

Consultation and Engagement



Bristol's Budget 2025/26



Consultation survey

Bristol City Council is consulting on the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept for next year (2025/26). We have included information about our proposals for other ways we can spend less and raise more income to address the budget gap over the next five years. We also invite your suggestions for ways we can balance the council's budget.

Budget 2025/26 Consultation

Consultation Report v4

24 January 2025

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Executive summary

ES1 Bristol City Council Budget 2025/26

Every year, the council must agree an annual budget which balances the money we spend with the money we expect to receive. On 25 February 2025, Full Council will set the council's budget for the 2025/26 financial year. The budget sets out how much money the council will be able to spend on each service area. As part of the budget, Full Council will decide on the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept¹ for 2025/26.

The money the council has available to spend on delivering day-to-day services to citizens is called the General Fund Revenue Budget. In 2024/25 the General Fund Revenue Expenditure Budget is £853.2 million. Other budgets the council manages include a capital budget (£576.6 million) and three ring-fenced revenue budgets (Housing Revenue Account, £151 million; Dedicated Schools Grant, £491.7 million; and Public Health related grants, £42.8 million).

In the Budget 2025/26 consultation, we focused on some of the ways we could fund the General Fund Revenue Budget, specifically Council Tax and Social Care Precept. In 2024/25, 37% of the General Fund Revenue Budget is raised through Council Tax (23%) and Business Rates (14%). The remaining 63% comes via grants from the government (38%), income from fees and charges we make for some of the services we provide (21%), contributions from other organisations (4%), and income from investment (less than 1%).

The budget decisions for 2025/26 will be again made in the context of acute financial pressures due to rising costs, continuing constraints on government funding, and increasing demand for the services the council provides. The council's current forecast, taking account of further funding and pressures following the provisional local government settlement², is a financial gap for 2025/26 of £41.8 million³.

Each year, the government sets a limit for the maximum amount councils can increase core Council Tax without holding a local referendum. The government also sets the maximum level of Social Care Precept local authorities can charge. The government announced the 2025/26 referendum limits for Council Tax (up to 3%) and Social Care Precept (2%) in the [Provisional local government finance settlement](#) on 18 December 2024. This was after the start of the council's budget consultation.

¹ Social Care Precept is a levy on top of core Council Tax, which is dedicated to help pay for adult social care.

² [Provisional local government finance settlement: England, 2025 to 2026](#), published on 18 December 2024

³ The budget consultation referred to a forecast budget shortfall of £51.6 million in 2025/26, based on information available at the time of publication in November 2024

Each 1% increase in Council Tax would raise approximately £2.9 million. If the council increases Council Tax by 3%⁴ and adds an additional Social Care Precept of 2% next year, there would still be a substantial funding gap in the council's core budget in 2025/26.

If we do not increase Council Tax or levy a Social Care Precept, the funding gap would be even greater; by up to £14.4 million more. With such a significant challenge the budget cannot be balanced without more funding, making greater efficiencies (doing the same for less money) and, in some cases, stopping doing some things entirely.

ES2 The Budget 2025/26 consultation

The [Budget 2025/26 consultation](#) took place between 7 November and 19 December 2024. It sought views from the public (including businesses and organisations which represent non-domestic rate payers⁵) on options for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept in 2025/26. The responses to the consultation have helped to inform final budget recommendations and will be taken into consideration by the council's Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on 3 February 2025 and by Full Council when making its decisions on the 2025/26 budget on 25 February 2025.

The Budget 2025/26 consultation sought feedback on the following.

- Options for the level of core Council Tax people would prefer in 2025/26. Options were no increase or increases of 1%, 2%, 3%, 4%, 5%, 6%, 7%, 8%, 9% or 10%⁶ compared to core Council Tax levels in 2024/25. Each option would have different implications for how much money the council could spend on general services
- Options for the level of Social Care Precept they would prefer in 2025/26 to support the delivery of adult social care, in addition to the increase in core Council Tax. Options were no Social Care Precept, a 1% Social Care Precept, a 2% Social Care Precept, a 3% Social Care Precept, a 4% Social Care Precept, or a 5% Social Care Precept⁷
- If the proposals would affect respondents because of their protected characteristics and, if so, how they would be affected. Respondents could also explain if the proposals would affect them because of something else
- Respondents' reasons for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept they would prefer and any ideas they have for how the council could save money or increase income

⁴ The council is permitted to raise Council Tax by **up to 3%** in 2025/26. Where we refer to a 3% increase in Council Tax, this is shorthand for an increase of 2.99%

⁵ The council has a statutory duty to consult each year with representatives of non-domestic rate payers about the authority's proposals for expenditure in the forthcoming year. The activities undertaken to consult representatives of non-domestic rate payers are described in section 2.2.4.

⁶ In the provisional local government finance settlement: England, 2025 to 2026 published on 18 December 2024, the government announced that core Council Tax can be increased by up to 3% in 2025/26 and the maximum level of Social Care Precept would be 2%. The consultation options for a core Council Tax increase of 4% or more would not be permitted

⁷ The provisional local government finance settlement: England, 2025 to 2026 indicated that options for a Social Care Precept of 3% or more would not be permitted

The budget consultation comprised information about the council's financial position and an online survey. An Easy Read version of the survey was also available online on the Consultation and Engagement Hub. [Paper versions of the consultation](#) were available in libraries and on request. Alternative accessible formats, including language translations, were available on request.

The consultation was widely publicised through media, social media, and communications with the public, including partner organisations, non-domestic rate payers and other stakeholders, as described in section 2.2.

ES3 Scope and use of this report

This consultation report describes the methodology and presents the feedback received in the Budget 2025/26 consultation. It includes quantitative data for 6,861 survey responses and analysis of the 3,462 survey free text responses (question 4) and 23 responses received via email, telephone, and the council's iCasework system.

This consultation report does not contain the council's recommendations for the level of Council Tax increase or Social Care Precept (if any) in 2025/26, nor an assessment of the feasibility of any of the suggestions received.

The consultation feedback that is summarised in this report has been taken into consideration by officers when developing final proposals for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept. The final proposals are included in a separate report which, together with this consultation report, will be considered by the council's Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on 3 February 2025. The Strategy and Resources Policy Committee will agree a recommended budget for all councillors to consider. Full Council will take into consideration this consultation report and responses when making its decisions about the 2025/26 budget at the Full Council meeting on 25 February 2025.

Budget decisions will be published through normal procedures for Full Council and committee decisions at democracy.bristol.gov.uk

ES4 Budget 2025/26 consultation - Key findings

ES4.1 Response rate

The Budget 2025/26 consultation survey received 6,861 responses.

5,430 responses (79%) were received from postcodes within the Bristol City Council area, 45 (0.7%) were from South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES), and North Somerset. A further 103 (2%) were from unspecified locations within the four West of England authorities⁸, and 5 (0.1%) were from outside the West of England. 1,251 (19%) did not provide a postcode.

⁸ Incomplete postcodes identified the home location as within the West of England authorities area (Bristol, B&NES, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire), but not which authority.

Analysis of respondents' postcodes shows there was under-representation of responses from the most deprived 20% of the city. People with the following protected characteristics were under-represented compared to the proportion of these groups living in Bristol:

- Children and young people aged 24 years and younger, and people aged 85 and older
- People of Asian or Asian British backgrounds; Black, Black British, Caribbean or African backgrounds; Mixed or multiple ethnic groups; and people of other ethnic background • Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs
- Female citizens
- Heterosexual citizens

A map of response rate by ward for the Bristol respondents is presented in chapter 3 along with the details of age profile, sex, and other respondent characteristics.

ES4.2 Level of core Council Tax increase 2025/26

Of the 6,673 people who stated their preference for the level of Council Tax, 4,431 (66%) favour an increase in core Council Tax to support general services in 2025/26 (Figure ES1).

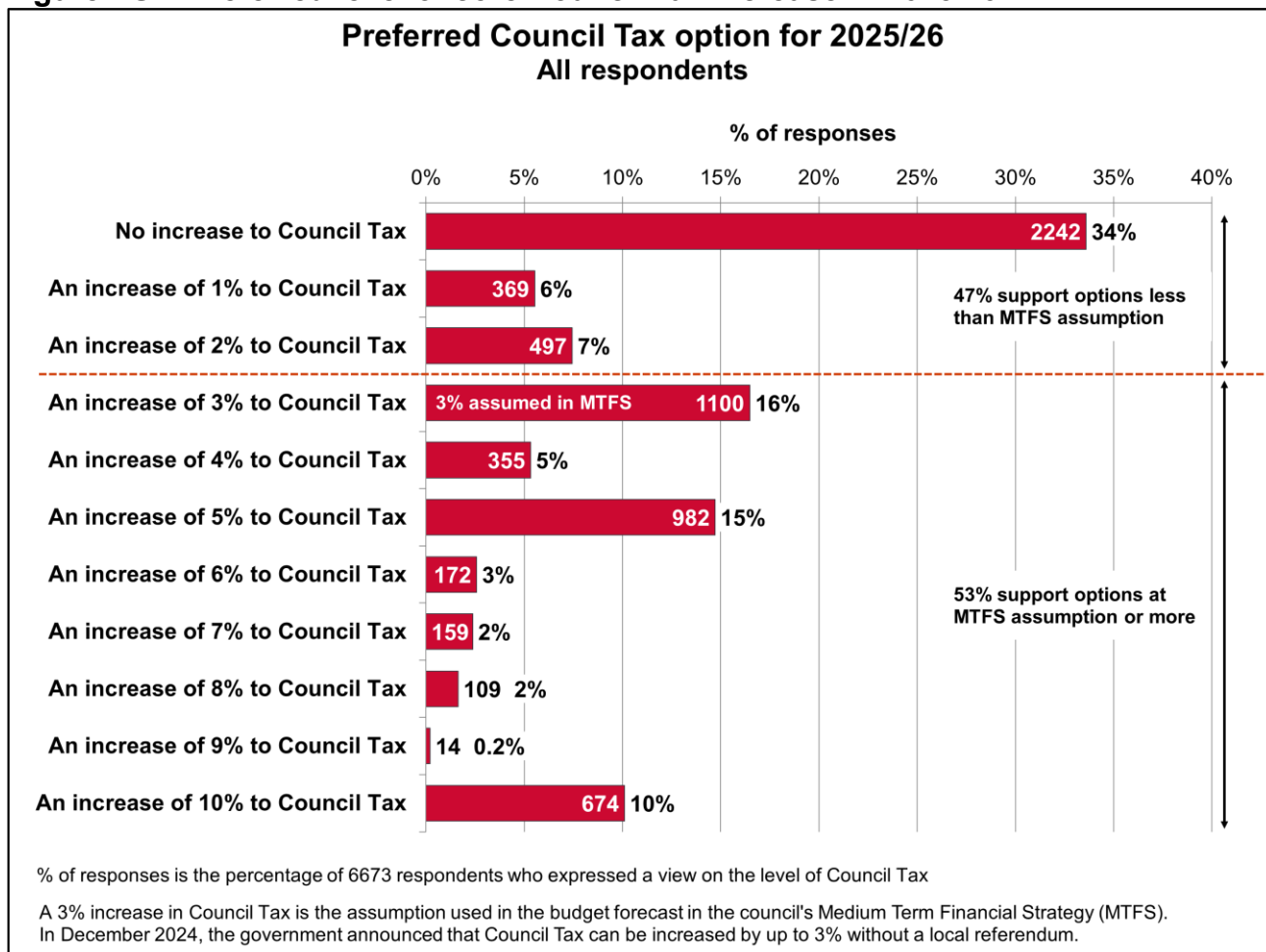
- 2,242 (34%) respondents would prefer no increase to Council Tax in 2025/26. This is the option with the highest support
- 369 (6%) favour a 1% increase
- 497 (7%) favour a 2% increase
- 1,100 (16%) prefer a 3% increase. This is the option with the second highest support. It is the option assumed in the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy
- 355 (5%) favour a 4% increase
- 982 (15%) prefer a 5% increase. This is the option with the third highest support
- 172 (3%) favour a 6% increase
- 159 (2%) favour a 7% increase
- 109 (2%) favour an 8% increase
- 14 (0.2%) favour a 9% increase
- 674 (10%) prefer a 10% increase. This is the option with the fourth highest support
- 188 respondents did not give a view on Council Tax.

In December 2024, the government announced⁹ that local authorities would be permitted to raise Council Tax by up to 3% in 2025/26. The consultation options for Council Tax increases of 4% to 10% would not, therefore, be permitted.

⁹ Provisional local government finance settlement: England, 2025 to 2026 published on 18 December 2024
Produced by Consultation and Engagement team

Figure ES1 shows that more than half of respondents (53%) support options for increases to Council Tax of 3% (the permitted maximum) or more. 47% of respondents would prefer no increase or increases of 1% or 2%.

Figure ES1: Preferred level of core Council Tax increase in 2025/26

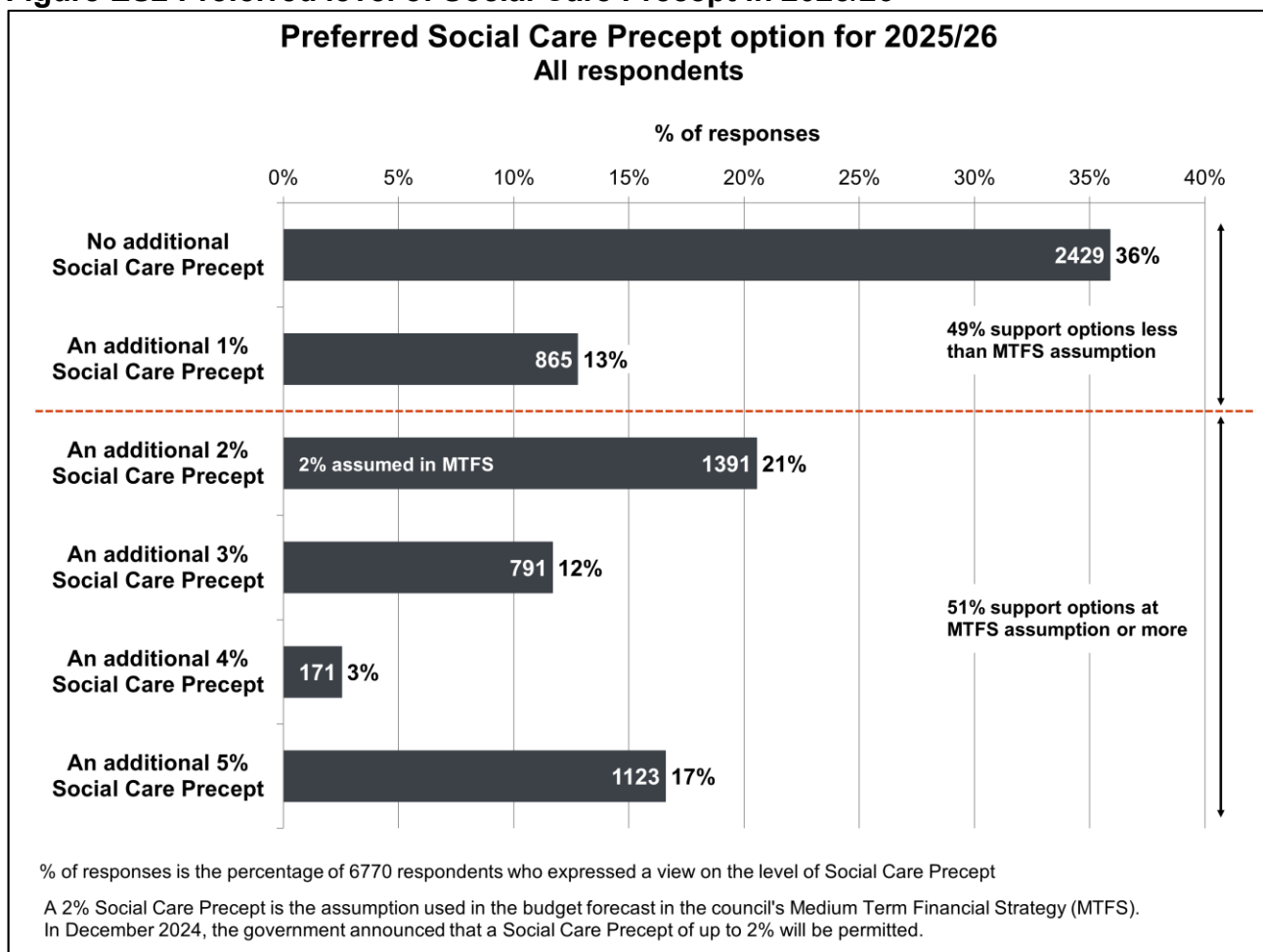


ES4.3 Level of Social Care Precept in 2025/26

Of the 6,770 respondents who stated their preference for the level of Social Care Precept, 4,341 (64%) favour some Social Care Precept (on top of core Council Tax) to support the delivery of social care in 2025/26 (Figure ES2).

- 2,429 (36%) respondents would prefer no Social Care Precept in 2025/26. This is the option with the highest support
- 865 (13%) favour a 1% Social Care Precept
- 1,391 (21%) would prefer a 2% Social Care Precept. This is the option with the second highest support. It is the option assumed in the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy
- 791 (12%) favour a 3% Social Care Precept
- 171 (3%) would prefer a 4% Social Care Precept
- 1,123 (17%) favour a 5% Social Care Precept. This option has third highest support
- 91 respondents did not give a view on Social Care Precept.

Figure ES2 Preferred level of Social Care Precept in 2025/26



In December 2024, the government announced¹⁰ that local authorities would be permitted to charge A Social Care Precept up of 2% on top of core Council Tax in 2025/26. The consultation options for Social Care Precept of 3%, 4% and 5% would not be permitted.

Figure ES2 shows that just over half of respondents (51%) would support options for a Social Care Precept of 2% (the permitted maximum) or more. 49% of respondents would prefer a Social Care Precept of 1% or no precept.

ES4.4 Differences in views on the level of Council Tax in areas of high and low deprivation

Views on the preferred level of core Council Tax increase (0%, 1%, 2%, 3%, 4%, 5%, 6%, 7%, 8%, 9% or 10%) were compared for respondents in areas with different levels of deprivation (Figure ES3). The comparison looked at levels of deprivation in 10 bands (known as 'deciles') from decile 1 (most deprived) to decile 10 (least deprived).

Figure ES3 also shows the views of people who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode, and the combined views of all respondents.

¹⁰ Provisional local government finance settlement: England, 2025 to 2026 published on 18 December 2024
Produced by Consultation and Engagement team

Figure ES3 Preference in each deprivation decile for the core Council Tax options

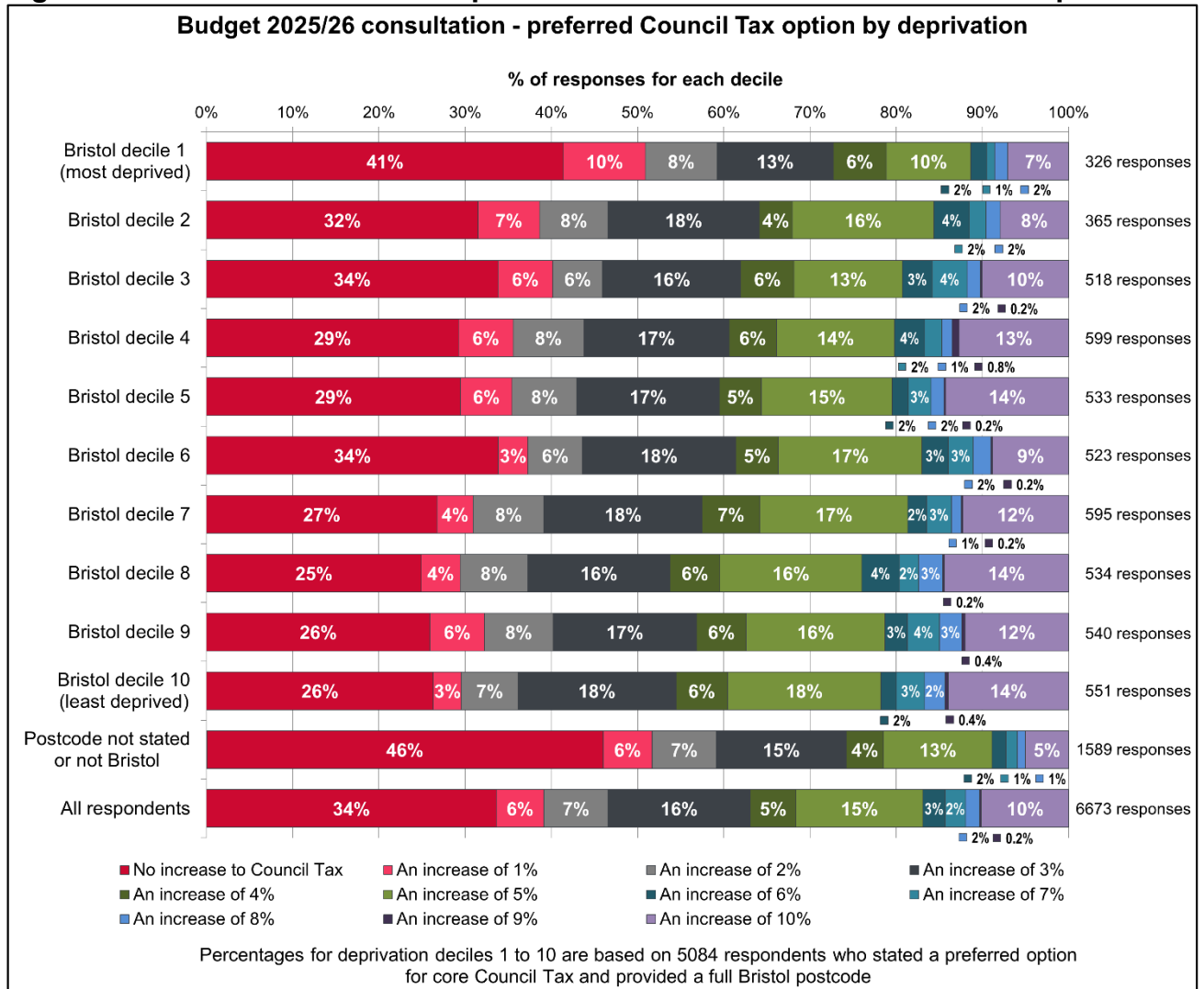


Figure ES3 shows that people living in less deprived areas tend to support higher levels of core Council Tax. The views of respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode are closest to respondents in decile 1 (most deprived).

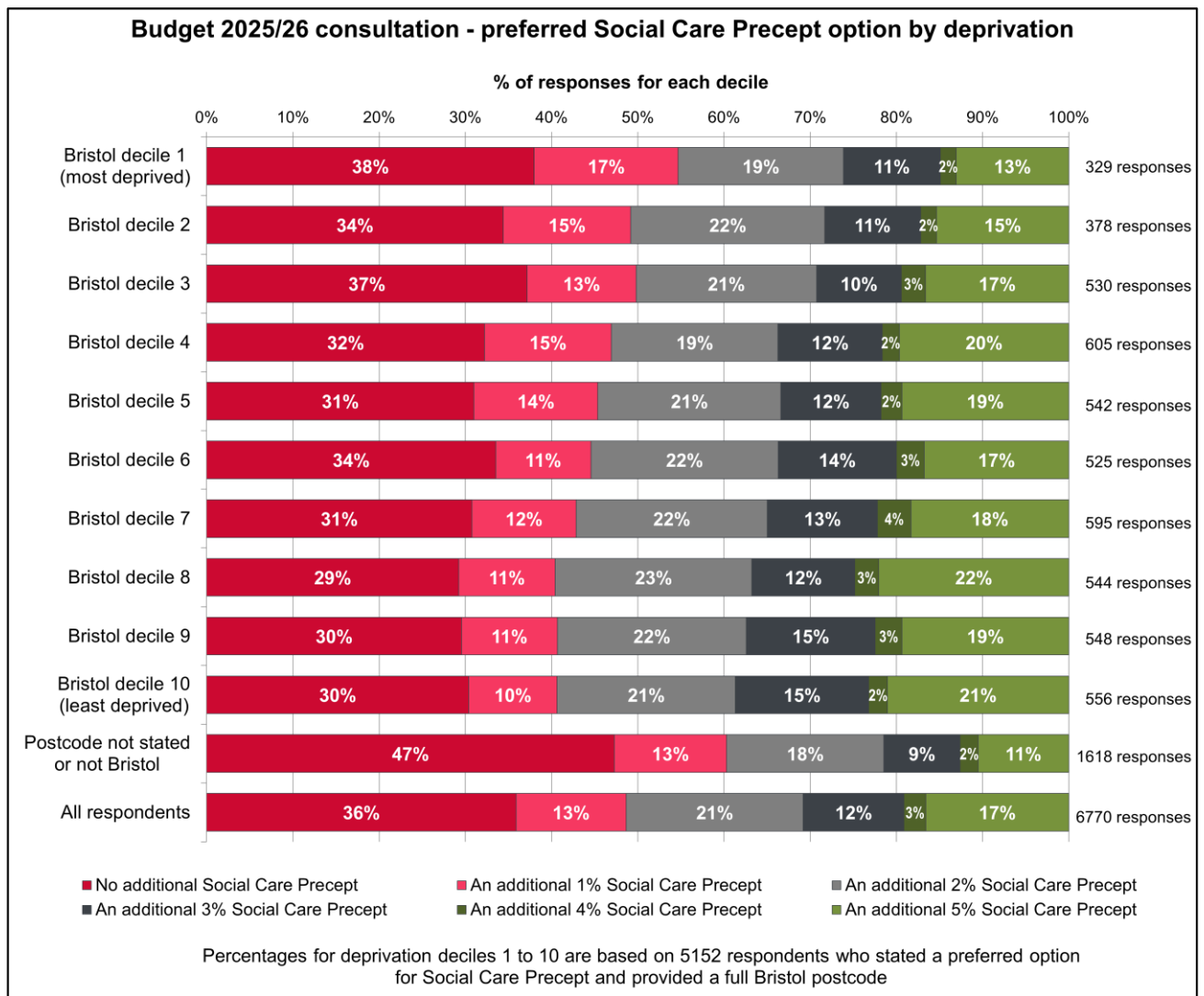
More than half of respondents support an increase in core Council Tax at or above the 3% maximum permitted by government, in all deciles except decile 1 (most deprived) and respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode.

Support for an increase in Council Tax of 3% or more ranges from 64% of respondents in decile 10 (least deprived) to 41% in decile 1 (most deprived) and 41% for respondents who gave a non-Bristol or no postcode.

