

A summary of responses to Cheshire East Council's

Household Waste Recycling Centre Consultation

Version 1

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Report produced on 18 January 2021 by the Research and Consultation Team, Cheshire East Council, Email RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk for further information.

Executive summary and conclusions

Between 23 November 2020 and 4 January 2021 Cheshire East Council consulted on various options for future Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) provision in the borough. The results of which will be used to inform the future design and procurement process of a new provider of the service

The options presented were based on an independent review commissioned by the Council to assess alternative service scenarios, as the current contract comes to an end within the next 3 years. The options presented as part of the consultation were:

- **Remain with current service:** Replacement of Congleton site
- **Alternative service: Scenario 4:** Closure of Congleton & Poynton
- **Alternative service: Scenario 3:** Closure of Congleton, Middlewich & Poynton
- **Alternative service: Scenario 2:** Closure of Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich & Poynton
- **Alternative service: Scenario 1:** Closure of Alsager, Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich & Poynton

Support was greatest for the option '**Remain with current service**' (59% overall, tend to or strongly support), with opposition increasing in each alternative scenario where a HWRC site was being proposed to close (65% overall, tend to or strongly oppose '**Scenario 4**' increasing to 97% for '**Scenario 1**'. Generally, in each scenario opposition was greatest with the HWRC users whose nearest site was identified, apart from '**Scenario 1**' where opposition was strong across all HWRC users.

The impact of each option, upon respondents, followed a similar pattern to that noted above with '**Remain with current service**' reported as having the least impact (51% overall, fairly or very low impact). For '**Scenario 4**', 53% overall, stated that it would have a fairly or very high impact on them personally, increasing to 95% for '**Scenario 1**'. The likely impact again was generally reported as being greatest by those HWRC users whose nearest site(s) were identified as potentially being closed.

74% of respondents stated that they would be willing to travel up to 10 minutes to reach a HWRC site, 24% would be willing to travel 10 to 20 minutes. With the current service it seems that many respondents reside within a 10-minute drive time to their nearest HWRC. However, this would not be the case for certain respondents within a number of the alternative scenarios.

Within the survey respondents were asked to provide any comments / considerations we may need to be aware of as part of this review. The top themes emerging from the comments were around the environmental impacts closing sites may cause for example, concern about fly tipping, carbon footprint, pollution and congestion, misuse of kerbside bin collections and reduction in recycling rates. Other concerns included the increased time / cost it would take to travel to an alternate site including an increased difficulty for those of an older age/ the disabled and increase in demand due to new houses being built. Some suggestions and general comments were also received.

Further details of the comments will be available in the next version of this report.

The Research and Consultation team recommend that the findings in this report are reviewed and considered alongside any other evidence whilst making a decision.

Introduction

Purpose of the consultation

Between 23 November 2020 and 4 January 2021 Cheshire East Council consulted on various options for future Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) provision in the borough.

The options presented were based on an independent review commissioned by the Council to assess alternative service scenarios as the current contract comes to an end within the next 3 years. The full review conducted is available on the [Cheshire East Website](#).

Consultation methodology and number of responses

The consultation was mainly held online (due to the current Covid-19 restrictions) with paper versions being available on request. It was promoted to:

- HWRC Users, via posters at all Cheshire East Council HWRC sites
- The general public, via the council webpage, social media sites and through a press release.

The consultation picked up a lot of interest and was mentioned in numerous news articles. In total, 10,208 consultation responses were received, including:

- 10,173 online survey responses
- 4 paper survey responses
- 31 email responses

We are also aware of 1 petition on change.org 'Save our Congleton Recycling Centre' this petition is currently still ongoing, at the time of writing this report it has received around 1,900 signatures.

A breakdown of demographics for the online & paper survey can be viewed in Appendix 1.

Section 1 – Current use of HWRC sites

As part of the, survey respondents were asked how often approximately, in a typical 12-month period, do they visit each of the current HWRC sites within Cheshire East. This question was asked to gain an insight into respondent usage and doesn't reflect actual usage of the sites in a typical 12-month period.

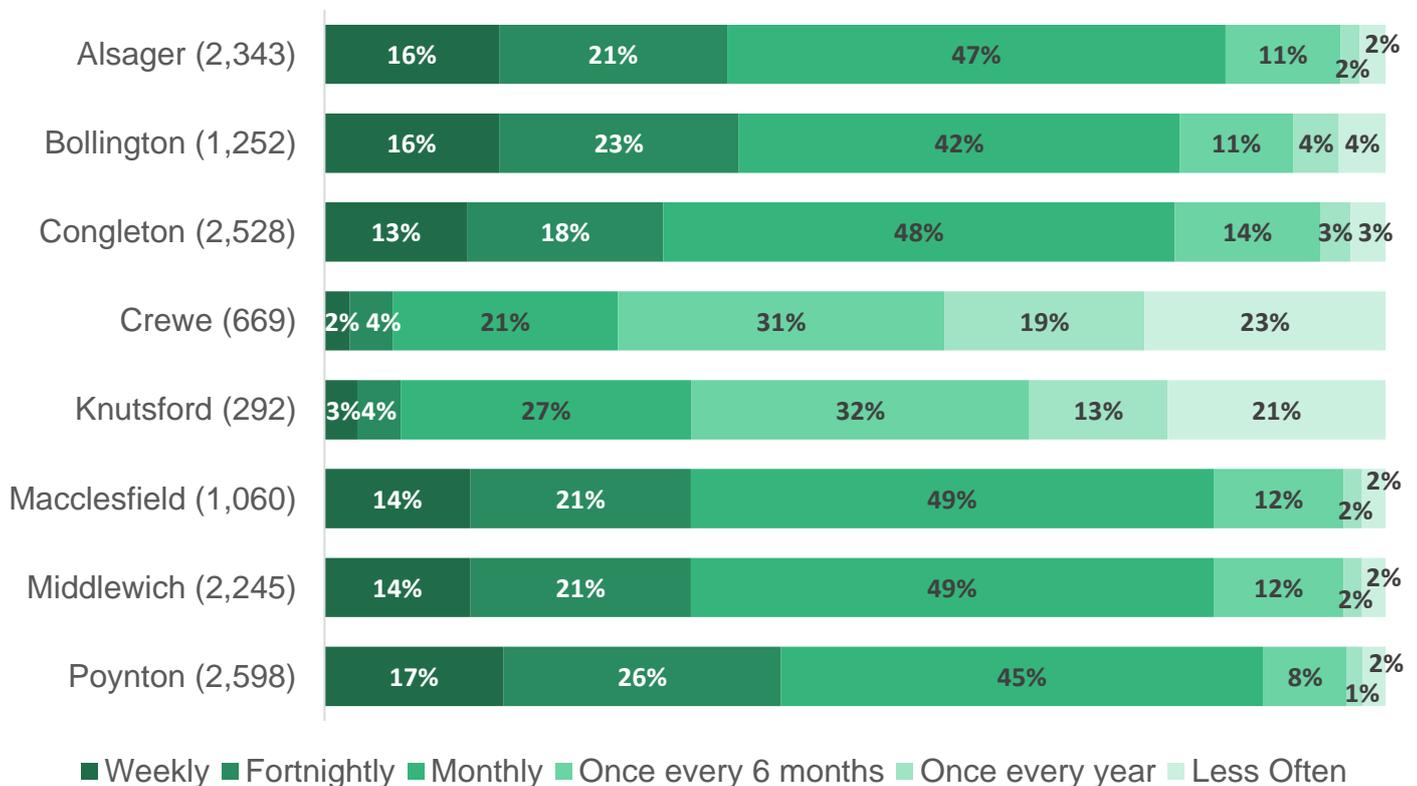
Figure1 shows the breakdown of results, excluding those who stated never. For most of the HWRC site's respondents represent frequent users - typically visiting monthly or more often:

- Alsager, 85% typically visit monthly or more often
- Bollington, 81% typically visit monthly or more often
- Congleton, 80% typically visit monthly or more often
- Macclesfield, 84% typically visit monthly or more often
- Middlewich, 84% typically visit monthly or more often
- Poynton, 88% typically visit monthly or more often

For Crewe and Knutsford HWRC sites however, respondents represented less frequent users visiting once every 6 months or less often:

- Crewe, 72% typically visit once every 6 months or less often
- Knutsford, 65% typically visit once every 6 months or less often

Figure 1: How often respondents visit Cheshire East HWRC sites in a typical 12-month period (excluding those who stated never)



Many respondents (83%) had visited only one Cheshire East HWRC site within a typical 12-month period, 16% had visited two different sites and 5% had visited more than two different sites.

