Greater Manchester Universities polling – headline findings

May 2021

Methodology

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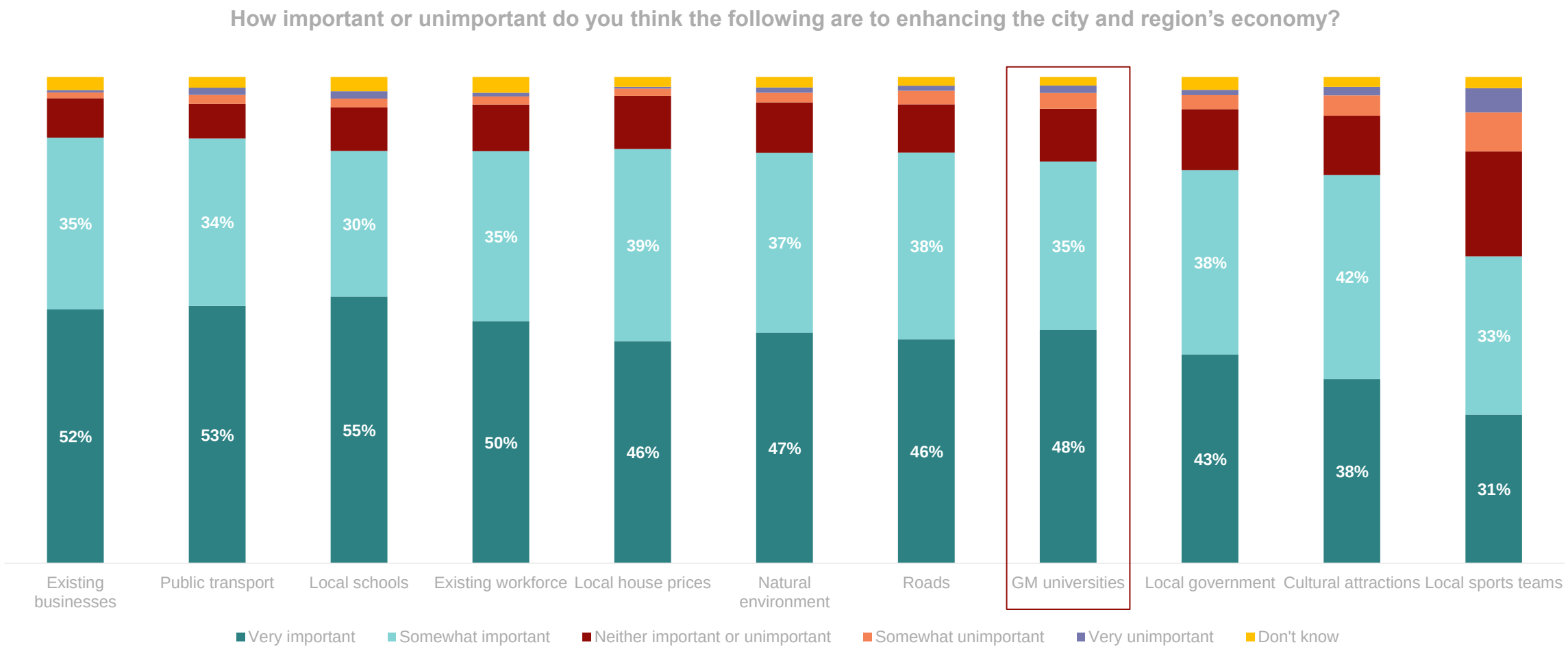
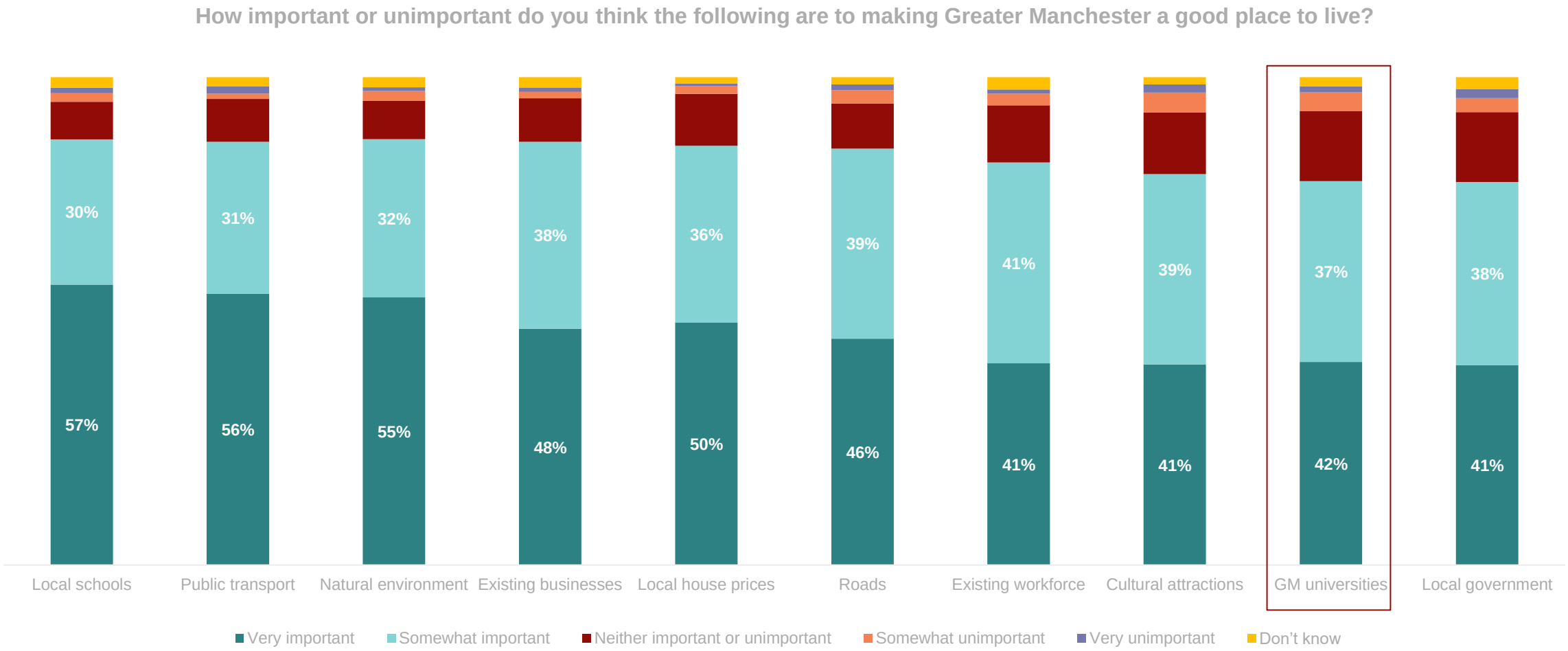
- 1013 respondents polled, adults of all ages
- At least 100 respondents in each of the ten boroughs
- Fieldwork 10th-22nd February 2021
- Data weighted by interlocking age & gender, and borough of residence, to representative proportions for Greater Manchester
- Additional data (not summarised here) asked about each of the Greater Manchester Universities individually, which has been provided to each client under separate cover
- Further analysis of the economic value respondents place on GM Universities to follow, also asked in this poll
- Public First is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by all its rules. For questions, please contact Head of Opinion Research Seb Wride at seb@publicfirst.co.uk