ES4.5 Views on the level of Social Care Precept in areas of high and low deprivation

Views on the preferred level of Social Care Precept (0%, 1%, 2%, 3%, 4% or 5%) were also compared for respondents in areas with different levels of deprivation (Figure ES4). Figure ES4 also shows the views of people who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode, and the aggregate views of all respondents.

Figure ES4 Preference in each deprivation decile for the Social Care Precept options



As with core Council Tax, people living in less deprived areas tend to support higher levels of Social Care Precept (Figure ES4). The views of respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode are closest to respondents in decile 1 (most deprived) but show a higher preference for no Social Care Precept.

More than half of respondents support a Social Care Precept at or above the 2% maximum permitted by the government, for all deciles except decile 1 (most deprived) and respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode.

Support for a Social Care Precept of 2% or more varies from 60% of respondents in decile 8 (59% in deciles 10 and 9) to 45% in decile 1 (most deprived) and 40% for respondents who gave a non-Bristol or no postcode.

ES4.6 Effects of the proposals because of protected characteristics

Respondents were asked what effect, if any, the proposals would have on them because of their protected characteristics. Figure ES5 shows the scale of effects reported by 6,476 respondents for each of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010¹¹.

Figure ES5: Effects of the proposals due to respondents' protected characteristics

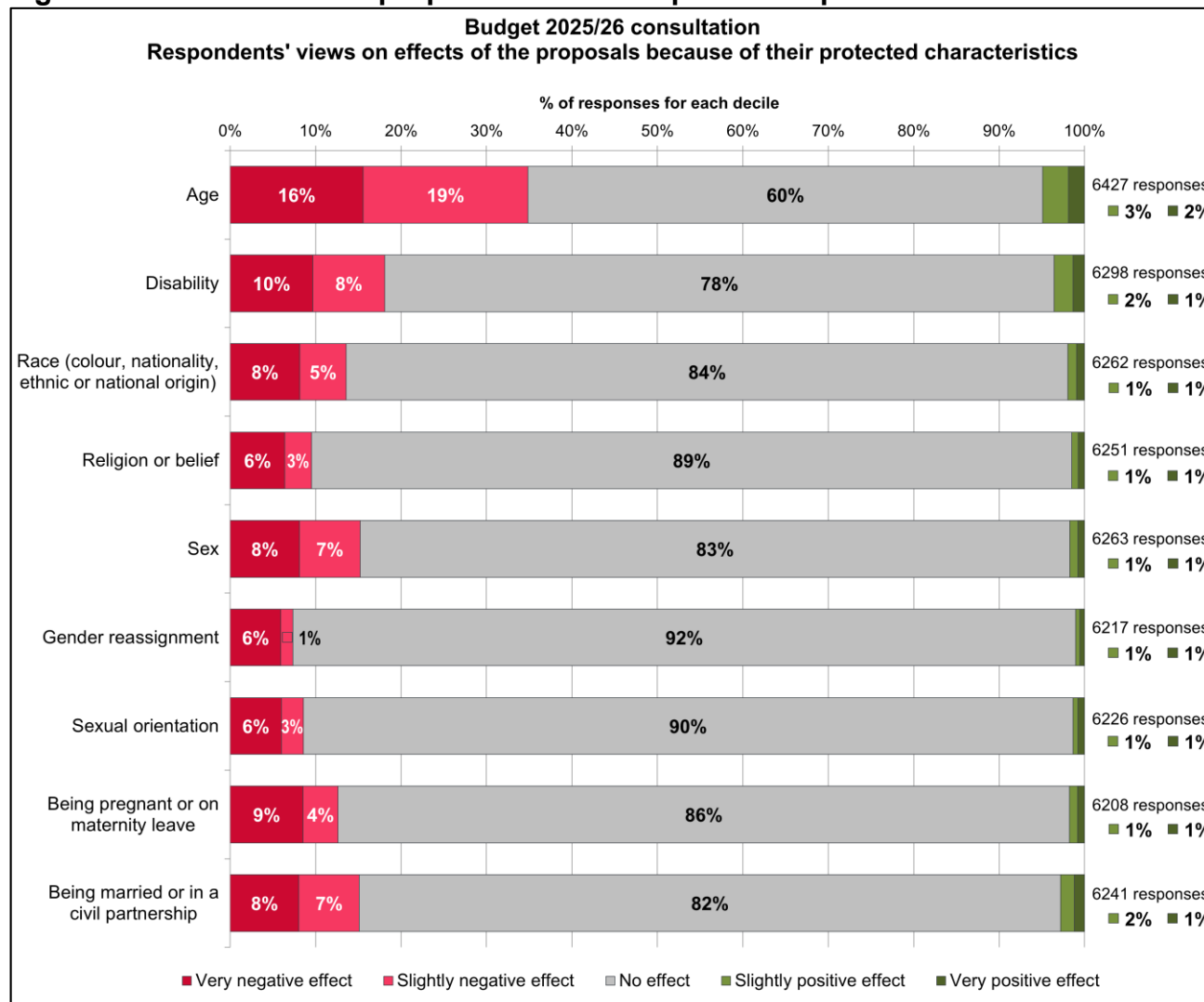


Figure ES5 shows that more respondents anticipate negative effects (very or slightly negative) than positive effects (very or slightly positive) for all nine protected characteristics. The scale of negative effects varies widely for different protected characteristics:

- The characteristics for which the highest percentage of respondents anticipate the proposals will have a negative effect are age (35%), Disability (18%), sex (15%), and being married or in a civil partnership (15%)

¹¹ The protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 are age; Disability; race including colour; nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sex; gender reassignment; sexual orientation; being married or in a civil partnership; being pregnant or on maternity leave.

- The characteristics for which the lowest percentage of respondents expect a negative effect are gender reassignment (7%), sexual orientation (9%), region or belief (10%), and being pregnant or on maternity leave (13%)

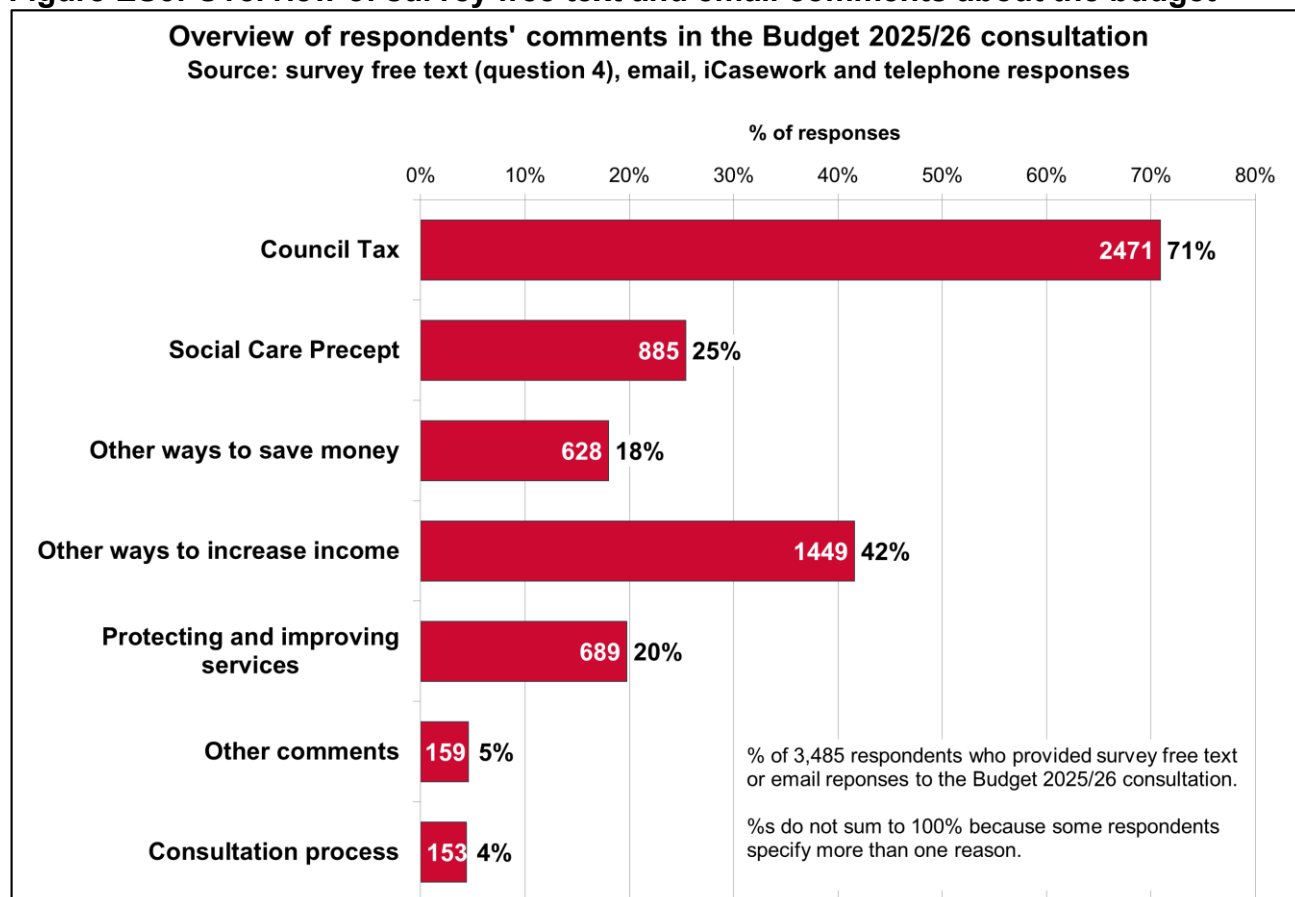
Because different characteristics affect different numbers of people in the population, it is helpful to compare the percentages who anticipate positive effects versus negative effects, excluding those who anticipate no effect. Results are as follows.

- Sex: nine times as many people anticipate negative effects compared to positive effects
- For age, race, gender reassignment, and being pregnant or on maternity leave, seven times as many respondents expect negative effects compared to positive effects
- For religion/belief and sexual orientation, six times as many respondents expect negative effects compared to positive effects
- For Disability and being married or in a civil partnership, five times as many respondents expect negative effects compared to positive effects.

ES4.7 Free text comments on the budget proposals

3,485 (51%) of the 6,861 survey responses and 23 email, iCasework and telephone responses provided free text comments that explained their preference for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept, their views on the savings / income generation proposals, suggestions for other ways the council could save money or generate more income, and some comments about the consultation. The 3,485 free text responses have been categorised into themes (Figure ES6).

Figure ES6: Overview of survey free text and email comments about the budget



- 2,471 (71% of 3,485 comments) explained their preference for the level of Council Tax or made other comments about Council Tax. A breakdown is provided in section 5.2
- 885 (25%) explained their preference for the level of Social Care Precept, or made other comments about Social Care Precept (section 5.3)
- 628 (18%) suggested other ways the council could increase income (section 6.2)
- 1,449 (42%) suggested ways the council could save money (section 6.3)
- 689 (20%) provided comments about protecting and improving services (section 6.4)
- 159 (5%) provided other comments or suggestions (section 6.5)
- 153 (4%) provided comments about the consultation process (section 6.6).

The total number of comments exceeds 3,485 because some respondents addressed several themes.

1 Introduction

1.1 The council's budget

The money the council has available to spend on delivering day-to-day services to citizens is called the General Fund Revenue Budget. In 2024/25 the General Fund Revenue Expenditure Budget is £853.2 million. Other budgets the council manages include a capital budget (£576.6 million) and three ring-fenced revenue budgets (Housing Revenue Account, £151 million; Dedicated Schools Grant, £491.7 million; and Public Health related grants, £42.8 million). [Read more about council budget areas](#).

In the Budget 2025/26 consultation, we focused on some of the ways we could fund the General Fund Revenue Budget, specifically Council Tax and Social Care Precept. In 2024/25, 37% of the General Fund Revenue Budget is raised through Council Tax (23%) and Business Rates (14%). The remaining 63% comes via grants from the government (38%), income from fees and charges we make for some of the services we provide (21%), contributions from other organisations (4%), and income from investment (less than 1%).

Every year, the council must agree an annual budget which balances the money we spend with the money we expect to receive. On 25 February 2025, Full Council will meet to set the council's budget for the 2025/26 financial year. The budget sets out how much money the council will be able to spend on each service area and what the priorities are. As part of the budget, Full Council will decide on the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept¹² for 2025/26.

This year, these decisions will be again made in the context of acute financial pressures due to rising costs, continuing constraints on government funding, and increasing demand for the services the council provides.

1.2 Funding pressures and uncertainty

Councils are facing unprecedented financial pressures because of the continuing impact from the high inflation in recent years, alongside pay pressures. This affects the cost of our supply chain of goods, energy, and services. At the same time, there have been many years of reductions or changes in local government funding. And in Bristol, demand for services, and the cost of providing them, have continued to rise as the city's population has grown, and the complexity of care and support packages we provide has increased.

How much Bristol can expect to receive in government funding for council services next year and beyond is very uncertain. The UK's economic outlook remains challenging as the economy continues to be affected by global events, as well as the ongoing national cost of living crisis. This makes forecasting our future finances difficult and requires us to prepare for multiple situations.

The budget consultation referred to a forecast budget shortfall of £51.6 million in 2025/26, based on information available at the time of publication (in November 2024). After further

¹² Social Care Precept is a levy on top of core Council Tax, which is dedicated to help pay for adult social care. Produced by Consultation and Engagement team

funding and pressures as outlined following the provisional local government settlement, the revised position on the financial gap for 2025/26 is £41.8 million.

The council is able to increase core Council Tax by up to 3%¹³ to help fund general services in 2025/26, without a local referendum. This would raise an additional £8.6 million. A Social Care Precept of up to 2% can be added to support the delivery of adult social care. This would raise £5.7 million and is in addition to the permitted increase of up to 3% in core Council Tax for general services. These limits are set by government¹⁴ and were announced after the start of the council's budget consultation. There was not enough time to hold a local referendum on increases above these limits before Full Council decides on its 2025/26 budget in February 2025.

If we increase Council Tax by 3% and levy a Social Care Precept of 2% next year, we estimate there would remain a substantial funding gap in the council's core budget in 2025/26. If we do not increase Council Tax or levy a Social Care Precept, the funding gap would be even greater; by up to £14.4 million more. With such a significant challenge the budget cannot be balanced without additional funding, making greater efficiencies (doing the same for less money) and, in some cases, stopping doing some things entirely.

1.3 Budget 2025/26 consultation

The Budget 2025/26 consultation took place between 7 November and 19 December 2024. It sought views from the public (including businesses and organisations which represent non-domestic rate payers¹⁵) on the following:

- Options for the level of core Council Tax they would prefer in 2025/26 to support the delivery of general council services
- Options for the level of Social Care Precept they would prefer in 2025/26 to support the delivery of adult social care, in addition to the core Council Tax for general services
- Other ideas or suggestions for how the council might bridge the budget gap.

When the budget consultation started in November 2024, the government had not announced the limits for Council Tax and Social Care Precept. We therefore consulted on a wide range of options for Council Tax (from no increase to a 10% increase) and Social Care Precept (from no precept to a 5% precept), in case these might subsequently be permitted.

1.4 Scope of this report

This consultation report describes the consultation methodology and the feedback received, which will be considered by the council's Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on 3

¹³ Where we refer to a 3% increase in Council Tax, we are using 3% as shorthand for an increase of 2.99%.

¹⁴ The limits of a 3% increase in Council Tax and 2% for Social Care Precept were announced in the [Provisional local government finance settlement: England, 2025 to 2026](#) on 18 December 2024.

¹⁵ The council has a statutory duty to consult each year with representatives of non-domestic rate payers about the authority's proposals for expenditure in the forthcoming year. The activities undertaken to consult representatives of non-domestic rate payers are described in section 2.2.4

February 2025 before decisions on the 2025/26 budget are made by Full Council on 25 February 2025.

- **Chapter 2** of this report describes the consultation methodology. The print version of the [consultation survey](#) can be viewed online.
- **Chapter 3** presents the consultation survey response rate and respondent characteristics
- **Chapter 4** describes survey respondents' preferences for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept
- **Chapter 5** summarises comments about Council Tax and Social Care Precept included as free text in survey responses and consultation feedback received via email, telephone, and the council's iCasework system
- **Chapter 6** summarises respondents' suggestions on other ways to reduce costs and generate more income, which would help to bridge the forecast budget gap.
- **Chapter 7** sets out the effects that respondents said the proposals would have on them because of their protected characteristics.
- **Chapter 8** describes how this report will be used and how to keep updated on the decision-making process.

This report includes analysis of the responses to the multiple-choice questions and the 'About You' survey questions for all 6,861 respondents to the survey.

3,462 of the respondents also provided free text comments and suggestions as part of their survey responses (survey question 4). These have been analysed together with 21 email responses to the consultation, one telephone response, and one response received via the council's iCasework comments system (3,485 free text survey, email, telephone and iCasework responses, in total).

2 Methodology

2.1 Survey

2.1.1 Online survey

The [Budget 2025/25 consultation survey](#) was available on the council's Consultation and Engagement Hub (www.ask.bristol.gov.uk) between 7 November and 19 December 2024. An online Easy Read version was also available on the Consultation and Engagement Hub.

Survey information

The survey contained the following information as context for the survey questions.

- An overview of five budget areas – the General Fund Revenue Budget, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the Dedicated Schools Grant, the Public Health Grant, and the Capital Budget – that make up the council's overall budget
- Details of the council's General Fund Revenue Budget (the money available to spend on delivering day-to-day services). This included an overview of where the money comes

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from and a breakdown of how much the council spends to provide different services (based on 2024/25 expenditure)

- Details of the forecast budget shortfall of £51.6 million¹⁶ in 2025/26, as estimated at the time of publication (in November 2024), due to increasing costs, continuing constraints on UK Government funding and increasing demand for services the council provides
- Examples of how costs have increased for four services the council provides; Adult Social Care, Housing Support, Children’s Social Care and Education Services
- Equality considerations as part of council budget setting, including our legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to consider the impacts of our proposals on individuals based on their protected characteristics
- Details of help the council is providing to low-income households in meeting their Council Tax bills through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, the Local Crisis Prevention Fund (LCPF) and the Household Support Fund (HSF)
- Forecasts of how much additional revenue would be raised in 2025/26 by each of the proposed core Council Tax options (increases of 0%, 1%, 2%, 3%, 4%, 5%, 6%, 7%, 8%, 9% or 10%) and each of the options for the level of Social Care Precept (0%, 1%, 2%, 3%, 4% or 5%)
- The weekly and annual cost increases that would be payable by households in each Council Tax band for each Council Tax option and Social Care Precept option

Survey questions

The survey questions sought respondents’ views on the following:

- The level of core Council Tax they would prefer in 2025/26. Options were no increase or increases of 1%, 2%, 3%, 4%, 5%, 6%, 7%, 8%, 9% or 10%¹⁷ compared to core Council Tax levels in 2024/25. Each option would have different implications for how much money the council could spend on general services
- The level of Social Care Precept they would prefer in 2025/26 in addition to the increase in core Council Tax. Options were no Social Care Precept, a 1% Social Care Precept, a 2% Social Care Precept, a 3% Social Care Precept, a 4% Social Care Precept, or a 5% Social Care Precept¹⁸

¹⁶ After further funding and pressures as outlined following the provisional local government settlement, the revised position on the financial gap for 2025/26 is £42.2 million.

¹⁷ In the provisional local government finance settlement: England, 2025 to 2026 published on 18 December 2024, the government announced that core Council Tax can be increased by up to 3% in 2025/26 and the maximum level of Social Care Precept would be 2%. The consultation options for a core Council Tax increase of 4% or more would not be permitted

¹⁸ The provisional local government finance settlement: England, 2025 to 2026 indicated that options for a Social Care Precept of 3% or more would not be permitted

- If the proposals would affect respondents because of their protected characteristics and, if so, how they would be affected. Respondents could also explain if the proposals would affect them because of something else
- Respondents' reasons for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept they would prefer and any other suggestions they have for how the council could save money or generate income.

The 'About you' section requested information which helps the council to check if the responses are representative of people across the city.

- Respondents' postcode – this identifies if any parts of the city are under-represented in responding to the consultation and it can show if people from more deprived areas of the city have different views compared to people living in less deprived areas
- Equalities monitoring information – this enables the council to check if people with specific protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, or carers, or refugees and asylum seekers are under-represented in the responses
- Other information about respondents; for example, whether they are a councillor, a council employee, or represent a local business
- How respondents found out about the consultation – to help the council publicise future consultations effectively.

Respondents could choose to answer some or all questions in any order and save and return to the survey later.

2.1.2 Alternative formats

An Easy Read version of the consultation was available on the Consultation and Engagement Hub.

[Paper versions of the consultation](#) were distributed with Freepost return envelopes to all libraries in Bristol and were available on request.

Other formats (braille, large print, other alternative formats, and translation to other languages) were available on request.

2.1.3 Other correspondence

21 emails and one telephone message were received in response to the consultation and one response was received via the council's iCasework comments system. All 21 emails, the telephone response, and the response via iCasework were received from members of the public. The emails provided comments on the level of Council Tax, ideas for other ways to raise income and reduce costs, views on which services are important to continue funding, and feedback about the consultation process.

The email, telephone and iCasework responses have been analysed with the free text responses to question 4 of the survey and are reported with the survey free text feedback in chapters 5 and 6.

2.2 Publicity and briefings

2.2.1 Objective

The following activities were carried out to publicise and explain the Budget 2025/26 consultation. The objective was to engage residents, communities, stakeholders, businesses, and representatives of non-domestic ratepayers across the city in decisions on the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept and to seek their ideas for other ways the council might bridge the forecast budget gap.

To achieve this, information was shared across a wide range of channels, to reach as broad a range of audiences as possible and maximise response rates. Areas of the city that were found to have responded in lower numbers were targeted part way through the consultation.

2.2.2 Bristol City Council channels

The consultation was promoted and shared via the following council and partner channels and networks:

- Bristol City Council's fortnightly business e-newsletter on 12 November and 10 December 2024 with around 2,900 recipients
- We Are Bristol weekly newsletter on 7 November, 21 November, 27 November and 9 December 2024 with around 2,000 recipients
- Ask Bristol e-bulletin on 11 and 19 December 2024 with 7,454 recipients
- An email to the 142,523 users of the online Council Tax account system on 13 November and 28 November 2024 inviting them to take part in the survey
- Direct emails to the City Partners Group, which is made up of leaders from organisations from across Bristol
- Direct email to over 300 community-based organisations and organisers

2.2.3 Internal communications

Messages announcing the launch of the public consultation were sent to the following internal stakeholders:

- Leader and Deputy Leader
- Policy Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs
- Directors, heads of service, managers, managers of offline staff
- Party group leaders
- Elected councillors who were provided with a digital engagement pack, which included assets for social media and newsletter content, to share with their contacts.
- Trade unions

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- Staff-led groups
- Youth Council and Youth Mayors
- Mayoral Commissions (Women's, Race, Disability, History)
- Wholly owned companies (Bristol Holding Company, Bristol Waste and Goram Homes).
- All Bristol City Council staff with an ask to promote the consultation
- Reminders throughout November and December in Internal Communication blogs and bulletins

2.2.4 Bristol City Council partners, businesses, and voluntary sector organisations

The council has a statutory duty to consult each year with representatives of non-domestic rate payers about the authority's proposals for expenditure in the coming year.

Details of the consultation were shared at the launch, and with two weeks to go, with representatives of business organisations (including Business West, local Business Improvement Districts, and the Federation of Small Businesses), the Local Government Association (LGA), voluntary sector organisations, public sector/city stakeholders, local health partners and equalities groups and community groups, with a request for information to be circulated through their networks.

219 survey responses were received from people who represent or own a local business and, in addition, there were 20 survey responses from health and social care providers, 17 from school or education providers, four from public transport providers and two from housing associations. 26 survey responses were received from voluntary/community/social enterprise organisations/interest groups. Details are reported in section 3.4.

2.2.5 Media engagement

A news article was published to the Bristol City Council Newsroom on 8 November 2024. The External Communications team supported reporting of the budget leading to at least four items of news coverage and other references to the consultation across broadcast media during the six-week consultation period.

2.2.6 Social media – posts, outreach, and advertising

Regular posts on Bristol City Council's social media channels (X, Facebook, Next Door, LinkedIn, and Instagram) were made for the duration of the consultation. These organic posts had a potential reach of 14,500 people resulting in 418 survey link clicks.

Targeted paid-for Facebook advertising (over nine days with a budget of £225) was created two weeks before the consultation closed to engage areas of the city where response was low. This had a reach of 28,179 with 1,094 link clicks.

3 Survey response rate and respondent characteristics

3.1 Response rate to the survey

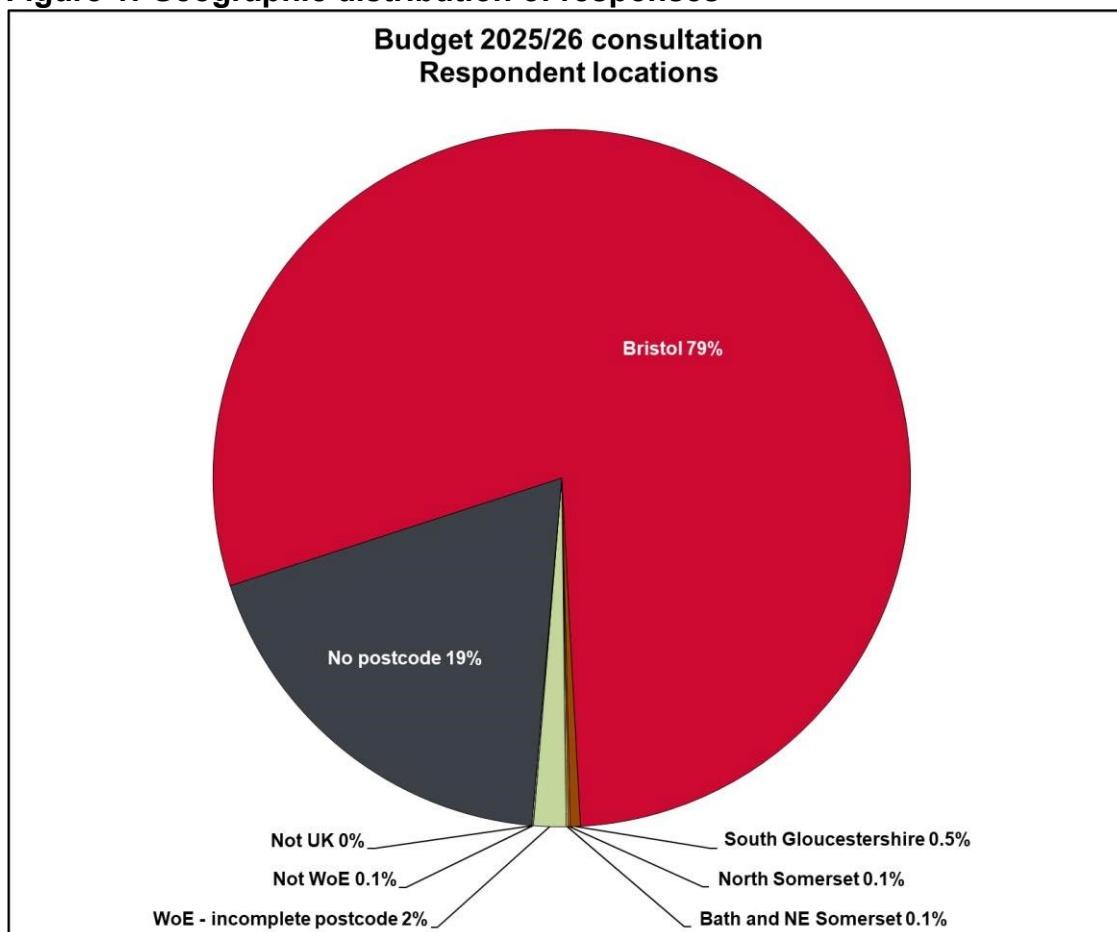
The Budget 2025/26 consultation survey received 6,861 responses, of which 6,816 (99%) were responses to the main online survey, 28 (0.4%) were responses via the Easy Read survey and 17 (0.2%) were paper surveys. In addition, the consultation received 21 emails, one telephone response and one response via the council's iCasework system.

