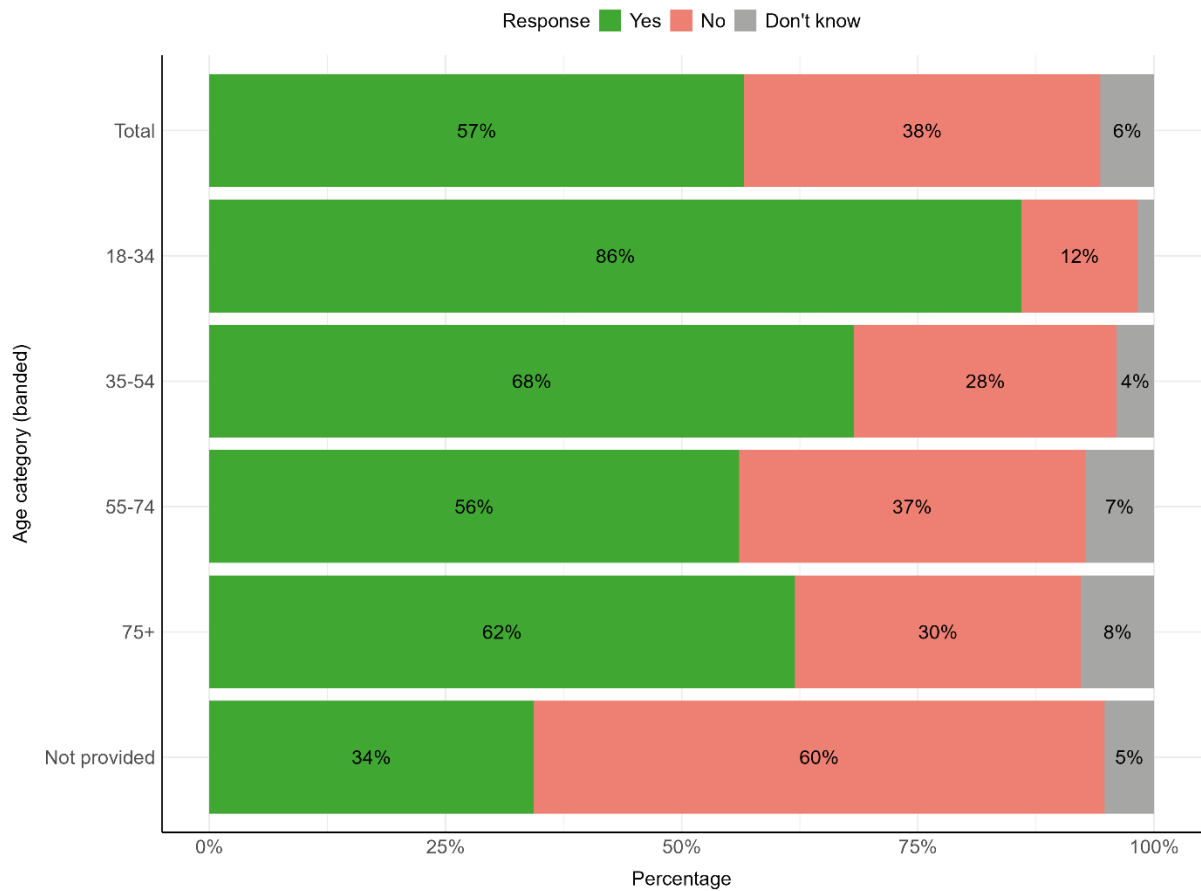
When reviewing response by age category, it is also worth noting the lower number of respondents in the 18-34 and 75+ age groups (n=114 and n=143 respectively) compared with other age groups.

Organisational responses (n=35) are not included in the breakdown of respondents by age group but are included in the total response.

**Across all respondents, over half believe that North Somerset Council should join the MCA (57%).** A smaller proportion do not believe North Somerset Council should join (38%). A further 6% of respondents did not know whether the extension of the combined authority should take place.

There was varied response across different age groups in relation to North Somerset Council joining the MCA, with respondents in the older age groups less likely to favour the proposal. The vast majority of respondents aged 18-34 believe North Somerset Council should join (86%), compared with smaller proportions of respondents aged 35-54 (68%), 55-74 (56%) and 75+ (62%).

**Figure 1: Whether respondents believe that North Somerset Council should join West of England Combined Authority (by age group)**



Base: All consultation responses

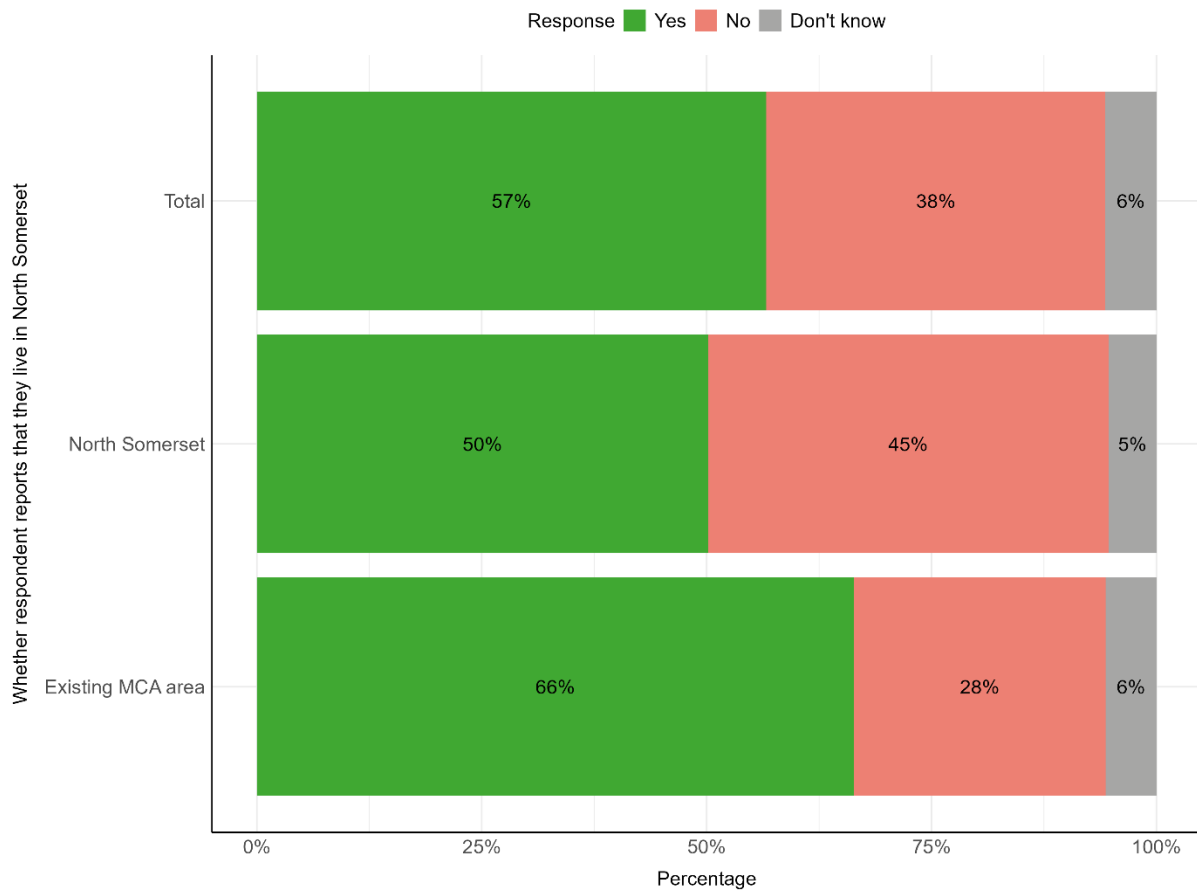
Base size: Total - 1268, 18-34 - 114, 35-54 - 252, 55-74 - 453, 75+ - 143, Not provided - 306

Source: Consultation on NSC joining West of England MCA (Feb - Apr 2026)

Reflecting the age groups most likely to support the proposal, the proportion of respondents expressing a lack of support for the proposal was highest among those aged 55-74 (37%) and lowest for respondents aged 18-34 (12%). The level of respondents selecting 'Don't know' was relatively consistent across all age groups, varying from 2% to 8%.

To identify differences between respondents living in North Somerset compared with those living in the existing MCA area, each respondent's postcode was matched to one of these areas. A small proportion of respondents (2%) were included in the 'Total' response but could not be matched to an area inside the proposed combined authority area. It is worth noting that some respondents are likely to work in North Somerset and live in the existing combined authority area, while others are likely to do the opposite. Those representing organisations were asked to provide a postcode for their organisation.