Table 1 below, provides further insight into respondent distribution per HWRC site. Users of Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton HWRC represent around one quarter of the overall response each. Bollington HWRC Users represent 12% of the overall response.

Please note that percentages won't add up to 100 as respondents could specify that they use more than one HWRC site.

Table 1: User count by HWRC and Percentage of total response		
HWRC Site	User Count	Percentage of total respondents
Alsager	2,343	23%
Bollington	1,252	12%
Congleton	2,528	25%
Crewe	669	7%
Knutsford	292	3%
Macclesfield	1,060	10%
Middlewich	2,245	22%
Poynton	2,598	26%
Total Respondents	10,177	

Within section 2 of the report, the main results are shown overall and are also broken down by site users (excludes those who stated that they had never visited for each HWRC site).

Section 2 – The options

Respondents were presented with a table providing a snapshot of each option being considered by the Council as part of the review. A summary document which gave more detail on the options was also provided as well as a link to the full independent review document.

The options presented were:-

- **Remain with current service:** Replacement of Congleton site
- **Alternative service: Scenario 4:** Closure of Congleton & Poynton
- **Alternative service: Scenario 3:** Closure of Congleton, Middlewich & Poynton
- **Alternative service: Scenario 2:** Closure of Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich & Poynton
- **Alternative service: Scenario 1:** Closure of Alsager, Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich & Poynton

After respondents reviewed the information, they were asked how strongly they supported or opposed each option as well as what impact each option would have on them personally. The rest of this section of the report looks at the results received for each option in turn.

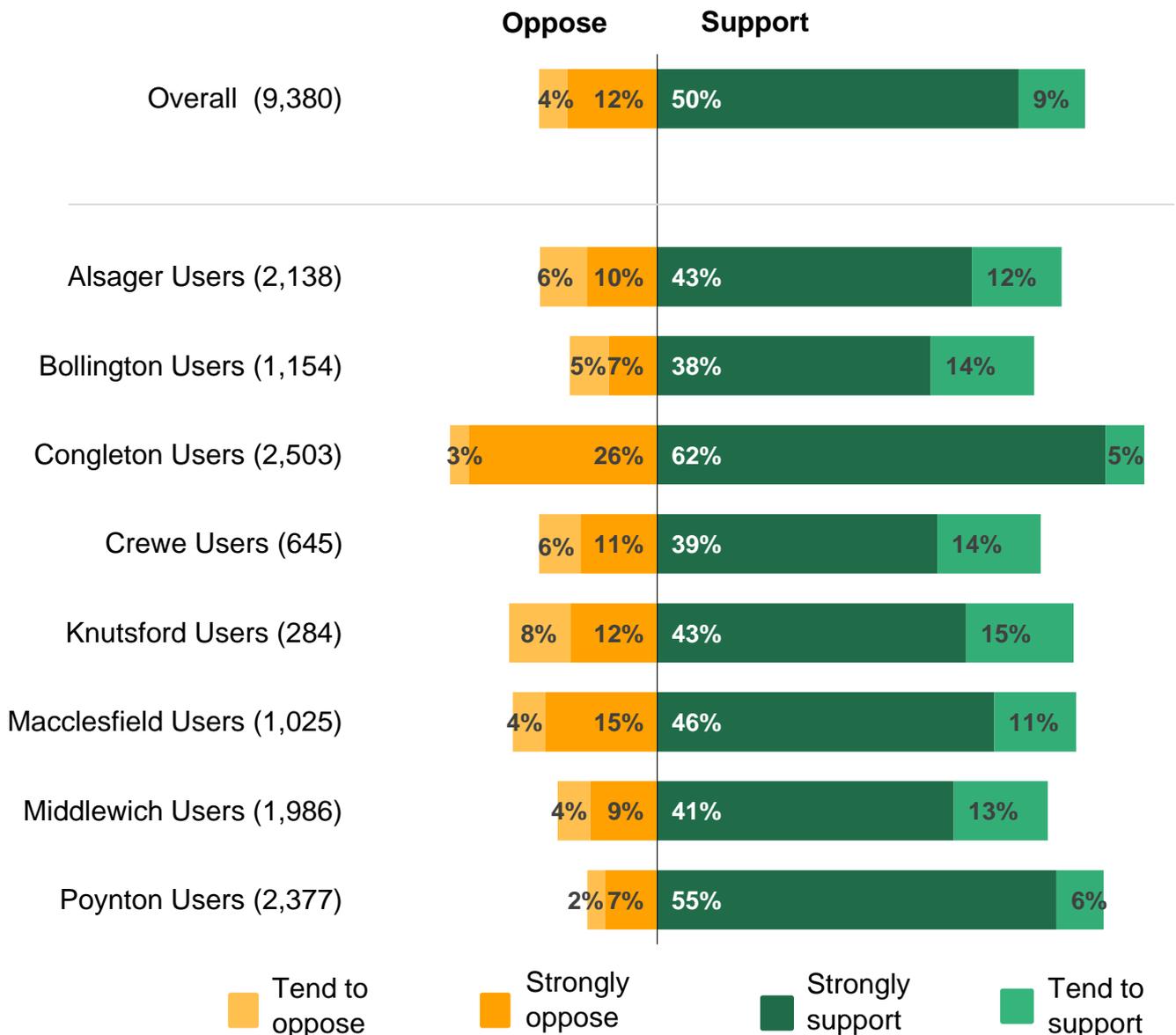
Please note that 'users' excludes those who stated that they had never visited for each HWRC site.

Remain with current service

Under this option Congleton HWRC Site would need to be replaced in order to maintain current levels of service. The current site is not owned by the Council and a long-term lease of this land has not been able to be secured.