The response rate and respondent details in sections 3.2 to 3.4 are for survey respondents. The email, telephone and iCasework responses were all from members of the public.

3.2 Geographic distribution of survey responses

5,430 responses (79%) were received from postcodes within the Bristol City Council area, 32 (0.5%) responses were from South Gloucestershire, seven (0.1%) from North Somerset, and six (0.1%) were from Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES). A further 103 (2%) were from unspecified locations within the four West of England authorities¹⁹, and 5 (0.1%) were from outside the West of England (Figure 1). 1,251 (19%) did not provide a postcode.

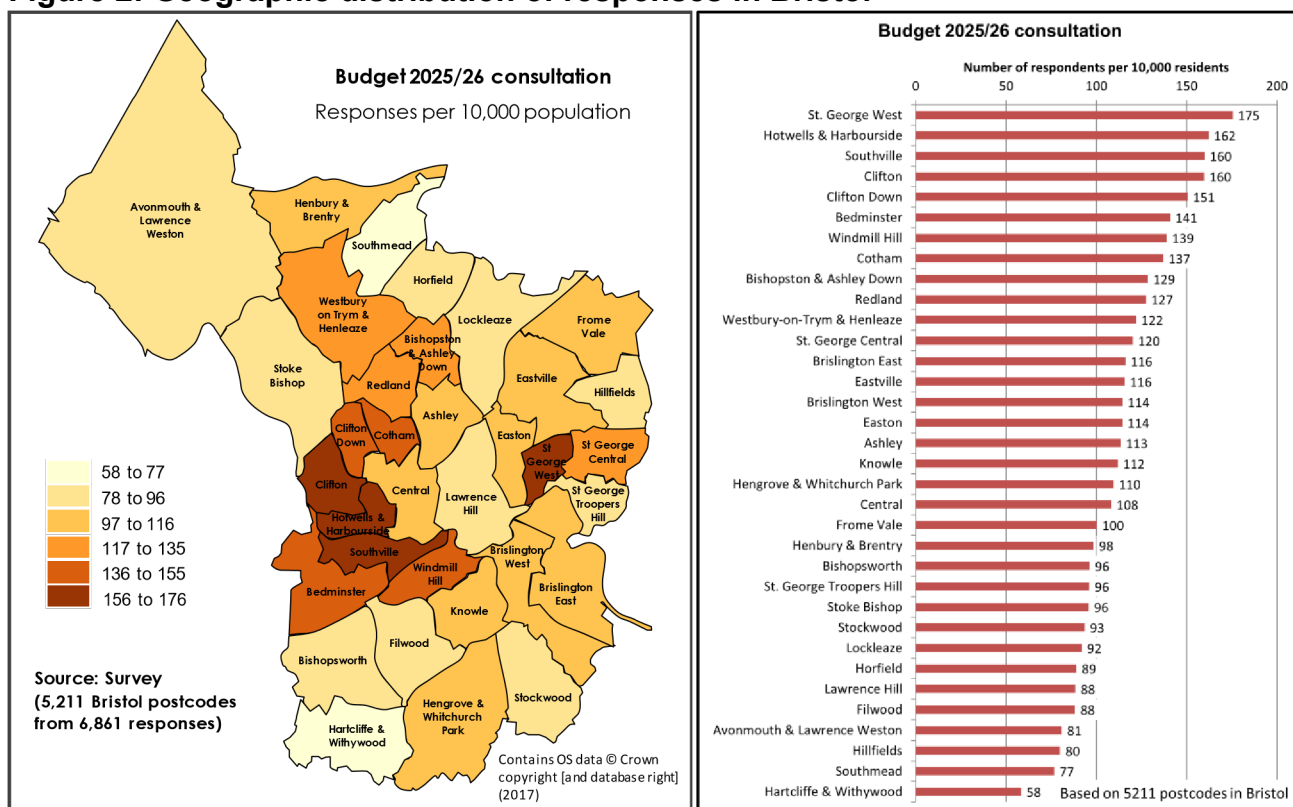
Figure 1: Geographic distribution of responses



¹⁹ Incomplete postcodes identified the home location as within the West of England authorities area (Bristol, B&NES, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire), but not which authority.

Of the 5,430 responses from within the Bristol City Council area, 5,211 provided full or partial postcodes from which the ward of origin could be identified²⁰ (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Geographic distribution of responses in Bristol



3.3 Response rate from areas of high and low deprivation

The home location of respondents in Bristol was compared with nationally published information on levels of deprivation across the city²¹ to review if the responses received include a cross-section of people living in more deprived and less deprived areas.

The comparison looked at levels of deprivation in 10 bands (known as ‘deciles’) from decile 1 (most deprived) to decile 10 (least deprived). Figure 3 compares the percentage of Bristol respondents²² living in each of the deprivation deciles (red bars) to the percentage of all Bristol citizens who live in each decile (grey bars).

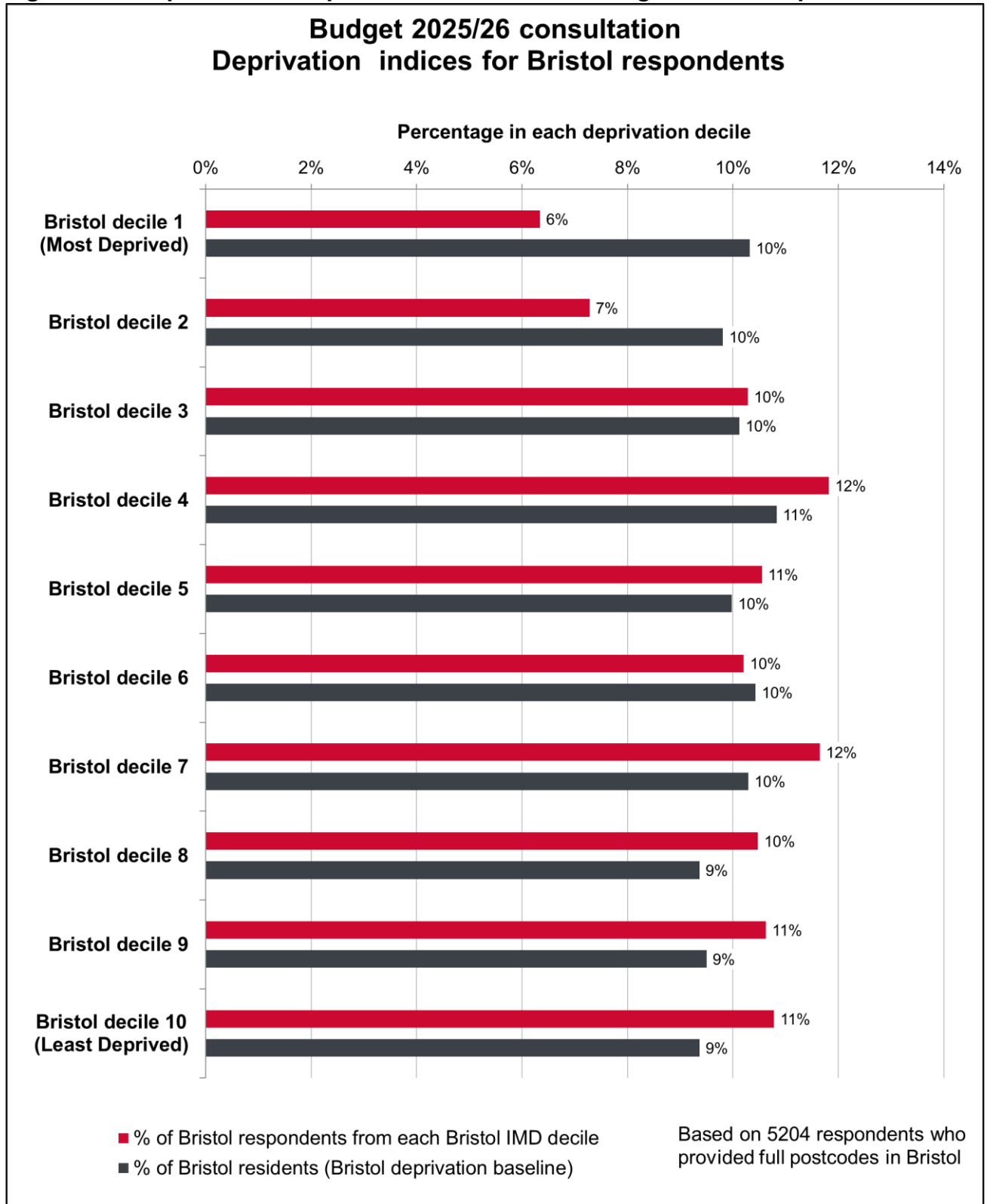
²⁰ The other 219 responses included incomplete postcodes which are within Bristol but do not include enough information to identify a specific ward.

²¹ The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes information about deprivation for small areas throughout England - known as ‘Lower Super Output Areas’ (LSOAs). For each LSOA, a measure of deprivation is published called ‘Indices of Multiple Deprivation’ (IMD), which takes account of 37 indicators that cover income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment. The latest IMD data are from 2019 and define IMD for each of the 32,844 LSOAs in England used in the 2011 Census, of which 263 LSOAs are in the Bristol City Council area. Postcodes provided by respondents can each be matched to one of the 263 LSOAs in Bristol and thus to one of the deprivation deciles. Note: postcodes provide approximate locations; they are not used to identify individuals or specific addresses.

²² Based on 5,204 respondents who provided full postcodes in the Bristol administrative area from which deprivation decile can be identified.

Figure 3 shows there was under-representation of responses from the most deprived 20% of the city (deciles 1 and 2). Response rates from the least deprived 40% of the city (deciles 7, 8, 9 and 10) and from deciles 4 and 5 were over-represented. Responses from deciles 3 and 6 closely match the proportion of Bristol citizens living in these deciles.

Figure 3: Comparison of response rate from areas of high and low deprivation



Percentages in Figure 3 are shown to the nearest whole number. The length of each bar reflects unrounded percentages; hence bars shown with the same percentage (e.g. decile 3) may be slightly different in length.

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3.4 Characteristics of survey respondents

3.4.1 Overview

6,374 (93%) people answered one or more of the equalities monitoring questions. Respondent characteristics are summarised below. The charts compare:

- characteristics for all respondents who answered the equalities questions (shown by bars with a red outline)
- characteristics of 'Bristol respondents' who answered equalities questions and provided a Bristol postcode (shown by solid red bars)
- characteristics of all Bristol's citizens based on the 2021 Census (shown by solid grey bars). Census 2021 data are available for seven protected characteristics (age, Disability, ethnicity, religion/faith, sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation)

Note that respondents who did not provide postcodes may also live in the Bristol City Council area but are not included in figures for 'Bristol respondents'.

In summary, groups that were under-represented in the responses were:

- Children and young people aged 24 years and younger and people aged 85 and older
- People of Asian or Asian British backgrounds; Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African backgrounds; Mixed or multiple ethnic groups; and people of other ethnic background • Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs
- Female citizens
- Heterosexual citizens

The following groups responded in higher numbers than their proportion in the population:

- People aged 25 to 74 years
- Disabled people
- People of White British background and Other White background
- People with no religion, Buddhists, and people with 'Other religion'
- Males
- People who have a gender identity different from their sex recorded at birth
- Bi, gay/lesbian and people who use another term to describe their sexual orientation

Response rates from people aged 75 to 84, people who are Jewish and Gypsy Roma Travellers matched the prevalence of these groups in Bristol's population.

Chapter 7 describes the effects that respondents said the proposals would have on them because of their protected characteristics.

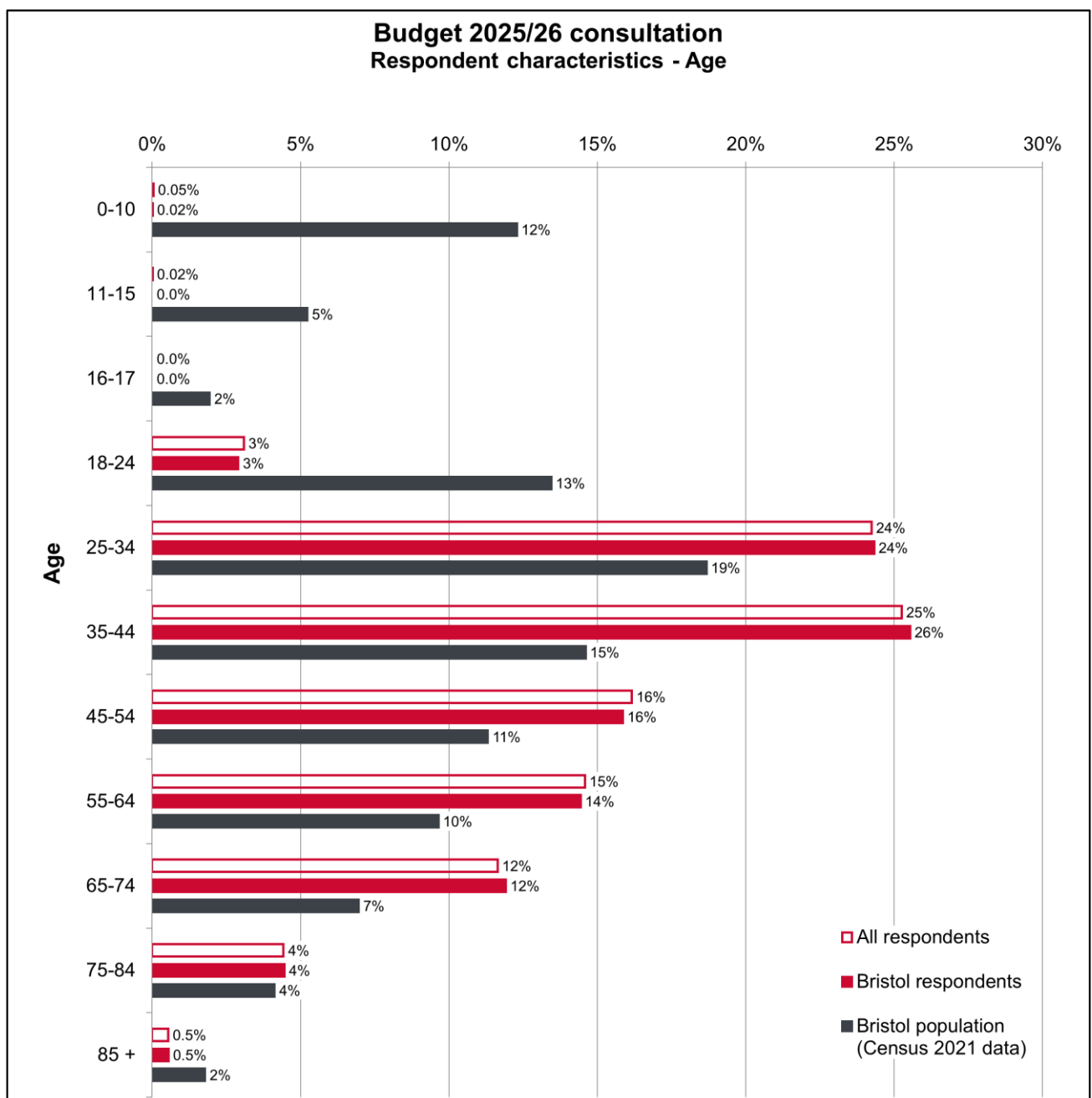
3.4.2 Age

The highest number of responses was from people aged 35 to 44 (25% of all respondents; 26% of Bristol respondents), followed by 25 to 34 (24% of all and Bristol respondents).

All age groups between 25 and 74 responded in higher proportions than these ages in the population. Response rates from people aged 75 to 84 years closely match the proportion of these age groups in Bristol’s population. Survey responses from children (under 18), young people aged 18 to 24 and people aged 85 and older were under-represented. These percentages exclude the 4% of respondents (3% of Bristol respondents) who answered ‘prefer not to say’.

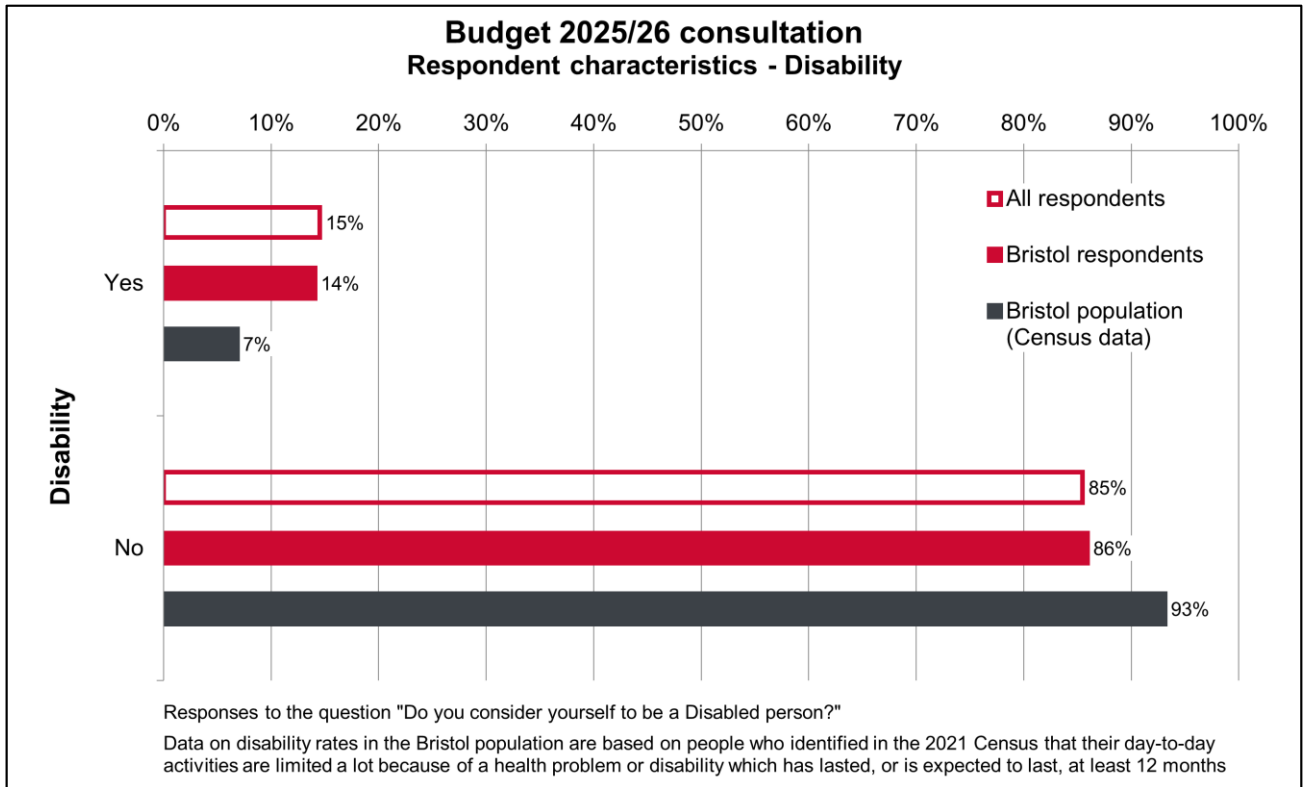
In each age category, the proportions of ‘all respondents’ and ‘Bristol respondents’ were very similar.

Figure 4: Age of respondents



3.4.3 Disability

The proportion of Disabled respondents (15% of all respondents; 14% Bristol respondents) is greater than the proportion of Disabled people living in Bristol. These percentages exclude the 9% of respondents (8% Bristol respondents) who answered ‘prefer not to say’. **Figure 5: Disability**



3.4.4 Ethnicity

The response rates from White British (75% of all respondents; 76% of Bristol respondents) and Other White Background respondents (14%) are higher than the proportions of these citizens in the Bristol population.

The proportion of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller (0.2%) is similar to the proportion of these citizens in the Bristol population.

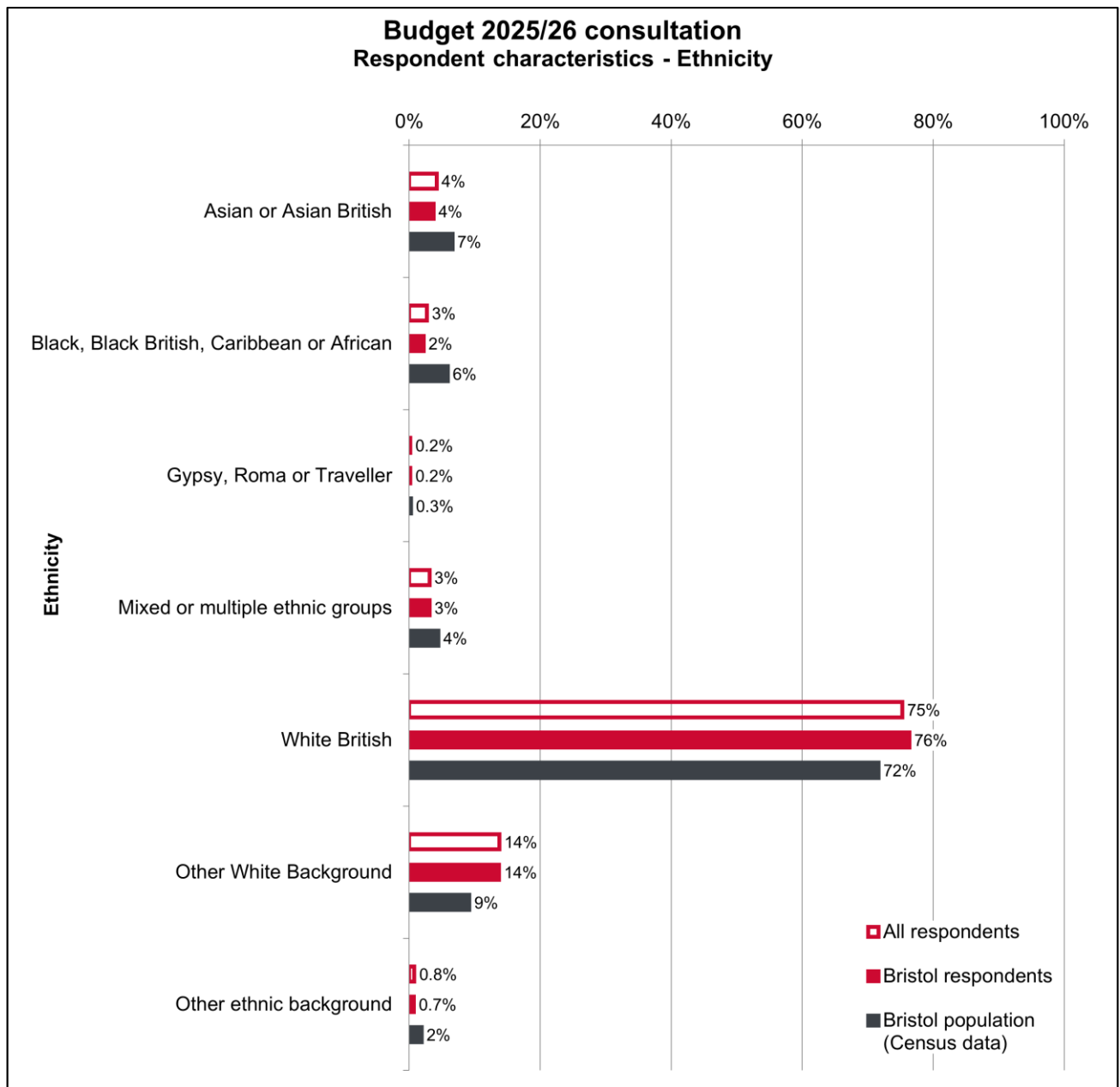
The following ethnic groups were under-represented in the response rates compared to the proportion of people in each of these ethnic groups living in Bristol:

- Asian or Asian British (4% of all respondents; 4% of Bristol respondents)
- Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African (3% of all respondents; 2% of Bristol respondents)
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (3% of all respondents; 3% of Bristol respondents)
- Other ethnic background (0.8% of all respondents; 0.7% of Bristol respondents)

These percentages exclude the 13% of respondents (10% of Bristol respondents) who answered ‘prefer not to say’. Proportions of each ethnicity for all respondents are similar to

respondents who provided a Bristol postcode, with the exception of Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African respondents.

Figure 6: Ethnicity of respondents



3.4.5 Religion/Faith

People with no religion (64% of all respondents; 65% of Bristol respondents) responded in higher proportion than people of no religion in Bristol's population (55%).

The proportion of Jewish respondents (0.4%) is similar to the proportion of Jewish citizens in the Bristol population.