Topline findings

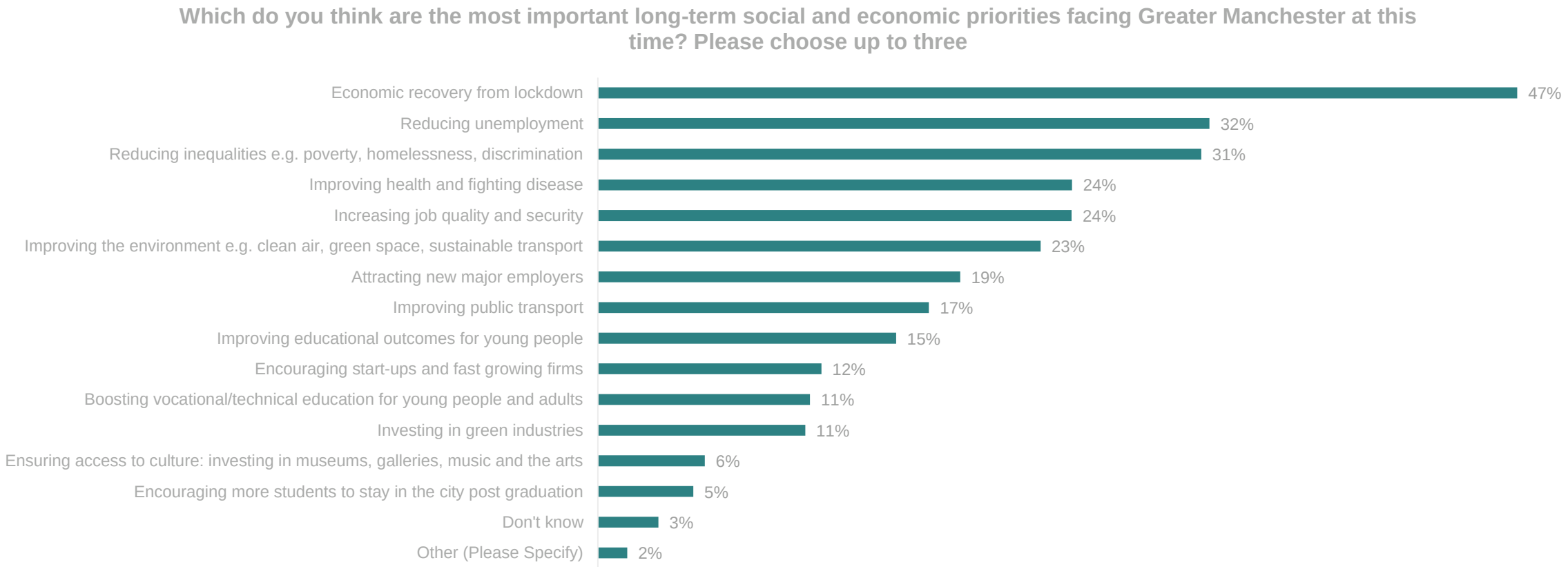
83% of respondents think GM Universities are important economically to the region



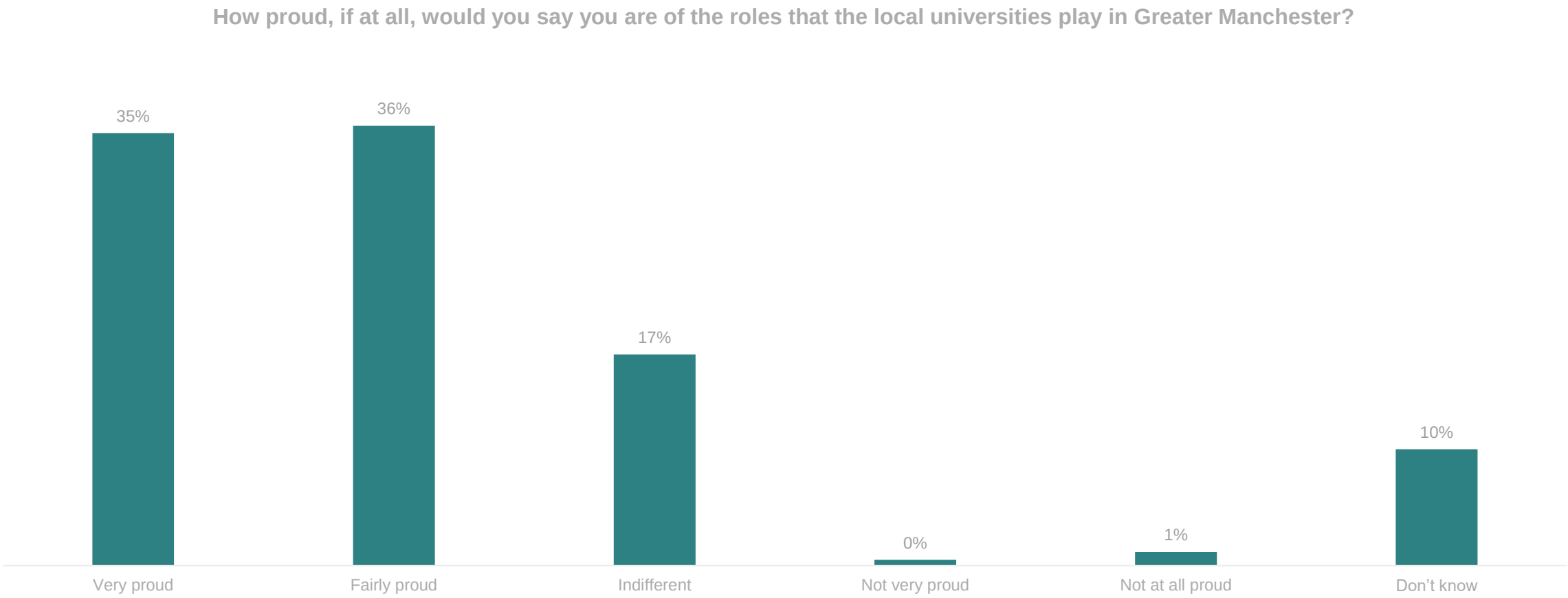
79% of respondents think GM Universities contribute to making the region a good place to live