**Figure 2: Whether respondents believe that North Somerset Council should join West of England Combined Authority (by area of residence)**



Base: All consultation responses

Base size: Total - 1268, North Somerset - 714, Existing MCA area - 532

Source: Consultation on NSC joining West of England MCA (Feb - Apr 2026)

Respondents living in the North Somerset area were more likely to support the extension of the MCA into North Somerset (50%) than oppose it (45%). A small proportion of respondents living in North Somerset did not know whether the extension of the combined authority should take place (5%).

Just under two-thirds of respondents within the existing MCA area support North Somerset Council joining (66%), compared with a smaller proportion who did not (28%). A small proportion of respondents living in the existing MCA area chose 'Don't Know' (6%).

## “Why do you believe that North Somerset Council should or should not join?”

Following the initial question on whether respondents believe the MCA should be extended into North Somerset, respondents to the consultation were asked to provide the reasons for their response. For ease of analysis, respondents were asked to provide an open-ended (“free-text”) response to one of the following questions based on their initial response:

- [If ‘Yes’ at Q1] “Why do you believe that North Somerset Council should join the West of England Combined Authority?”
- [If ‘No’ at Q1] “Why do you believe that North Somerset Council should not join the West of England Combined Authority?”
- [If ‘Don’t know’ at Q1] “Why are you not yet sure whether North Somerset Council should join the West of England Combined Authority?”

These questions were designed to allow each respondent to provide additional detail, recognising that there may be a range of factors influencing their stance on the proposal. Due to the low number of ‘Don’t know’ responses, analysis relating to the third follow-up question is not covered within the report.

For both open-ended questions analysed, qualitative responses were analysed manually and “coded” according to theme, taking an inductive approach. A summary of the results for these questions is presented below, highlighting the “key” themes (largely designated by frequency of responses coded to that theme). Themes coded fewer than ten times are not reported.

Of the total responses, a proportion were coded as “Invalid response” or “Other” and were therefore removed from the assessment of dominant themes. Invalid responses were classified as such if the content included: symbols only; a statement of declining to respond, such as “no comment”; illegible text; and / or a comment included a statement that might be classified as hate speech alongside no other substantive content. A response was classified as “Other” if a distinct topic was mentioned by too few respondents to form a substantive, standalone theme (<5).

*“Why do you believe that North Somerset Council should join the West of England Combined Authority”*

This question received **712 responses** in total, after initial data cleaning described above.

A small proportion of respondents expressed a general, positive sentiment towards North Somerset joining the MCA, without specifying a particular benefit.

The majority of respondents to this question cited an explicit benefit, and of these, the most frequently cited reason as to why North Somerset should join the MCA was centred on integration. Respondents highlighted *existing* geographical, economic, transport, and collaboration linkages across authority boundaries. Within this theme, many respondents noted that North Somerset residents routinely work, study, visit, or travel across the region; recognising this, *further* integration was often seen as advantageous to develop a more joined up, strategic approach to regional issues. This theme also encompassed perceived benefits of an enhanced regional voice, collaboration on shared challenges, and strengthened influence when negotiating at regional or national levels if North Somerset were to join the MCA.

The next most common theme related to respondents citing perceived economic advantages as a reason for North Somerset to join the MCA. These advantages included expectations of improved access to funding, grants, and investment opportunities, as well as the potential for cost efficiencies, reduced duplication, and better value for money through sharing of resources.

Another key theme, mentioned by a similar proportion of respondents, was transport. Respondents believed joining the MCA could lead to better and more "joined-up" transport planning, strategy, and investment for the region. Some respondents further expressed this was an important priority for them personally and / or other residents; for example, to facilitate employment opportunities, and / or to deliver accessible travel for disabled residents.

*"Why do you believe that North Somerset Council should not join the West of England Combined Authority"*

This question received **472 responses** in total, after initial data cleaning described above.

A small proportion of respondents expressed a general, negative perception or concern around North Somerset joining the MCA, without opting to provide a clearly defined reason alongside.

Of those who did state specific concerns, the most prominent reason for opposing North Somerset's MCA membership was respondents' concern about a potential loss of local control if North Somerset were to join the MCA. This related to potential erosion of decision-making authority and autonomy, a perception that North Somerset may have a weaker "voice" within the partnership, and / or a desire to have decision-making remain on a smaller, more local scale as it functions currently. Some respondents expressed concern around the perception that decision-making power would shift away from North Somerset and therefore that the area's distinct priorities and needs, particularly those linked to its rural identity, might be overshadowed by more urban authorities - most commonly this latter concern was connected to Bristol.

The next most common theme involved a concern around negative financial implications and / or the perceived "cost" associated with joining. Specific points

expressed by respondents within this theme most often included concerns around: increased taxation on residents (i.e., raised Council Tax); inefficient use or wastage of public monies; and / or “unfair” distribution or apportioning of funds across the MCA region (i.e., a perception that funds would be disproportionately allocated to Bristol). Broader financial concerns expressed by some respondents within this theme included, for example, references to the current financial status and pressures facing North Somerset Council.

Some respondents also expressed apprehension about the increased scale and bureaucracy that might accompany membership in a larger combined authority. Some felt that joining the MCA could lead to more complex governance structures, slower processes, and greater administrative burden.

A smaller proportion of respondents expressed concerns connected to the previous Avon County Council model. This historical association contributed to a perception that the MCA could replicate governance structures from this model which they had regarded as ineffective or problematic, and / or informed a general negative view of the MCA model’s potential efficacy.

A less frequent theme pointed to respondents’ concerns around the absence of a democratic process to determine whether North Somerset should join the MCA.

## **“To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across a wider combined authority area will support economic growth?”**

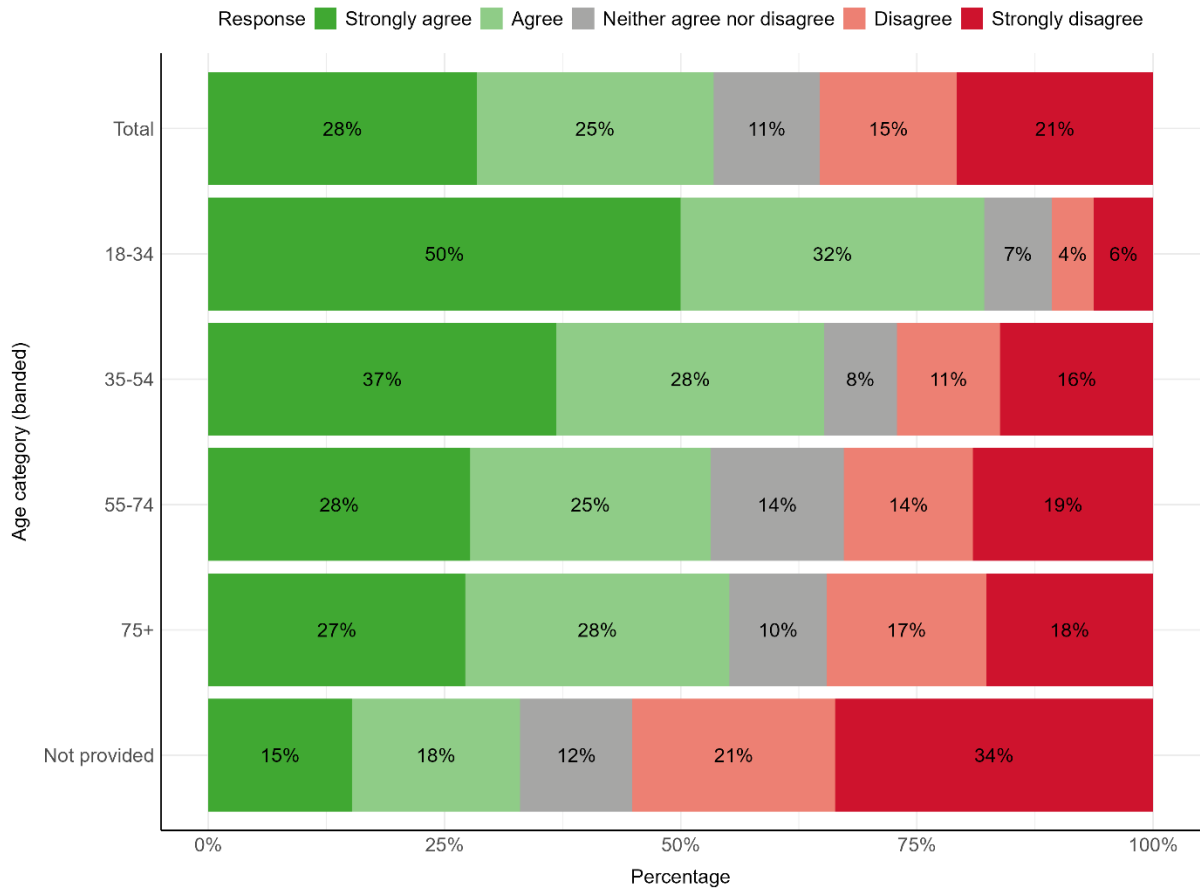
All respondents to the consultation were asked whether they believe that working across a wider MCA area, including North Somerset, will support economic growth in the region. Respondents could choose from a five-point scale in responding to this question: ‘Strongly agree’, ‘Agree’, ‘Neither agree nor disagree’, ‘Disagree’ and ‘Strongly disagree’. These responses are displayed separately in Figure 3 before being combined into ‘Strongly agree / agree’ and ‘Disagree / strongly disagree’ categories during the rest of the report.

