

# Balancing Bristol's Budget 2019-20



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## Executive Summary

### ES1 Bristol City Council Budget 2019/20

Following Cabinet approval and recommendation on 22 January 2019, Full Council will consider the council's budget for the 2019/20 financial year on 26 February 2019.

The decision on the council's budget is in the context of over £276m of savings identified by the council since 2010, of which £41.9m of future savings were agreed in February 2018 by Full Council which will be made over the course of four years from 2019/20 to 2022/23. These are necessary to address future budget challenges and continue to deliver the services that are valued by Bristol residents.

As part of the council's budget planning, the council agreed in February 2018 that Council Tax increases would be reviewed annually and only charged where necessary and justifiable. Our early forecast indicated that we would need to increase Council Tax each year; and for next year (2019/20) an overall increase of 3% in Council Tax bills would be required together with £17.1m of previously agreed savings.

This forecast defined the scope of the Budget 2019/20 Consultation.

### ES2 The Budget 2019/20 Consultation

The Budget 2019/20 Consultation was open between 6 November and 17 December 2018. The consultation sought views from the public (including businesses and organisations which represent non-domestic rate payers) about alternative options for the level of Council Tax increase in 2019/20, before decisions on the 2019/20 budget are made by Full Council in February 2019.

We have previously consulted on the amount of the savings which are already included in the council's financial plans and work is underway across the council to further develop and deliver the agreed savings. For this reason, the Budget 2019/20 Consultation focussed on Council Tax options and did not include new savings proposals. Should assumptions change or new plans be identified that require consultation, we will consult on specific service proposals before making a decision about changes to services.

The Budget 2019/20 Consultation sought feedback on:

- the scale of Council Tax increase in 2019/20, with options of no increase and increases of 1%, 2%, 3% or 4%<sup>1</sup>;
- how citizens would like the council to spend any Council Tax revenue which exceeds the forecast amount needed for day-to-day services;
- respondents' reasons for the level of Council Tax increase they selected and where they would like Council tax revenue to be spent.
- suggestions for how the council can save money or raise money.

The Budget 2019/20 Consultation comprised information about the council's financial position and an [online survey](#). Paper copies of the survey and alternative accessible formats, including language translations, were available on request. Paper copies of the survey were also available in all libraries and the Citizen Service Point.

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<sup>1</sup> 4% is the maximum amount the council can raise Council Tax in 2019/20 without holding a local referendum. This limit is set by government and comprises a maximum increase of 3% for core Council Tax plus an extra 1% levy (the social care precept) on top of core Council Tax, which is dedicated to help pay for adult social care. There was not enough time to hold a local referendum before Full Council decides on its 2019/20 budget in February 2019 so we did not ask if citizens would prefer an increase of more than 4%. In the consultation, it was explained that if the 4% option is approved, 1% (£2m) would be dedicated to help pay for adult social care.

Additional survey responses were garnered through face-to-face interviews at City of Bristol College, with the Youth Council and in 10 areas of the city which have historically low response rates, high deprivation and/or high proportions of black, Asian & minority ethnic (BAME) citizens.

The consultation was widely publicised through media, social media and communications with the public, including partner organisations, representative non-domestic rate payers and other stakeholders, as described in section 2.4.

### **ES3 Scope and use of this report**

This report describes the methodology and presents the findings of the Budget 2019/20 Consultation. It includes quantitative data and analysis of free text comments from the consultation survey responses.

This consultation report does not contain the council's recommendations for the level of Council Tax increase (if any) in 2019/20, nor an assessment of the feasibility of any of the suggestions received or officers' proposals for the delivery of future services, having considered the consultation feedback.

The consultation feedback in this report will be taken into account by officers as final proposals for the 2019/20 budget, including the level of Council Tax, are developed. The final proposals will be included in a separate recommendations report which, together with this consultation report, will be considered by Cabinet on 22 January. Full Council will also consider this consultation report in making its decisions about the 2019/20 budget at the Full Council meeting on 26 February 2019.

Budget decisions will be published through normal procedures for Full Council and Cabinet decisions at [democracy.bristol.gov.uk](https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk).