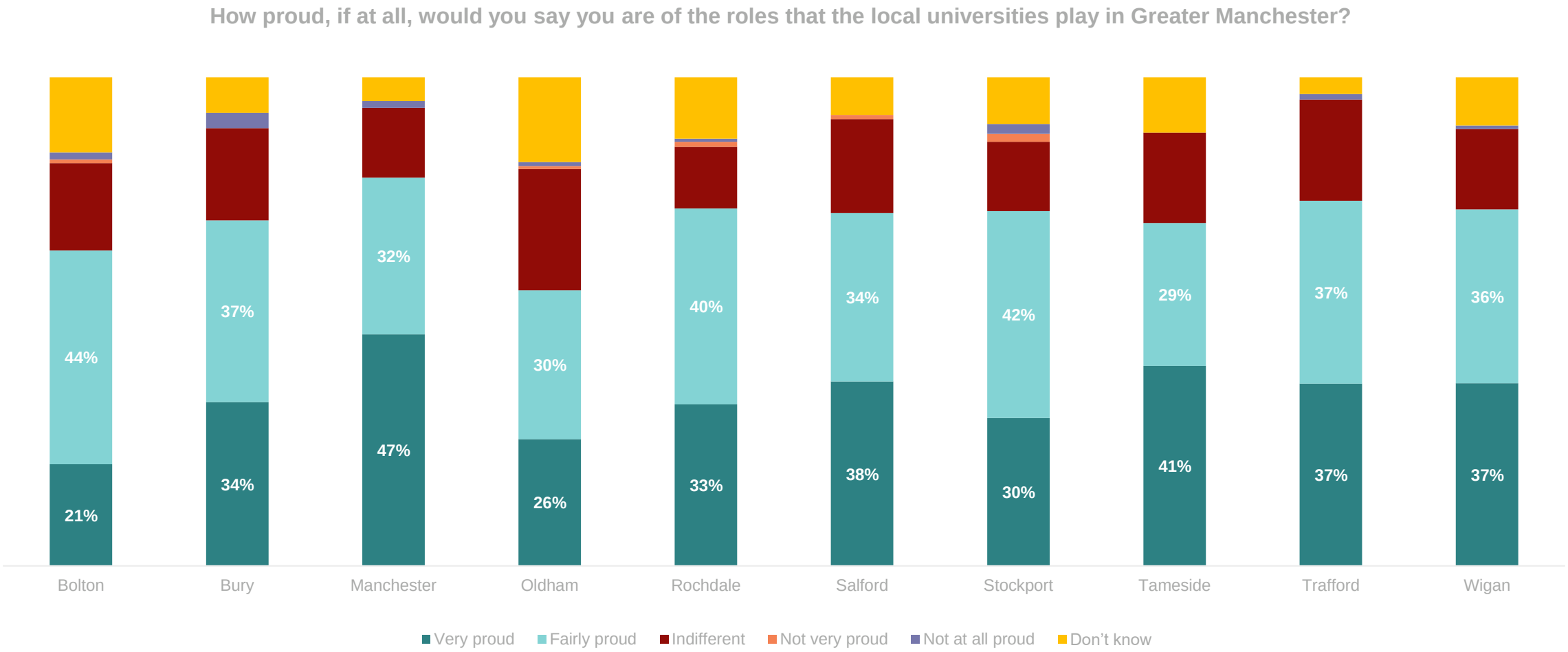
Without specific reference to the role of universities, economic recovery is clearly the top priority for GM residents – reducing inequalities and quality of life issues also score highly