As with the initial question on extending the combined authority into North Somerset, the overall number of responses to this question (n=1239) exceeds the number of respondents who provided their age group (n=906). Similarly, organisational responses will not be included in the breakdown of responses by age group but are included in the total response. When reviewing response by age category, it is worth noting the lower number of respondents in the 18-34 and 75+ age groups (n=112 and n=137 respectively) compared with other age groups.

**Over half of all respondents agree that working across a wider MCA area will support economic growth (53%).** Over one-third of respondents disagree (36%), while the remainder of respondents neither agree nor disagree that an expanded area would support economic growth (11%).

Within each individual age group, a majority of respondents agree that a wider MCA area will support economic growth (53%-82%). Respondents aged 18-34 were most likely to agree (82%), followed by those aged 35-54 (65%). Across respondents aged 55-74 and those aged 75+, there was a similar level of agreement (53% and 55% respectively).

**Figure 3: Whether respondents believe that working across a wider combined authority area will support economic growth (by age group)**



Base: All consultation responses

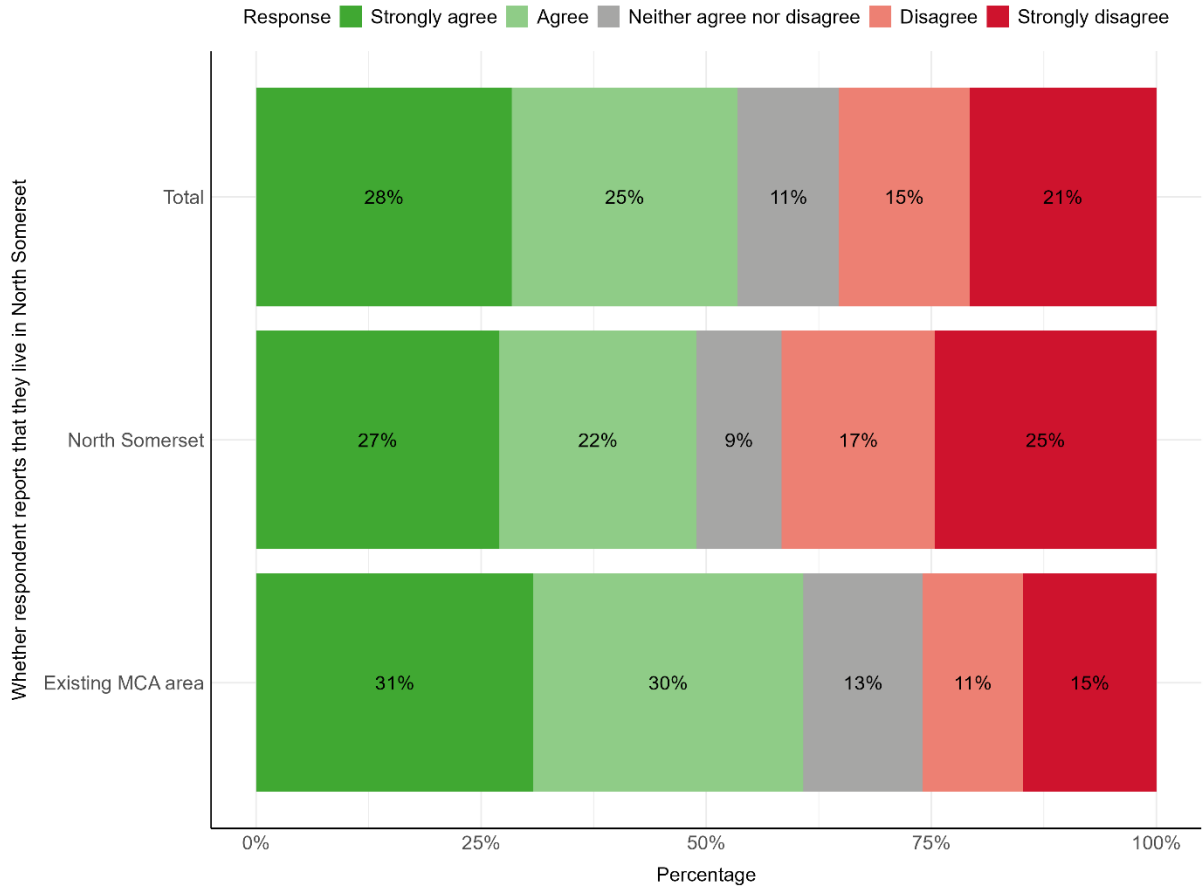
Base size: Total - 1239, 18-34 - 112, 35-54 - 247, 55-74 - 440, 75+ - 137, Not provided - 303

Source: Consultation on NSC joining West of England MCA (Feb - Apr 2026)

Approximately one-third of respondents aged 55-74 disagreed that an expanded MCA area would support economic growth (33%), along with a similar proportion of those aged 75+ (35%). Over one-quarter of respondents aged 35-54 disagreed that a wider area will support economic growth (27%), along with a small proportion of those aged 18-34 (8%). The proportion of respondents who reported that they neither agree nor disagree ranged from 7% to 14% across each individual age group.

As with the initial question on extending the MCA into North Somerset, respondent postcode was used to make comparisons between those living in North Somerset and those living in the existing area. Approximately 98% of responses were able to be matched to one of these areas, with the remainder included in the 'Total' category. Those representing organisations were asked to provide a postcode for their organisation.

**Figure 4: Whether respondents believe that working across a wider combined authority area will support economic growth (by area of residence)**



Base: All consultation responses

Base size: Total - 1239, North Somerset - 699, Existing MCA area - 520

Source: Consultation on NSC joining West of England MCA (Feb - Apr 2026)

Respondents living in North Somerset were more likely to agree that an expanded MCA area would support economic growth (49%) than disagree (42%).

A majority of those who report living outside North Somerset and inside the existing MCA area agreed that working across a wider area will support economic growth (61%). Over one-quarter of respondents living in the existing area disagreed that working across a wider area would support economic growth (26%).

Considering those who chose 'Don't Know', there was a difference of five percentage points between those living in the existing MCA area and those living in North Somerset (13% and 9% respectively).