### **ES4 Budget 2019/20 Consultation - Key findings**

#### **ES4.1 Response rate**

The Budget 2019/20 Consultation survey received 4,644 responses of which 3,997 (86%) were self-completed online, 553 (12%) were completed online as interview surveys and 94 (2%) were self-completed using paper surveys.

3,989 responses (86%) were received from postcodes within the Bristol City Council area, 73 (2%) of the responses were from North Somerset, Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) or South Gloucestershire, and a further 139 (3%) responses were from unidentifiable locations within the four West of England authorities<sup>2</sup>. 27(1%) responses were from further afield or were unidentifiable, and 416 (9%) did not provide a postcode.

Analysis of respondents' postcodes indicate that there was a broadly representative response rate from areas of high, medium and low deprivation in Bristol. There was a substantial increase in response rates from black, Asian & minority ethnic (BAME) citizens and from people of minority faiths, compared to equivalent recent consultations. A map of response rate by ward for the Bristol respondents is presented in chapter 3 along with the details of age profile, gender and other respondent characteristics.

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<sup>2</sup> Incomplete postcodes identified the home location as within the WOE authorities area (Bristol, B&NES, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire), but not which authority.



## ES4.2 Council Tax 2019/20

4,521 (97%) of the 4,644 respondents stated the level Council Tax increase they would support in 2019/20, from the five options provided (Figure ES1).

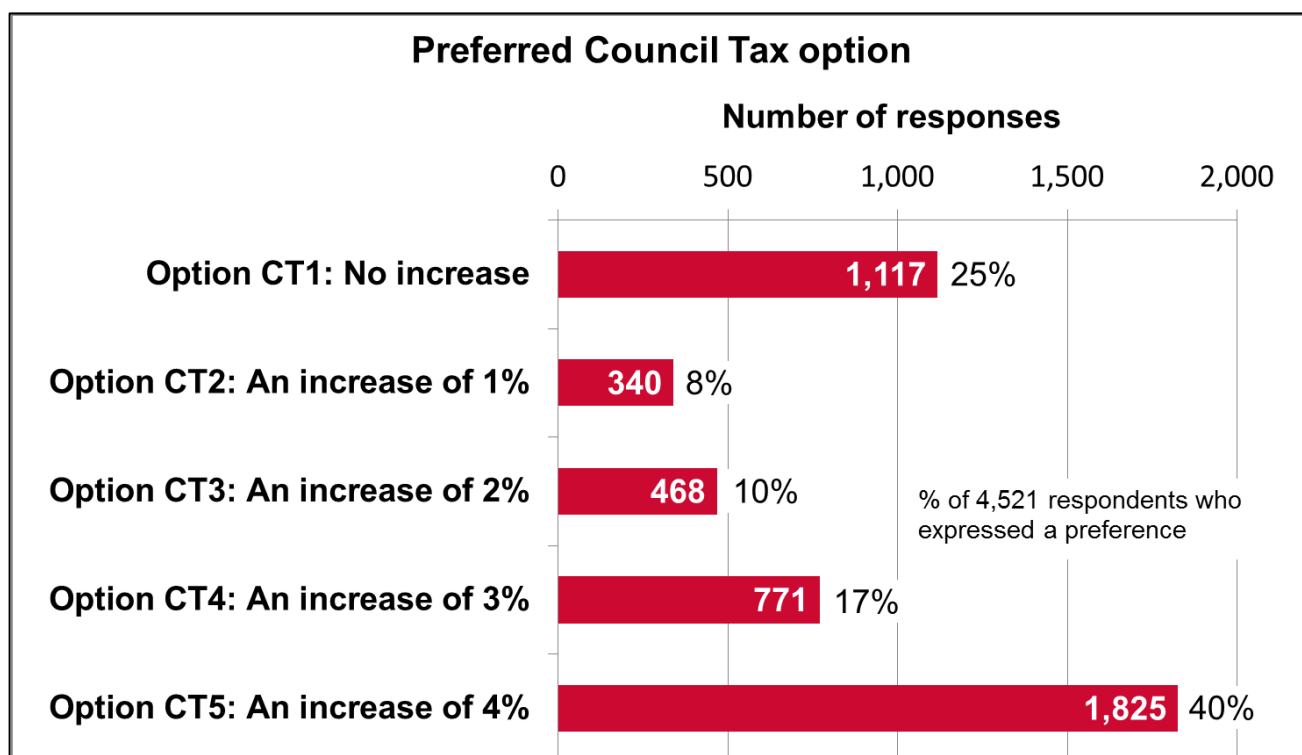
The option which received most support (40% of respondents) was a 4% increase in Council Tax. This is the maximum increase permitted without requiring a referendum.