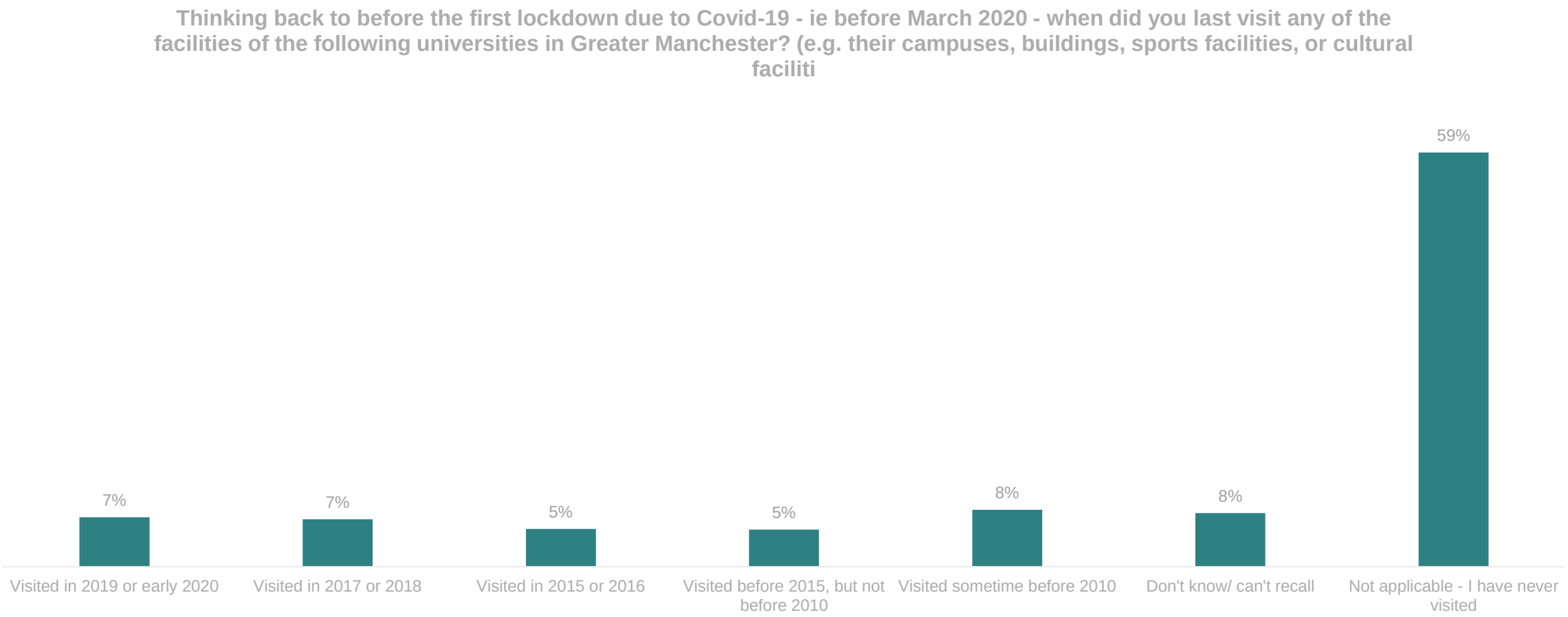
71% of respondents say in aggregate that they are very proud or fairly proud of the role that the local universities play in the region



….when broken down by borough, concepts of pride vary – from 79% in Manchester to 56% in Oldham