**“To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across a wider combined authority area will improve public services?”**

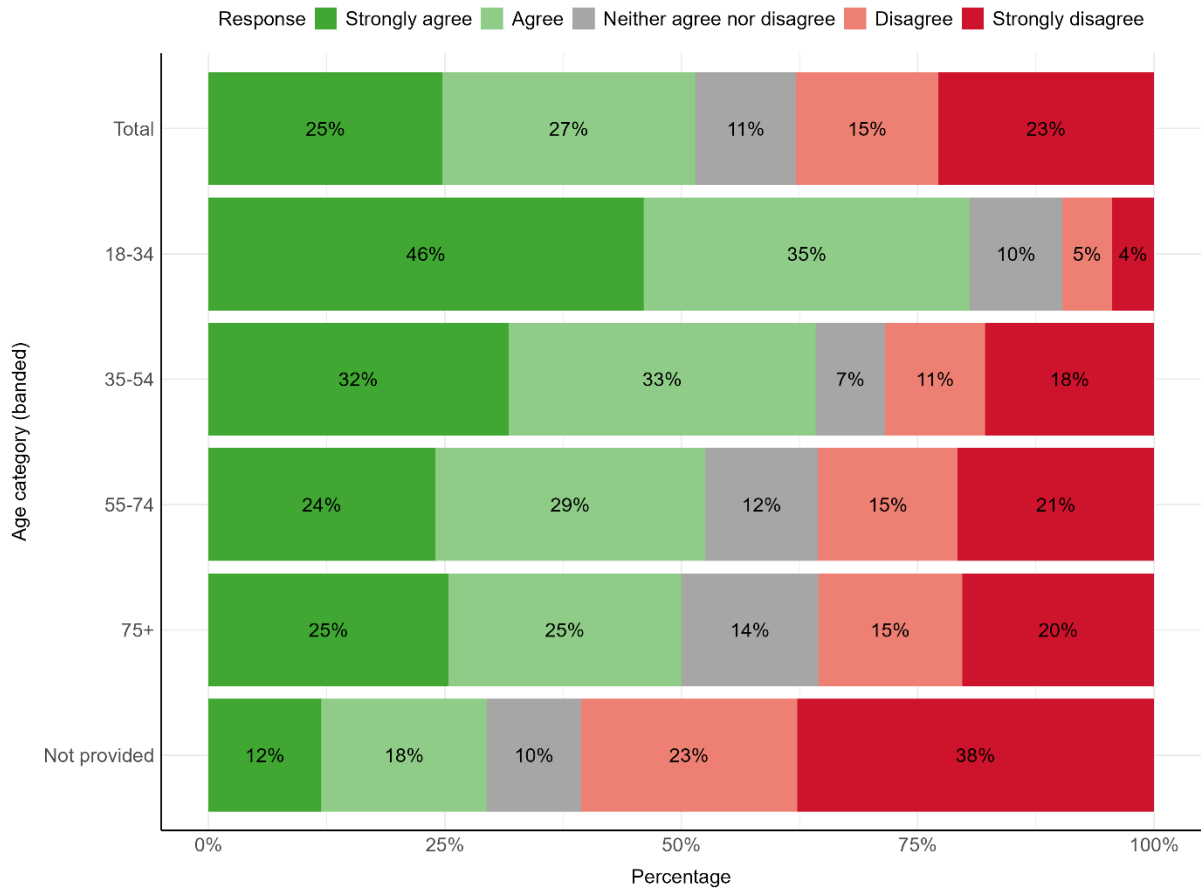
All respondents to the consultation were asked whether they believe that working across a wider MCA area, inclusive of North Somerset Council, will improve public services in the region. As for the previous question relating to economic growth, respondents could choose from a five-point scale in responding to this question.

As with previous questions, the overall number of responses to this question (n=1241) includes organisational responses and exceeds the number of respondents who provided their age group (n=939). When reviewing response by age category, it is worth noting the lower number of respondents in the 18-34 and 75+ age groups (n=113 and n=138 respectively) compared with other age groups.

**Respondents were more likely to agree that working across a wider MCA area will improve public services (52%) than disagree (38%).** A smaller proportion reported that they neither agree nor disagree (11%).

Within each individual age group, at least half of respondents agree that working across a wider area will improve public services (50%-81%). As with the previous question relating to economic growth, respondents aged 18-34 were most likely to agree (81%), followed by those aged 35-54 (65%). At least half of respondents aged 55-74 and 75+ agree that working across a wider area would improve public services (53% and 50% respectively).

**Figure 5: Whether respondents believe that working across a wider combined authority area will improve public services (by age group)**



Base: All consultation responses

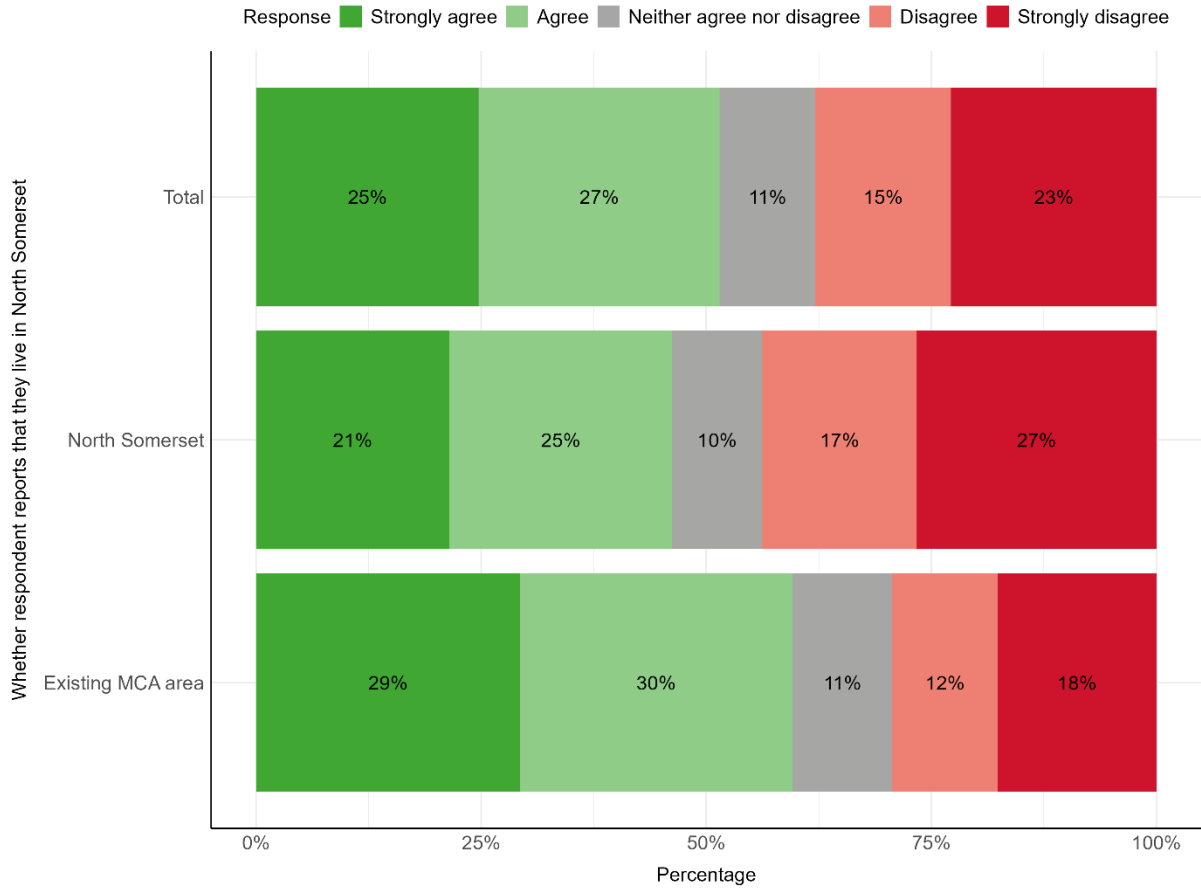
Base size: Total - 1241, 18-34 - 113, 35-54 - 246, 55-74 - 442, 75+ - 138, Not provided - 302

Source: Consultation on NSC joining West of England MCA (Feb - Apr 2026)

Similar proportions of respondents aged 55-74 and 75+ disagreed that an expanded MCA area would improve public services (36% and 35% respectively). Over one-quarter of respondents aged 35-54 disagreed that a wider area will improve public services (29%), compared with a small proportion of respondents aged 18-34 (9%). A similar proportion of respondents aged 18-34, 54-75 and 75+ reported that they do not agree or disagree (10-14%), compared with a slightly smaller proportion of those aged 35-54 (7%).

In line with previous questions, respondents' postcodes were matched to areas within North Somerset or the existing MCA area. This applies to the majority of respondents, with the exception of a small number who were unable to be allocated to either group.

**Figure 6: Whether respondents believe that working across a wider combined authority area will improve public services (by area of residence)**



Base: All consultation responses

Base size: Total - 1241, North Somerset - 699, Existing MCA area - 522

Source: Consultation on NSC joining West of England MCA (Feb - Apr 2026)

Considering respondents who live in the North Somerset area, a similar proportion agreed and disagreed that an expanded MCA area will improve public services (46% and 44% respectively).

A majority of respondents who live in the existing MCA area agreed that working across a wider area will improve public services (59%), compared with just under one-third of respondents living in the existing area who disagreed (30%).

The proportion of respondents who chose ‘Don’t Know’ was similar across those living in the existing area and those living in North Somerset (11% and 10% respectively).