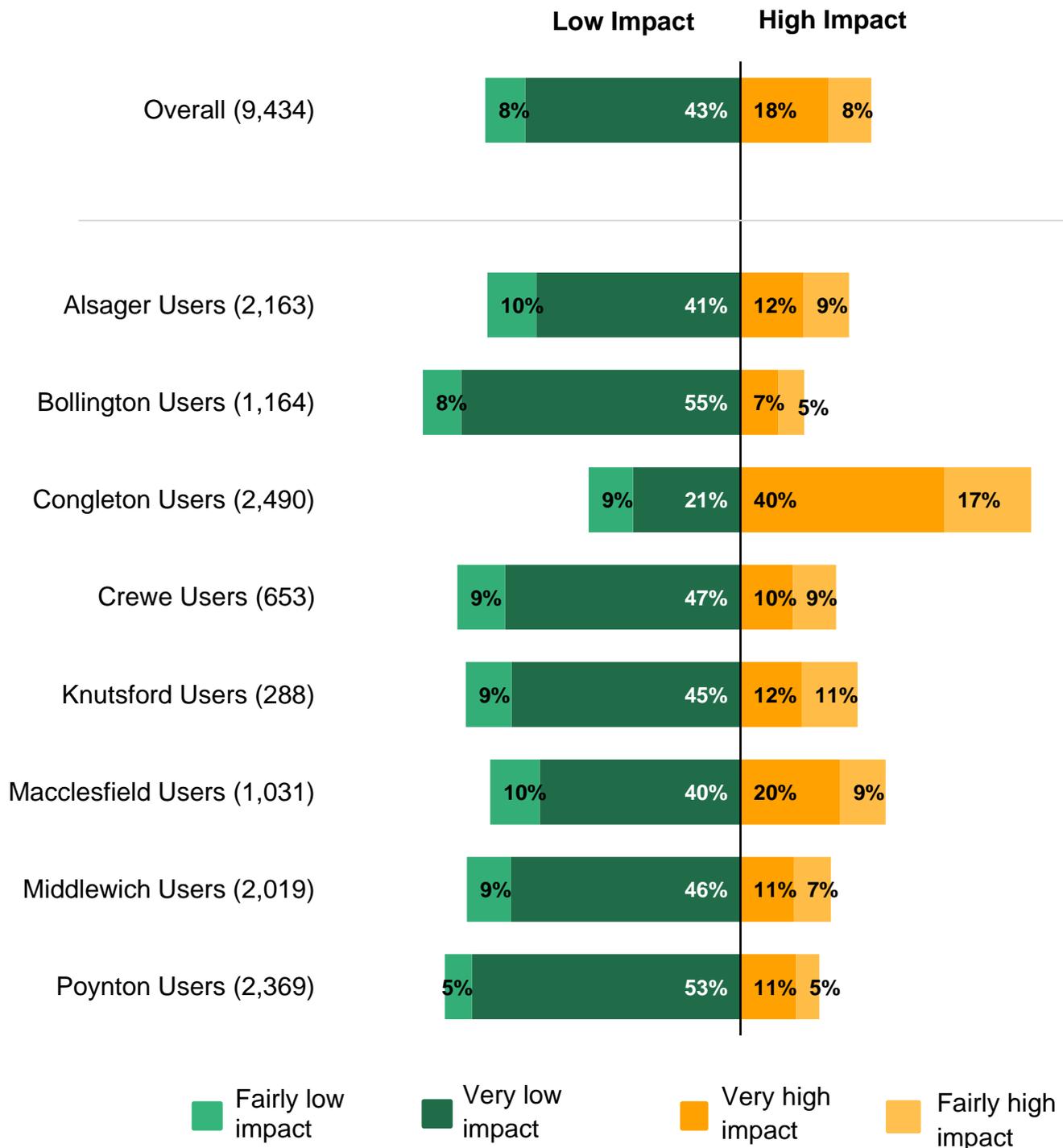
Over one half of all respondents (59%) stated that they strongly or tend to support this option overall. Congleton HWRC Site users were more likely to strongly support this option compared to other site users (62% strongly support). Conversely, they were also more likely to strongly oppose this option (26% strongly oppose). This possibly represents those who do not want the site to be replaced or to change location and would rather it remain where it is. Figure 2 shows the percentage of those that stated oppose or support broken down by each HWRC site users. The remainder of the respondents (not shown on Figure 2) either selected 'neither support nor oppose' or 'don't know / unsure'.

Figure 2: Percentage of those stating oppose or support to the option: Remain with current service, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Just over one half of all respondents (51%) stated that this option would have a fairly or very low impact on them personally. Even though Congleton HWRC users were more likely to support this option they were also more likely to state that this option would impact them personally (58% very or fairly high impact compared to 26% Cheshire East overall). This probably reflects those who may feel that a replacement site / change in location to the current site would impact them and their current use.

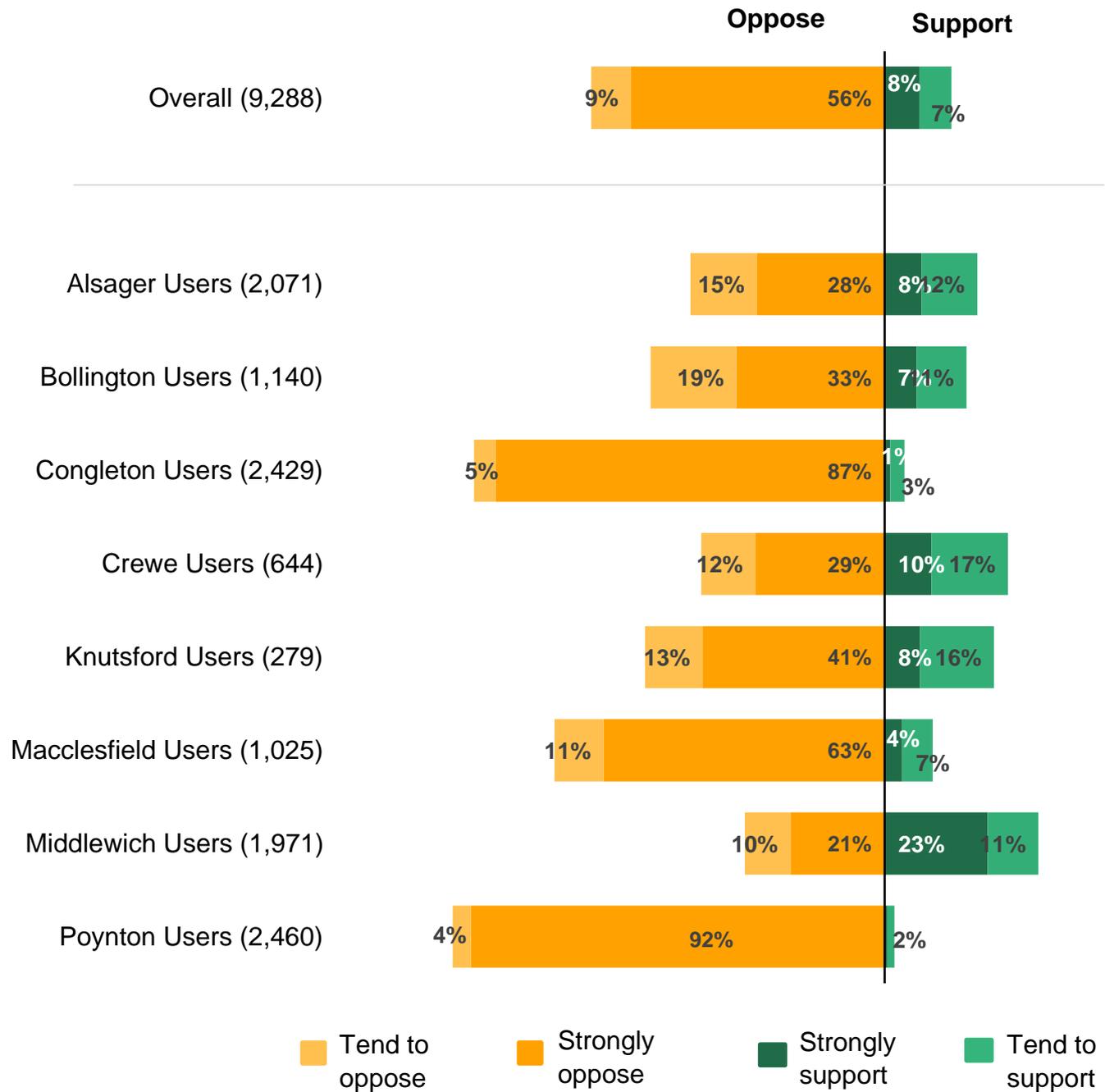
Figure 3: Percentage of those stating that the option: Remain with current service, would have a low impact or high impact on them personally, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Alternative service: Scenario 4