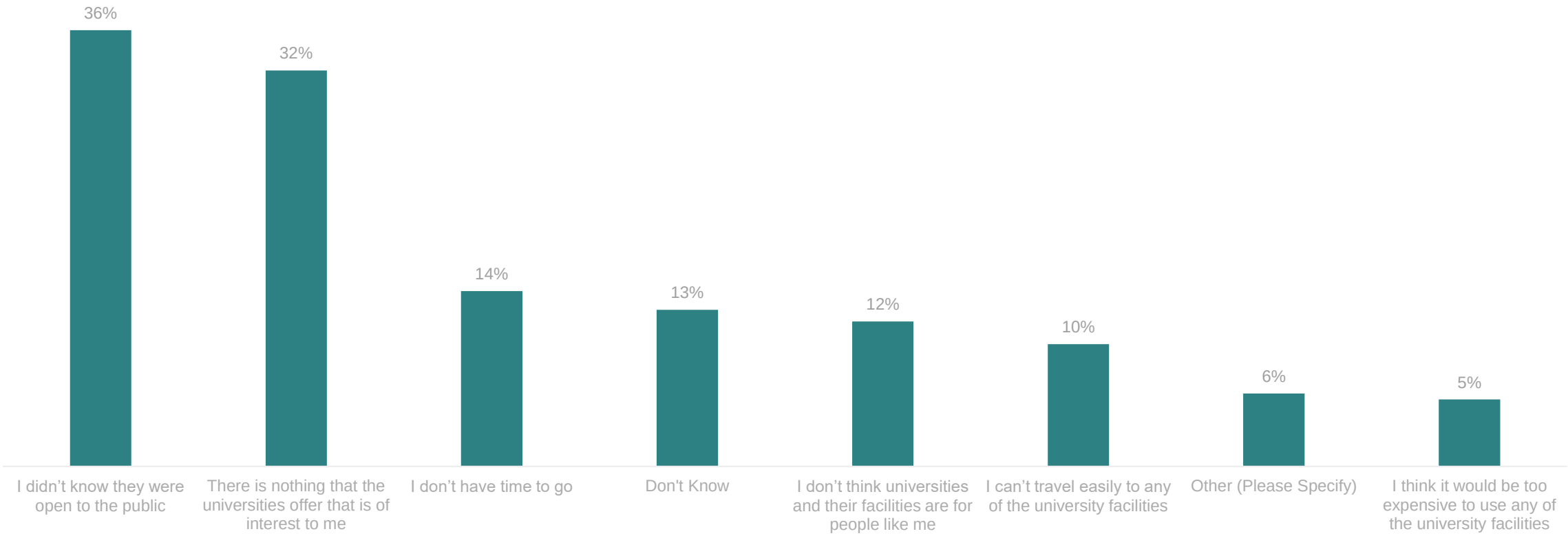


59% of respondents claim to have never visited any of the GM Universities

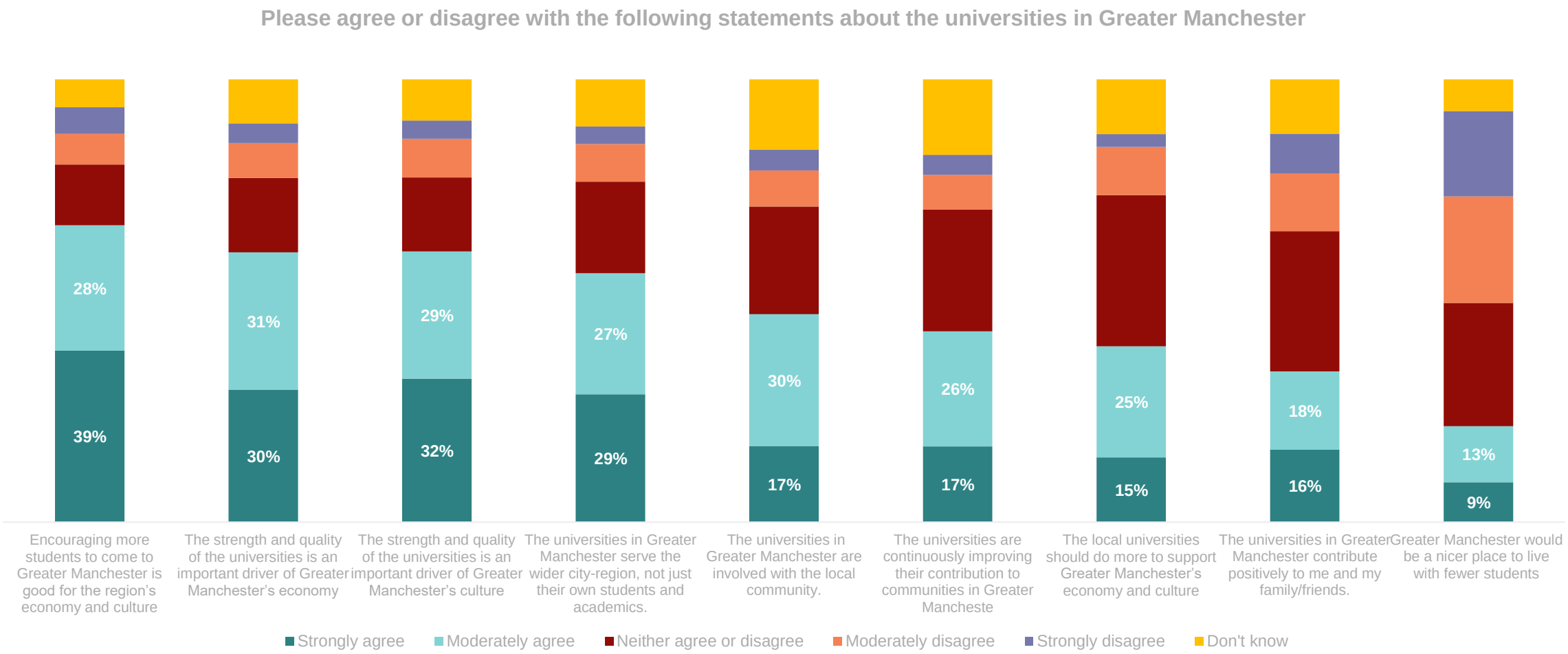


Of those who haven’t visited since 2017 (or indeed less than that), lack of knowledge and interest are the most commonly cited reasons