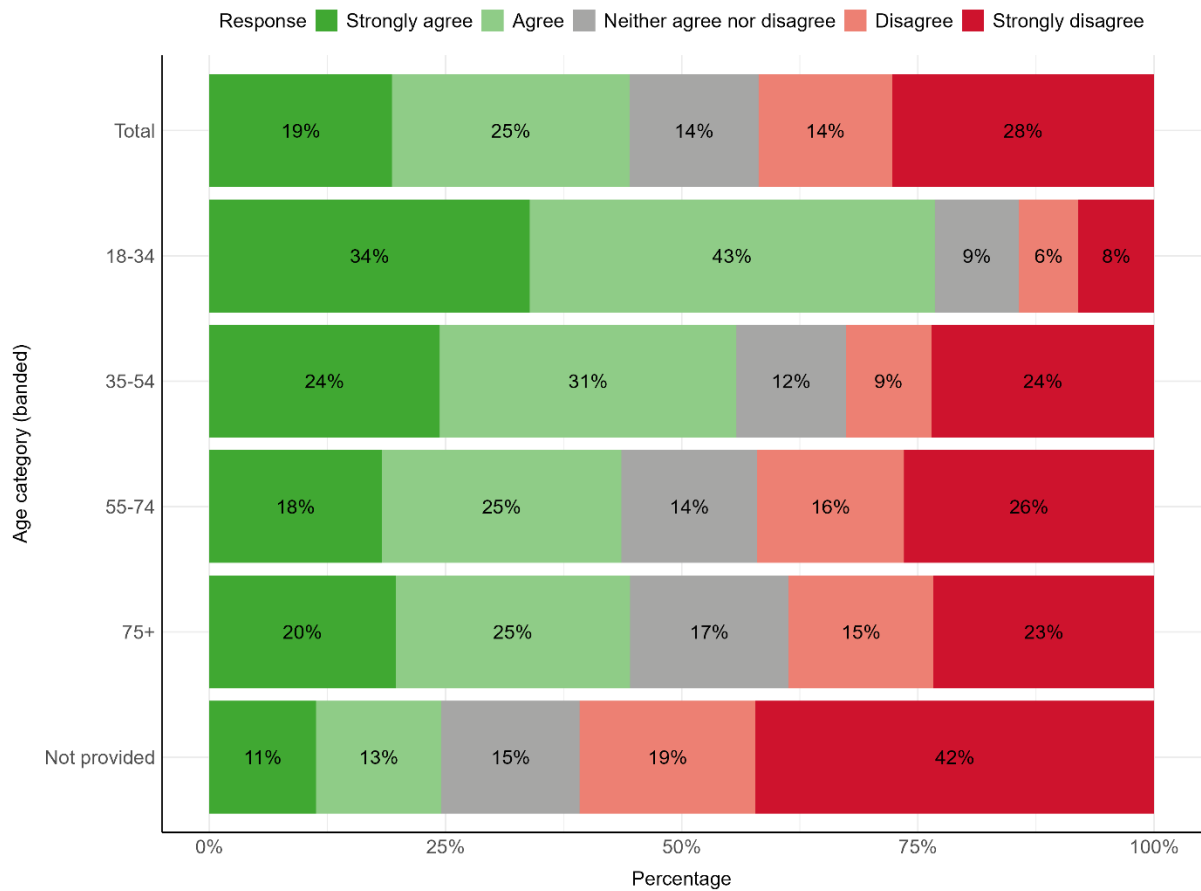
**“To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across a wider combined authority area will support the diverse needs and interests of local communities?”**

All respondents to the consultation were asked whether they believe that working across a wider MCA area, inclusive of North Somerset Council, will support the diverse needs and interests of local communities. Respondents could again choose from a five-point scale in responding to this question.

As with previous questions, the overall number of responses to this question (n=1231) includes organisational responses and exceeds the number of respondents who provided their age group (n=930). When reviewing response by age category, it is worth noting the lower number of respondents in the 18-34 and 75+ age groups (n=112 and n=138 respectively) compared with other age groups.

**Across all respondents, a similar proportion agreed and disagreed that working across a wider MCA area will support the diverse needs and interests of local communities (44% and 42% respectively).** This reflected lower levels of agreement compared with previous questions around the potential for an expanded MCA area to support economic growth (53%) and improve public services (52%).

**Figure 7: Whether respondents believe that working across a wider combined authority area will support the diverse needs and interests of local communities (by age group)**



Base: All consultation responses

Base size: Total - 1231, 18-34 - 112, 35-54 - 242, 55-74 - 438, 75+ - 138, Not provided - 301

Source: Consultation on NSC joining West of England MCA (Feb - Apr 2026)

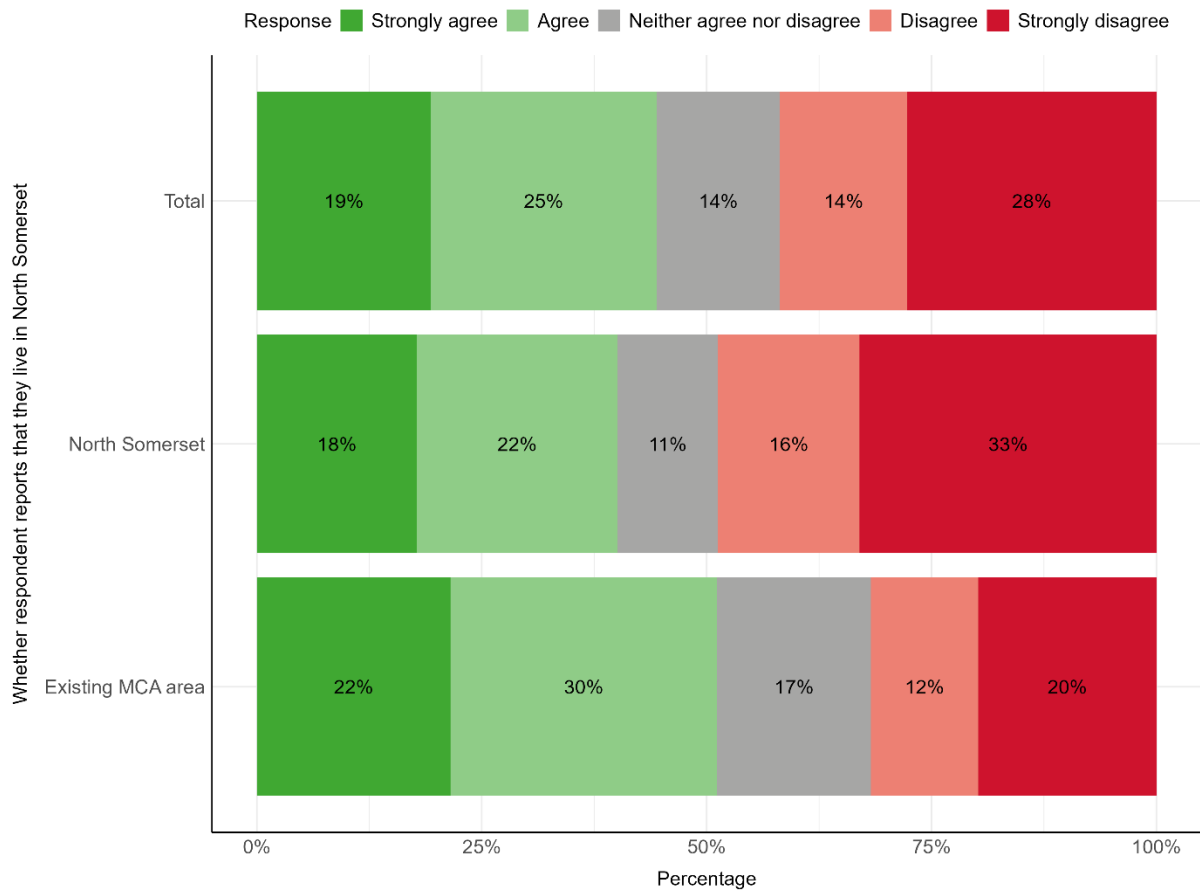
There were varied responses across different age groups in relation to whether respondents believe that an expanded MCA area will support the needs and interests of local communities; over three-quarters of respondents aged 18-34 agreed (77%), compared with a smaller proportion of those aged 35-54, 55-74 and 75+ (55%, 43% and 45% respectively).

