

BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION AHEAD OF THE BUDGET

October 2026

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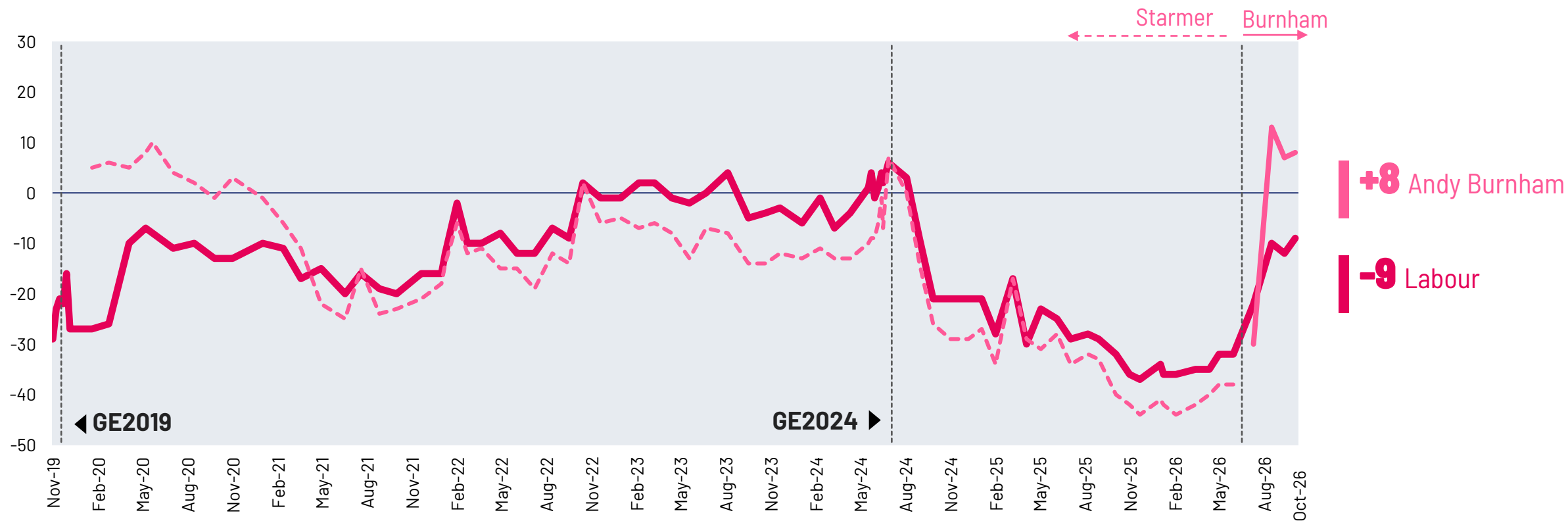
THE **POLITICS** OF IT ALL



A Burnham bounce? But more personal than party

To what extent, if at all, do you have a favourable or unfavourable opinion of the following politicians and political parties?

Net favourability: Labour Party and Leader



Base 2,257 Online British Adults aged 18+, 9-13 October 2026

And a bounce in confidence...

but still fragmented, contested support

How confident, if at all are you that? % confident

 The Labour party

 The Conservative party

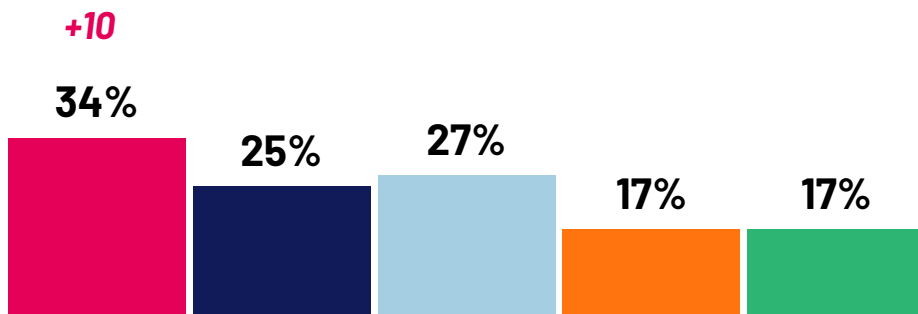
 Reform UK

 The Liberal Democrats

 The Green party

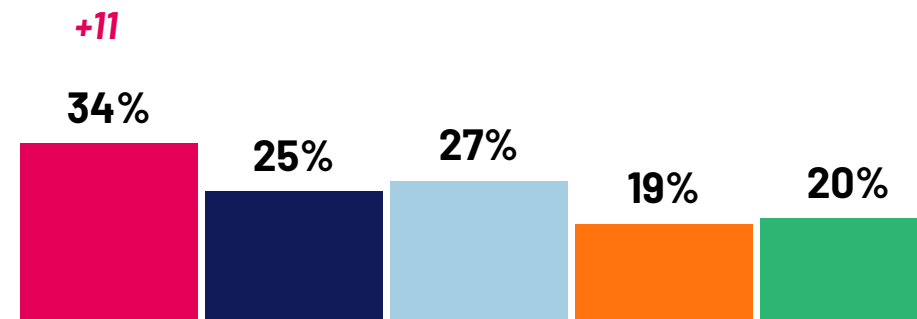
**Have a good long-term economic plan
for Britain?**