The option with the second highest level of support (25%) was 'no increase to Council Tax'.

17% would prefer a Council Tax increase of 3%. This is the level of Council Tax increase which the council's early forecasts indicated would be needed to balance the 2019/20 budget, together with £17.1m of previously agreed savings.

10% of respondents would support a 2% increase and 8% would prefer a 1% increase.

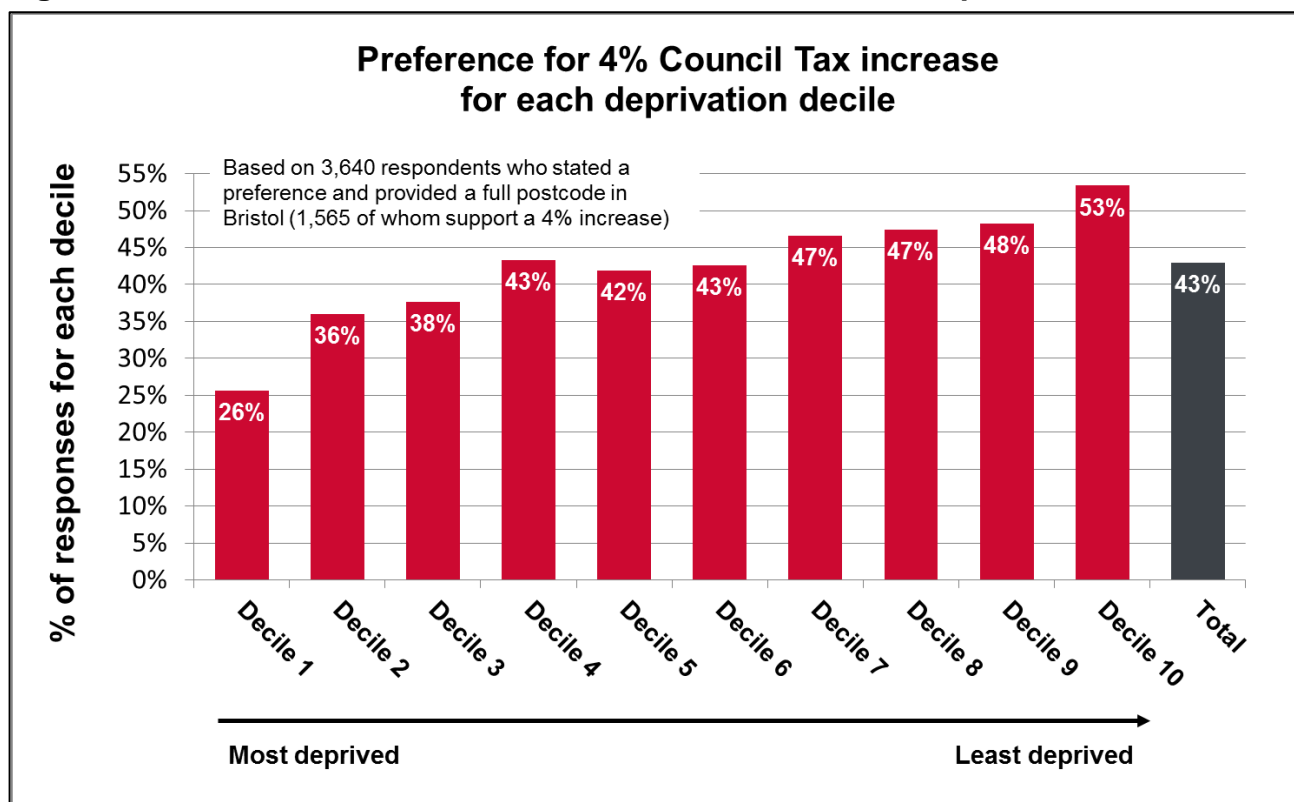
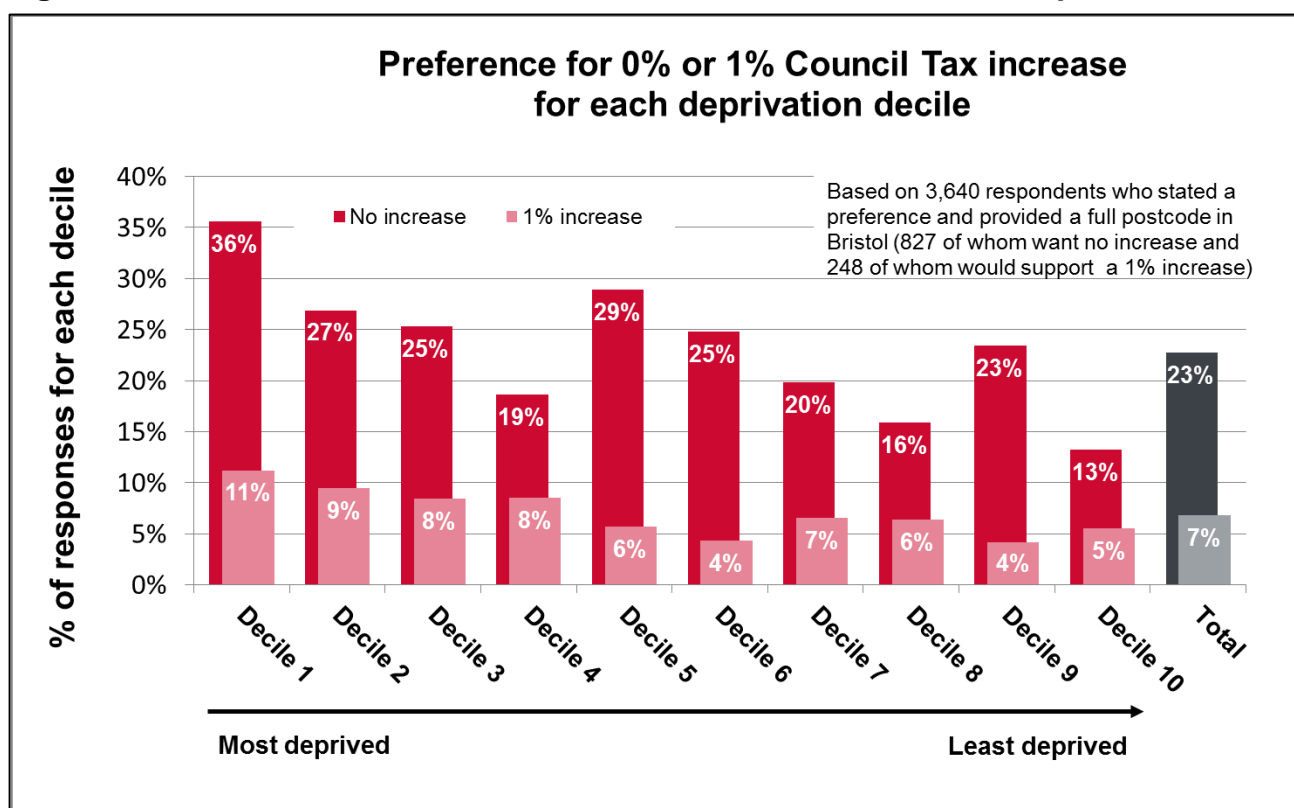
**Figure ES1: Preferred level of Council Tax increase in 2019/20**