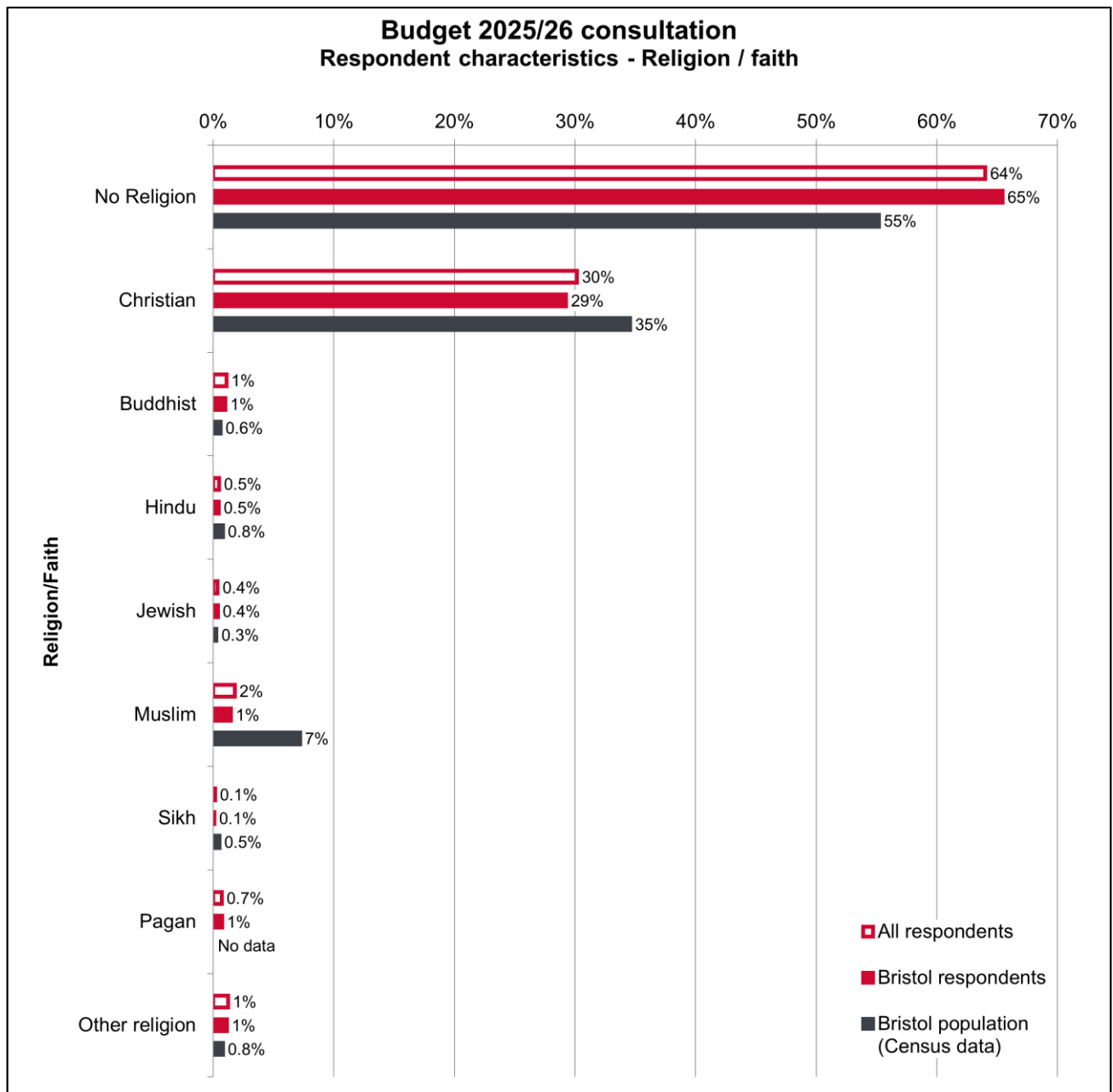
Buddhists (1% of all respondents; 1% of Bristol respondents) and people with 'other religion' (1%) also responded in slightly greater numbers than the proportions of these faiths in Bristol.

Christians (30% of all respondents; 29% of Bristol respondents), Muslims (2% of all respondents; 1% of Bristol respondents), Hindus (0.5% of all respondents; 0.5% of Bristol respondents) and Sikhs (0.1% of all respondents; 0.1% of Bristol respondents) were under-represented compared to the proportions of these faiths living in Bristol.

0.7% of all respondents (1% of Bristol respondents) are Pagan. There are no data from the Census 2021 for the proportion of Pagans living in Bristol.

These percentages exclude the 15% of respondents (12% of Bristol respondents) who answered 'prefer not to say'.

Figure 7: Religion/faith of respondents

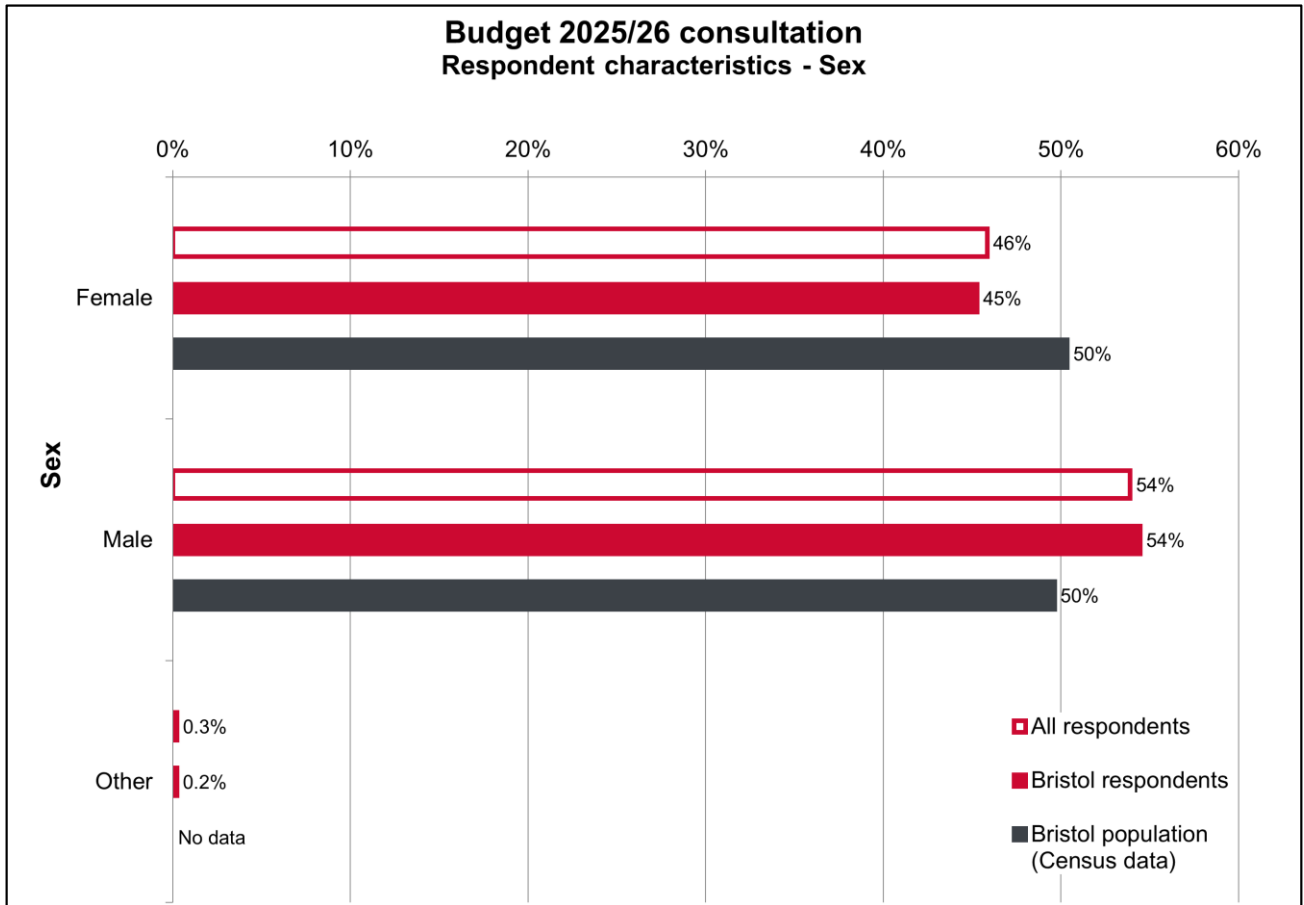


3.4.6 Sex

46% of all survey responses (45% of Bristol responses) were from women and 54% were from men. This compares to 50% of each sex in the Bristol population. 0.3% of responses (0.2% of Bristol responses) were from people who identified as 'other sex'.

These percentages exclude the 12% of respondents (10% of Bristol respondents) who answered ‘prefer not to say’.

Figure 8: Sex of respondents

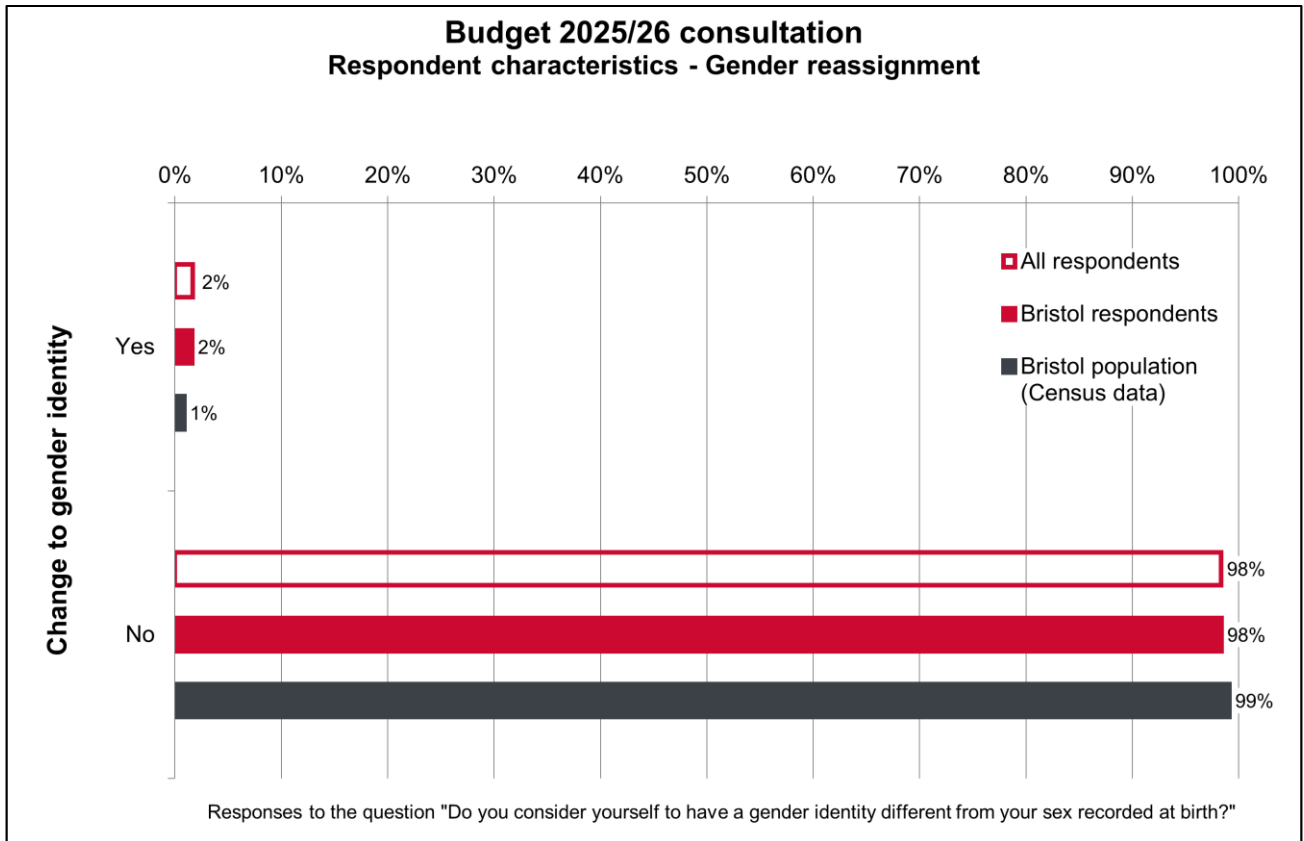


3.4.7 Gender reassignment

2% of respondents (2% of Bristol respondents) stated they have a gender identity different to their sex recorded at birth. This is more than the 1% of the Bristol population who stated in the 2021 Census that their gender identity is different to their sex recorded at birth.

These percentages exclude the 10% of respondents (8% of Bristol respondents) who answered ‘prefer not to say’.

Figure 9: Gender reassignment



3.4.8 Sexual orientation

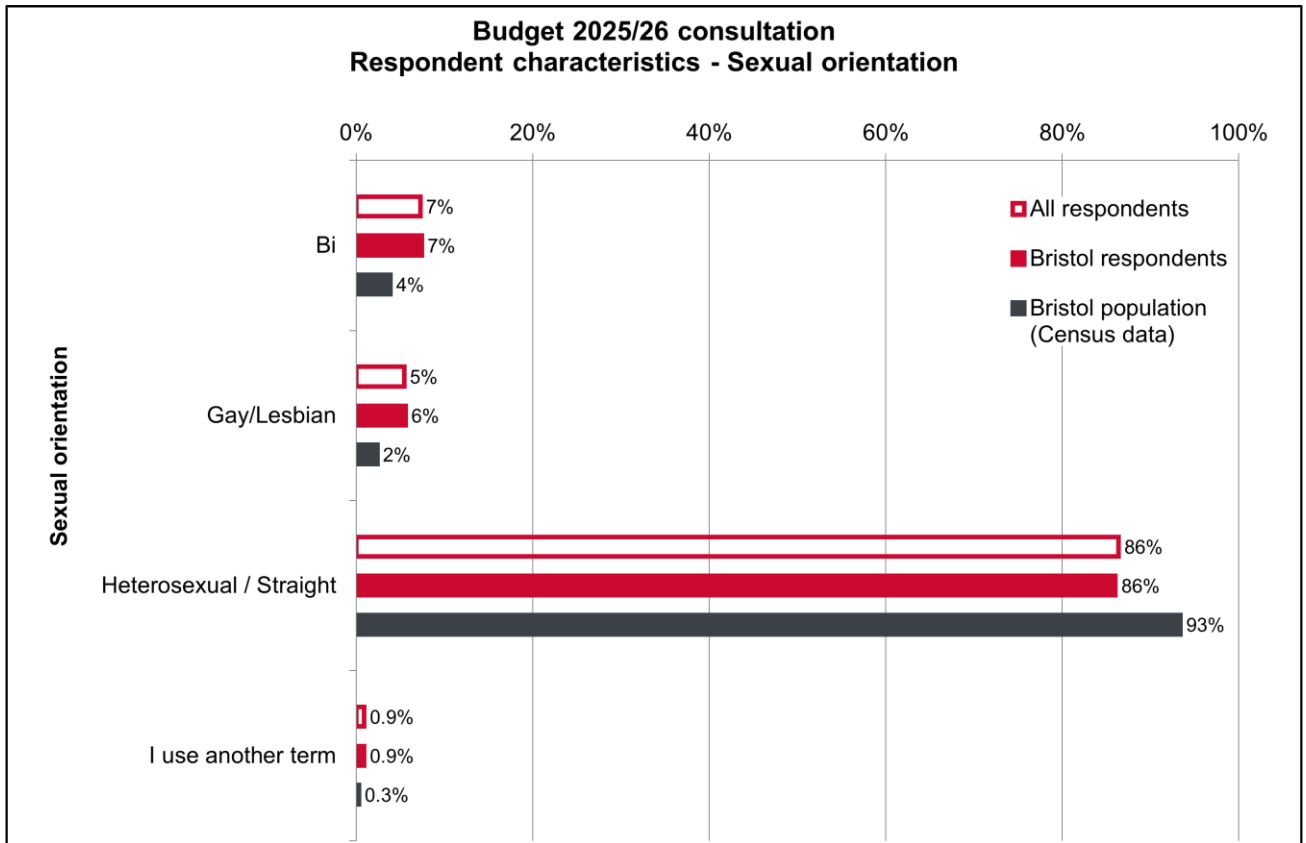
People who are bi (7%), gay/lesbian (5% of all respondents; 5% of Bristol responses) or who use another term for their sexual orientation (0.9%) responded in higher numbers than the proportions of these groups in Bristol’s population. In the 2021 Census, the proportions of each group in Bristol was 4% bi, 2% gay/lesbian and 0.3% use another term.

Heterosexual respondents (86%), were under-represented compared to the proportions of heterosexual people living in Bristol (93%).

The proportions of each group for all respondents are similar to the proportions for Bristol respondents.

These percentages exclude the 22% of respondents (20% of Bristol respondents) who answered ‘prefer not to say’.

Figure 10: Sexual orientation



3.4.9 Pregnancy and maternity, carer status and refugee/asylum status

The survey also asked respondents about their pregnancy and recent maternity status, if they are a carer, and if they are a refugee or asylum seeker.

Census data are not available for the proportion of people with these characteristics living in Bristol. Figures 11, 12 and 13 show the proportions of all respondents and Bristol respondents for each of these characteristics. The proportion of each characteristic for all respondents closely matches the proportion for Bristol respondents.

Figure 11: Pregnancy and recent maternity

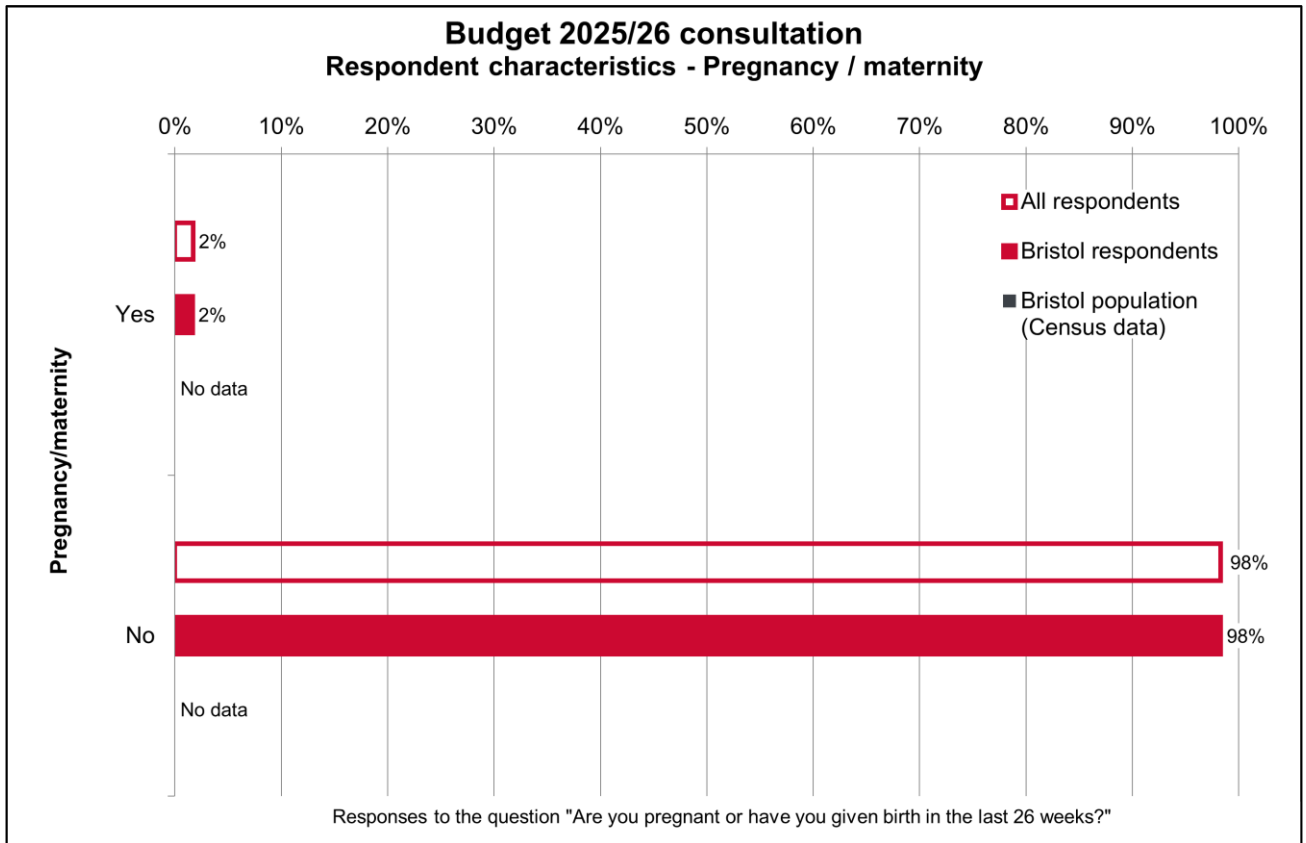


Figure 12: Carer status

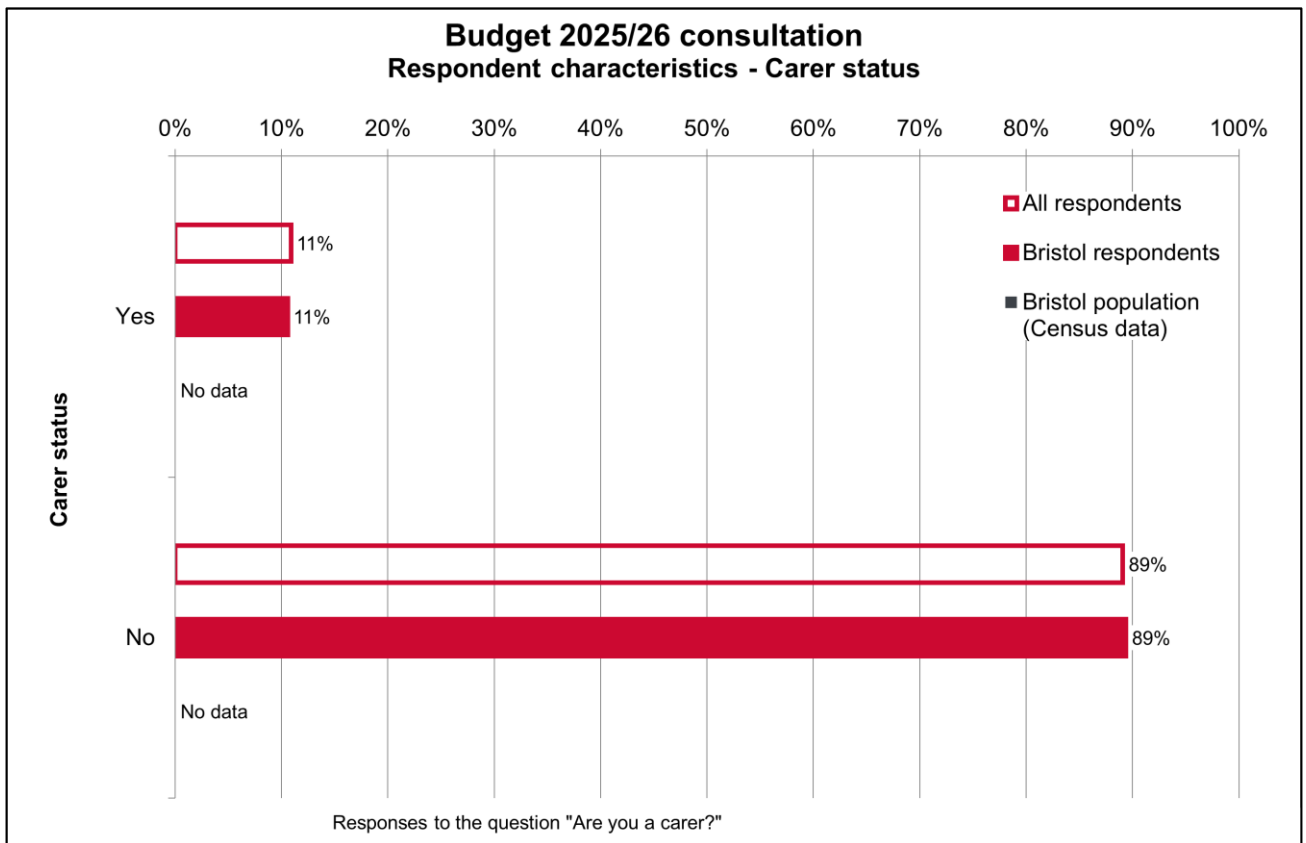
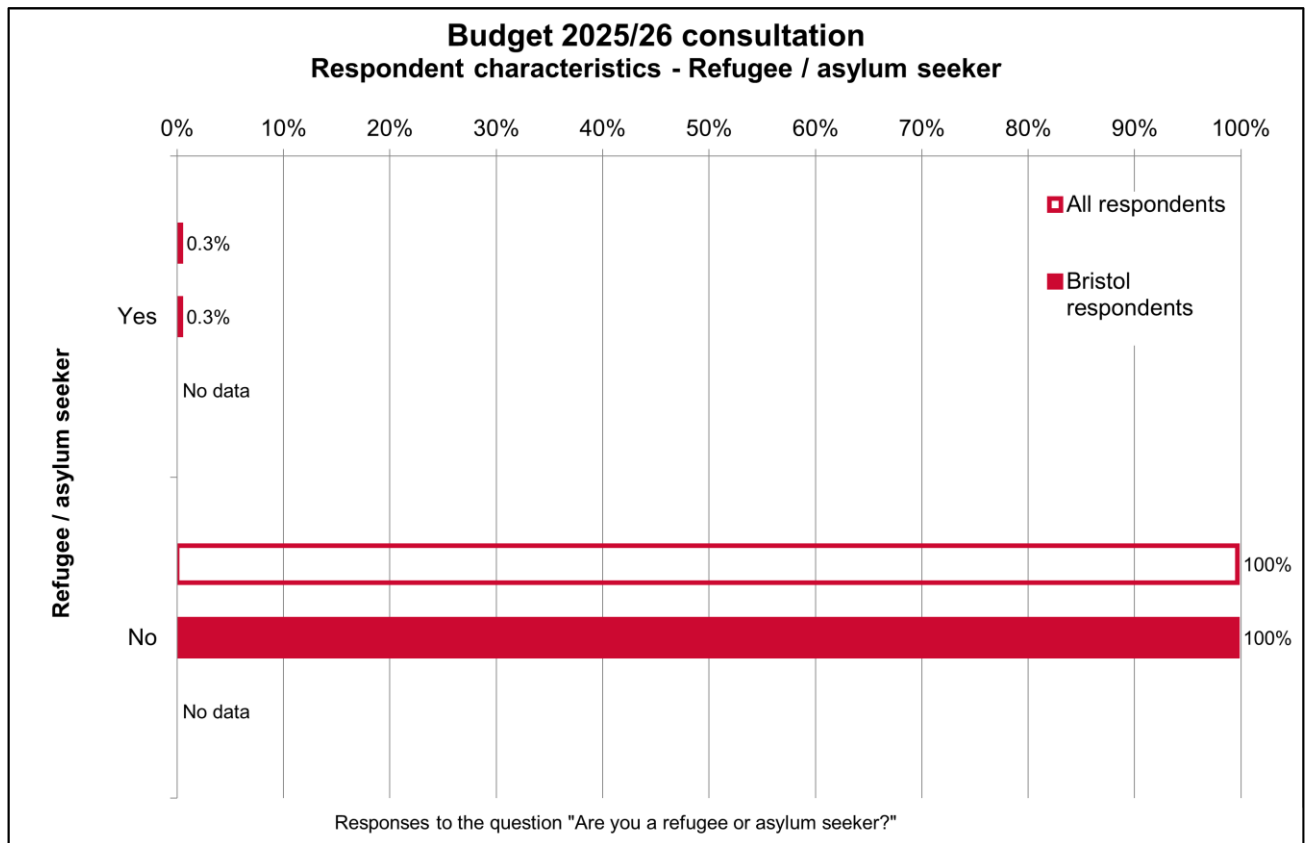


Figure 13: Refugee or asylum seeker status



3.4.10 Other respondent characteristics

6,395 (93%) respondents provided other details of their personal situation, selecting from a list of 12 options. Because respondents could select more than one option, the percentages below exceed 100%.