*v February 2026,
pre-Spring statement*



**Will deliver improvements that will make a
difference to my daily life?**

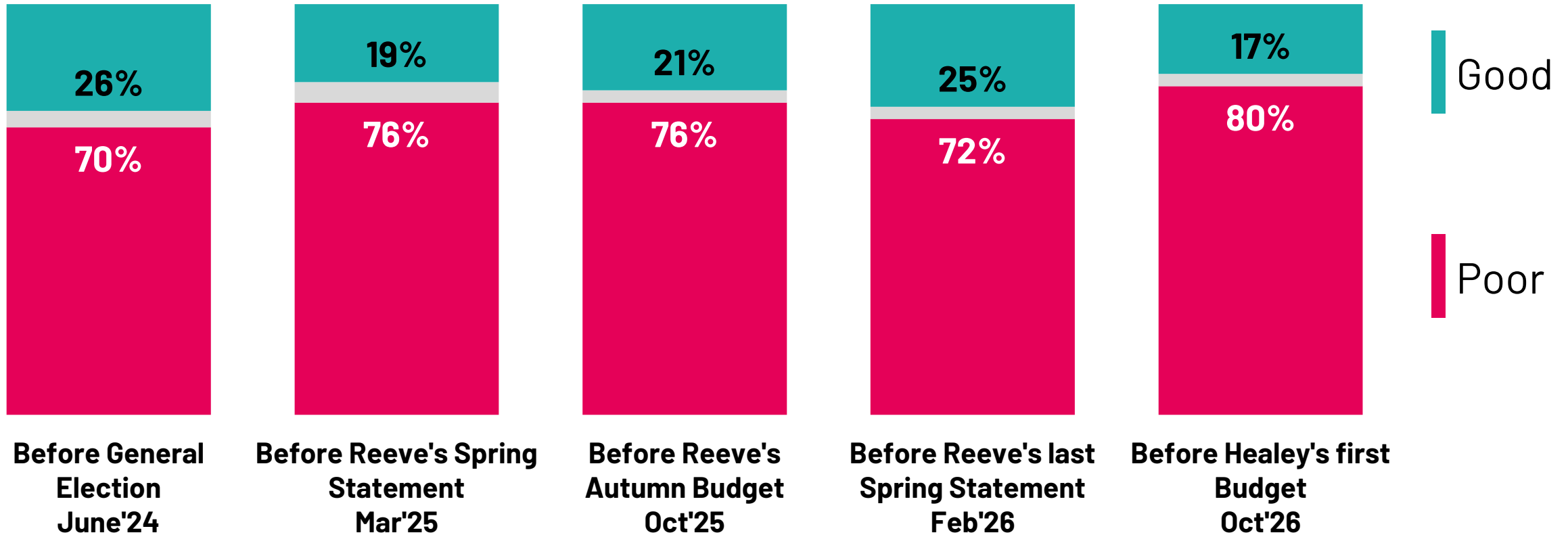
*v February 2026,
pre-Spring statement*



Base: 1,080 Online British adults aged 18-75, 9-13 October 2026

Perceptions of the British economy have not improved

How would you describe the current state of the British economy? Would you say it is...?