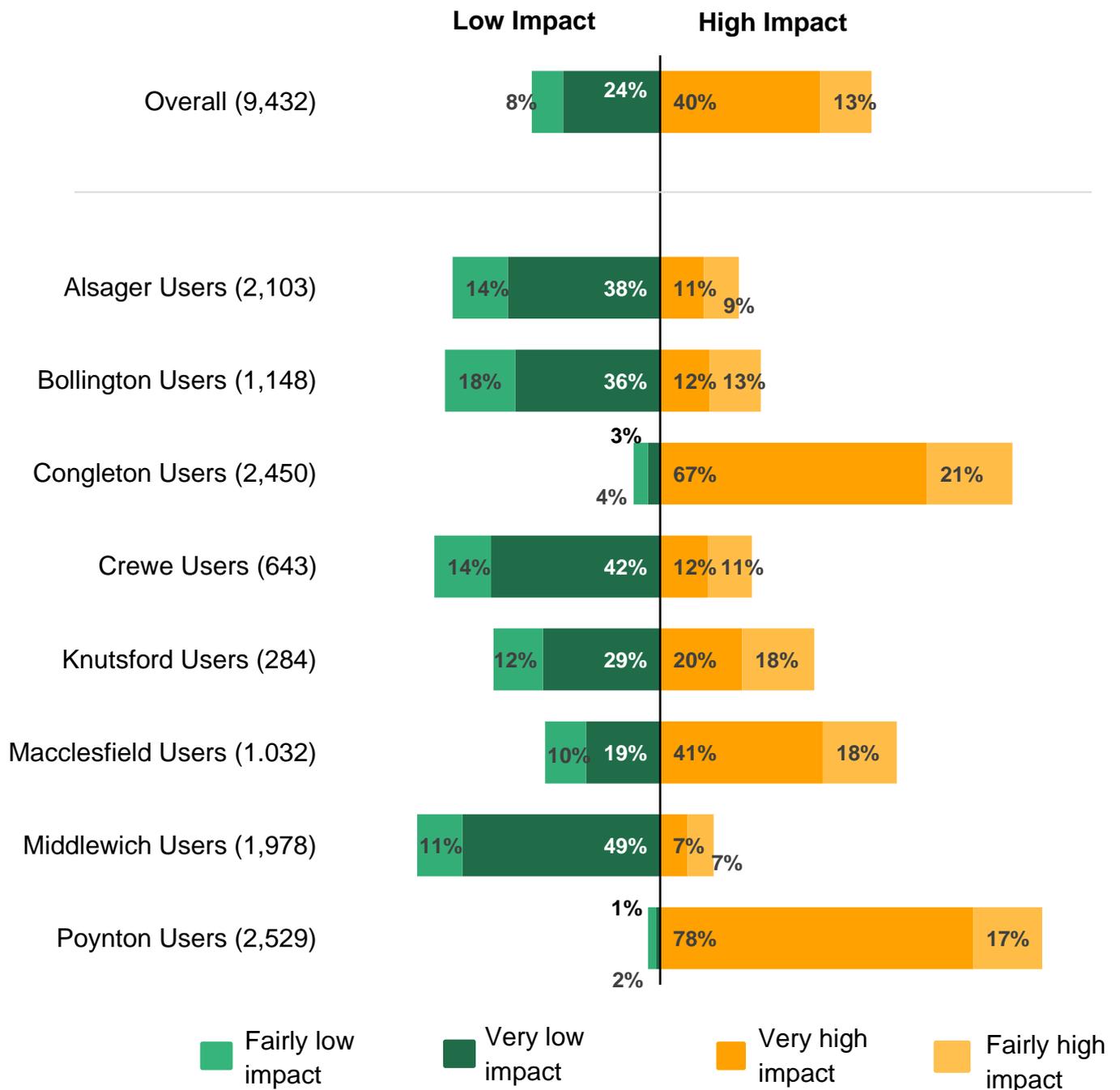
The majority of respondents opposed this option with 65% stating that they tend to or strongly oppose this option overall. Both Congleton and Poynton HWRC would close in this scenario, unsurprisingly users of these sites were more likely to oppose this option compared to the other HWRC site users (92% and 96% oppose respectively). The remainder of the respondents (not shown on figure 4) either selected 'neither support nor oppose' or 'don't know / unsure'.

Figure 4: Percentage of those stating oppose or support to the option: Alternative service Scenario 4, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Just over one half of all respondents (53%) stated that this option would have a fairly or very high impact on them personally. Congleton and Poynton HWRC users were more likely to state that this option would personally impact them (88% and 95% respectively). Macclesfield HWRC users state a slightly greater impact compared with the other remaining HWRC users, 59% feel that this scenario would impact them (see figure 5). This might represent those with a concern that closing Poynton HWRC would mean greater use of the Macclesfield HWRC site as the next closest site.

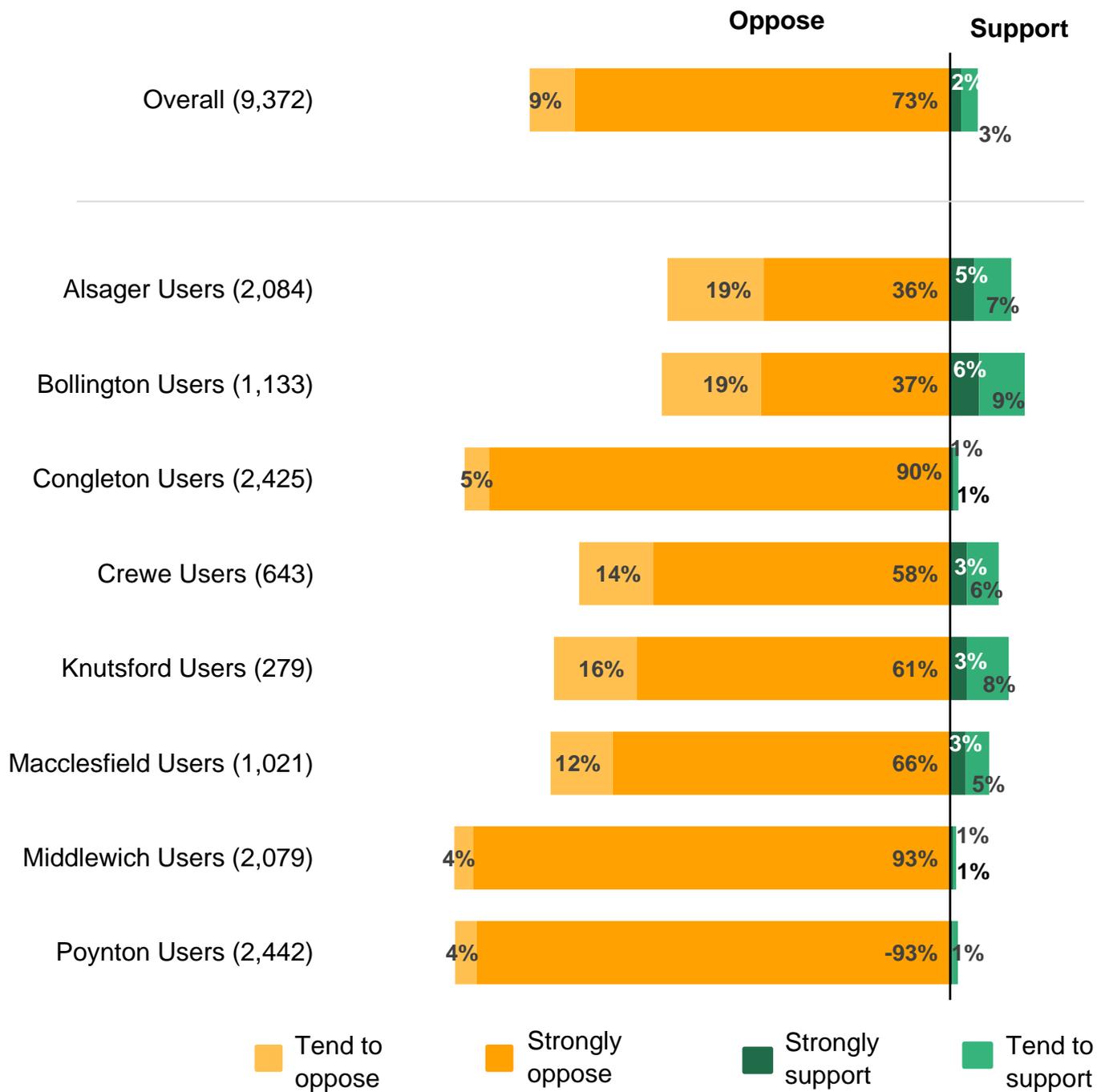
Figure 5: Percentage of those stating that the option: Alternative service Scenario 4, would have a low impact or high impact on them personally, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Alternative service: Scenario 3