As might be expected, the findings above largely reflect whether respondents disagreed that an expanded MCA area will support the needs and interests of local communities. Respondents aged 55-74 were most likely to disagree, along with a similar proportion of those aged 75+ (42% and 38% respectively). Smaller proportions of respondents aged 35-54 (33%) and 18-34 (14%) disagreed that working across a wider area will support the needs and interests of local communities.

The response to this question was also considered in the context of whether respondents report living in North Somerset, or whether they report living in the

existing MCA area. As with previous questions, it is worth noting that some respondents are likely to work in North Somerset and live in the existing combined authority area, while others are likely to do the opposite. Organisational responses were also matched to an area based on the reported postcode of the organisation.

**Figure 8: Whether respondents believe that working across a wider combined authority area will support the diverse needs and interests of local communities (by area of residence)**



Base: All consultation responses

Base size: Total - 1231, North Somerset - 691, Existing MCA area - 520

Source: Consultation on NSC joining West of England MCA (Feb - Apr 2026)

Respondents who report living in North Somerset were more likely to disagree that working across a wider MCA will support the diverse needs and interests of local communities (49%) than agree (40%).

Just over half of respondents living within the existing MCA area agree that an expanded MCA area will support the needs and interests of local communities (52%), compared with just under one-third who disagree (32%).

Under one-in-five respondents living within the existing MCA area report that they neither agree nor disagree with the idea of an expanded MCA area supporting the

needs and interests of local communities (17%), compared with a smaller proportion of respondents living in North Somerset (11%).

## **“What benefits do you think can be achieved through expanding the West of England Combined Authority into North Somerset?”**

All respondents were asked to provide an open-ended (“free-text”) response to a question on perceived benefits of an expanded MCA, regardless of their initial response relating to whether North Somerset Council should join.

This question received **1061 responses** in total, after initial data cleaning described above.

Qualitative responses were analysed manually and “coded” according to theme, taking an inductive approach. A summary of the results for this question is presented below, highlighting the “key” themes (largely designated by frequency of responses coded to that theme). Themes coded fewer than ten times are not reported.

Of the total responses, a proportion were coded as “Invalid response” or “Other” and were therefore removed from the assessment of dominant themes. Invalid responses were classified as such if the content included: symbols only; a statement of declining to respond, such as “no comment”; illegible text; and / or a comment included a statement that might be classified as hate speech alongside no other substantive content. A response was classified as “Other” if a distinct topic was mentioned by too few respondents to form a substantive, standalone theme (<5).

A small proportion of respondents stated a general positive perception of North Somerset joining with the MCA but did not qualify a specific benefit.

Meanwhile, the most commonly coded theme for this question linked to respondents’ perception there would be no benefits to North Somerset joining with the MCA. (This includes respondents who: stated explicitly that they did not believe any benefits would be achieved; stated they were as yet unsure or unaware of any possible advantages; and those who made a statement indicating no benefits without qualifying it further.) These comments reflected a general sense of scepticism or uncertainty, with some indicating a lack of clear information provided by the MCA about how the MCA extension might deliver positive outcomes to North Somerset and the wider region.

A greater proportion of respondents expressed one or more potential benefits than reported no perceived benefits. Of those respondents citing a clear, perceived benefit, the topic of transport was most commonly mentioned, with potential noted for improving transport services and infrastructure within and across the region. Within the transport theme, respondents suggested that North Somerset Council joining the MCA could variously support: a more integrated and “joined-up” transport system; better public transport services and infrastructure (bus, rail, tram, mass transit); improved connectivity across the region; and / or, strengthened links to key regional hubs such as Bristol Airport. Several described a

partnership between North Somerset Council and the MCA as better positioned to deliver strategic, cross-boundary transport improvements, compared with North Somerset Council acting alone.

The next most common theme involved respondents citing the potential benefits of greater regional collaboration as a result of an expanded MCA, including: more "joined-up" and coordinated regional planning across areas such as transport and housing. In the context of an expanded MCA area, respondents further mentioned the potential for greater combined voice, influence, and negotiating power, both on the regional and national stages.

Further, a smaller proportion of respondents believed that joining the MCA would bring greater access to funding, including regional or national grants that may not otherwise be available, and a number of respondents perceived that MCA membership could lead to a range of efficiency improvements.

Other themes with fewer responses included opportunities for a stronger regional voice, potential for benefits in terms of economic growth, and potential for improved public services across a range of policy areas.

## **“Do you have any concerns about the proposal to expand the West of England Combined Authority into North Somerset? If so, what could be done to address those concerns?”**

All respondents were asked to provide an open-ended (“free-text”) response detailing their concerns in relation to an expanded MCA, regardless of their initial response relating to whether North Somerset Council should join or not. Within the same question, respondents were also asked to detail anything which could be done to address those concerns.

Qualitative responses were analysed manually and “coded” according to theme, taking an inductive approach. A summary of the results for this question is presented below, highlighting the “key” themes (largely designated by frequency of responses coded to that theme). Themes coded fewer than ten times are not reported.

Of the total responses, a proportion were coded as “Invalid response” or “Other” and were therefore removed from the assessment of dominant themes. Invalid responses were classified as such if the content included: symbols only; a statement of declining to respond, such as “no comment”; illegible text; and / or a comment included a statement that might be classified as hate speech alongside no other substantive content. A response was classified as “Other” if a distinct topic was mentioned by too few respondents to form a substantive, standalone theme (<5).

This question received **1041 responses** in total after initial data cleaning described above.

A majority of respondents provided a response which related to a concern, whereas a minority of respondents offered a potential solution. Solutions are discussed further below.

Respondent views were varied. The most prominent individual theme in relation to concerns involved respondents explicitly expressing that they held no, or very few, concerns about the proposal. This theme was articulated considerably more often than any single theme involving a named or general concern. However, when themes relating to named or general concerns are considered collectively, a greater proportion of respondents expressed one or more concerns than reported having no concerns.

The next most commonly reported theme involved respondents expressing a negative perception or concern around North Somerset joining the MCA, without opting to provide a clearly defined reason for this view, i.e., a generalised concern.

In terms of key, named concerns raised, the most common theme related to financial concerns, with responses coded to this theme primarily focused on perceived negative cost implications for residents and / or the region. Specific

points expressed by respondents most often included concerns around: increased taxation on residents (i.e., increased Council Tax); inefficient use or wastage of public monies; and / or “unfair” distribution or apportioning of funds across the MCA region (i.e., a perception that funds would be disproportionately allocated to Bristol). Broader financial concerns expressed by some respondents included, for example, references to the current financial status and pressures facing North Somerset Council.

The next most common theme connected to respondents’ concerns that North Somerset’s voice would be less well heard or even ignored within a larger MCA structure. Some respondents, within this theme, reflected a preference for more localised decision-making. Further, the concern around loss of voice was often linked to a perception that North Somerset’s distinct rural identity and priorities may be overshadowed by differing priorities of more urban areas within the MCA, and / or that discussion may be dominated by Bristol / metropolitan interests.

A small proportion of respondents raised concerns about the increased size and scale of an expanded MCA, and the perception that this would create additional layers of governance and potential for increased bureaucracy. Respondents referenced concerns about the scale of an expanded MCA and the possibility that decision-making processes might become less effective.

Further themes stated with less frequency included concerns around the democratic process of North Somerset joining the MCA, the previous Avon County Council model, the consultation process, perceived political implications, and a possible detriment to regional transport.

The second part of the question invited respondents’ suggestions on what could be done to address their concerns about the proposal. As mentioned, a smaller proportion of respondents to the question offered solutions as opposed to concerns.

The most frequently suggested solution was for North Somerset to remain separate from the MCA, reflecting a view that the best way to address concerns would be to avoid joining the combined authority.

The next most common solution involved ensuring fair and transparent distribution and apportionment of funding across the proposed MCA region. Suggestions included establishing mechanisms to ensure fair allocation of future funding, and increasing transparency around how funds would be used.

Mentioned to a similar frequency as the above theme, was a suggestion that democratic solutions to North Somerset joining the MCA and operating under its Mayor be explored.

The next most common themes, with a similar proportion of responses to each other, were: a suggestion to strengthen mechanisms which deliver accountability for governing authorities; and, a suggestion from some respondents that their preferred solution would be to see the MCA abolished or disbanded.

Themes mentioned to a lesser frequency included: respondents expressing they were not aware of any solutions to their concern; a desire from respondents to

ensure North Somerset is heard and represented; and, a desire for improved communication from and between the MCA and its residents.