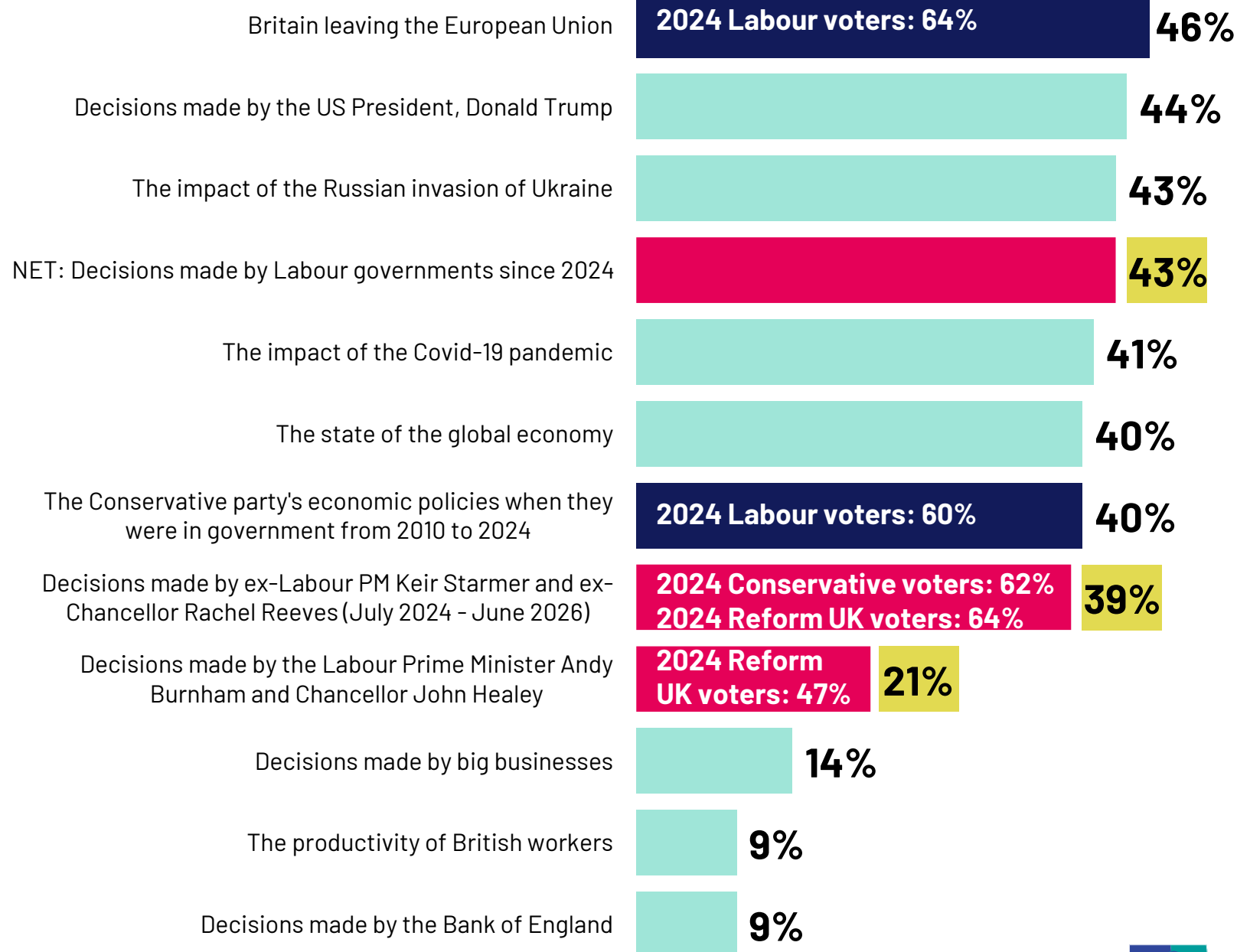


Base: 1,080 Online British adults aged 18-75, 9-13 October 2026

This govt is avoiding the blame for the state of the economy... for now

Which of the following, if any, would you say have contributed MOST to the British economy currently being in a POOR state?

Base: 1,080 Online British adults aged 18-75, including 850 who say the economy is in a poor state, 9-13 October 2026