Views on the preferred level of Council Tax were compared for respondents from areas with different levels of deprivation.

Support for a 4% increase in Council Tax is highest among respondents from areas of least deprivation (Figure ES2). Conversely, there is more support for no increase in Council Tax or a 1% increase in the more deprived areas than in less deprived areas, albeit the trend is less clear (Figure ES3). However, there is still substantial support for the 4% option in even the most deprived areas (26% support for the 4% option in decile 1 and 36% support in decile 2).

There is no clear trend between deprivation and support for the 2% and 3% options.

**Figure ES2: Preference for 4% Council Tax increase in each deprivation decile****Figure ES3: Preference for 0% or 1% Council Tax increase in each deprivation decile**

### ES4.3 Preference for how to use an extra £2m raised by a 4% increase in Council Tax

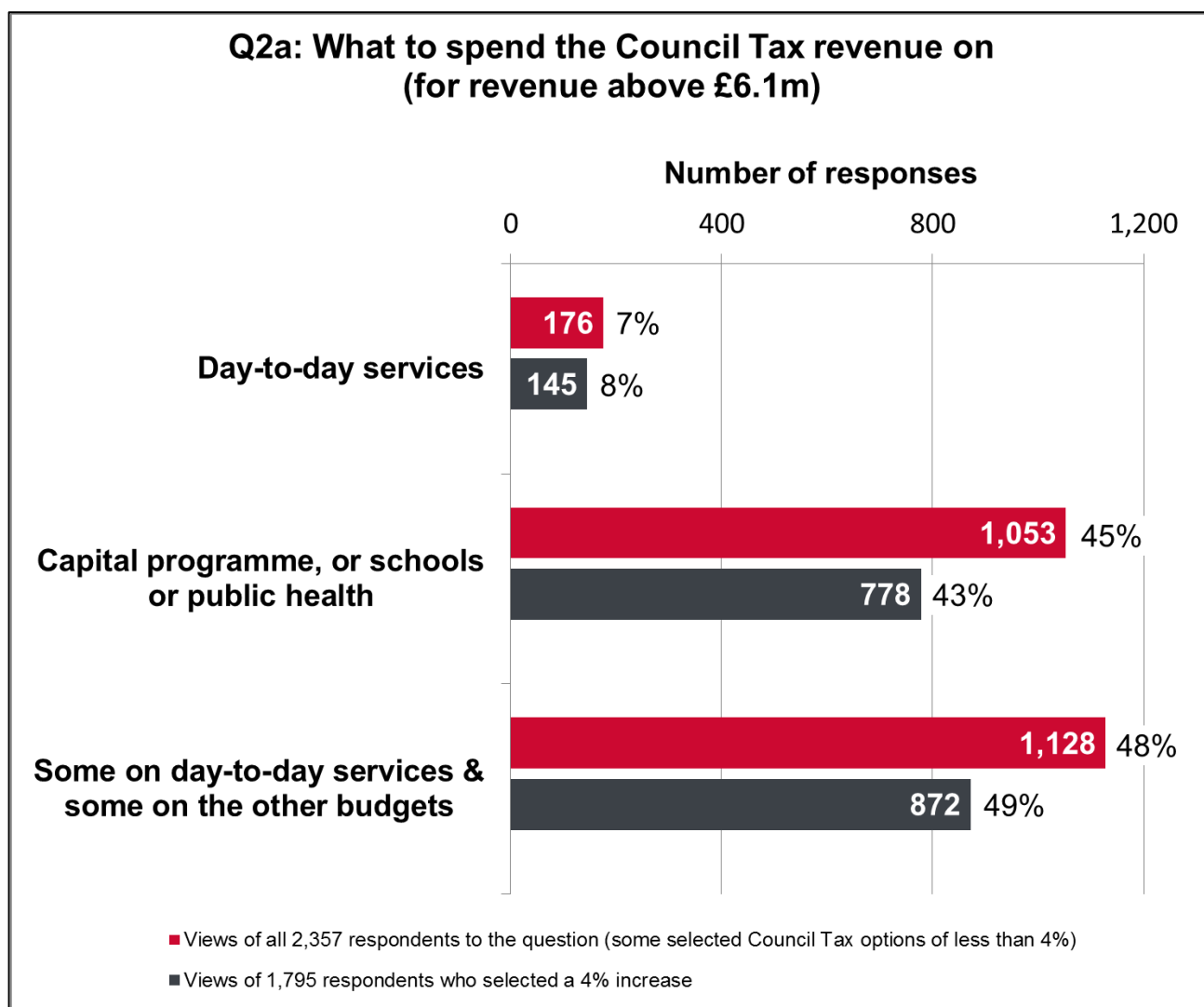
A 4% increase in Council Tax (Option CT5) would raise £2m more than the council's early forecast indicates we would need for day-to-day services. If a 4% increase is selected, the council could use the additional £2m raised to pay for day-to-day services (i.e. the General Fund) or to help pay for the capital programme, schools budget or public health activities.