## “What activities and projects would you identify as priorities for an expanded West of England Combined Authority?”

All respondents were asked to provide an open-ended (“free-text”) response to a question on which activities and projects they would prioritise in relation to an expanded MCA, regardless of their initial response relating to whether North Somerset Council should join or not.

Qualitative responses were analysed manually and “coded” according to theme, taking an inductive approach. A summary of the results for this question is presented below, highlighting the “key” themes (largely designated by frequency of responses coded to that theme). Themes coded fewer than ten times are not reported.

Of the total responses, a proportion were coded as “Invalid response” or “Other” and were therefore removed from the assessment of dominant themes. Invalid responses were classified as such if the content included: symbols only; a statement of declining to respond, such as “no comment”; illegible text; and / or a comment included a statement that might be classified as hate speech alongside no other substantive content. A response was classified as “Other” if a distinct topic was mentioned by too few respondents to form a substantive, standalone theme (<5).

This question received **1144 responses** in total after initial data cleaning described above.

Transport-related priorities formed almost half of all codes applied to responses for this question, a far greater proportion than any other theme. Respondents identified a wide range of potential transport-related opportunities for the region under an expanded MCA, including, for example:

- better, more reliable, and more frequent bus services;
- improved rail connectivity and infrastructure;
- investment in mass transit systems, including potential tram or rapid transit solutions;
- opportunities for more coordinated regional transport planning, strategy, and long-term infrastructure development;
- enhanced connectivity across North Somerset and to neighbouring areas including Bristol and the wider region;
- improved links to Bristol Airport, which sits within North Somerset and was often mentioned explicitly.

Comments often reflected a strong view that transport is a shared regional challenge that requires cohesive, cross-boundary decision-making.

The second most commonly coded theme was that respondents perceived no opportunities for the MCA to deliver productive or meaningful activities or projects. This included individuals who variously felt: that there were no priority projects or opportunities; that joining would be actively detrimental; that there is no potential for regional improvements; and / or that they did not have enough information to identify opportunities.

The next most notable theme focused on the repair of potholes and the improvement of road surfaces and maintenance.

The same proportion of respondents identified community- and social-focused projects as priorities. This also encompassed potential for improvements to social care and health, and other potential community benefits, including for specific groups.

Further, a similar proportion of respondents saw opportunities related to economic development, including potential for business growth and regeneration, job creation, skills and training opportunities, and greater prosperity through more coordinated regional planning.

Other themes, expressed to a lesser frequency, included climate and environmental priorities, regional housing development, including affordable housing, and opportunities for efficiency gains.

# Appendix A: Methodology

## Target population and sampling

The target population for the consultation was eligible respondents living or working in either the North Somerset Council area or existing combined authority area.

The consultation utilised a self-selecting sample (i.e., anyone with access to the consultation form could opt-in to respond), meaning the sample of respondents is not designed to be representative of the wider population. The use of a self-selecting sample limits the ability of analysts to generalise the findings to the wider population, while it is not practical to test any differences between sub-groups for statistical significance when utilising a self-selecting sample.

The consultation form contains demographic monitoring questions, allowing the MCA to monitor the difference between the profile of respondents and the population at large (further detail can be found in the 'Response Profile' section). In turn, the awareness of any difference between the profile of consultation respondents and the profile of the population supports the MCA in complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in its decision-making.

## Data collection method and timings

The consultation ran for eight weeks from Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February to Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April. The consultation form was closed in error from 10am to 3pm on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April, and then closed for a final time at 9am on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April.

This consultation timeline was developed in accordance with typical timings for similar consultations relating to the establishment of combined authorities. The timeline was, therefore, deemed sufficient to allow enough time for residents to engage with the consultation. Factors which were considered include the time requirements for requesting, completing and returning a paper response to the consultation.

Respondents to the consultation were able to provide a response online or via a paper form, which was available on request and enclosed in Appendix B. To collect online responses to the consultation, the 'DotDigital' cross-channel marketing platform was used. The consultation form was also embedded as part of the Combined Authority's website. Paper copies of the form containing a 'Freepost' address were sent to sites across the existing combined authority area and North Somerset to allow those with lower digital literacy to engage with the consultation. These sites included libraries, community centres and some GPs surgeries. Separate written submissions outside the format of the consultation form were also accepted.

Primarily, respondents were encouraged to complete the consultation form online, with this subsequently being the primary data collection method. Of the 1,275 responses received, 1,273 were provided via the 'DotDigital' platform. One separate organisational response was received via email, while a single paper copy of the consultation form was completed and returned via Freepost.

The consultation form was designed so that respondents are 'routed' through the survey questions based on whether they support or oppose the proposed extension of the MCA into North Somerset, helping to establish sentiment associated with each open-ended response.

## **Communications**

The consultation was advertised using both organic and paid-for content. The Combined Authority's social media channels were used for organic marketing. Promotional videos were developed featuring the West of England Mayor, as well as both the Leader and Deputy Leader of North Somerset Council. These videos were designed to encourage residents to engage with the consultation.

To both market the consultation and help residents understand the issues underpinning the consultation, an animation was created introducing the consultation. This animation was uploaded to YouTube and included on social media posts and in paid-for advertising<sup>6</sup>. It was also included on the consultation webpage, which was highlighted on the home page of the Combined Authority website, directing residents to the consultation page.

£10,000 of marketing spend was allocated to the consultation, with posts targeted towards TikTok and Meta to increase the number of young people seeing and engaging with the consultation.

## **Response profile**

The consultation used an open link, meaning the sample of respondents is self-selecting and not intended to be representative of the wider population. Demographic data were collected voluntarily as part of the consultation form, therefore, to identify gaps between the profile of respondents and the population at large. In some instances, these data are useful for drawing out tentative differences between sub-groups of respondents (e.g., age profile, geography). In the majority of cases, however, these data are important for establishing key gaps in response for certain groups of the population and identifying a need for further engagement beyond the consultation as appropriate. Identifying these gaps

---

<sup>6</sup> Consultation on North Somerset joining the West of England Combined Authority  
<https://youtu.be/aGpemCTpkSw?si=CYVG1RPEs8AcIU80>

supports the MCA in complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in its decision-making.

### *Individuals and organisations*

Overall, 1,233 responses were received from individuals (97%) with a further 35 responses received on behalf of organisations (3%). Primarily, organisational responses were received by local government organisations (e.g., parish councils), though some responses were also received from local interest groups, business membership organisations and individual businesses. Further detail relating to organisational responses can be found in Appendix B.

### *Geography*

Using ONS data on postcodes and Local Authority District (LAD)<sup>7</sup>, each respondent's postcode was matched to North Somerset or the existing combined authority area (i.e., Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol or South Gloucestershire).

As may be expected given the focus on North Somerset Council joining the MCA, the majority of respondents provided a postcode which was matched to the North Somerset area (56%). A further 532 respondents provided a postcode which was matched to one of the constituent authority areas which make up the existing MCA area (43%). Overall, just under one-in-five responses were matched to the Bristol area (19%), with a similar proportion being matched to either South Gloucestershire or Bath and North East Somerset (12% and 11% respectively).

**Figure 9: Consultation response by unitary authority area**

	<b>North Somerset</b>	<b>Bath &amp; North East Somerset</b>	<b>Bristol</b>	<b>South Gloucestershire</b>
<b>Consultation respondents (%)</b>	56	11	19	12
<b>Proposed combined authority area population (%)</b>	18	16	40	25

A small proportion of respondents (2%) were included in the 'Total' response but were not considered to be in either the existing combined authority area or North Somerset. These respondents typically did not provide a postcode, provided a postcode which belonged to an area outside the proposed combined authority area or provided an unrecognised postcode. It is worth noting that some respondents are likely to work in North Somerset and live in the existing combined authority

<sup>7</sup> ONS Open Geography Portal <https://geoportal.statistics.gov.uk/>

area, while others are likely to do the opposite. Those representing organisations were asked to provide a postcode for their organisation.

### *Age*

Overall, 76% of respondents provided an age category when prompted, with responses breaking down as follows: 18-34 (12%), 35-54 (26%), 55-74 (47%), 75+ (15%). It is worth noting the large proportion of respondents who chose not to provide an age category (24%) when making any comparisons by age group. These individuals are included in age group analysis under the 'Not provided' category for reference.

2024 data on age at local authority level<sup>8</sup> enables the age profile of consultation respondents to be compared with the population at large. Looking at the profile of consultation respondents, 18-34 year olds are most likely to be underrepresented, making up 9% of responses compared with the population estimate of 27%. 55-74 year olds are most likely to be overrepresented, with just over one-third of all respondents selecting this age category (35%) compared with the population estimate of 20%.