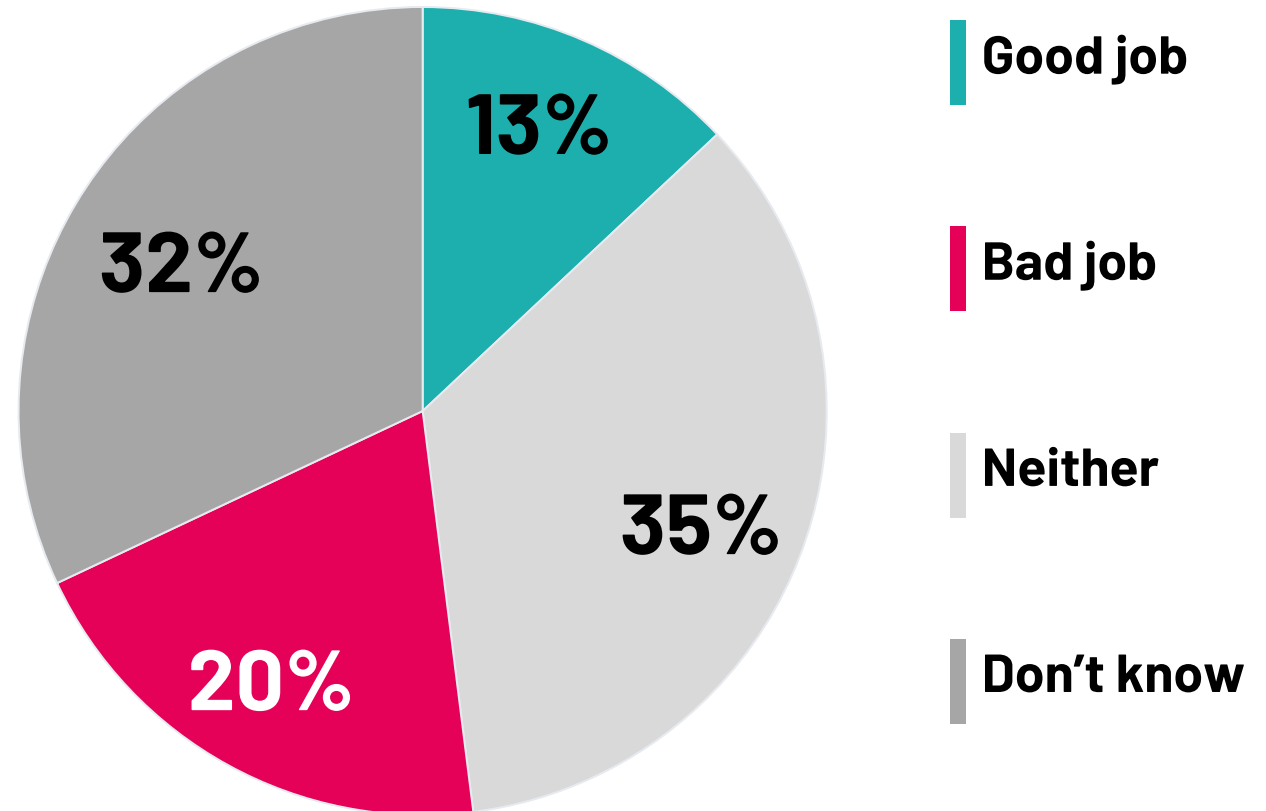


**The political context is
giving this government
a bit of breathing space**

A Chancellor unknown



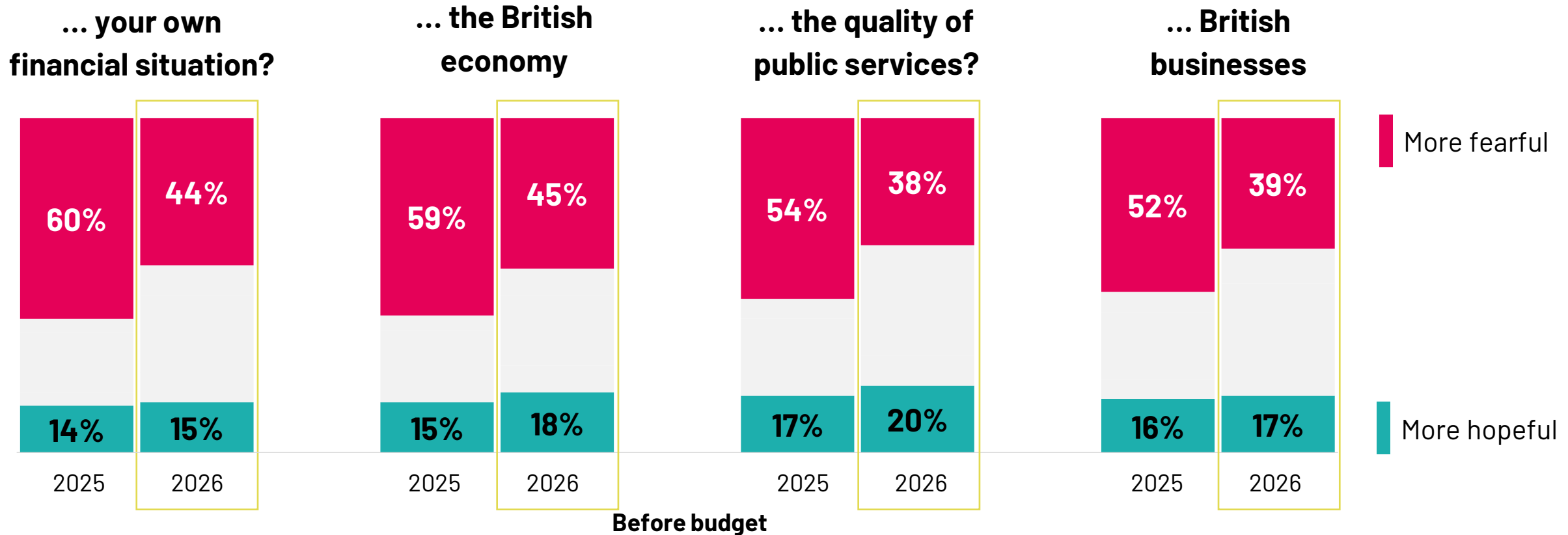
To what extent, if at all, do you think John Healey has been doing a good job or a bad job, in his role as Chancellor of the Exchequer, or neither?



Base: 1,080 Online British adults aged 18-75, 9-13 October 2026

Britain is not more hopeful, but it is less fearful about this Budget

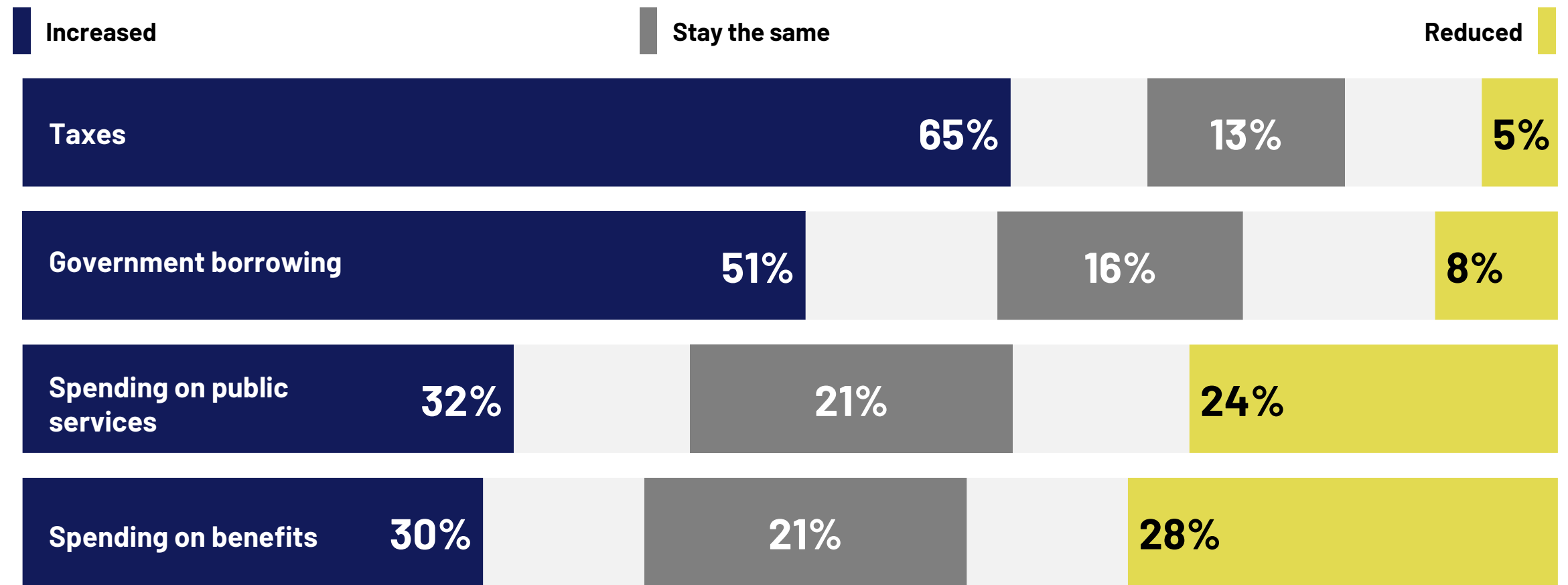
As you may know, Chancellor John Healey will be announcing the Autumn Budget on Wednesday 28th October. To what extent, would you say you are hopeful or fearful of how announcements in the upcoming Autumn Budget might impact...