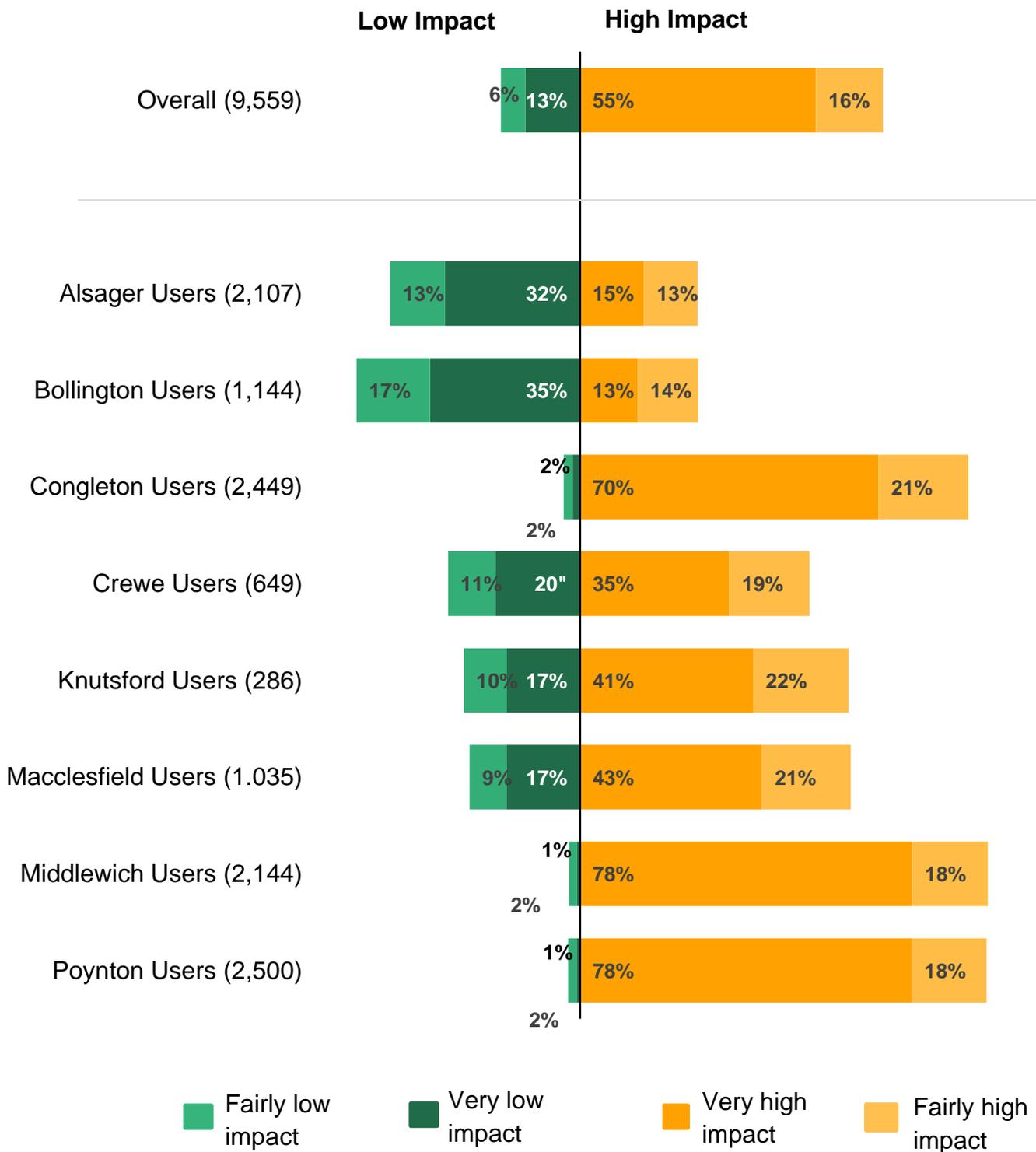
A high majority of respondents opposed this option with 82% stating that they tend to or strongly oppose this option overall. Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton HWRC sites would close in this scenario. Again, it's the users of these sites who show the greatest opposition compared to other HWRC site users (95%, 97% and 97% respectively) as shown in figure 6. The remainder of the respondents (not shown on figure 6) either selected 'neither support nor oppose' or 'don't know / unsure'.

Figure 6: Percentage of those stating oppose or support to the option: Alternative service Scenario 3, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Overall, 71% stated that this option would impact them personally. Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton HWRC users were more likely to state that this option would personally impact them (91%, 96% and 95% respectively).

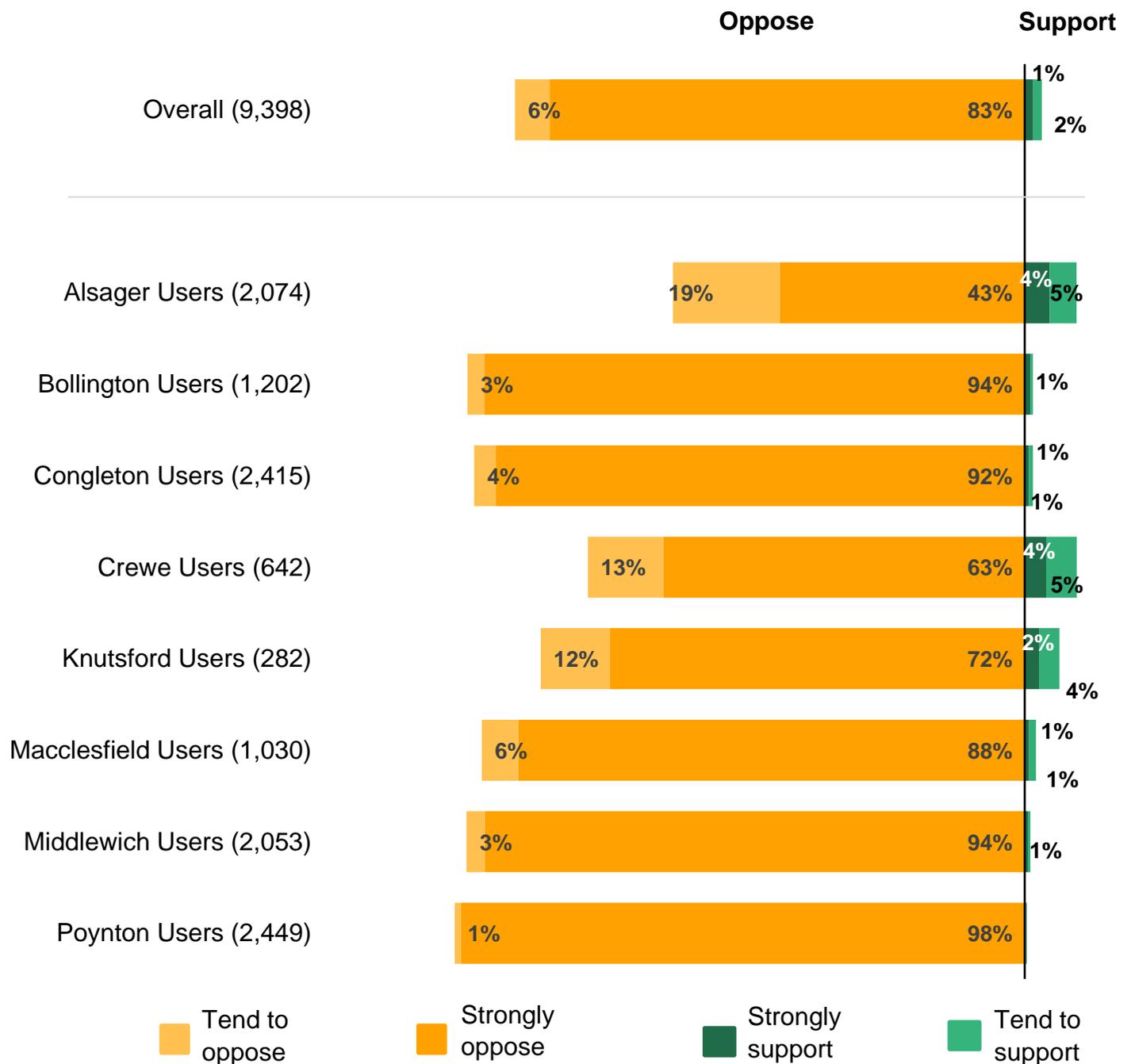
Figure 7: Percentage of those stating that the option: Alternative service Scenario 3, would have a low impact or high impact on them personally, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Alternative service: Scenario 2