- 6,318 (99% of the 6,395 respondents who answered the question) are Bristol residents
- 219 (3%) represent and/or own a local business
- 171 (3%) are Bristol City Council employees
- 91 (1%) work in Bristol but live elsewhere
- 26 (0.4%) responded on behalf of a Voluntary/Community/Social Enterprise
- 20 (0.3%) responded on behalf of a health or social care provider
- 17 (0.3%) responded on behalf of a school or education provider
- 9 (0.1%) are ward councillors
- 4 (less than 0.1%) responded on behalf of a public transport provider
- 2 (less than 0.1%) responded on behalf of a housing association
- 1 (less than 0.1%) is an MP
- 119 (2%) selected 'other'

Of the 119 respondents who selected 'other':

- 31 are retired

- 28 reiterated that they are Bristol residents, of whom one is a Ukrainian guest and one is temporarily living away from Bristol
- 7 are carers
- 7 described their employment status, including property owner, housing association tenant, insecure private rental, and van dweller
- 6 gave details of their profession
- 5 described their employment status
- 4 said they were on a low income, including both working and retired respondents
- 4 gave details of their voluntary roles
- 3 are landlords
- 3 stated they are taxpayers
- 2 work in Bristol
- 2 are students in Bristol
- 2 responded on behalf of South West Transport Network Railfuture
- 1 responded on behalf of a healthcare provider
- 1 stated they are a community group
- 1 is a former Bristol resident
- 1 is a South Gloucestershire resident
- 1 stated they are a Disabled citizen
- 1 said they were ill
- 20 selected 'other' but gave no details.

11 of the respondents listed above described themselves in more than one category.

3.5 Respondents who provided feedback via email, telephone and iCasework

21 emails were received in response to the consultation, one response was by telephone and one response was received via the council's iCasework comments system. All 21 emails, the telephone response, and the response via iCasework were received from citizens. These are in addition to the 6,861 survey responses.

The email, telephone and iCasework responses have been analysed with the free text responses to question 4 of the survey and are reported with the survey free text feedback in chapters 5 and 6.

4 Survey results: level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept

4.1 Level of core Council Tax and Social Care Precept – all respondents

4.1.1 Core Council Tax

Respondents were asked to state which level of Council Tax they would prefer in 2025/26, choosing from the following 11 options.

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- Option CT0: No increase to Council Tax ◦ Income raised: £0 (this is £8.6 million less than our forecast) ◦ Budget gap remaining: £60.2 million ◦ Cost increase per week for band B property: £0
- Option CT1: An increase of 1% to Council Tax ◦ Income raised: £2.9 million (this is £5.7 million less than our forecast) ◦ Budget gap remaining: £57.3 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B property: £0.31 (31 pence)
- Option CT2: An increase of 2% to Council Tax ◦ Income raised: £5.7 million (this is £2.9 million less than our forecast) ◦ Budget gap remaining: £54.5 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B property: £0.63 (63 pence)
- Option CT3: An increase of 3% to Council Tax ◦ Income raised: £8.6 million (this is the amount included in our forecast) ◦ Budget gap remaining: £51.6 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B property: £0.94 (94 pence)
- Option CT4: An increase of 4% to Council Tax ◦ Income raised: £11.5 million (this would raise £2.9 million more than our forecast) ◦ Budget gap remaining: £48.7 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B property: £1.25
- Option CT5: An increase of 5% to Council Tax ◦ Income raised: £14.4 million (this would raise £5.7 million more than our forecast) ◦ Budget gap remaining: £45.9 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B property: £1.57
- Option CT6: An increase of 6% to Council Tax ◦ Income raised: £17.2 million (this would raise £8.6 million more than our forecast) ◦ Budget gap remaining: £43 million ◦ Cost increase per week for band B property: £1.88
- Option CT7: An increase of 7% to Council Tax ◦ Income raised: £20.1 million (this would raise £11.5 million more than our forecast) ◦ Budget gap remaining: £40.1 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B property: £2.19

- Option CT8: An increase of 8% to Council Tax ○ Income raised: £23 million (this would raise £14.4 million more than our forecast) ○ Budget gap remaining: £37.2 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B property: £2.51
- Option CT9: An increase of 9% to Council Tax ○ Income raised: £25.9 million (this would raise £17.2 million more than our forecast) ○ Budget gap remaining: £34.4 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B property: £2.82
- Option CT10: An increase of 10% to Council Tax ○ Income raised: £28.7 million to deliver local services (this would raise £20.1 million more than our forecast)
 - Budget gap remaining: £31.5 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B property: £3.13

6,673 respondents (97% of the 6,861 people who responded to the consultation survey), stated their preference for the level of core Council Tax. Of these, 4,431 respondents (66%) favour an increase in core Council Tax to support general services in 2025/26 (Figure 14).

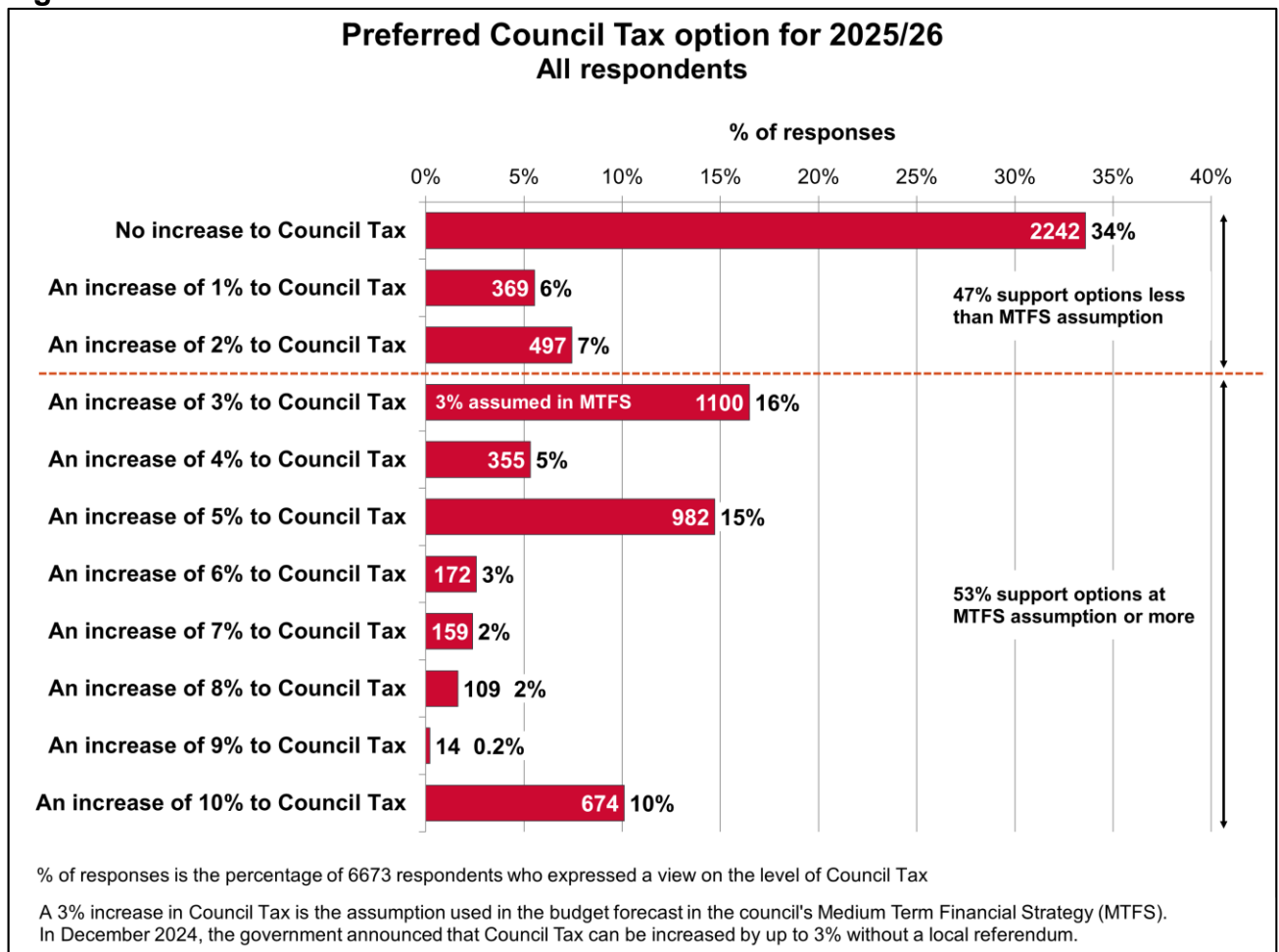
- 2,242 (34%) respondents would prefer no increase to Council Tax in 2025/26. This is the option with the highest support
- 369 (6%) favour a 1% increase
- 497 (7%) favour a 2% increase
- 1,100 (16%) prefer a 3% increase. This is the option with the second highest support. It is the option assumed in the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy
- 355 (5%) favour a 4% increase
- 982 (15%) prefer a 5% increase. This is the option with the third highest support
- 172 (3%) favour a 6% increase
- 159 (2%) favour a 7% increase
- 109 (2%) favour an 8% increase
- 14 (0.2%) favour a 9% increase
- 674 (10%) prefer a 10% increase. This is the option with the fourth highest support
- 188 respondents did not give a view on Council Tax

In December 2024, the government announced²³ that local authorities would be permitted to raise Council Tax by up to 3% in 2025/26. The consultation options for Council Tax increases of 4% to 10% would not, therefore, be allowed.

²³ Provisional local government finance settlement: England, 2025 to 2026 published on 18 December 2024
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Figure 14 shows that a majority of respondents (53%) support options for increases to Council Tax of 3% (the permitted maximum) or more. 47% of respondents would prefer no increase or increases of 1% or 2%.

Figure 14: Preferred level of core Council Tax increase in 2025/26



4.1.2 Social Care Precept

Respondents were asked to state which level of Social Care Precept they would prefer in 2025/26, choosing from six options:

- No additional Social Care Precept
 - Income raised: £0. (This is £5.7 million less than our forecast)
 - Budget gap remaining: £57.3 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B Property: £0
- An additional 1% Social Care Precept
 - Income raised: £2.9 million. (This is £2.9 million less than our forecast)
 - Budget gap remaining: £54.5 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B Property: £0.31 (31 pence)

- An additional 2% Social Care Precept ○ Income raised: £5.7 million. (This is the amount included in our forecast) ○ Budget gap remaining: £51.6 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B Property: £0.63 (63 pence)
- An additional 3% Social Care Precept ○ Income raised: £8.6 million. (This would raise £2.9 million more than our forecast) ○ Budget gap remaining: £48.7 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B Property: £0.94 (94 pence)
- An additional 4% Social Care Precept ○ Income raised: £11.5 million. (This would raise £5.7 million more than our forecast) ○ Budget gap remaining: £45.9 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B Property: £1.25
- An additional 5% Social Care Precept ○ Income raised: £14.4 million. (This would raise £8.6 million more than our forecast) ○ Budget gap remaining: £43 million
 - Cost increase per week for band B Property: £1.57

6,770 respondents (99% of the 6,861 people who responded to the consultation survey), stated their preference for the level of Social Care Precept. 4,341 respondents (64%), favour some Social Care Precept (on top of core Council Tax) to support the delivery of social care in 2025/26 (Figure 15).

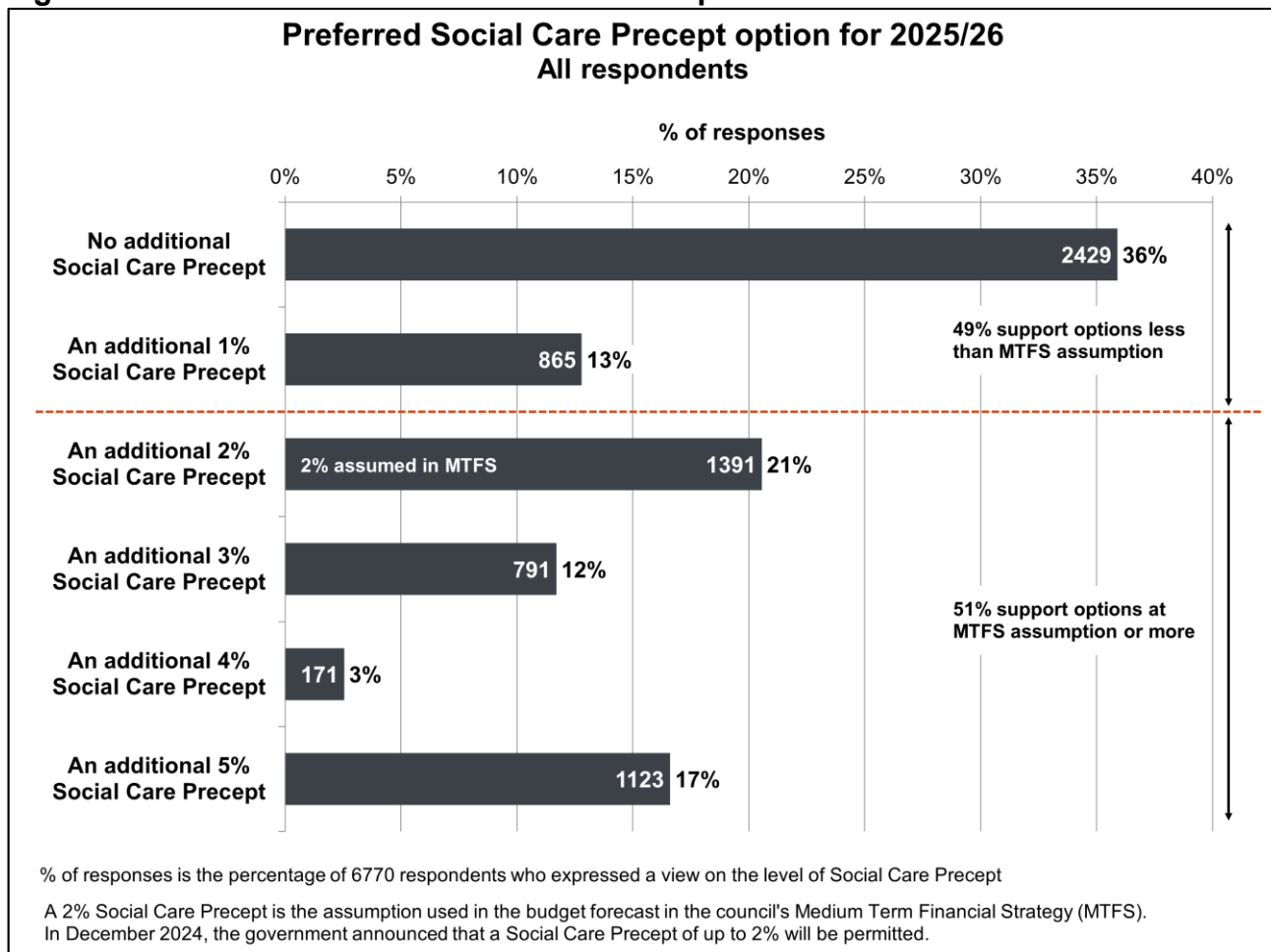
- 2,429 (36%) respondents would prefer no Social Care Precept in 2025/26. This is the option with the highest support
- 865 (13%) favour a 1% Social Care Precept
- 1,391 (21%) would prefer a 2% Social Care Precept. This is the option with the second highest support. It is the option assumed in the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy
- 791 (12%) favour a 3% Social Care Precept
- 171 (3%) favour a 4% Social Care Precept
- 1,123 (17%) would prefer a 5% Social Care Precept. This is the option with the second highest support
- 91 respondents did not give a view on Social Care Precept

In December 2024, the government announced²⁴ that local authorities would be permitted to charge A Social Care Precept up of 2% on top of core Council Tax in 2025/26. The consultation options for Social Care Precept of 3%, 4% and 5% would not be allowed.

²⁴ Provisional local government finance settlement: England, 2025 to 2026 published on 18 December 2024
Produced by Consultation and Engagement team

Figure 15 shows that just over half of respondents (51%) would support options for a Social Care Precept of 2% (the permitted maximum) or more. 49% of respondents would prefer a Social Care Precept of 1% or no precept.

Figure 15: Preferred level of Social Care Precept in 2025/26



4.2 Views on core Council Tax in areas with different levels of deprivation

4.2.1 Overview

Views on the preferred level of core Council Tax were compared for respondents in areas with different levels of deprivation to check for any significant differences. The comparison used the postcodes provided by respondents in Bristol to match each response to one of 10 deprivation bands (deciles) as described in section 3.3.

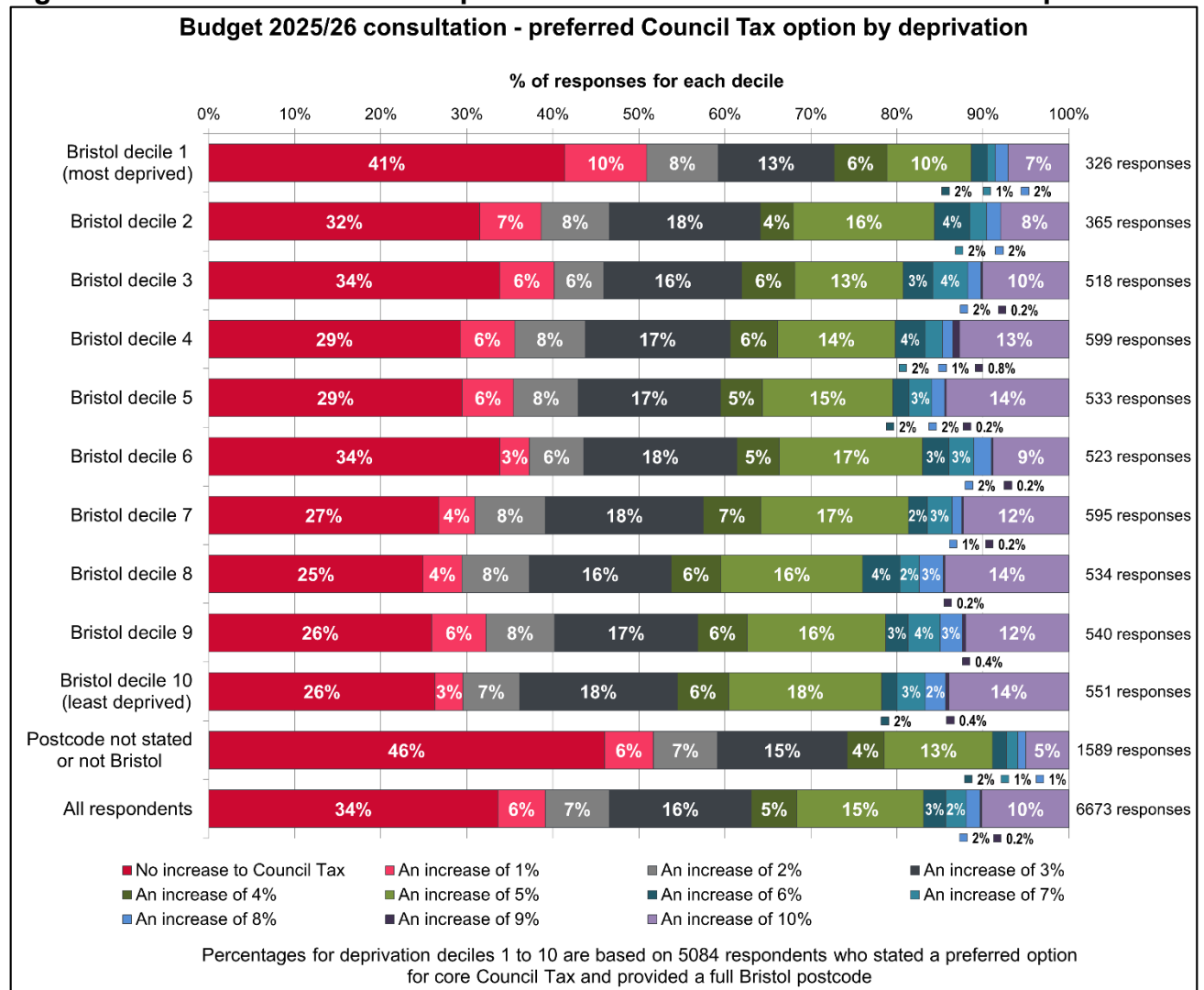
Figure 16 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who want a 0%, 1%, 2%, 3%, 4%, 5%, 6%, 7%, 8%, 9% or 10% increase in core Council Tax in 2025/26. This is based on 5,084 Bristol respondents who stated a preferred option for core Council Tax and provided a full postcode²⁵. Figure 16 also shows the views of people who

²⁵ Incomplete postcodes cannot be matched to the deprivation data.
 Produced by Consultation and Engagement team

did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode, and the aggregated views of all respondents.

Figure 16 shows that preference for higher core Council Tax tends to increase as deprivation reduces. The views of respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode are closest to respondents in decile 1 (most deprived).

Figure 16: Preference in each deprivation decile for the core Council Tax options



4.2.2 Support for a Council Tax increase of 3% or more

A majority (over 50%) of respondents support an increase in core Council Tax at or above the 3% maximum permitted by government, in all deciles except decile 1 (most deprived) and respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode.

Support for an increase to core Council Tax of 3% or more is highest in the least deprived 40% of Bristol (deciles 7, 8, 9 and 10). 64% of respondents would prefer options of 3% or more in decile 10 (least deprived), 63% in decile 8, 61% in decile 7, and 60% in decile 9.

Support for an increase of 3% or more is lowest in the most deprived 40% of the city (deciles 1, 2, 3 and 4) and in respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode. 41% of respondents would prefer options of 3% or more in decile 1 (most deprived), 53% in decile 2, 54% in decile 3, and 56% in decile 4. 41% of respondents who gave a non-Bristol postcode or no postcode would prefer options of 3% or more.

Support for an increase of 3% or more is 57% in decile 5 and 56% in decile 6.

Support for a 3% increase is consistent at between 16% and 18% of respondents for deciles 2 to 10. Only in decile 1 (most deprived) is support lower at 13%.

4.2.3 Support for a Council Tax increase of 2% or less

The reverse trend is observed for increases of 2% or less (2%, 1% or no increase). Support for these options increases with greater deprivation.

Lowest support for an increase of 2% or less is in least deprived decile 10 (36%), decile 8 (37%), decile 7 (39%) and decile 9 (40%).

The highest support for an increase of 2% or less is in decile 1 (59%), decile 2 (47%), decile 3 (46%), decile 4 (44%), and respondents with a non-Bristol or no postcode (59%).

Respondents in decile 1 (most deprived) and respondents with a non-Bristol or no postcode are the only groups for whom a majority favour an increase of 0%, 1% or 2% to core Council Tax.

Support for **no increase to core Council Tax** is lowest in the least deprived 40% of the city. 25% of respondents would prefer no increase in decile 8, 26% in decile 9, 26% in decile 10, and 27% in decile 7. Support for no increase is highest for respondents with a non-Bristol or no postcode (46%) and respondents in the most deprived decile 1 (41%), decile 3 (34%) and decile 2 (32%). Decile 6 (34%) also has relatively high support for no increase.

4.3 Views on Social Care Precept in areas with different levels of deprivation

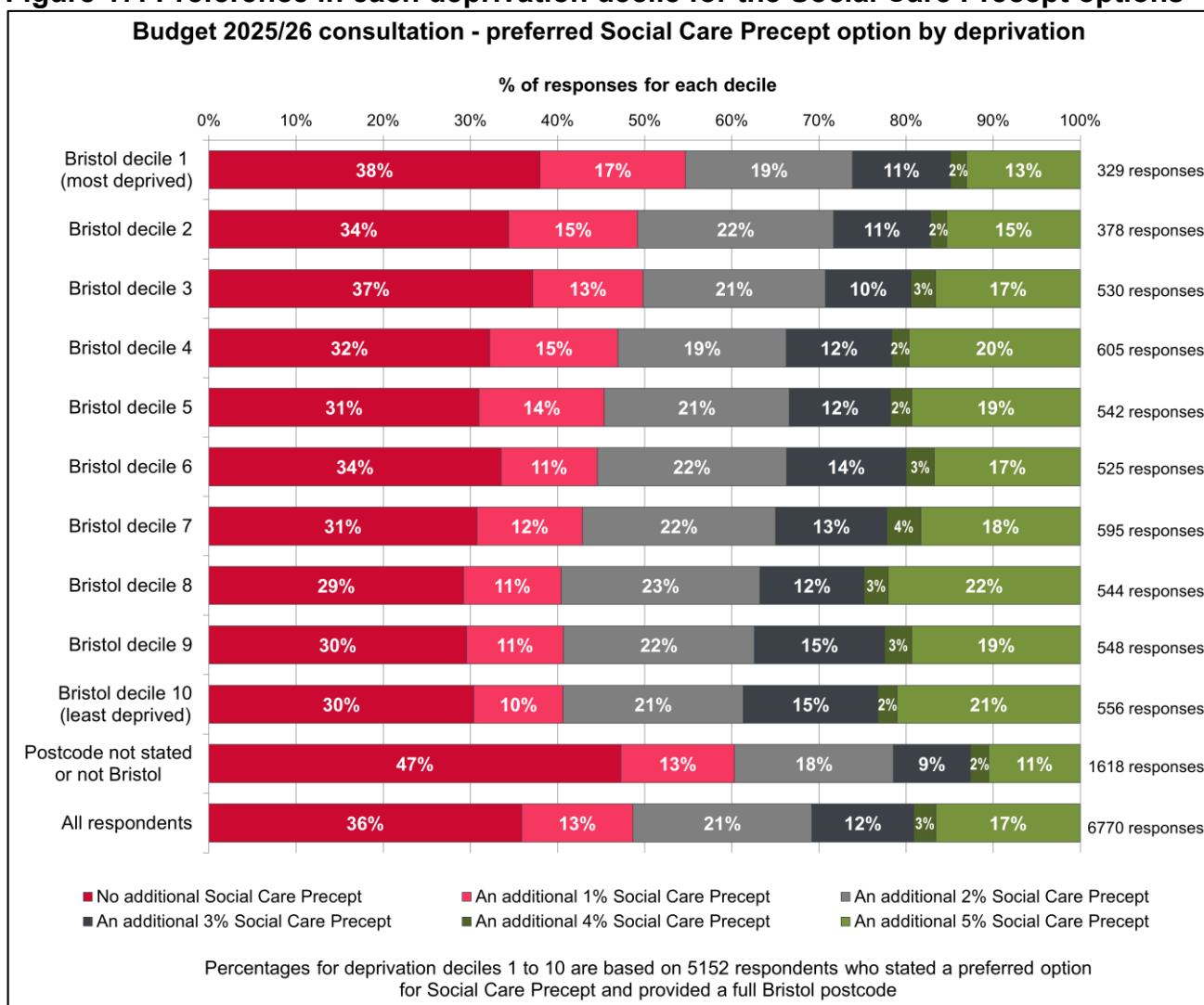
4.3.1 Overview

Views on the preferred level of Social Care Precept were also compared for respondents in areas with different levels of deprivation, to check for any significant differences in views.