Base: 1,080 Online British adults aged 18-75, 9-13 October 2026

The public expect higher taxes and more borrowing, but are split on spending

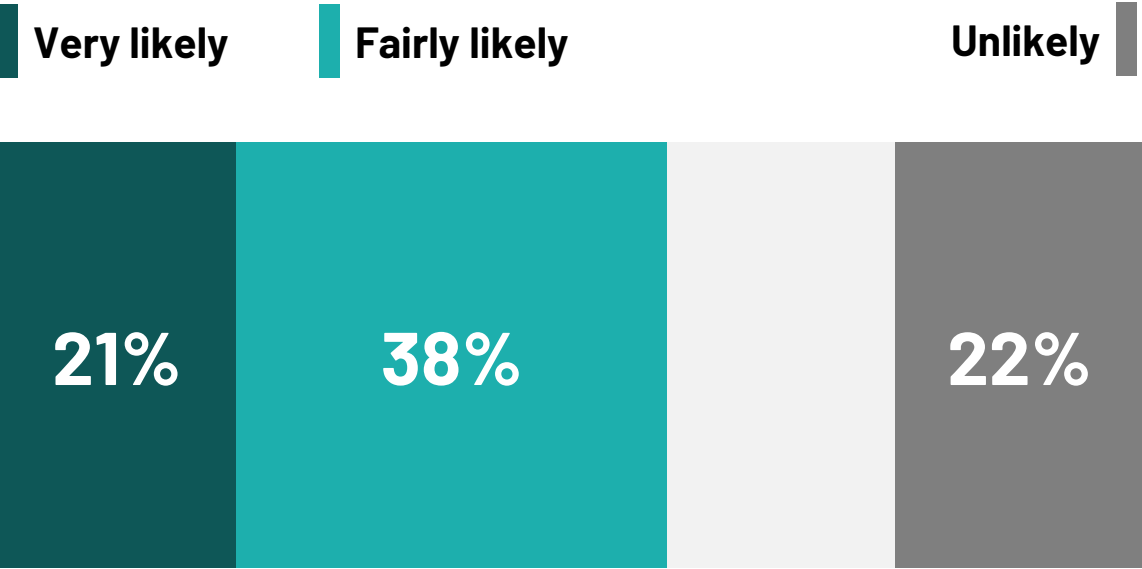
As you may know, the Chancellor of the Exchequer is announcing the Budget on 28 October. For each of the below, what, if anything, do you expect the Chancellor to announce in the upcoming Budget?



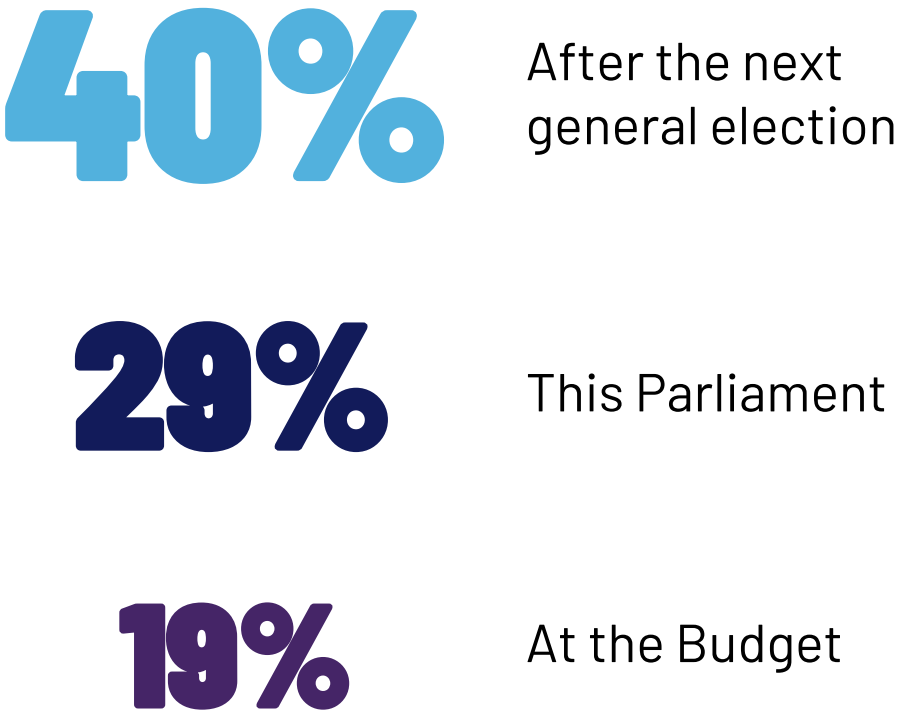
Base: 1,080 Online British adults aged 18-75, 9-13 October 2026

Britons expect more fiscal tightening, but mostly after the next general election

Over the next five years, how likely or unlikely do you think it is that the UK government will have to take significant steps to reduce the level of government debt beyond what is already planned, by significantly increasing taxes or cutting public spending beyond what is already planned?