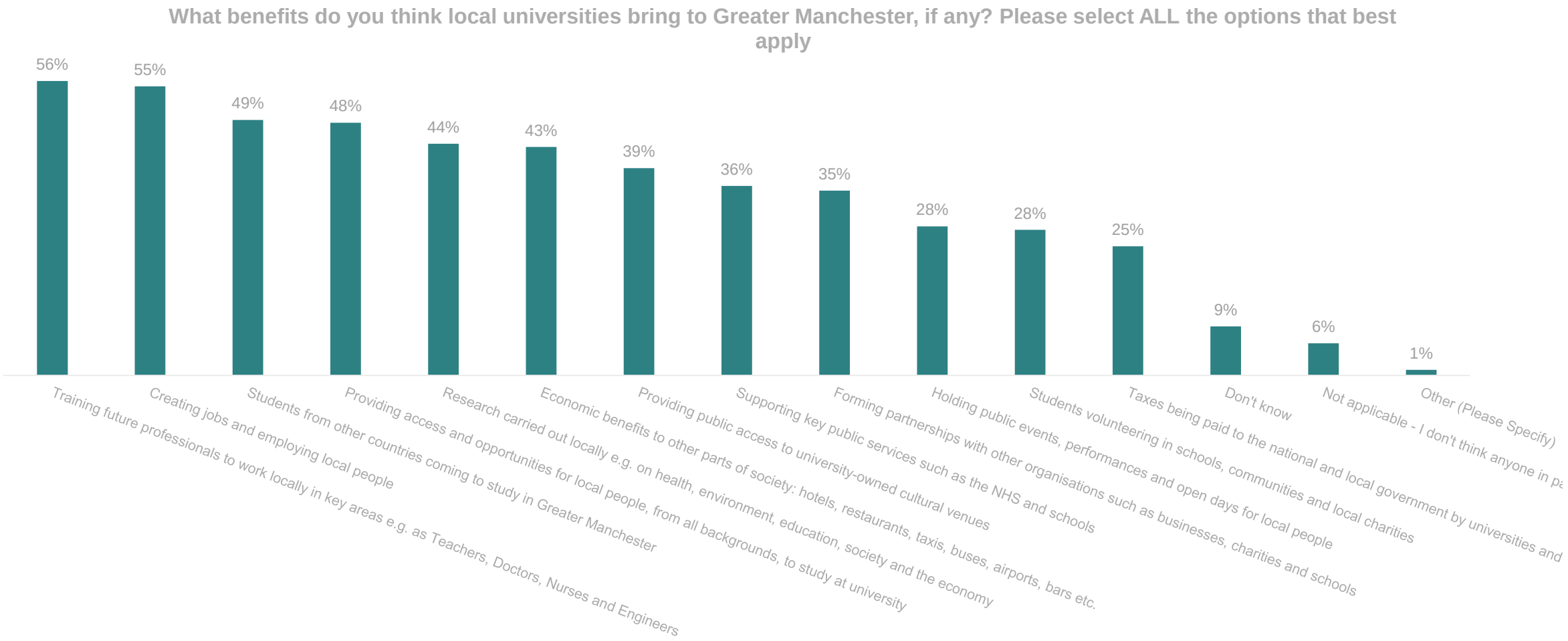
(For all those who haven’t visited since 2017) Which of the below are the main reason(s) why you did not visit any of the facilities of the universities in Greater Manchester more recently before the pandemic?