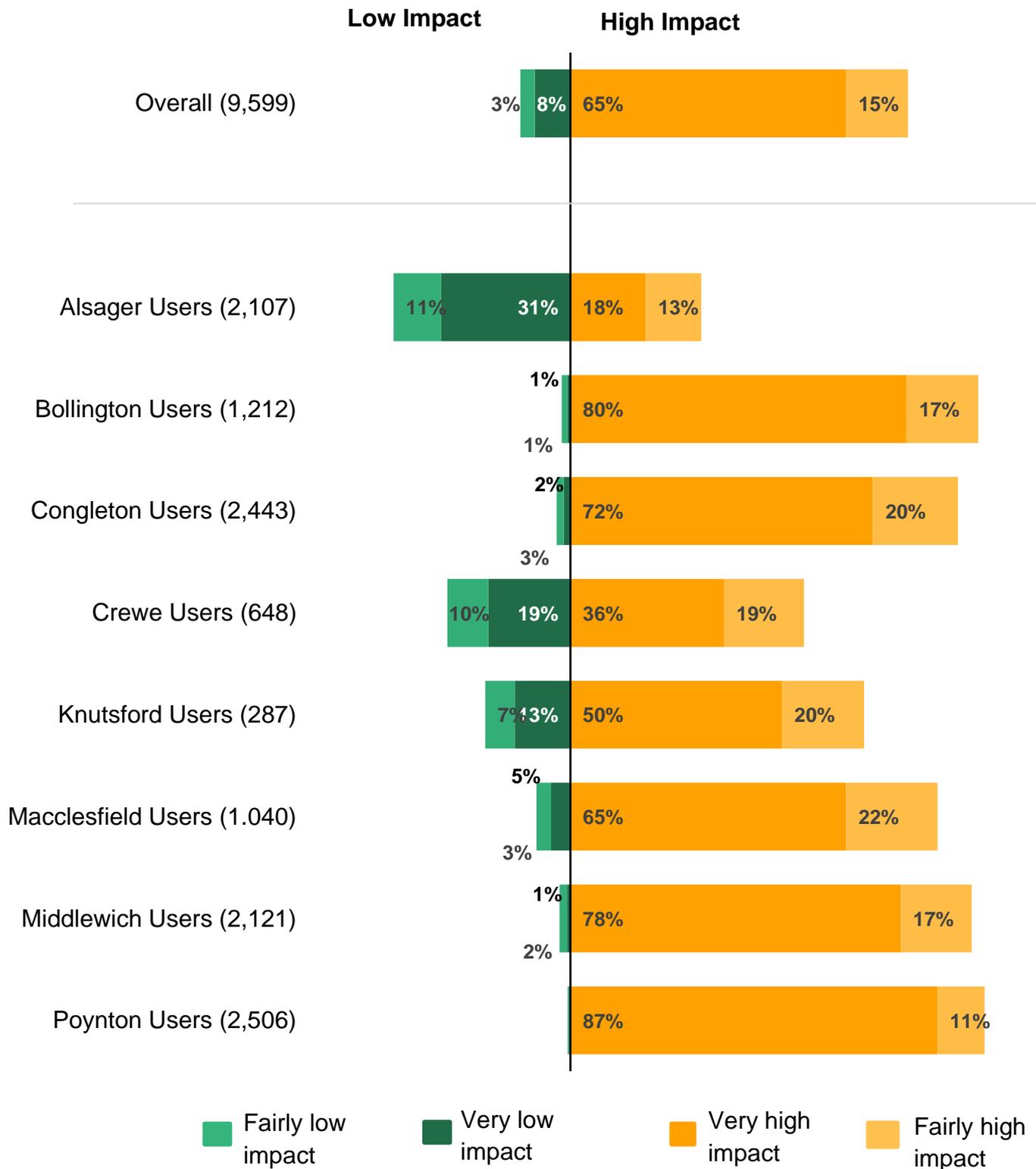
A high majority of respondents opposed this option with 89% stating that they tend to or strongly oppose this option overall. Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton HWRC sites would close in this scenario as such it was users of these sites who were more likely to oppose this option compared to other HWRC site users (97%, 96%, 97% and 99% respectively) as shown n figure 8. The remainder of the respondents (not shown on figure 8) either selected 'neither support nor oppose' or 'don't know / unsure'.

Figure 8: Percentage of those stating oppose or support to the option: Alternative service Scenario 2, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Overall, 80% stated that this option would impact them personally. Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton HWRC users were more likely to state that this option would impact them personally (97%, 92%, 95% and 98% respectively) as shown in figure 9.