Figure 17 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who want a 0%, 1%, 2%, 3%, 4% or 5% Social Care Precept in 2025/26. This is based on the 5,152 Bristol respondents who stated a preferred option for Social Care Precept and provided a full postcode. Figure 17 also shows the views of people who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode, and the aggregated views of all respondents.

As with core Council Tax, support for a Social Care Precept follows an inverse trend with deprivation (Figure 17). The views of respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode are closest to respondents in decile 1 (most deprived) but show a higher preference for no Social Care Precept.

Figure 17: Preference in each deprivation decile for the Social Care Precept options



4.3.2 Support for a Social Care Precept of 2% or more

A majority (more than 50%) of respondents support a Social Care Precept at or above the 2% maximum permitted by the government, for all deciles except decile 1 (most deprived) and respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode.

Support for a Social Care Precept of 2% (the permitted maximum) or more is highest in the least deprived 40% of Bristol (deciles 7, 8, 9 and 10). 60% of respondents would prefer options of 2% or more in decile 8, 59% in decile 10, 59% in decile 9 and 57% in decile 7.

Support for an increase of 2% or more is lowest in the most deprived 40% of the city (deciles 1, 2, 3 and 4) and in respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode. 45% of respondents would prefer options of 2% or more in decile 1 (most deprived), 50% in decile 3, 51% in decile 2, and 53% in decile 4. 40% of respondents who gave a non-Bristol postcode or no postcode would prefer options of 2% or more.

Support for an increase of 2% or more is 55% in decile 5 and 55% in decile 6.

Support for a 2% increase is fairly consistent between 19% and 23% of respondents for all deprivation deciles and is 18% for respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode.

4.3.3 Support for a Social Care Precept of 1% or less

The reverse trend is observed for increases of 1% or less (1% or no precept). Support for these options increases with greater deprivation.

Lowest support for a precept of 1% or less is in decile 8 (40%), decile 10 (41%), decile 9 (41%) and decile 7 (43%).

The highest support for a precept of 1% or less is in decile 1 (55%), decile 3 (50%), decile 2 (49%), decile 4 (47%) and respondents with a non-Bristol or no postcode (60%).

Respondents in decile 1 (most deprived) and respondents with a non-Bristol or no postcode are the only groups for whom a majority favour a precept of 1% or less.

Support for **no Social Care Precept** is lowest in the least deprived 40% of the city. 29% of respondents would prefer no increase in decile 8, 30% in decile 9, 30% in decile 10 and 31% in decile 7. Support for no increase is highest for respondents with a non-Bristol or no postcode (47%) and respondents in the most deprived decile 1 (38%), decile 3 (37%) and decile 2 (34%). Decile 6 (34%) also has relatively high support for no increase.

5 Comments about Council Tax and Social Care Precept

5.1 Overview

Of the 6,884 respondents to the Budget 2025/26 consultation, 3,485 (51%) provided free text comments as part of their response. This includes 3,422 comments received in survey question 4, together with 21 email responses to the consultation, one response received via voicemail and one response received via the council's iCasework comments system. The free text comments were analysed and sorted into key themes.

Each comment, or parts of comments, may have been applicable to more than one theme, therefore the percentages below do not always add up to 100%. Unless otherwise stated, the percentages reported in this section are the percentages of total comments, rather than the percentage of overall respondents to the survey. Below we report descriptive summaries detailing the range of comments and suggestions under each theme. Quotes typical of each theme have also been selected and are presented in the tables below to highlight the types of issues and suggestions raised by respondents in their own words.

5.2 Comments about Council Tax

5.2.1 Summary

Of the 3,485 respondents who left free text comments, 2,471 (71%) left comments concerning Council Tax:

- 920 (27%) comments explained a respondent's support for a Council Tax increase
- 763 (22%) comments explained a respondent's opposition to a Council Tax increase
- 465 (13%) comments suggested there should be a change to how Council Tax is charged
- 444 (13%) other comments about Council Tax

5.2.2 Comments supporting a Council Tax increase

920 (27%) comments explained a respondent's support for a Council Tax increase. Of these, 129 (4%) comments expressed support but for a lower level than forecasted. These comments related to:

- **Protecting or improving public services** ○ Increasing rates will prevent further cuts to, or will improve, services which improve quality of life for residents in Bristol and it is therefore important to contribute to funding them
 - The desire to support vulnerable people and meet local needs in Bristol through the funding and provision of services
 - Belief in the public good, supporting local democracy and investing in the future of Bristol
- **Acknowledgement of the council's financial situation** ○ To help close the budget gap and help the council balance the books at a time of increased costs
 - Recognition that the council needs to be better funded to continue operating and avoid bankruptcy
 - Expressions that if the national government does not properly fund councils, then it is the citizen's responsibility
 - Acknowledgements that the council needs better funding so it can employ enough staff to continue to function
- **Support a Council Tax increase with caveats** ○ Affordable amount for the individual, but that they cannot afford any more than the chosen option due to the increased cost of living
 - Higher increases need to be accompanied by a robust plan or major improvements to Bristol, clearer results and increased efficiency of operations and spending

Comments supporting an increase, but if this is set too high it will increase pressure on the council and services leading to increased costs

 - Suggestions of being happy with a onetime large increase to help reduce the deficit, but also wanting assurances this will not happen every time
 - Expressions that individuals are happy with a 'reasonable' increase, so long as lowincome households are protected
 - Suggestions that some increases are necessary but that 15% overall is far too much
- **Reasons for the of level Council Tax increase chosen** ○ Level chosen was seen as in line with inflation
 - Statements that the individual was able to afford increases and that those who can afford to pay more should do so

- The selected level was reasonable for the individual or was how much their wage or pension has increased by
- Expressions that individuals were happy to pay the forecasted levels to support the council
- **Support Council Tax increase but less than forecasted level**
(129 comments; 4% of total) ○ Expressions that any increase should be kept to a minimum, with many calling for an increase in line with inflation (often quoted as 2%), which was seen as a fair amount.
 - Statements that individuals cannot afford higher increases than those selected, especially as pay or pensions have not increased more than the levels selected
 - Acknowledgements of the need to increase by some amount, but that the council should look to efficiencies over high increases

Table 1: Selection of comments supporting a Council Tax increase

Protecting or improving services

“I am in the fortunate position to be able to afford an increase in Council Tax and Care Precept, and I would happily pay more taxes if the future of vital social and public services could be guaranteed.”

“We can't expect decent levels of public service while not paying for it. Support a higher end of increase of CTax with usual support for those on lower incomes.”

Acknowledgement of the council's financial situation

“Bristol City Council needs more funding and if some residents with deeper pockets can support then that needs to happen.”

“Funding increases are required to mitigate the risk of the council going bankrupt.”

Support a Council Tax increase with caveats

“I have suggested an increase above the planned budget but would not support this increase if the council reduced working days or continued on the path of working from home. The latter has led to reduced efficiency in council services. I would also expect the council to put in and publish exactly how they will improve productivity. Without these caveats I would not support any increase in the budget.”

“While I am happy to continue to pay a 5% increase, I would like to see an improvement in services. However, I will refuse to pay a 15% increase, which has been mentioned, unless I am provided why such a huge increase is being proposed at a point where the majority of the public are struggling to pay bills, pay for food and keep themselves and their families clothed.”

Reasons for the level of Council Tax increase chosen

“I believe a raise in line with inflation is the correct course of action.”

“I recognise increasing costs as a result of inflation and would therefore accept a 5% total increase but any more than this in already difficult circumstances is unacceptable.”

Support a Council Tax increase but less than forecasted level

“1% reflects some increase in costs but places responsibility on the council to make the changes it needs to in how it's run and its poor leadership over the last ten years.” “Due to the winter fuel allowance being stopped 1 per cent seems fair as we are senior citizens on a pension only with no benefits.”

5.2.3 Comments opposing a Council Tax Increase

762 (22%) comments explained a respondent's opposition to a Council Tax increase. These comments related to:

- **Personal financial circumstances**

- Affordability for the individual and families due to the cost of living crisis and all-time high outgoings, with no access to extra funds for increased Council Tax and households already struggling to pay the current amount
- Any increases will have a financial impact for the individual and their families, ranging from moderate to severe
- Tax should be taken from those who afford it, rather than from those who cannot ○ Opposing increases as they will further reduce the economic conditions of others, including the less well off, the elderly, those with Disabilities or health conditions

- **Negative view of the council**

- The council is not trusted, both in general and specifically to spend citizens' money, therefore the council should not have any additional money
- The council already has a high revenue, it should prove it can budget, fix inefficiencies and focus on savings, before asking for more money
- Against tax increases as they will only be used to fix the council's deficit which is seen as resulting from the mismanagement of funds. A subset also opposes any increases as no matter the level, the deficit will remain
- Suggestions the council should look to other funding options and revenue streams over Council Tax increases for residents
- The council must put taxpayers first before any rises can be justified, and perceptions the council is punishing working people

- **Services** ○ Suggestions that there have been no improvements to services from previous increases, so there is no point in increasing Council Tax again

- Opposing increases as the individual does not use most of the services council provides, so any rises will not benefit them personally
- Perceptions that an increase will not be used to make Bristol's services or infrastructure better, but rather used solely to fix the deficit

- **Other reasons for opposing a Council Tax increase** ○ Observations that the tax burden in Bristol is already high, often cited as one of the highest in the country, with the perception of above inflation increases over many years

- More funding should be sought from the government as taxation is already too high ○ Suggestions that Council Tax should be reduced not increased ○ Suggestions that working people should not be subsidising others, including the worse off, people on benefits, the elderly, and students, therefore giving more money has no benefit to the individual themselves

Table 2: Selection of comments opposing a Council Tax increase**Personal financial circumstances**

“The cost of living rises and rises and I am already stretched as a single mom so cannot afford an increase, let alone another big increase.”

“I am employed and I can't afford to eat for the last week of the month and I am Diabetic so this is dangerous for me. I would love to support more but it's a struggle at the moment. Rent is high in this city, energy prices set to raise again, food prices are getting ridiculous. Please take this on board when making your choices.” **Negative view of the council**

“There is no improvement of how BCC manage the city. Increasing Council Tax won't change anything.”

“I don't see why we should have to foot the bill for the council's mismanagement of the finances, the reason there is a 50 million deficit is not due to lower revenue, it's due to poor management!”

Services

“I do not see or experience any improvement in current council services and hence vehemently disagree with any increases to Council Tax.”

“I do not accept any rise to our Council Tax payments based on the fact that the roads remain in a terrible state with potholes; grass cutting outside our homes rarely happens. Unless we complain!”

Other reasons for opposing a Council Tax increase

“We are already paying too much (because of years of central government strangulation and terrible council investments) so I don't think we should have to pay any more. Hence my 0% first choice.”

“I selected no increase because Council Tax is too damn high. It's bewildering to me that there isn't an option to request for Council Tax to be reduced.”

5.2.4 Comments about financial concerns

Overall, 683 (20%) comments detailed financial concerns for the individual relating to increases. These can be further subdivided into:

- 609 (18%) comments detailing general financial concerns for the individual commenting
- 61 (2%) comments specifically detailed individual financial concerns due to old age
- 13 (0.4%) comments specifically detailed individual financial concerns due to Disability

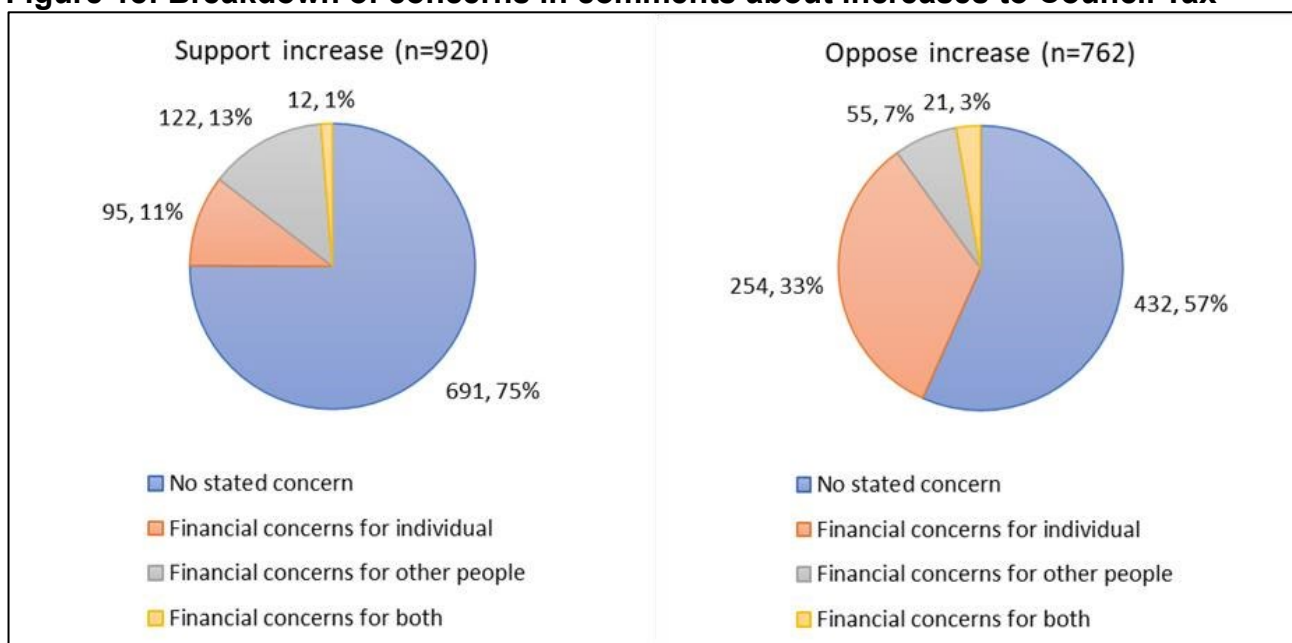
In addition to these **financial concerns for the individual**, 363 (10%) comments related to **financial concerns for other people**. These, for example, include concerns how increases may impact the less well off, the elderly, or Bristol residents in general. Some individuals

detailed financial concerns both for themselves as individuals and concerns for how increases may impact other people.

Having financial concerns was a cross-cutting theme across those supporting increases and those opposing increases. Figure 18 displays the breakdown of respondents who left free text comments either supporting or opposing increases to Council Tax and, of these, how many respondents expressed financial concerns for themselves or for other people.

The percentages in Figure 18 represent the proportion of those who left comments supporting or opposing a Council Tax increase, rather than a proportion of overall comments. A quarter of respondents (25%) who left comments supporting an increase also stated financial concerns, whereas almost half (43%) of respondents who left comments opposing an increase also shared financial concerns. Those who opposed an increase were more likely to share financial concerns relating to themselves, whereas those who supported an increase were more likely to share concerns relating to the financial position of other people.

Figure 18: Breakdown of concerns in comments about increases to Council Tax



These comments related to:

- **Financial concerns for the individual (general)**
 - How expensive it is to live in Bristol, with wages low compared to the cost of living here, and that individuals are currently struggling to pay bills, rents and mortgages
 - Inflation heavily impacting personal finances and increasing expenditure further will impact on ability to save or ability to afford necessities such as food and heating
 - Inability for individuals to gain more income, either through wages or access to benefits to support them, or suggestions that wages have not increased proportionally with costs for years
 - General comments about the cost of living crisis and the difficulties it has created
 - Details of personal economic circumstances, such as low wages, living alone, redundancy, maternity leave, and struggles with supporting oneself financially

- Concerns the Council Tax single person discount may be removed, making it even more difficult to pay
- **Financial concerns for the individual (old age)** ○ Concerns relating to having a limited income due to age and that pension rises are fixed, making any additional outgoings difficult to cover
 - Government cuts to the Winter Fuel Payment has increased financial pressure on pensioners
 - The cost of living has been particularly hard for older people due to inability to access or make more money
- **Financial concerns for the individual (Disability)** ○ Expressions that the individual's Disability places them in a more precarious financial situation ○ Statements increases will have disproportionate impacts due to the individual's Disability
- **Financial concerns for other people** ○ Expressions from individuals who support an increase that while they themselves can withstand it financially, there are many in Bristol who may not be able to
 - Statements that Council Tax is regressive, therefore impacts poorer households disproportionately, which may then in turn increase pressure on council services
 - Observations that people in general are struggling with the cost of living in Bristol and that people's wages have not increased proportionally
 - Concerns that an increase will disproportionately impact certain groups, such as the elderly, Disabled people, the vulnerable, or those living alone

Table 3: Selection of comments detailing financial concerns
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Financial concerns for the individual (general)

“I am a single mother working full time, with two teenage children. I have a huge mortgage but it’s still less than rental would be and I struggle to pay the bills. I have nothing left over for house repairs or if my car breaks down and often have to ask my parents for help.”

“On an above average wage, I struggle to pay Council Tax as it is, along with uncapped rental prices, energy prices and the cost of essentials such as food and toiletries. My outgoings for basic necessities are easily over £1,000 a month and even on an aboveaverage wage, this leaves me with little at the end of the month.”

“It is extremely hard in Bristol to work full time, live on your own and afford it. It is depressing thinking that the costs will rise more taking in consideration the cost of living crisis.”

Financial concerns for the individual (old age)

“As a pensioner I have very limited options for increasing the funds available to me. Although the state pension will increase by 4.1 most of this has been accounted for by the withdrawal of my winter fuel payment.”

“Something would have to go for me to afford rises it will be bills or food and heating rent etc my pension is not rising to keep up.”

Financial concerns for the individual (Disability)

“I am Disabled and I already struggle with living cost, bills and costs associated with my disability. I struggle to find a job that pays more to keep up with these things because I am Disabled and the options for me to earn more money to pay higher bills are extremely limited.”

“I am single and Disabled and an increase will disproportionately impact people like me”

Financial concerns for other people

“However, I recognise that there may be citizens in worse off financial pressures than myself who may not have as much financial resilience to such an increase. The council must ensure it is doing what it can to make sure those who are worse off have the right support to meet their financial needs and are not further plunged into destitution.”

“People are stretched to capacity financially. There are food banks everywhere.”

“A larger increase would disproportionately affect lower income households not all of whom live in lower banded houses.”

5.2.5 Suggestions to change how Council Tax is charged

465 (13%) comments suggested there should be a change to how Council Tax is charged. These comments related to:

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- **Charging students and student accommodation**
 - Suggestions that it is unfair students do not get charged while still making use of council services, with calls for some level of charge for students whether it is paid by their landlords, universities, or the students themselves
- **Changes to banding**
 - General comments that Council Tax bands need to be reassessed
 - Call to only increase the rate for those in higher bands, and for additional protections for those in lower bands
 - Concerns that 1991 valuations do not accurately reflect property price, or that price growth since 1991 may not be matched by the affluency of occupants
- **Means-testing Council Tax**
 - Suggestions that Council Tax should be based on income and calls for Bristol's richer residents to be taxed more than poorer residents
- **Changes to schemes**
 - Expressions that the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in Bristol is too generous and should be reduced or removed, and that people on benefits should pay Council Tax
 - Suggestions that the single person discount is not generous enough and should be increased from 25% to 50%
- **Charging landlords and multiple property owners**
 - Calls to increase tax on landlords and those who own houses of multiple occupancy
 - Suggestions to increase tax on second, third and fourth homes and properties which remain empty

Table 4: Selection of comments suggesting changes to how Council Tax is charged
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Charging students and student accommodation

“Start taxing student accommodation! Increase your tax base. You can’t keep raising taxes on the limited tax base you have. It can be a reduced rate but it is foolish to be a city with such a large student population and then exempt them from contributing to the costs they bring.”

“The council should levy the university students £100-200 in their fees as students pay no Council Tax but still use council services. As this is about 10% of the yearly bill for a regular person I think it’s reasonable.”

Changes to banding

“Suggest progressive increases based on Band - smallest %increases for Band A, largest for Band F etc!”

“Re-assess banding since house values have changed so much.”

Means-testing Council Tax

“Council Tax is a scam and should be based on income, not where you live.”

“I would advocate for a means tested Council Tax increases dependant on household income.”

Changes to schemes

“Council Tax reduction scheme needs to be looked at. I believe it should be scrapped it most definitely needs to be changed. Why is Bristol still doing this? I thought all other councils had stopped.”

“The 25% discount for a single person is also a complete joke. It should be 50% discount for single people.”

Charging landlords and multiple property owners

“I think it’s completely unacceptable for tenants to pay Council Tax, this should be something landlords have to pay, and Bristol City Council should be doing something about this.”

“All second homes can also be leveraged for more tax, especially those that are empty or partly occupied.”

5.2.6 Other comments about Council Tax

There were 444 (13%) other comments about Council Tax. Of these, 326 (9%) concerned perceptions of Council Tax’s value for money. These related to:

- **Value for money** ○ General comments that Council Tax represents poor value for money for Bristol residents
 - Comments that every year Council Tax increases but residents receive less for their money
 - Perceptions that the only service received from the council is rubbish collections, and widespread dissatisfaction with this service
 - Suggestions Council Tax is very high and this is not reflected in the poor state of the roads, unclean state of the city, lack of policing, and issues with homelessness in Bristol ○ A lack of confidence that increasing Council Tax would lead to better services ○ Suggestions that if there were visible improvements to Bristol then individuals would be happy to pay increased Council Tax
 - Comments that Council Tax is already one of the highest in the county and that the council does not need more money, rather it needs to spend what it has more efficiently and effectively
- **Government limits and assurances** ○ Observations relating to government limits on Council Tax increases ○ Comments suggesting national Labour government assured the public there would be no tax rises on working people
- **Citizens and the deficit** ○ Expressions that is not the responsibility of Bristol residents to make up the council's deficit through additional Council Tax.
 - Observations that no matter how much Council Tax is raised by, the money generated will be insufficient to fix the deficit
- **Comments about the 15% proposal** ○ Comments suggesting the 15% combined proposal is far too high

Table 5: Selection of other comments about Council Tax

Value for money

“It seems we are constantly paying more but we seem to be getting less and less for it.”

“Council Tax represents very poor value for money. I pay £4,000 a year and the only benefit I seem to get is the bins emptied fortnightly.”

“Also Bristol already looks pretty awful in Some areas and so I’m confused what the Council Tax even pays for. I bet if more people could see change in the community (better policing, cleaner streets, less homelessness, bins actually being emptied) that they would be okay with a higher Council Tax.”

Government limits and assurances

“Any increases above the governmental permitted maximum is a form of additional local taxation, which is unfair.”

“Raising Council Tax above the rate of inflation feels like another tax on working people, exactly what Labour promised wouldn’t happen.”

Citizens and the deficit

“Pulling yourself out of a hole by stepping on working people’s throats is an unacceptable way to get over the deficit.”

“Working people should nor be expected to dig the council out of its gross mismanagement of funds - nor should Bristolians be further forced out of their city due to further rising costs.”

Comments about the 15% proposal

“You then send preposterous proposals of 15% rises. I do not get more than a 5% pay rise each year, so you should not get such a rise in Council Tax each year.” “15% is far too much.”

5.3 Comments about Social Care Precept

5.3.1 Summary

Of the 3,485 respondents who left free text comments, 885 (25%) left comments concerning the Social Care Precept:

- 576 (17%) comments explained a respondent’s support for a Social Care Precept increase
- 262 (8%) comments explained a respondent’s opposition to a Social Care Precept increase
- 73 (2%) suggested there should be a change to how the Social Care Precept is charged
- 17 (0.5%) other comments about the Social Care Precept

5.3.2 Comments supporting a Social Care Precept increase

576 (17%) comments explained a respondent's support for a Social Care Precept increase. These comments related to:

- **Importance of social care** ○ Expressions of the belief in the importance of social care services and a wish to contribute to the council's ability to continue to run these vital services which support the vulnerable in Bristol
 - Some noted they are in a position financially to be able to pay more, while others noted that even though they have limited finances, it is still important to fund social care
- **Social care crisis** ○ Observations that social care is under increased demand, is expensive to run, or has not received adequate funding, therefore it requires additional funding to avoid cuts in service provision
 - Reflections that as there is an ageing population, therefore funding must increase to meet increasing demands in social care
- **Personal or family reliance on social care services** ○ Suggestions the individual, or their family, use social care services, therefore they want to contribute to the continued functioning of these services
 - Suggestions that the individual or their families may be reliant on social care in the future, therefore they are happy to pay an increased Social Care Precept
- **General comments supporting increases** ○ Support for increases so the council can continue to provide or improve services, including social care

Table 6: Selection of comments supporting a Social Care Precept increase

Importance of social care

“I think council services and social care are extremely important to everybody in Bristol’s quality of life, and I think it’s right and important that we all contribute to them.”

“I am happy to contribute the 5% more to social care for the moral and long-term economic benefits.”