Figure ES4 shows where respondents would like this money to be spent. The preferences of all 2,357 respondents who provided their views<sup>3</sup> are shown in red. The views of the 1,795 respondents who support a 4% increase in Council Tax<sup>4</sup> are shown in grey. There is close agreement between the views of both groups.

Almost half the respondents support dividing the extra £2m between the General Fund (day-to-day services) and three 'other budgets' (the capital budget, schools budget and public health budget). Nearly as many respondents support spending all the £2m on the capital, schools or public health budgets.

Only 7% of respondents (8% of the respondents who support a 4% Council Tax increase) want all the £2m spent on day-to-day services (the General Fund).

**Figure ES4: What to spend the Council Tax revenue on (for revenue above £6.1m)**



<sup>3</sup> Includes 1,795 respondents who support a 4% Council Tax increase and 562 who want a smaller increase.

<sup>4</sup> Only a 4% increase would raise enough money to cover the forecast cost of day-to-day services and release additional funds which could be used for other budgets.

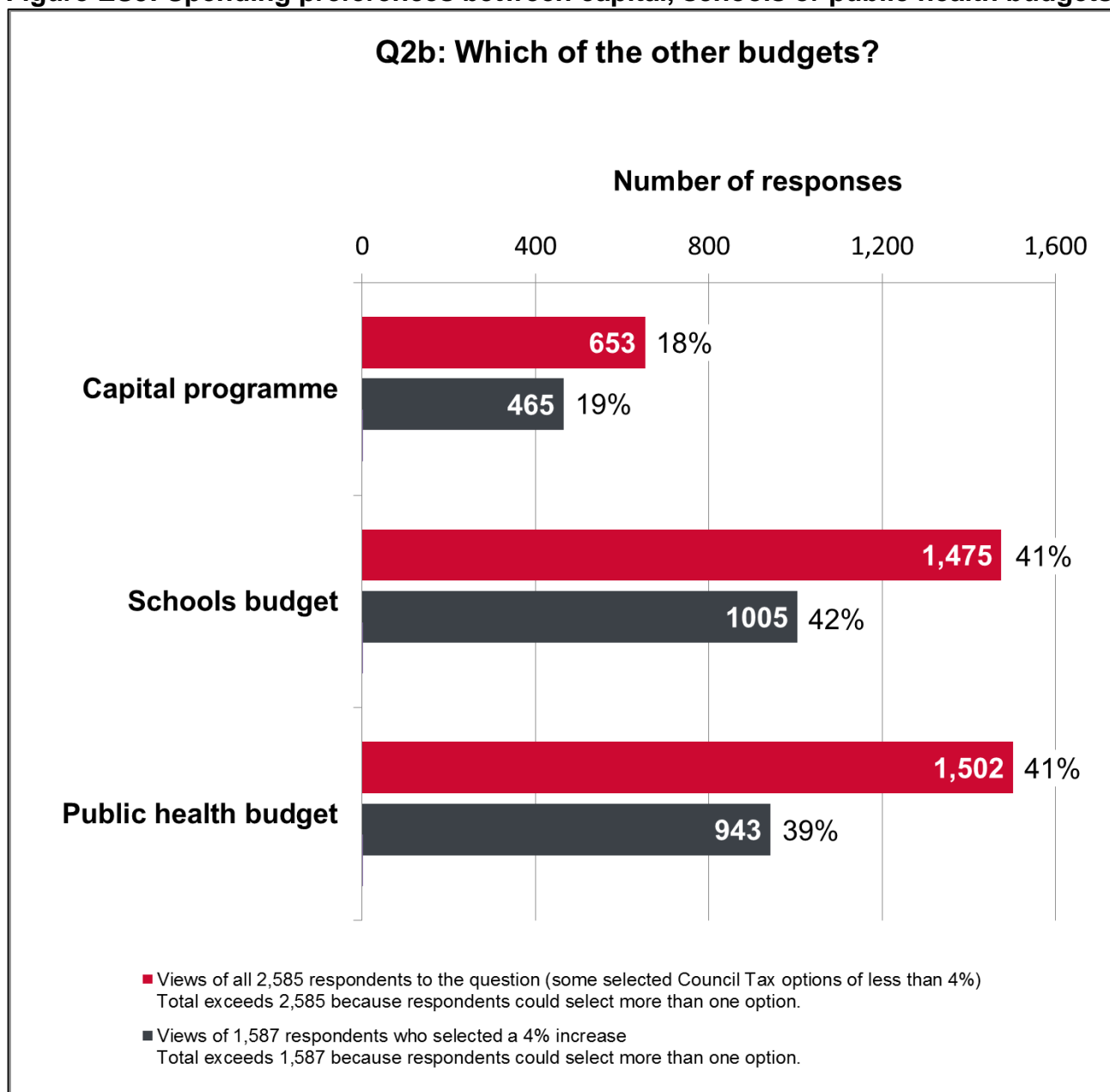


For respondents who want some or all of the £2m spent on the capital, schools and public health budgets, Figure ES5 shows which of these three budgets' respondents would prefer to receive extra funding. There is close agreement between the views of all 2,585 respondents (in red) and the 1,587 respondents who support a 4% increase in Council Tax (in grey).

Approximately 40% of respondents in both groups would like some or all of the extra £2m to be spent on the schools budget and very similar numbers want the money directed to public health.

Less than 20% of respondents would like the money spent on the capital programme.

**Figure ES5: Spending preferences between capital, schools or public health budgets**



There appears to be greater support for additional spending on the capital budget in areas of low deprivation than in more deprived areas. No other trends are apparent between deprivation and how respondents would like the addition £2m to be spent.

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Context**

On 26 February 2019, Full Council will set the council's budget for the 2019/20 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 for 2019/20.

The Budget 2019/20 Consultation was open between 6 November 2018 and 17 December 2018 and sought views from the public (including businesses and organisations which represent non-domestic rate payers<sup>5</sup>) about alternative options for the level of Council Tax increase in 2019/20. The consultation also invited respondents' suggestions for ways in which the council could save money or generate more income.

This consultation report describes the consultation methodology and the feedback received, which will be considered by Cabinet and Full Council before decisions on the 2019/20 budget are made by Full Council in February 2019.