When do you think this most likely to happen?



Base: 1,080 Online British adults aged 18-75, including 661 who think it is likely for the UK Government to take steps to reduce government debt, 9-13 October 2026

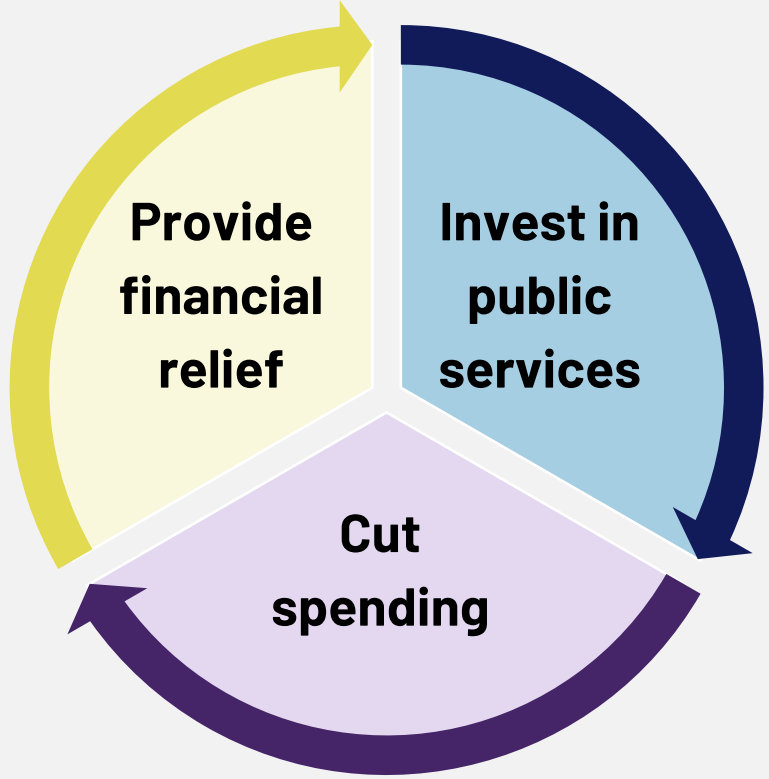
How can the Chancellor **manage expectations** in an economically difficult environment?

What do people want from the Budget? In their own words

"Help with energy costs, help with fuel costs, find a way to make sure interest rates do not impact on my mortgage increase - don't expect government to help much though"

"I want changes in taxation. All these taxes that we pay in our daily life just make it impossible to have money, not for future pension nor for all the payments that we have now."

"Businesses having more room for profits so that they can expand and have more job opportunities for the younger generations"



"More money being spent on NHS. I would even go as far to say I would be willing to be pay some extra from my national insurance contribution to support it"

"Investment in defence, British business support to build defence equipment and green energy investment"

"The triple lock restored to pensions"

"Clamp down on benefits and illegal immigration to reduce money wasted"

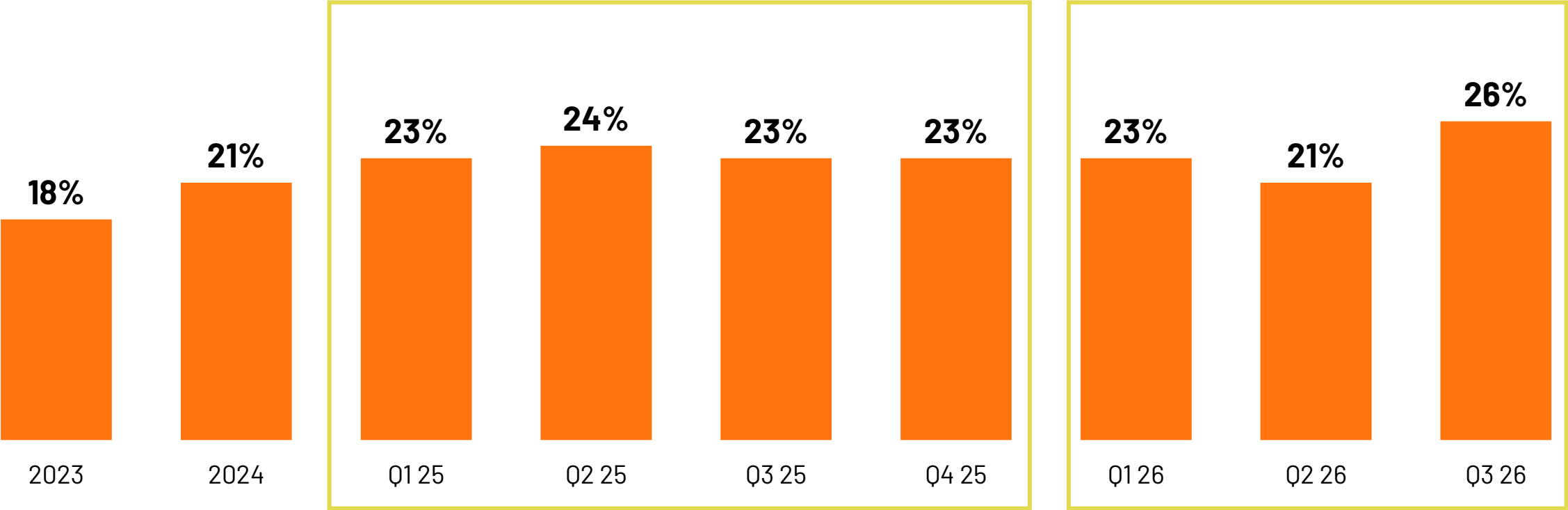
Base: 1,080 Online British adults aged 18-75, 9-13 October 2026