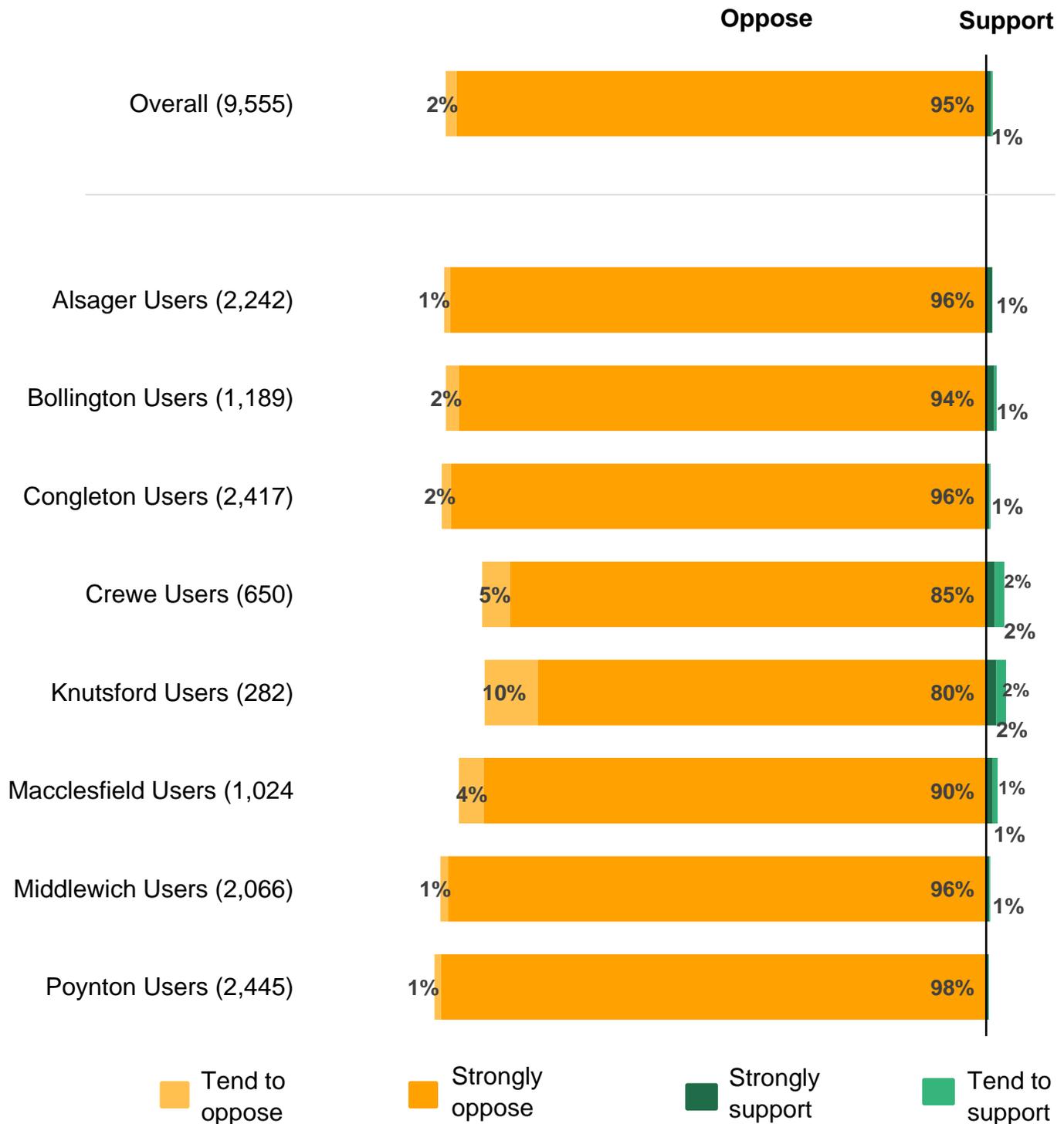
Figure 9: Percentage of those stating that the option: Alternative service Scenario 2, would have a low impact or high impact on them personally, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Alternative service: Scenario 1

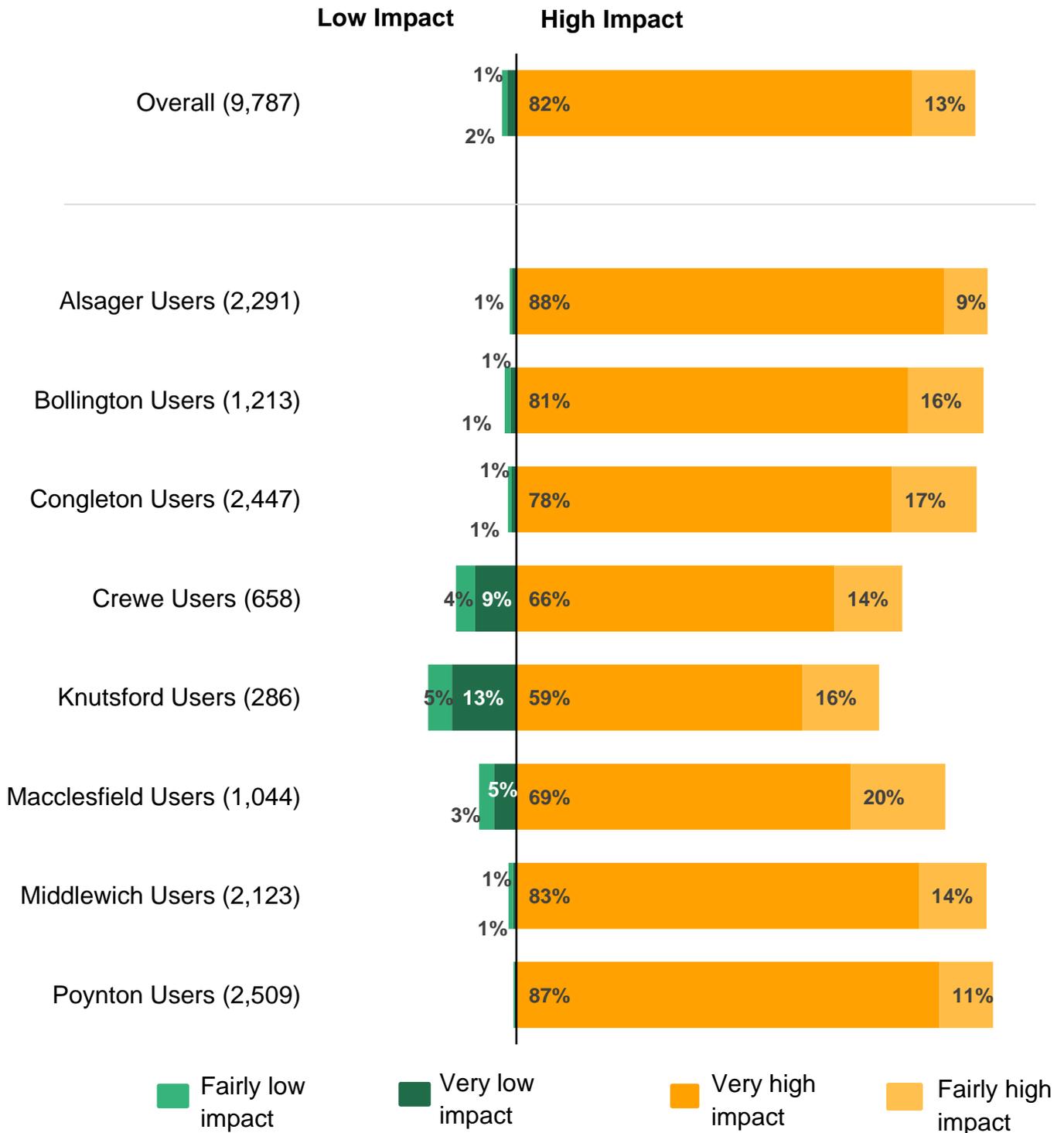
Almost all of respondents opposed this option with 97% overall stating that they tend to or strongly oppose this option. Alsager, Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton HWRC sites would close in this scenario. Opposition was strong amongst all HWRC site users for this scenario as figure 10 shows. The remainder of the respondents (not shown on figure 10) either selected 'neither support nor oppose' or 'don't know / unsure'.

Figure 10: Percentage of those stating oppose or support to the option: Alternative service Scenario 1, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Impact was high amongst nearly all HWRC users (95% very or fairly high impact). Crewe and Knutsford HWRC users were slightly less impacted personally compared to the other HWRC site users as figure 11 shows.