“The alternative would be cutting vital services. Social Care and Education services must be protected otherwise we will end up spending more later down the line.” **Social care crisis**

“I selected more on social care precept because I know it’s chronically underfunded across the country and hit by national policy (or absence of reform).”

“I do think that the social care system is failing to meet its mandate and so am willing to pay a little more to help it achieve that.”

“Before any increase in Council Tax is implemented the council should seek to streamline and optimise all their departments and responsibilities, and ensure that they are honestly offering every bit of value for money to the tax paying public that they can be. Social care is an exception for me, as I don’t expect it likely for Bristol City Council to actually run more efficiently (despite being declared bankrupt) so an increase in that is essential in order to ensure that the already struggling care for vulnerable adults isn’t even more compromised.”

Personal or family reliance on social care

“Social care by Bristol City Council has been a life saver (literally) for the person I care for. My common sense and aim to be a decent person means I must vote in favour of increases, even though I am on a limited budget.”

“We are getting older and will probably need to use more of these services in the not-too-distant future, so we are happy to pay a significant amount more now, when we can afford it, in order to keep the systems going.”

5.3.3 Comments opposing a Social Care Precept increase

262 (8%) comments explained a respondent’s opposition to a Social Care Precept increase. These comments related to:

- **Oppose funding model** ○ Suggestions that the national government needs to increase funding for social care, rather than an increase in local taxation ○ Suggestions it is not fair, nor the responsibility, for individuals to pay for others’ social care costs
- **Concerns about how social care operates** ○ Perceptions of the lack of effectiveness of social care, or dissatisfaction with how social care is managed

- Concerns relating to increases going to private care providers and not enough support given to the people who need care
- Suggestions that social care should receive less money overall
- **Personal financial circumstances** ○ Financial strain on individuals and families due to the cost of living crisis and high outgoings, with any tax increases disproportionately impacting those who are already struggling
- **Comments expressing opposition to increases in general** ○ Comments opposing increases due to a negative view of the council, how it manages money, or the level of service provided to Bristol residents

Table 7: Selection of comments opposing a Social Care Precept increase

Oppose funding model

“Social care should be funded by government, not local councils, so I could not bring myself to vote for an increase in me personally having to finance this.”

“We spend enough on the elderly and they take up the majority of NHS funding. They should pay for the care they need themselves not increase the tax burden on the general population.”

“I don't think social care should be the council's responsibility, so in principle I cannot support increasing the social care precept (I recognise there are statutory obligations).”

“Social Care wise - another element that is completely unfair as a lot of people in the city do not even use these services yet everyone has to pay for them. I do not want to pay more for adult social care services, our generation is getting rinsed plenty already.”

Concerns about how social care operates

“I choose to keep the social care precept lower. Negative in my experience no help or funding is offered to people in need anyway, therefore this money effectively acts at profit for care home companies rather than supporting people.”

“I know from bitter experience that the actual time given to people living in their own homes is nowhere near what is charged by the companies to whom that care is outsourced. I am not prepared to subsidise a system that supports profit making of that type when the time that is needed is not given. My mum had to pay a large proportion of her care for 4 visits per day supposedly amounting to 2.5 hours a day. She was lucky to receive 40 minutes per day. Carers have insane rotas that leave them rushing from one client to another and rarely having time to provide the essential services that are required. It's a state supported scandal. If people in need of care actually got the care they required and were charged for, I'd feel differently.”

“Stop putting so much money into adult social care.”

5.3.4 Comments suggesting a change to how the Social Care Precept is charged

73 (2%) comments suggested there should be a change to how the Social Care Precept is charged including suggestions for other funding models. These comments related to:

- **National government funding** ○ Social care funding needs reform and the national government needs to either increase funding or fund it entirely
 - Calls for the council to lobby the national government to fund social care, rather than relying on local taxation
 - Social care services should be integrated within the NHS and funded nationally
- **Service user charges** ○ Suggestions that social care service users, particularly the elderly, should contribute to the costs of their care through their personal savings, pensions (or the pension industry), or through the financial support of their family members
- **Reallocating funding** ○ Social care should receive more funding through savings made to council efficiency, and the reallocation of funding from other services locally, including using Clean Air Zone charges and defunding the police to fund social care
- **Integration with Council Tax** ○ Suggestions that Council Tax and Social Care Precept should be combined

Table 8: Selection of comments suggesting a change to how the Social Care Precept is charged

National Government funding

“Campaign for social care to be an issue that is funded by Central taxes. It's so dumb it's not. Otherwise a reasonably small proportion of the population of an area get a hugely disproportionate wedge of the budget and then actual local issues can't be addressed. Social care is a national issue, particularly home care and basic care needs. So why isn't it dealt with at a national level so councils don't have to keep absorbing spiralling costs of an aging population....?!”

“Social care should be funded by government, not local councils.”

“The social care precept needs removing entirely (0%) and much more funding made available from Central Government in recognition of the growing problem faced in social care.”

Service user charges

“There is a high cost to an ageing population. I feel that service users should pay more for their care and support, this should be the expectation. With the most recent budget, care homes will be under a lot of pressure to cut costs which will likely adversely affect residents. This shortfall should be supported by those residents who are able to contribute more.”

“Ensure that when accessing adult social care that immediate and extended family members are also reviewed to see if they can support their relatives as opposed to the taxpayer.”

Reallocating funding

“Use clear air zone funding to pay towards social care.”

“Review existing services and fund allocation redistribute to social care away from unnecessary spending.”

“Less funding for the police and use that for preventative social care instead.” **Integration with Council Tax**

“Why make the tax system more confusing a social care precept is just a figment of your imagination. Just call it Council Tax (a poor system anyway) and say what you need to raise it by. You will confuse people that are not financially clued up.”

“Why do we have two taxes that are for the same pot? Let's just simplify into a single Council Tax.”

5.3.5 Other comments on the Social Care Precept

There were 17 (0.5%) other comments about the Social Care Precept:

- 10 comments **seeking assurances** that money from the Social Care Precept will be ringfenced and used to fund social care, including calls for transparency and explanations of how the money will be spent
- 7 comments **detailing a lack of understanding of the Social Care Precept**, or calls for it to be better explained to residents

6 Suggestions for how the council can increase income and save money

6.1 Overview

This chapter describes respondents' free text comments and suggestions about ways in which the council can save money and increase income.

6.2 Suggestions for how the council can increase income

6.2.1 Summary

Of the 3,485 respondents who left free text comments, 628 (18%) left comments suggesting ways the council could increase income:

- 156 (4%) of comments suggested that the government should increase funding for local councils and services and that the council should lobby for this
- 124 (4%) of comments provided suggestions for ways of generating income through transport related fees, fines, or charges
- 32 (1%) of comments gave suggestions of ways to generate income through council houses, including rent increases, capital sales or investing in housing developments to generate income
- 26 (1%) of comments gave suggestions for ways of generating income from waste, refuse and recycling fees, fines and charges
- 41 (1%) of comments suggested ways of using Business Rates and other business taxes to increase council income
- 67 (2%) of comments suggested selling or using council assets for income
- 102 (3%) of comments were about increasing income through recovering debts
- 22 (1%) respondents recommended that the council develops investment strategies to create a long-term funding stream to support revenue budgets
- 45 (1%) of comments gave suggestions for other types of fees, fines and charges that could be used to generate income
- 19 (1%) of comments suggested raising other taxes
- 77 (2%) other suggestions for ways to generate income

6.2.2 National government funding

156 (4%) comments suggested that national government should increase funding for local councils and services, and that the council should lobby for this. Comments included the following:

- **National government responsibility:** There was a prevailing sentiment that national government should be responsible for funding local government rather than residents. Responses included reasons such as national government being responsible for funding shortfalls for local authorities over the long-term and that it should restore adequate funding to local councils to deliver essential services and reverse austerity measures

- **Council should lobby for more funding:** There were several comments saying that the council should actively lobby national government for more funding

6.2.3 Transport taxes, charges, and fines

124 (4%) comments provided suggestions for ways of generating income through transport related fees, fines, or charges. These were:

- Increase parking charges
- Making sure parking fines are collected
- Employ more traffic wardens/extend working hours
- Expand the Clean Air Zone
- Increase the Clean Air Zone charge
- Fine dangerous drivers
- Increase taxes/permit costs for second cars
- Levy on bikes and on electric bike/electric scooter users
- Charge emissions taxes for companies that drive large HGVs into the city
- Extend Resident's Parking Schemes (RPS)
- Create more council-owned car parks
- Introduce a charge for business car parking

In addition, there were 46 (1%) comments criticising the existing transport related fees, fines, or charges, including the Clean Air Zone fines, parking charges and resident's parking permits.

6.2.4 Housing

32 (1%) comments gave suggestions of ways to generate income through council houses, including rent increases, capital sales or investing in housing developments to generate income. These were:

- Sell housing in expensive areas or that costs a lot to maintain
- Prioritise non-student housing to increase number of properties paying Council Tax
- Build more council housing to generate more income
- Build more affordable housing
- Increase council housing rents
- Collect overdue council housing rent and provide practical advice to prevent people from going into arrears
- Reduce the number of voids

6.2.5 Waste, refuse and recycling fees, fines, and charges

26 (1%) comments gave suggestions for ways of generating income from waste, refuse and recycling fees, fines and charges. These were:

- Charge a waste levy for heavy users of waste services
- Bring waste services back in-house
- Increase fines for people who litter and fly tip
- Charge businesses that cause pollution and litter
- Deliver commercial waste collection services for businesses
- Fines for dog fouling
- Fines for graffiti
- Fine people for not recycling/not separating their recycling correctly
- Reduce black bin collection
- Charge students/universities for their bin collection
- Increase the bulky waste collection charge
- Charge for the using the Reuse and Recycling Centre
- Charge households based on the amount of waste they need collecting
- Sell leaves that are swept from roads as leaf mulch

6.2.6 Business rates and taxes

41 (1%) comments suggested ways of using Business Rates and other business taxes to increase council income. These were:

- Increase business rates
- Reduce or rethink business rates to encourage a greater number of businesses to start up in Bristol, increasing the overall business rate income
- Tax large companies and institutions more
- Introduce a landlord tax for HMOs
- Additional tax for gambling premises

6.2.7 Sale or use of council assets

67 (2%) comments suggested selling or using council assets for income. These were:

- Sell or lease out unused or underused land and buildings
- Sell or lease out City Hall
- Sell the council's art collection
- Sell the museum collections

6.2.8 Recover debts

102 (3%) comments were about increasing income through recovering debts. These were:

- Recover unpaid Council Tax debts
- Collect unpaid Clean Air Zone charges and other fines
- Ensure all invoices are paid
- Collect unpaid council rents

6.2.9 Events, arts, festivals, and tourism

39 (1%) comments suggested raising income through events, arts festivals and tourism. These were:

- Introduce a tourist tax
- Increase charges for events and festivals
- Rent out council properties and land for events
- Monetise cultural assets
- Hold festivals
- Introduce a levy on ticket prices for Bristol Beacon

6.2.10 Investment income

22 (1%) respondents recommended that the council develops investment strategies to create a long-term funding stream to support revenue budgets. These were:

- Invest in infrastructure, housing, and transport to promote growth in the economy and attract new businesses into the city
- Crowdfund private investment for infrastructure projects
- Make investments that generate passive income
- Own and run more services
- Buy shares in companies and services

6.2.11 Other fees, fines, and charges

45 (1%) comments gave suggestions for other types of fees, fines and charges that could be used to generate income. These were:

- Increase charges for planning permission
- Create a fast-track version of planning permission for an additional charge
- Charge vehicle dwellers a fee
- Charge dog owners a licence fee
- Fine people for anti-social behaviour

- Fine organisations/businesses for breaching planning conditions/operating without premises licences
- Increase fees for advertising spaces
- Provide paid services, such as hedge trimming, grass cutting, gas and electricity safety checks
- Charge housing developers, or have them give the council a percentage of the houses built
- Increase fees for services such as allotments and boat docking
- Build more nursing homes and nurseries and charge for the services
- Charge for missed GP appointments
- Build public toilets and charge for them
- Start charging for more non-essential services
- Increase charges for filming licences
- Charge for library services, e.g. supplying books to book clubs
- Charge businesses that run on council land, e.g. businesses that use parks

6.2.12 Other taxes

19 (1%) comments suggested raising other taxes. These were:

- Land tax
- Tourist tax
- Tax unoccupied properties and second homes
- Tax Airbnb accommodation
- Tax short-term rentals
- Introduce a wealth tax
- Introduce a student levy

6.2.13 Other income ideas

There were 77 (2%) other suggestions for ways to generate income. These were:

- Introduce a Bristol City lottery
- Students, student landlords and universities could contribute more financially to the city
- Remove single-person discount for larger homes
- Create more advertising spaces
- Charge housing developers more
- Seek sponsorship from philanthropists

Table 9: Selection of comments about ways to increase income**National Government Funding**

“Refuse to make cuts or increase council tax and tell the government we need more money for councils now. The people of Bristol will support you.”

Transport

“Introduce extra charges on polluting vehicles. Enforce bad and pavement parking and use the fines to help the budget.”

Waste

“Please raise much more money from fines levied of people who drop litter, people who undertake fly tipping & businesses that cause pollution or littering”

Taxes

“Start putting a local tax on air bnb premises. If individuals who rent out their properties(s) for income then an additional tax should be paid as this blocks people trying to get into the property market”

6.3 Suggestions for how the council can save money**6.3.1 Summary**

Of the 3,485 respondents who left free text comments, 1,449 (42%) left comments relating to how the council could save money:

- 629 (18%) comments said that the council needed to improve its efficiency and reduce waste internally
- 163 (5%) comments said that the efficiency can be improved through scrutinising external contracts and services
- 17 (0.5%) comments suggested using digital technology, including AI, to automate services and increase efficiency
- 340 (10%) respondents said that Bristol City Council needs to reduce the cost of internal staff and councillors
- 14 (0.4%) respondents suggested cost savings related to council buildings
- 392 (11%) of respondents left comments suggesting Bristol City Council should stop specific activities or activities in general
- 103 (3%) comments were suggestions of how to save money through benefits
- 56 (2%) respondents suggested other ways the council could save money and left other comments on savings

6.3.2 Improving efficiency

629 (18%) comments said that the council needed to improve its efficiency and reduce waste internally. These addressed the following themes:

- **Stronger financial discipline** ○ Review finances and implement better financial management practices ○ Spend money more effectively, focusing on value for money and cost-efficient services
 - Improve transparency and accountability in spending ○ Negative sentiment regarding overspend of taxpayer money, particularly on large capital projects such as Bristol Energy and Bristol Beacon
 - The council should manage their finances like a household and only spend what they receive in income
 - Achieve value for money
- **Cut non-essential spending and activities** ○ Focus resources on essential and statutory services only ○ Targeted spending cuts are required ○ Eliminate unnecessary departments and activities to save costs ○ Desire to cut 'waste' within the council
- **Improve operational efficiency** ○ Reduce bureaucracy ○ Learn from private sector efficiency and productivity practices ○ Reduce administrative costs ○ Merge departments to save money ○ Streamline processes to cut waste and optimise departments ○ Conduct a root-and-cause review of council spending and departmental efficiency
- **Better management and accountability** ○ Address incompetence and poor management practices ○ Eliminate unnecessary management positions and duplicate roles ○ Stronger budgeting and risk management processes ○ Foster a "right-first-time" approach to reduce mistakes ○ Improve oversight of teams and decision-making to prevent bad choices ○ Provide clear and accessible information about spending and decision-making processes
 - Pivoting council staff benefits to align with the private sector ○ Reducing remote work and encouraging on-site productivity

External contracts and services

163 (5%) respondents said that the efficiency can be improved through scrutinising external contracts and services. These comments related to:

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- **Consultants** ○ Reduce reliance on consultants and develop expertise in-house to reduce costs ○ Freeze all consultancy contracts or renegotiate consultancy contracts in more favourable terms for the council
- **Procurement**
 - Cut spending on procurements both in general, and specifically for phone, printing, and stationary services, including scrutinising value-for-money of approved suppliers
 - Procurement consortium to make savings through cooperation with other public bodies
- **Contractors** ○ The need to scrutinise the value-for-money for council contracts in general and specifically for tasks like repair work
 - Stop using agency staff to do council jobs, as this is more expensive than hiring inhouse
- **Services** ○ Externally provided services means taxpayers money is going to private company profits and dividends, these services need to be brought back in-house for lower costs and better delivery
 - Insert penalty clauses or clawback provisions in contracts for failure to deliver services on time or to standard
 - Better regulation and oversight of external service providers

Digital solutions

17 (0.5%) comments suggested using digital technology, including AI, to automate services and increase efficiency.

6.3.3 Reducing council staff costs

340 (10%) respondents said that Bristol City Council needs to reduce the cost of internal staff and councillors. These comments related to:

- **Management**
 - Suggestions the council is top-heavy with management and the number of senior management and executive positions should be reduced and wages decreased
 - Cut middle management, or restructuring management away from a hierarchical approach, leading to wage savings and increased efficiency in operation
- **Councillors** ○ Reducing or removing councillor pay and allowances, or reducing the overall number of councillors
- **General** ○ Suggestions to reduce staff costs, either by decreasing the amount of council staff or reducing wages in general
 - Cut down on 'non-jobs' and stop hiring for positions which do not deliver front-line work

- Reducing staff benefits such as free parking, sick leave, redundancy pay, bonuses, and pension scheme

6.3.4 Reducing council building costs

14 (0.4%) respondents suggested cost savings related to council buildings:

- **Energy efficiency** through new contracts with energy providers, turning off lights and heating, or the installation of solar panels and LED lights in council-owned buildings including City Hall
- **Home-based working** or moving to and working from cheaper premises and locations
- **Decorative elements** such as turning off City Hall's fountains and not installing flower displays

6.3.5 Stop activities

392 (11%) of respondents left comments suggesting Bristol City Council should stop specific activities or activities in general. Specifically, these comments related to the following areas, activities, or projects:

Transport/Streets

236 (7%) comments were suggestions on stopping and reducing activities on transport, streets, and travel, including the following:

- **Stop transport schemes and activities, such as:**
 - Liveable Neighbourhoods/Low Traffic Neighbourhoods
 - Bus lanes and bus gates
 - Bike lanes
 - Traffic calming
 - Pedestrianisation
 - Clean Air Zones
 - 20mph roads
 - One-way systems
 - Reduce street lighting
 - Stop resurfacing roads and pavements that do not need it
 - Reduce the number of planters on streets
 - Reduce the number of bike sheds in areas where homes can store bicycles
 - Reduce the number of free bus journeys given
 - Reduce amount of unnecessary signage
 - Reduce the amount of street trees planted
- **Other suggestions of ways to save money on transport, streets and travel:**
 - Stop doing short-term quick fixes on repairs to pavements and potholes and do long-term repairs instead
 - Stop contractors from taking excessive amounts of time to complete roadworks
 - Improve public transport and cycle lanes to reduce the number of cars and therefore reduce wear and tear and repairs of the roads

Housing

101 (3%) comments were suggestions on stopping or reducing housing activities, including the following:

- Stop funding accommodation for illegal immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers
- Stop doing short-term fixes on council housing and instead carry out long-term repairs
- Review social housing grants
- Review who receives council housing to ensure they meet the criteria
- Reduce money spent on temporary accommodation
- Fine developers for delays in delivering council-owned developments
- Use empty houses for housing homeless people rather than costly hotels
- Invest in social housing to reduce the need to provide hotels or temporary housing

Waste

66 (2%) comments gave suggestions for how to save money on waste, refuse and recycling:

- Reduce the frequency of non-recyclable waste collection
- Reduce the frequency of recyclable waste collection
- Simplify recycling collection (e.g. reduce the number of boxes)
- Plan the waste collection routes better
- Make sure Bristol Waste are fulfilling their contract and carrying out waste collection and recycling correctly
- Reduce the costs of the waste collection contract
- Have volunteers carry out street cleaning

'Vanity projects'

65 (2%) commented that the council has wasted or should not waste any more money on perceived vanity projects.

Bristol Beacon

62 (2%) comments said that the Bristol Beacon renovation should not have been funded or should not have been allowed to go over budget.

Social care

42 (1%) comments were suggestions that social care costs should be reduced either in general or through the reduction in use of private providers or scrutinising contracts.

Equality and diversity initiatives

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38 (2%) comments suggested reducing spending on DEI initiatives, including reducing or removing DEI jobs, unisex toilets, rainbow crossings and flags, language translations, and not supporting initiatives relating to race or gender.

Bristol Energy

34 (1%) comments said that Bristol Energy is an example of waste that should never have happened, and similar projects should be avoided in future.

Arena

25 (1%) comments stated that funding and feasibilities for the Bristol Arena is an example of waste that should have never happened, and similar projects should be avoided in future.

Climate goals/green schemes

16 (0.5%) comments said that the council should stop spending money on goals related to net-zero, green schemes, carbon reduction and eco initiatives.

Regeneration

16 (0.5%) comments stated that the council has wasted and should stop spending money on changing the city, including changes to the city centre, the fountains, Cumberland basin, and Temple Meads renovation.

Travel/council events

12 (0.3%) comments suggested limiting or stopping international trips for mayors, councillors, or council staff, and reducing catering for internal or external council events.

Arts

6 (0.2%) comments suggested that funding for the arts should be reduced or stopped, including funding for Watershed and Arnolfini, general art grant funding, and the reduction of free tickets to events.

Education

7 (0.2%) comments were suggestions to cut or reduce spending on education including SEND, encouraging schools to turn their lights off, stop providing free school meals, and stop spending on new playgrounds.

Voluntary/community organisation funding

5 (0.1%) comments suggested stopping or reducing funding to charitable and volunteering organisations, including suggestions that citizens should have a say in which charities are funding through the council.

Home to School Transport

7 (0.1%) of comments were suggestions to reduce the use of taxis to send children to school.

Libraries

5 (0.1%) comments suggested that the number of libraries should be reduced depending on demand, and that libraries could cut down on electricity costs by switching off lights.

Parks and green spaces

5 (0.1%) comments said that parks should close, or be left to rewild, saving costs on maintenance, or suggestions cut back spending on new children's play area equipment.

Planning

4 (0.1%) comments suggested reducing spend on planning and development decisions, streamline processes and reduce the spend on legal fees.

Public events

3 (0.1%) comments suggested reducing spending and support for public events and carnivals in Bristol.

Wealthy people

3 comments (0.1%) suggested reducing service provision for wealthy areas or residents.

Political concerns

2 (0.1%) comments said that political concerns should not be funded by the council.

6.3.6 Benefits

103 (3%) comments were suggestions of how to save money through benefits. These were:

- Reduce or stop benefit payments
- Charge people who receive benefits Council Tax
- Make people currently receiving benefits do work to improve city, e.g. maintaining green spaces, supporting social care, cleaning public spaces
- Reduce benefit fraud and review those who currently receive benefits to make sure they are genuinely eligible

- Pay housing benefit for supported accommodation directly to the providers
- Get people who are currently on benefits into work

6.3.7 Other ways to save money

56 (2%) respondents suggested other ways the council could save money and left other comments on savings. These comments related to:

- **Cross-council partnerships** ○ Suggestions that Bristol City Council should partner with other councils, including WECA, to pool resource to deliver services
- **Volunteering and community schemes** ○ The council could save money by increasing volunteering opportunities in operations and services, including general volunteering schemes for the public, the unemployed, prisoners, the homeless, or school children, and specific suggestions such as park wardens and gardening, social workers, pre-school childcare staff, museums and libraries, caretakers, painting and repair work, and cleaning and litter picking
 - Engaging with community leaders and communities to build a sense of shared society around issues such as littering and fly tipping, leading to a cleaner Bristol and less costs in clean up
- **Other savings suggestions** ○ Removing van dwellers to reduce demand on services ○ Not allowing so many student accommodation buildings every year, as increasing student population increases demand on services
 - Cracking down on graffiti so there is less clean up spend
 - Investing to create a longer-term saving (e.g. public health programmes to reduce health service costs in the future)
 - Not investing in war and munitions
- **Other comments on savings** ○ Respondents said that as they did not have access to council accounts, they could not come up with savings suggestions and it should be the council's job not for citizens to come up with savings
 - The way current departmental savings targets work is unfair

Table 10: Selection of comments about ways to save money

Improving efficiency

“Council needs to make internal cost savings via increased efficiency. Act like a business has too.”

“How much is the council spending on consultants each year? Are council receiving good value for money or are you better off trying to attract more talent internally?”

Reducing Staff Costs

“Conduct a council wide review to reduce the number of manager posts and adopt a more 'First Amongst Equals' flatter structure for leading on team work. There are hundreds of such posts producing reports and other bureaucratic work output which does not directly help the citizens of Bristol especially those most in need.”

“Stop paying too many high salaries. Is the model correct for how many senior roles there are? Do a zero-based review on the current council set up. Like the Civil Service, I suspect there are a lot of staff doing work that actually doesn't add value but it gets done because 'we've always done this'.” **Stopping activities**

“The council could stop wasting money on vanity projects, i.e. Colston Hall redevelopment, and instead spend money doing things that are actually important.” **Other ways to save money**

“Bristol City Council should partner up with other council and pool resources especially for niche service or specialism service.”

“More volunteering? Maybe not sustainable but more parks volunteers and street cleaners etc. or social enterprise post prison/employing young people in their first jobs.”

6.4 Comments about protecting and improving council services

6.4.1 Overview

687 (20%) respondents suggested services that should not be reduced or could be improved. These are described below under six themes: general comments about council services; waste; transport; housing; social care; and schools, youth services and safeguarding.