SMEs are also struggling

Feel that they are 'Struggling'

24% 2025

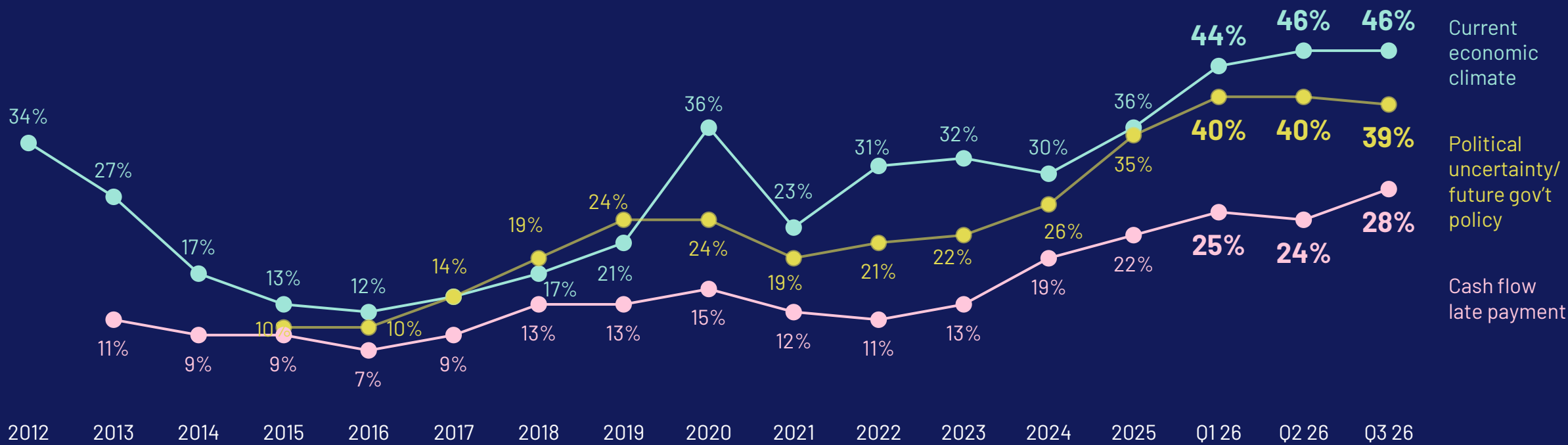
23% 2026 YTD



Qcv8 all SMEs 3m to September 3,811

While businesses recognise the impact of economic conditions, they are also looking for certainty from political leaders

Major obstacles to running business in next 12 months



Q93 Barriers to running business as would want in next 12 months
Base : All respondents 3m to September 2026: 3,811.