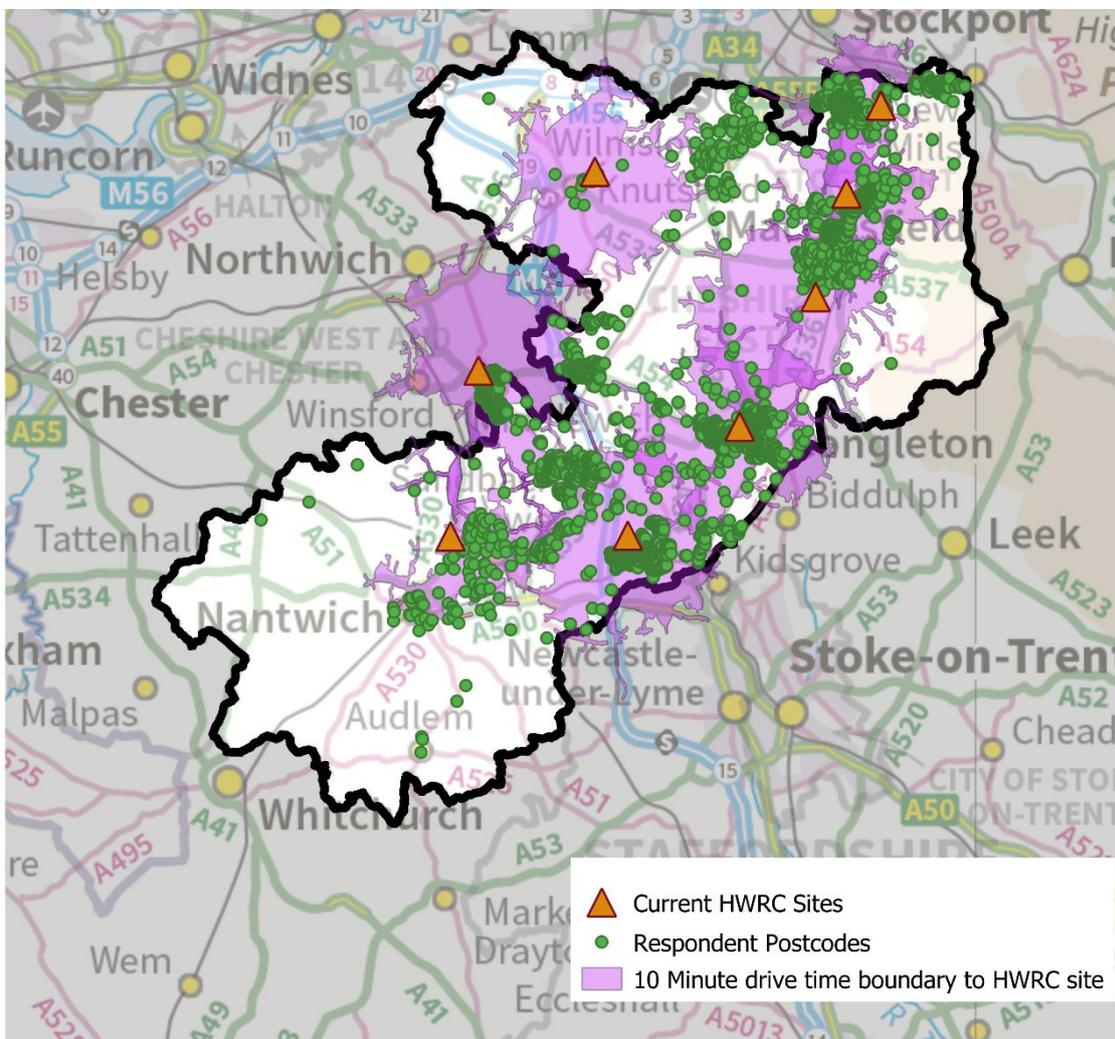
Figure 11: Percentage of those stating that the option: Alternative service Scenario 1, would have a low impact or high impact on them personally, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



How long willing to travel

74% of respondents stated that they would be willing to travel up to 10 minutes to reach a HWRC site, with 24% willing to travel 10 to 20 minutes. The map below plots respondent postcodes (those that left a valid postcode, 8,822 respondents) against the current HWRC sites and a 10-minute drive time to each site. With the current service, it seems that many respondents live within a 10-minute drive time to their nearest HWRC. However, this would not remain the case for many respondents, for a number of the given alternative scenarios.

It is worth noting here, that even though respondent preference is a 10 minute drive time to their nearest HWRC, the Waste and Resources Action Partnership (WRAP) guidance suggests there should be a maximum driving time (for the great majority of residents in good traffic conditions) of twenty minutes (30 minutes in very rural areas) - this is looked at in the independent review documentation.





Cheshire East Council

Current HWRC sites with 10 minute drive time boundaries and respondent postcodes



1:1

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Section 3 - Comments / Considerations

Respondents were asked if they had any comments or considerations on the options presented within the consultation. A total of 6,049 respondents chose to leave a comment. Comments received through emails (31 responses) will also be included as part of this analysis.

Please note: This section highlights the top-level themes that have emerged from the comments. Further details of the comments including the number of references received for each theme will be available in the next version of this report.

Theme 1: Keep our HWRC Open

Respondents specifically expressed that their HWRC site was well utilised / always busy and therefore should remain open. The HWRC's specifically mentioned were: Alsager, Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton.

Theme 2: Environmental impacts / concerns

Respondents expressed great concern about an increase in fly tipping, carbon footprint, pollution and congestion if HWRC's were to close. Misuse of household waste bins as well as a reduction in recycling rates were also factors brought up as key environmental concerns.

Theme 3: Time, costs or demand

The impact of new houses and increasing population on the demand for HWRC services was mentioned as well as the inconvenience and increased cost of having to travel further to an alternate site. There were specific mentions to disability / age making it difficult for long travel. Others felt that they pay enough Council tax to cover the service so it shouldn't be removed.

Theme 4: Alternative suggestions

Some respondents gave an alternative income generating suggestion including introducing a charge for use of the tip / a charge to dispose of non-recyclable waste. Others gave an alternative scenario suggestion including a reduction in the opening times of HWRC sites.

Theme 5: General comments / concerns

General comments on personal use and concerns not directly related to the options were also received.

Appendix 1 – Demographic breakdowns

A number of demographic questions were asked at the end of the survey to ensure there was a wide range of views from across different characteristics. All of the questions were optional and therefore won't add up to the total number of responses received.

Table 1: Number of survey respondents by representation

	Count	Percent
As an individual (local resident)	9,995	98%
As an elected Cheshire East Ward Councillor, or Town/Parish Councillor	62	< 5%
On behalf of a local business	56	< 5%
On behalf of a group, organisation or club	34	< 5%
Other	46	< 5%
Grand Total	10,153	100%

Table 2: Number of survey respondents by gender

	Count	Percent
Male	5,273	54%
Female	4,148	42%
Other gender identity	< 5	< 5%
Prefer not to say	413	< 5%
Grand Total	9,837	100%

Table 3: Number of survey respondents by age group

	Count	Percent
16-24	165	< 5%
25-34	1,004	10%
35-44	1,990	20%
45-54	2,307	23%
55-64	2,069	21%
65-74	1,569	16%
75-84	437	< 5%
85 and over	41	< 5%
Prefer not to say	352	< 5%
Grand Total	9,934	100%

Table 4: Number of survey respondents by ethnic origin

	Count	Percent
White British / English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / Irish	9,008	92%
Any other White background	79	< 5%
Asian / Asian British	25	< 5%
Black African / Caribbean / Black British	12	< 5%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean / African / Asian	34	< 5%
Other ethnic origin	29	< 5%
Prefer not to say	614	6%
Grand Total	9,812	100%

Table 5: Number of survey respondents by religious belief

	Count	Percent
Christian	4,534	49%
Buddhist	29	< 5%
Muslim	17	< 5%
Hindu	10	< 5%
Jewish	5	< 5%
Sikh	<5	< 5%
Other religious belief	92	< 5%
None	2,954	32%
Prefer not to say	1,598	17%
Grand Total	9,293	100%

Table 6: Number of survey respondents by limited activity due to health problem / disability

	Count	Percent
Yes	1,322	14%
No	7,306	77%
Prefer not to say	855	9%
Grand Total	9,483	100%