6.4.2 Public services in general

There were 299 (9%) comments on public services in general, including the following:

- Protect public services from reductions and the acknowledgment that they need paying for, with cuts to services seen as costing more in the long run

- Public services in Bristol are bad, unreliable, getting worse and need improvement
- Prioritise and fund essential services, including libraries, museums and parks, over nonessential activities
- The importance of public services and the wish to see them maintained or provided particularly for the less well off or the vulnerable

6.4.3 Waste

There were 251 (7%) comments on waste services, including the following:

- Waste collection is an essential service that needs prioritising, protecting, and improving
- Opposition to reducing bin collection frequency
- Complaints about how Bristol Waste operates
- Bin collections are unreliable, leave rubbish spread in the streets, and bins and boxes broken
- Bristol feels like a dirty city with rubbish and fly tipping everywhere
- Street cleaning needs improvement
- Usage of the Reuse and Recycling Centres should be simplified, and users should not have to book slots

6.4.4 Transport

196 (6%) respondents provided suggestions for improvements to transport, streets and travel. These were:

- Pavements, footpaths and roads need to be better maintained
- The road networks need to be improved and better designed
- Pothole repair needs improvement
- Signage and road markings needs to be better maintained
- Hedgerows and verges need to be better maintained
- The bus and train services need to be improved
- Bus prices need to be maintained or made cheaper to encourage usage of public transport
- Street lighting needs to be improved
- Better management of on-street parking and residential parking is needed
- Free car parking should be provided at parks
- The city centre needs to be accessible to encourage visitors and retail customers
- Drainage needs to be improved and cleared to prevent flooding of the streets
- Roadworks need to be carried out more quickly, effectively and to clean up after themselves

6.4.5 Housing

67 (2%) respondents provided criticisms and suggestions for housing. They included the following:

- Criticism of levels of student accommodation allowed to be built in Bristol
- Criticism of levels of private landlord rent prices and suggestions the council needs to take action to control prices
- Criticism of planning application waiting times and complexity of planning system
- Suggestions the council needs to take action to increase levels of affordable housing in Bristol
- Suggestions that extra housing, including city centre flats, needs to be accompanied by other services, including schools, doctors and dentists
- Stricter approval processes and checks for HMO, with enforcement for those in breach
- Suggestions the council should remove van dwellers from locations or should set up dedicated locations for van dwellers
- Convert unused or derelict properties into liveable properties
- Money should be directed to housing the homeless

6.4.6 Social Care

58 (2%) of comments provided suggestions for social care. These include the following:

- Social care workers should be properly paid, with a minimum of the Real Living Wage
- Perception that privatisation has been damaging to social care, increasing costs and reducing the quality of the care provided
- A review of people who currently receive social care should be carried out to ensure that they genuinely require it
- The council should invest more in facilities such as care homes and units for in-authority placements that it runs in-house rather than relying on private companies
- Families should pick up more social care responsibilities
- Council should carry out public health campaigns to help older people learn about diet and exercise, which could help reduce the need for social care
- Allocate more funding to occupational therapy to help improve independence and reduce reliance on care services
- Need to ensure that money is making it to care workers and for service provision rather than management, contractors etc.
- Need to invest in retaining people in important care roles
- Provide more home visits
- Create more effective communication channels with the NHS to prevent miscommunication, loss of information, delays and people receiving the wrong service
- Provide funding to voluntary organisations to provide services

Produced by Consultation and Engagement team

6.4.7 Schools, youth services and safeguarding

36 (1%) comments were about schools, youth services and safeguarding, including the following:

- Funding schools and education generally is a priority, including SEND funding specifically and the provision of free school meals
- Local youth services and recreational centres should not be cut and require more funding

6.5 Other comments and suggestions

159 (5%) provided other comments, including the following:

- Comments and criticisms about anti-social behaviour and policing, including that there should be less funding of the police, that the police do not function effectively at preventing crime and that there has been a noticeable increase in anti-social behaviour and crime
- General criticism of the council, including that it has been mismanaged, that it cannot deliver services and that it wastes money

6.6 Comments about the consultation survey

There were 153 (4%) comments about the consultation process, publicity, level of information, informed choices, and consultation and engagement in general. Comments covered the following issues:

- **Positive comments** about the level of information provided and transparency in involving citizens in helping to shape the budget
- **Insufficient information**, request for more information to be provided in the survey, including:
 - Information about other precepts (fire service, police) to be included, to compare to cost of Social Care Precept
 - More detailed breakdowns of the council's budgets

7 Impact of the proposals because of protected characteristics

7.1 Scale of effects for each protected characteristic

Respondents were asked what effect, if any, the proposals would have on them because of their protected characteristics. Respondents were asked to state the scale of any effect very negative, slightly negative, no effect, slightly positive, or very positive - for each of the nine protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010²⁶. Of the 6,861 respondents to the survey, 6,476 (94%) answered the question for one or more protected characteristics.

Figure 19 shows the scale of effects reported by respondents.

Figure 19: Effects of the proposals because of respondents' protected characteristics

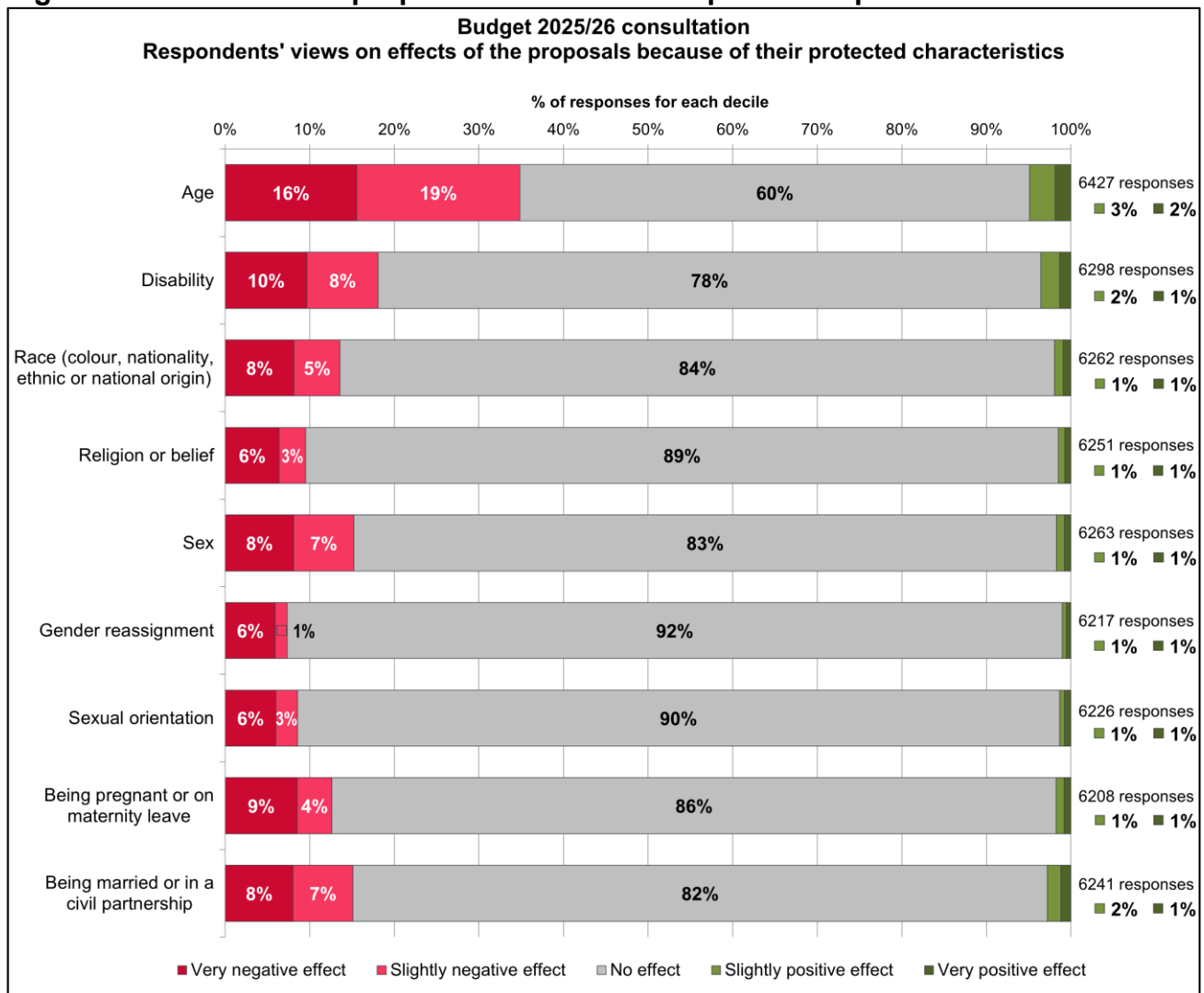


Figure 19 shows that more respondents anticipate negative effects (very or slightly negative) than positive effects (very or slightly positive) for all nine protected characteristics.

²⁶ The protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 are age; Disability; race including colour; nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sex; gender reassignment; sexual orientation; being married or in a civil partnership; being pregnant or on maternity leave.

The scale of **negative effects** varies widely for different protected characteristics:

- The characteristics for which the highest percentage of respondents anticipate the proposals will have a negative effect are age (35%), Disability (18%), sex (15%) and being married or in a civil partnership (15%)
- The characteristics for which the lowest percentage of respondents expect a negative effect are gender reassignment (7%), sexual orientation (9%), region or belief (10%) and being pregnant or on maternity leave (13%)
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin) is mid-ranking, with 14% of respondents anticipating the proposals will have negative effects because of their race

The scale of **positive effects** also varies for different protected characteristics:

- The characteristics for which the highest percentage of respondents anticipate the proposals will have a positive effect are age (5%), Disability (4%), being married or in a civil partnership (3%) and race (2%)
- The characteristics for which the lowest percentage of respondents expect a positive effect are gender reassignment (1%), sexual orientation (1%), region or belief (2%) and sex (2%)
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave is the mid-ranking characteristics with 2% respondents anticipating the proposals will have negative effects because of this characteristic

Because different characteristics affect different numbers of people in the population, it is helpful to compare the percentages who anticipate positive effects versus negative effects, excluding those who anticipate no effect. For each characteristic, the ratio of the percentage of respondents who expect negative effects compared to percentage who expect positive effects is as follows.

- Sex - ratio of negative : positive is 9 - i.e. 9 times as many respondents anticipate negative effects (15.2%) compared to positive effects (1.7%)
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave: ratio of negative : positive is 7 - i.e. 7 times as many respondents expect negative effects (12.6%) compared to positive effects (1.8%)
- Age - ratio of negative : positive is 7
- Gender reassignment - ratio of negative : positive is 7
- Race - ratio of negative : positive is 7
- Religion or belief - ratio of negative : positive is 6
- Sexual orientation - ratio of negative : positive is 6
- Being married or in a civil partnership - ratio of negative : positive is 5
- Disability - ratio of negative : positive is 5

7.2 Reasons why the proposals would affect people because of protected characteristics

7.2.1 Overview

1,021 (15% of the total) respondents provided free text comments explaining how the proposals would affect them because of their protected characteristics. These address the following themes:

- Financial impacts
- Impacts of changes to social care funding and cuts to services
- Other negative impacts
- Other comments

7.2.2 Negative financial impact of proposals due to protected characteristics

678 (66%) of comments were about how the proposals would have a negative financial impact on them due to their protected characteristics. These are reported in more detail in the sections below.

Financial Impact on Older People

149 (14%) respondents mentioned concerns about negative financial impacts on older people. These concerns are summarised below:

- For many people receiving a pension on a fixed income, pension increases have not risen in line with the cost of living so any increase in outgoings may result in older people less able to balance their budgets
- Respondents report a significant decrease in their quality of life, often making sacrifices such as heating and meals to manage other financial aspects of their lives due to the increase in the cost of living
- There are concerns about ageism faced by older people when looking for, or remaining in, employment. This may result in fewer opportunities to supplement their income
- The gender pay gap discriminates against older women with a lower pension and savings and often older women are in a single person household leaving them at a financial disadvantage
- Criticism is directed at the removal of the winter fuel allowance as many respondents will struggle financially to make up the shortfall.

Financial Impact on Younger People

91 (9%) respondents to the questions stated their concerns about disproportionate financial impacts on younger people. These concerns are summarised below:

- Young people face a cost-of-living crisis with many facing low-income prospects at the start of their careers, any rise in Council Tax would increase their financial burden
- Many younger people mention that the high cost of the private rental market already takes up a disproportionate amount of their income

- Respondents report concern for their future prospects stating that savings and homeownership are out of reach with suggestions of delaying starting a family or leaving Bristol due to financial circumstances
- Criticisms are directed to the perceived disproportionate burden of care that younger people face with increased financial contributions where younger people view older people as an asset rich, wealthier generation

Financial Impact on other age groups

12 (1%) respondents stated concerns about impacts on other age groups. The concerns are summarised as:

- Respondents that do not fall into younger people or older people feel they make a significant financial contribution whilst making limited use of the services provided by the council
- The cost of living and unaffordable increase has had a significant impact on plans to have children and homeownership

Financial impact on Disabled people

100 (10%) respondents to the question stated their concerns about disproportionate impacts on Disabled people:

- Concerns raised around the higher cost of living and lower income associated with being Disabled. The Disability pay gap leaves Disabled people more vulnerable to changes in finances
- Criticism directed at the Disability pay gap, and that many individuals are on a fixed income and rely on financial support, and increasingly a greater proportion of that income is unaffordable
- Concerns about difficulties with being on a fixed income, or accessing financial support, and the impact this may have if more would have to be directed towards Council Tax.
- Concerns raised around potential reductions in social care services, which many Disabled individuals either currently need or may require in the future.
- Concerns that the proposed increases in Council Tax will have a significant impact on their mental and/or physical health, adding to the burden Disabled people may already face
- Calls for more support for Disabled people. There are also concerns that many individuals who do not qualify for government financial support but are Disabled are self-financing care/on a fixed income. These individuals will be disproportionately impacted by increased taxes

Financial impact on people due to their race/ethnicity

25 (2%) respondents to the question mentioned concerns about the impacts of the cuts having a disproportionate impact due to race.

- Concerns about the cost of living and low wages with the rise in Council Tax being a higher percentage of their earnings
- Concerns about the race pay gap between Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents and white residents, and the affordability of the Council Tax increases having a disproportionate effect
- Concerns raised by single parent households on how they are more vulnerable to any changes in Council Tax
- Concerns about the structural discrimination faced as by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and any general rise in the cost of living having a disproportionate effect
- Criticism directed at the lack of access to public funds based on race, the impact on single parent households and low wages not being sufficient to fund a rise in Council Tax

Financial impact on single people

98 (9%) respondents to the question raised their concerns about the impact on single people.

- Respondents said they face an unfair financial burden where the cost of living has increased, they live in a single income household facing a higher cost of living than dual income households
- Criticisms directed that the Council Tax discount for single adult households is disproportionate, and the discount rate should be increased
- Concerns raised that Council Tax discount penalises single adult households:
 - Single person households are more likely to be women and single mothers on lower incomes due to the gender pay gap
 - Older women are more likely to be widowed and on a fixed income leaving them vulnerable to any increases in tax

Financial impact on people due to their sex

55 (5%) respondents to the question raised concerns about the disproportionate effect of the Council Tax rise due to their sex. The concerns are summarised below:

- Concerns about the pay gap between men and women that leave women less able to absorb any increase in the cost of living due to lower wages and wider sex-based discrimination faced
- Criticism directed at how the Council Tax increase affects single parent households (12/55 coded respondents) and the gender pay gap (17/55), which disproportionately affects women. Concerns raised by the higher burden of care that women face with childcare, spending more of their income, or giving up opportunities to care for children
- Challenges raised of being a single parent household as well as the single persons Council Tax discount having a disproportionate effect on women

- Concerns about structural sexism in society that discriminates against women, with lower wages leading to higher financial burden
- Criticism directed at how the Council Tax increase affects single parent households (12/55 coded respondents), the pay gap (17/55), which disproportionately effect women
- Calls for more support around childcare and single parent households

Financial impact on people due to their sexual orientation

7 (1%) respondents to the question raised concerns of the impacts due to their sexuality. The concerns are summarised below:

- LGBTQI+ people face discrimination in the workplace which can affect job security, income, and lack of opportunities
- LGBTQI+ people are more likely to live alone for safety and changes in Council Tax would have a disproportionate impact since they are single income households

Financial impact on maternity/pregnancy

45 (4%) respondents mentioned concerns about the impacts of the proposed changes on maternity and pregnancy. The concerns are summarised below:

- Concerns that statutory maternity leave places many on a low/fixed income compounding the strain of rising expenses
- Additional Council Tax rises would be particularly challenging for those on statutory maternity leave due to the fixed amount
- Statutory maternity leave results in a lower household income that may result in reduced resources for maternity costs and preparing for a family
- Concerns about low incomes among people on maternity/pregnancy and the rising cost of living which results in disproportionate financial burdens
- Criticism directed at the rate of statutory maternity leave and being on a fixed income that any rise in cost of living is more difficult to absorb

Financial impact on people due to socio-economic status

16 (2%) respondents reported concerns of the impacts due to their socio-economic status:

- Respondents had concerns that the cost-of-living crisis and a fixed low income leaves them vulnerable to tax increases
- Criticisms are directed at the disproportionate levels of tax those on low incomes compared to high income earners and that cuts to services have a greater impact in deprived areas

Financial impact on having children

58 (6%) respondents cited concerns about the impacts on having children. These are:

- Concerns that having children and starting a family is already unaffordable and any rise in taxes will have negative impacts on their budgets and lives

- Respondents mentioned the cost of childcare means they must choose between working or providing care to children, a high burden of childcare disproportionately affects women and single parent households
- Concerns about the cost of living and low wages and vulnerability to cost increases in general
- Challenges highlighted for specific groups, for example racially minoritised, Disabled people and women may already experience additional barriers to starting a family and increasing financial burden will have a disproportionate impact
- Criticisms directed at the general unaffordability of a family due to the impacts caused by the increase in cost of living, low wages and financial instability as a barrier to starting a family
- Calls for more support on childcare and also requests for Council Tax banding or Council Tax discounts/exemption for having children (those on maternity/young families)

Financial impact due to marriage

6 (1%) respondents mentioned concerns about the impacts of the proposed changes on marriage:

- Challenges highlighted the high cost of living and the results that financial strains can have on relationships
- Respondents mentioned the loss of single adult Council Tax discount when living as a dual adult household as having a negative financial impact

Financial impact on people due to their religion

3 (0.3%) respondents to the question raised concerns about impacts due to their religion:

- Religious commitments affect their ability to work and their earning potential

Financial Impact on students

3 (0.3%) respondents reported concerns about negative financial impacts on students.

- Concerns about the proposed changes being unaffordable for students on a fixed income and that employment opportunities are limited whilst in full-time education

Financial impact on carers

3 (0.3%) respondents mentioned concerns about the impacts on carers:

- Carers are often on a low or no income so any changes in finances leaves them more vulnerable to financial instability
- Criticisms directed at the lack of support for carers of Disabled children, the high cost of services Disabled people may need to access and concerns that current services for Disabled people are at risk due to cuts

Other concerns about financial Impact

174 (17%) respondents to the question mentioned concerns about negative general financial impacts. The concerns are summarised below:

- Concerns directed around the cost of living increasing at a higher level than income with less disposable income to manage everyday costs
- Concerns that Bristol City Council already charge a high rate of Council Tax compared to other councils in the UK, and the rate of proposed increase is too high, making it unaffordable.
- Concerns about the proposed changes having a detrimental effect on respondents' future such as homeownership or planning for a family
- Concerns directed around the high cost of the private rental sector in Bristol and any increase in outgoings could lead to difficulties in balancing household budgets
- Criticisms are directed at the balance of Bristol City Council's budget, high level of debt and increase not translating to an improvement in council run services

7.2.3 Impacts of changes to social care funding and cuts to services

71 (7%) of comments were about the impact that changes to social care funding and cuts to services would have on people due to protected characteristics. These comments are described further in the sections below.

Impact of changes to social care funding on Disabled People

16 (2%) respondents raised other impacts on Disability and social care funding. The impacts are summarised below:

- Respondents supported continued funding of services or would like to see an increase in adult social care funding as these are services Disabled people often rely on for carers, mobility and general quality of life
- Calls to protect funding for Adult Social Care to take care of the vulnerable, support mental health and to fund carers

Impact of changes to social care funding on people because of their sex

3 (0.3%) respondents mentioned other impacts on changes to social care funding because of their sex. The impacts are summarised below:

- Respondents mentioned that cuts to Adult Social Care have a disproportionate effect on women due to the burden of care mainly falling to women
- Calls for services for women to be improved, for example, services for domestic abuse survivors, childcare, female reproductive health, mental health, and equality at work

Impact of changes to social care funding on older people

13 (1%) respondents mentioned other impacts on changes to social care funding on older people. The impacts are summarised below:

- Respondents in this group call for an increase in spending on Adult Social Care as they see it as a service they could benefit from in the future
- People in this group are likely to receive some form of Adult Social Care and would like to see services maintained

Impact of changes to social care funding on people because of their race

1 (0.1%) respondent mentioned other impacts to social care funding due to their race.

- Respondent raised concerns that cuts often effect minority groups disproportionately

Impacts of cuts to services on Disabled people

10 (1%) respondents mentioned impacts of cuts to services on Disabled people. These were:

- Disabled people already face significant barriers to accessing services and raised concerns that any decrease in services would negatively impact their accessibility
- Calls for services for the mental health of Disabled people to be considered in any changes in service provision as any cuts would have a negative effect

Impacts of cuts to services on carers

1 (0.1%) respondent mentioned concerns about the impacts of cuts to services on carers.

- Calls for Adult Social Care budget to not be cut as any reduction in services could have a devastating impact on the physical and mental health of carers

Impacts of cuts to services to people because of their sex

2 (0.2%) respondents raised concerns about the impacts of cuts to services to people because of their sex.

- Respondents mentioned the inequality that women face and that any cuts to services would have a disproportionate impact

Impacts of cuts to services on older people

4 (0.4%) respondents stated their concerns about the impacts of cuts to services on older people.

- Criticism was raised that if the budget for Adult Social Care was cut that older people would suffer by no longer being able to access services they require for their health and quality of life

Impacts of cuts to services on younger people

2 (0.2%) respondents mentioned concerns about the impacts of cuts to services on younger people.

- Respondents mentioned that any cuts in services would have a negative impact on younger people

Impacts of cuts to services on LGBTQI+ people

3 (0.3%) respondents raised concerns about impacts of cuts to services on LGBTQI+ people.

- Criticisms raised that the budget does not do enough to protect the LGBTQI+ community

Impacts of cuts to services in general

19(2%) respondents mentioned concerns about impacts of cuts to services in general. These concerns are summarised below:

- Concerns raised that any cut in services would negatively impact on the services that the council offer and would increase barriers to access for vulnerable people
- Criticisms raised that cuts to services have impacted neighbourhood safety such as policing and streetlights
- Calls for refuse collection services to be improved

7.2.4 Other negative impacts

22 (2%) of comments were about other negative impacts due to protected characteristics. The impacts are summarised below:

Other negative impacts on people because of their race

5 (0.5%) respondents mentioned other negative impacts due to their race.

- Respondents mentioned the racial inequality and barriers that racial minoritized groups face in accessing services already leave them at a disadvantage

Other negative impacts due to marriage

1 (0.1%) respondent mentioned other negative impacts due to marriage

- The respondent raised a concern that Bristol City Council penalises residents who are in stable relationships

Other negative impacts on older people

11 (1%) respondents mentioned concerns about other negative impacts on older people.

- Concerns raised around issues of pedestrian safety and accessibility due to weather, refuse collection and cars parked on pavements
- Calls for more action on the regulation of e-bikes and scooters
- Criticisms were raised around the lack of support for older people

Other negative impacts on younger people

1 (0.1%) respondent raised concerns about other negative impacts on younger people

- Respondent mentioned that there is a lack of services for younger people and that services provided by the council are funding Adult Social Care rather than services that could benefit them

Other negative impact on Disabled people

8 (1%) respondents to the question mentioned concerns about other negative impacts on Disabled people.

- Disabled people report feeling left behind and neglected by the council. This is compounded with a feeling that services for Disabled people are difficult to access

Other negative impacts on vulnerable groups in general

1 (0.1%) respondent raised concerns about other negative impacts on vulnerable groups in general.

- One respondent felt that the proposed changes were punishing vulnerable people

Other negative impacts on pregnancy and maternity

1 (0.1%) respondent mentioned concerns around other negative impacts on pregnancy and maternity

- Respondent called for better services for pregnant people

7.2.5 Other comments

Comments that included Anti Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) or a specific protected characteristic

43 (4%) respondents raised comments about Anti DEI or a specific protected characteristic. These comments are summarised below:

- Respondents questioned the relevance of protected characteristics in a question about proposed budget changes
- Criticisms directed at DEI council initiatives as discriminating against white and working-class people

- Comments that targeted specific characteristics include anti-trans and gender reassignment, anti-immigration and anti-older people
- Calls for the council to reprioritise funding in DEI with suggestions to close the department to cover the costs for other services

Comments that are against the question or do not understand the question

81 (8%) respondents included comments that against the question on protected characteristics or do not understand the question.

- Respondents questioned the relevance of the question with regards to changes to the budget
- Criticism directed at the wording of the question, either being difficult to understand or for using language that is not accessible
- Calls for the question to define protected characteristics
- Respondents found the question was too vague and difficult to answer without knowing what policies or services the proposed changes will have an impact on

8 Next steps

8.1 How will this report be used?

The consultation feedback summarised in this report has been taken into consideration by officers when developing final proposals for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept as part of the 2025/26 budget.

The final proposals are included in a separate report which, together with this consultation report, will be considered by the council's Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on 3 February 2025. The Strategy and Resources Policy Committee will agree a recommended budget for all councillors to consider.

Full Council will take into consideration this consultation report and responses in making its decisions about the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept. These decisions will be taken at the Full Council meeting on 25 February 2025.

8.2 Future consultations

The proposals in this consultation for Council Tax and Social Care Precept will not be enough on their own to be able to set a balanced budget in 2025/26. We have therefore been working hard to identify proposals for other ways we can raise income and reduce costs by improving efficiency wherever possible, or in some cases reducing or stopping some services.

At the budget setting meeting on 25 February 2025, Full Council will consider the proposals for savings and increasing income and will decide on the money available for council services. Some of the proposals for changes to services will require public consultation. Where this is the case, changes will not be made until we have consulted and the feedback

has been considered and a decision made by the relevant policy committee or other decision-making authority.

8.3 Your ideas for savings and generating income

The responses to the Budget 2025/26 consultation included nearly 1,800 suggestions for ways the council could save money or generate more income, together with comments about which aspects of services citizens value most. These ideas and suggestions have been summarised in this report and will be provided in full to be considered by each council service. The council needs to identify further savings over the next five years, and we will review how the ideas in this consultation can help us balance the budget and improve the services we provide in future.

8.4 How can I keep track?

You can find the latest consultation and engagement surveys online on the council's Consultation and Engagement Hub (www.ask.bristol.gov.uk). You can also sign up to receive automated email notifications about consultations and engagement at www.bristol.gov.uk/askbristolnewsletter

Decisions related to the proposals in this consultation will be made publicly at the Full Council meeting on 25 February 2025.

You can find forthcoming meetings and their agendas at democracy.bristol.gov.uk.

Any decisions made by Full Council and policy committees will also be shared at democracy.bristol.gov.uk