Universities are thought of strongly – including on economy and culture – and residents want more students, not fewer. Opinions on their civic role, and direct benefits to residents, are more mixed



When more specific benefits are probed – as priorities for the civic role – the practical takes precedence over the theoretical, with a bent to local (but not national) economic impact



Trafford is consistently the borough most likely to recognise the prompted practical benefits of GM Universities. Manchester (borough)'s pride – the highest in a previous question – seems more abstract than practical

	Bolton	Bury	Manchester	Oldham	Rochdale	Salford	Stockport	Tameside	Trafford	Wigan	Average
Training future professionals to work locally in key areas e.g. as Teachers, Doctors, Nurses and Engineers	50%	54%	42%	53%	54%	66%	60%	62%	71%	60%	**56%**
Creating jobs and employing local people	51%	65%	47%	52%	63%	57%	57%	51%	65%	54%	**55%**
Students from other countries coming to study in Greater Manchester	53%	49%	35%	45%	58%	57%	56%	45%	58%	44%	**49%**
Providing access and opportunities for local people, from all backgrounds, to study at university	53%	47%	41%	47%	47%	52%	48%	57%	50%	46%	**48%**
Research carried out locally e.g. on health, environment, education, society and the economy	33%	50%	34%	35%	55%	49%	49%	49%	57%	43%	**44%**
Economic benefits to other parts of society: hotels, restaurants, taxis, buses, airports, bars etc.	39%	47%	33%	35%	45%	52%	51%	41%	61%	41%	**43%**
Providing public access to university-owned cultural venues	36%	44%	28%	35%	44%	53%	40%	44%	54%	32%	**39%**
Supporting key public services such as the NHS and schools	26%	39%	33%	26%	30%	46%	42%	40%	46%	35%	**36%**
Forming partnerships with other organisations such as businesses, charities and schools	25%	36%	28%	36%	42%	42%	40%	33%	43%	33%	**35%**
Holding public events, performances and open days for local people	27%	31%	30%	29%	29%	27%	28%	29%	35%	22%	**28%**
Students volunteering in schools, communities and local charities	25%	37%	24%	28%	33%	36%	29%	21%	30%	22%	**28%**
Taxes being paid to the national and local government by universities and students	24%	28%	24%	22%	22%	28%	25%	28%	28%	20%	**25%**
Don't know	9%	7%	10%	19%	7%	7%	7%	8%	7%	12%	**9%**
Not applicable - I don't think anyone in particular benefits from my local university(ies)	8%	4%	5%	9%	8%	2%	6%	8%	6%	6%	**6%**
Other (Please Specify)	1%	1%	2%	0%	3%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	**1%**