### *Sex and gender identity*

Overall, 69% of respondents provided sex at birth when prompted, with responses breaking down as follows: Male (58%), Female (42%). Female respondents are underrepresented across the consultation sample compared with population estimates for the existing combined authority area plus North Somerset<sup>9</sup>. 13% of respondents chose 'Prefer not to say' when answering the question.

Overall, 68% of respondents answered a voluntary question relating to whether their gender identity matched their sex at birth. Of these respondents, the majority indicated that their gender identity matches their sex at birth (99%), with a small proportion indicating that their gender identity does not match their sex at birth (<1%). As for the initial question relating to sex at birth, 13% of respondents chose 'Prefer not to say' when answering the question.

The proportion of respondents who indicated that their gender identity does not match their sex at birth is similar to population estimates collected as part of the previous Census<sup>10</sup>.

### *Ethnicity*

Overall, 71% of respondents answered a voluntary question relating to ethnicity. The majority of these respondents identified their ethnic group within the high-

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/pestsyoala>

<sup>9</sup> <https://opendata.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/explore/assets/age-sex-ods-lep/view/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS078/editions/2021/versions/4>

level 'White' category (95%). Small proportions of respondents identified their ethnic group within one of the following high-level categories: 'Asian or Asian British' (1%), 'Black, Black British, Caribbean or African' (<1%), 'Mixed or multiple ethnic groups' (1%) or 'any other ethnic group' (1%). 15% of respondents chose 'Prefer not to say' when answering the question.

Census data on ethnicity at local authority level enables the age profile of consultation respondents to be compared with the population at large. Population estimates relating to ethnicity for the existing combined authority area plus North Somerset are as follows<sup>11</sup>:

- 88% identify their ethnic group within the 'White' category
- 4% identify their ethnic group within the 'Asian or Asian British' category
- 3% identify their ethnic group within the 'Black, Black British, Caribbean or African' category
- 3% identify their ethnic group within the 'Mixed or multiple ethnic groups' category
- 1% identify their ethnic group within the 'any other ethnic group' category

Please note that the figures above relate to high-level ethnicity categories for ease of summary. High-level ethnicity categories are typically derived from a larger number of sub-categories.

### *Long-term conditions and disability*

In line with the approach taken on the 2021 Census<sup>12</sup>, respondents were asked two separate questions in relation to long-term conditions and disability:

- 1) *Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?*
- 2) *[If 'Yes' to above] Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?*

Just under one-quarter of respondents reported that they have a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last twelve months or more (23%). Of these, just over three-quarters reported that their condition or illness limits their day-to-day activities 'a little' or 'a lot' (76%). As a result, the proportion of disabled respondents is 17% according to the Census definition. 11% of respondents chose 'Prefer not to say' when answering the question.

---

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS021/editions/2021/versions/3>

<sup>12</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/census2021dictionary/variablesbytopic/healthdisabilityandunpaidcarevariables/census2021/disability>

Data from the Census<sup>13</sup> indicates that 17% of usual residents in the Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire areas are disabled under the Equality Act.

### *Sexual orientation*

Overall, 65% of respondents answered a voluntary question relating to their sexual orientation. Of these respondents, the majority identify as straight or heterosexual (89%). Small proportions of respondents identified as gay or lesbian (4%), bisexual (1%) or chose to write in the sexual orientation with which they identified (1%). 23% of respondents chose 'Prefer not to say' when answering the question.

Census estimates relating to sexual orientation for the existing combined authority area plus North Somerset break down as follows<sup>14</sup>:

- 88% identify as straight or heterosexual
- 2% identify as gay or lesbian
- 2% identify as bisexual

Please note, the Census estimates above do not include those who did not answer the Census question on sexual orientation.

### **Data processing**

Raw response data from the 'DotDigital' platform was exported at two points ahead of analysis and reporting. The first export occurred at 9am on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March with a second export occurring shortly after 10am on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April.

Six responses from the initial 1,273 collected via the 'DotDigital' platform were excluded from further analysis. The exclusion of responses took place if the respondent did not consent to additional processing of their response data. As the consultation process was not designed to collect informed consent from younger respondents according to Information Commissioner's Office guidelines<sup>15</sup>, responses were also excluded if the respondent indicated that they were under the age of 18.

A single written submission sent on behalf of an organisation was also excluded from analysis, on the basis that the response could not be easily structured according to the content of the consultation form.

---

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/c2021ts038>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS077/editions/2021/versions/3>

<sup>15</sup> <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/childrens-information/using-childrens-information-a-guide/>

## Analysis and reporting

### Analysis of closed questions

For closed questions, respondents typically chose from a set of pre-determined response options (such as an agree-disagree scale). An exception to this is the opening question relating to whether North Somerset Council should join the MCA, in which a binary choice was provided along with the option to express uncertainty towards the proposal.

Following the closure of the consultation, a raw data export from DotDigital was cleaned, including the exclusion of responses referenced in the previous section of the report, before analysis and reporting took place. The data cleaning process included standardisation of variable names and structure, as well as the removal of identifiers as required. Analysis was conducted in 'R', a programming language for statistical computing and data visualisation.

### Sub-group analysis

For closed questions, sub-group analysis was carried out on the basis of age and geography (e.g., how the answer to a certain question varied by the age group of respondents or where they live). As noted above, these responses should not be interpreted as being representative of these sub-groups in the population as a whole. Further detail relating to organisational responses can be found in Appendix B.

### Analysis of open-ended responses

Open-ended qualitative responses were analysed in two analytical phases. This included analysis of 738 responses received up to 9am on Tuesday 10th March (number of responses varies by individual question), and a further 529 responses received between this initial point and closure of the consultation at 9am on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April.

A manual (human-led) qualitative coding and analysis approach was adopted to draw out key themes with accuracy.

Following data familiarisation, the qualitative responses to each question were systematically coded. An inductive coding methodology was applied, meaning that the codes developed were data driven ("bottom up") and led directly by the data, as opposed to any preconceived or theory driven ("top down") categories. This is an established approach, grounded in interpretive qualitative methods, and allowed respondents' perspectives to shape the analytical categories that make up the resulting code frame.

Importantly, only one code was assigned to each response, representing the primary theme expressed. Responses often contained multiple ideas, and in these cases the code was selected either on the basis of the central or most salient issue raised by the respondent, or, where no clear emphasis was evident, according to the first idea mentioned in the response. This report does not include the frequency that certain responses were made, to avoid misrepresenting points raised in multi-faceted comments.

In common with all analysis of qualitative responses, this analysis is subject to researcher judgement, and the identified themes necessarily reflect high level patterns in reported responses rather than comprehensive accounts of individual participants' views.

## Appendix B: Organisational responses

Overall, 1,233 responses were received from individuals (97%) with a further 35 responses received on behalf of organisations (3%).

Responses were received on behalf of the following types of organisations:

- Local government and public sector organisations (e.g., parish councils)
- Individual businesses
- Business membership organisations
- Charities and Community Interest Companies (CICs)
- Community groups and local interest groups

Noting the small number of responses received on behalf of organisations, these responses were largely supportive of North Somerset joining the MCA. These responses also contained broadly high levels of agreement towards the potential for an expanded MCA area to support economic growth, improve public services and support the diverse needs and interests of local communities.

# Appendix C: Consultation form

## QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe that North Somerset Council should join the West of England Combined Authority?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

1a. And why do you say that?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across a wider Combined Authority area will support economic growth?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across a wider Combined Authority area will improve public services?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know







- What best describes your response?
  - I am a member of the public, giving views as an individual
  - I am responding on behalf of, or as a representative, of a business organisationIf the latter, please name organisation:

- Please give the full postcode of where you live or where the organisation you are representing is based.

- What is your sex?
  - Female     Male     Prefer not to sayIs the gender you identify with the same as your sex at birth?
  - Yes     No     Prefer not to sayIf 'no', please describe gender identity:

- What is your age group?
  - Under 18     18-24     25-34     35-44     45-54     55-64
  - 65-74     75+     prefer not to say

- What is your ethnic group?
  - White     Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
  - Asian or Asian British     Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
  - Other ethnic group     Prefer not to say

- Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?
  - Yes     NoIf 'Yes', do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?
  - Yes - a lot     Yes - a little     Not at all

- Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?
  - Heterosexual/Straight     Gay/Lesbian     Bisexual
  - prefer not to say     other- please write below