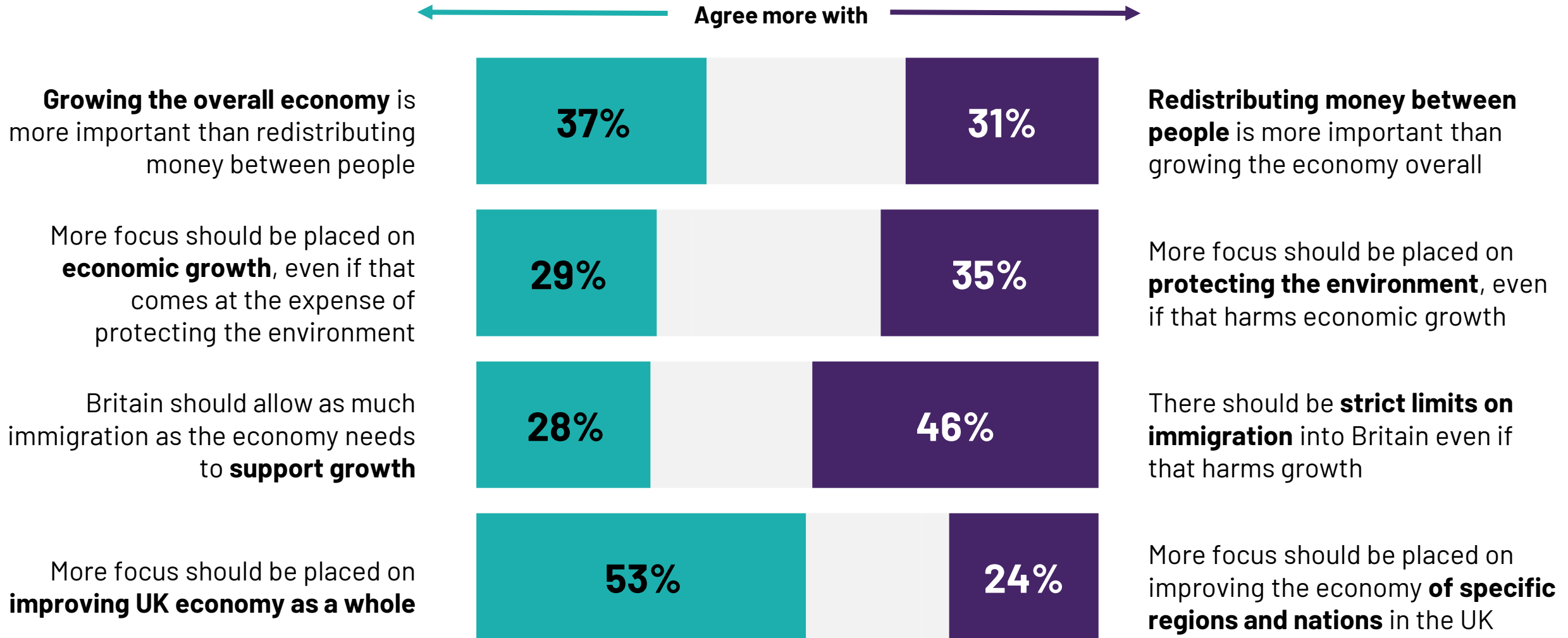


53%

think economic
growth does more
good than harm

But what
trade-offs are
people willing
to make?

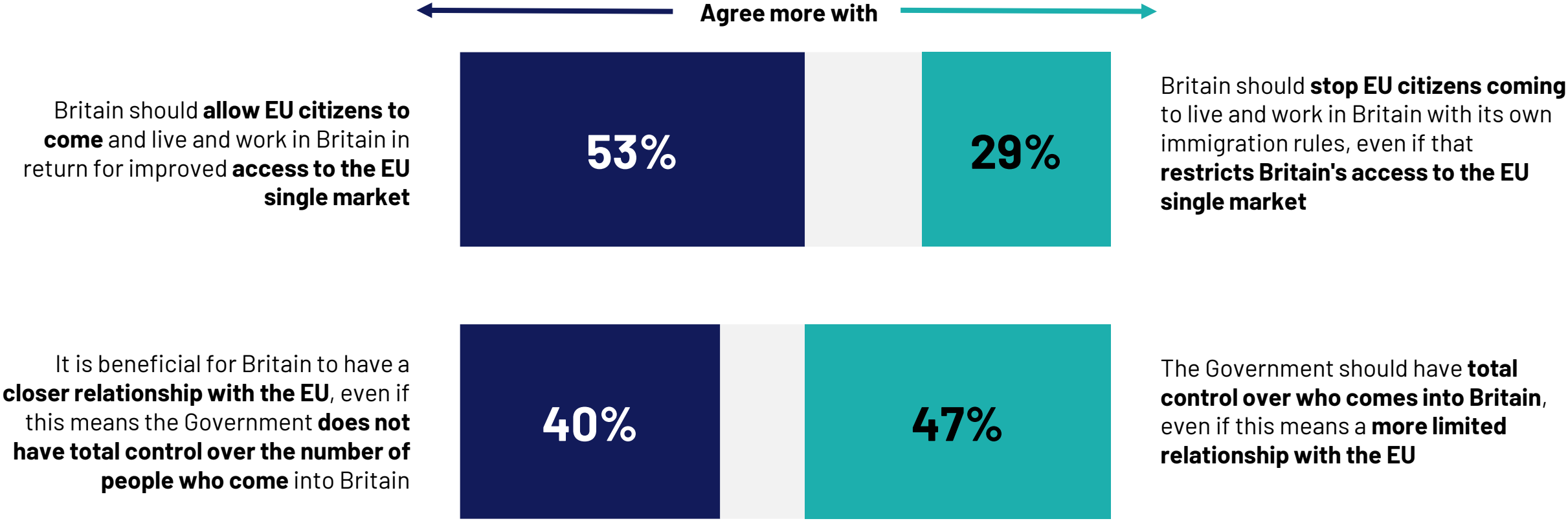
Brits are split on how to achieve economic growth



Base: 1,080 Online British adults aged 18-75, 9-13 October 2026

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Getting access to the EU single market seems appealing, but when framed as a matter of control... Brits aren't as keen



Base: 1,080 Online British adults aged 18-75, 9-13 October 2026

And we can't decide on tax vs spend either

← Agree more with →

Increase spending on public services, even if means I personally pay more in taxes

30%

35%

Cut the taxes I pay personally, even if it means spending less on public services

Reduce borrowing to cut the national debt, even if means I personally pay more in taxes

31%

28%

Cut the taxes I pay personally, even if it means the national debt getting higher

Businesses should be taxed more to pay for the funding gap in public services

24%

37%

Businesses should be taxed at a lower level to encourage them to invest in job creation and economic growth

Making sure **everyone who needs health related benefits gets them**, even if it means spending on health benefits remains high

35%

28%

Making it **more difficult to claim health related benefits** to reduce the amount spent on benefits, even if it means some people might not receive benefits they genuinely need

Base: 1,080 Online British adults aged 18-75, 9-13 October 2026

What does this mean?

1

The political context may be more favourable,

... but this is not translating into an improved economic mood. People are still worried about the economy and their own finances, and their economic expectations are impacting their current behaviours.

2

The Prime Minister and Chancellor have a bit of breathing space,

... but people expect more action to improve their lives. Yet voters are not giving any hints on how they expect government to improve economic outcomes or willing to accept compromises. **The hard choices have not gone away.**

3

The public are waiting to pass judgement on Burnham and Healey's first Budget,

... people are looking for signals that things will improve, and how. 'Vibes'-based politics may have won a bit of good will, but voters will demand to see the government's homework soon.

THANK YOU

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