## **1.2 The budget challenge**

Since 2010, the amount of money the council receives from government has reduced. At the same time, the council faces pressures to spend more on services. These 'expenditure pressures' include the effects of inflation and meeting the increasing costs and rising demand for services.

It is expected that these pressures will continue to require additional funding each year over the next two to five years.

Since 2010 the council has identified over £276m of savings. These include £41.9m of future savings agreed in February 2018 by Full Council which will be made over the course of four years from 2019/20 to 2022/23. These are necessary to address future budget challenges and continue to deliver the services that are valued by Bristol residents.

As part of the council's budget planning, we agreed in February 2018 that Council Tax increases would be reviewed annually and only charged where necessary and justifiable. Our early forecast indicated that to balance the budget we would need to increase Council Tax each year; and for the coming financial year (2019/20) an overall increase of 3% in Council Tax bills would be required together with £17.1m of previously agreed savings.

## **1.3 Budget 2019/20 Consultation**

The Budget 2019/20 Consultation sought citizens' views on a range of Council Tax increases between no increase and a 4% increase, each of which would have different implications for the amount of money the council could spend on services and/or would have to find from other sources. The consultation also invited suggestions for how the council can save money or raise money to help address the budget challenge.

We have previously consulted on the amount of the savings which are already included in the council's financial plans and work is underway across the council to further develop and deliver the agreed savings. The Budget 2019/20 Consultation therefore focussed on Council Tax options and did not include new savings proposals. Should assumptions change or new plans be identified that require consultation, we will consult on specific service proposals before making a decision about changes to services.

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<sup>5</sup> 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 2.4.5

The consultation information and questions are summarised in section 2.1 and the full [consultation survey](#) can be viewed online.

#### **1.4 Structure of this report**

Chapter 2 of this report describes the Budget 2019/20 Consultation methodology.

Chapters 3 and 4 present the Budget 2019/20 Consultation survey results:

- Chapter 3 presents the survey response rate and respondent characteristics;
- Chapter 4 describes the survey feedback on the Council Tax proposals and respondents' suggestions for ways the council could save money or raise more income;

Chapter 5 describes feedback received in other correspondence (emails).

Chapter 6 describes how this report will be used and how to keep updated on the decision-making process.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Survey

#### 2.1.1 Online survey

The [Budget 2019/20 survey](https://bristol.gov.uk/consultationhub) was available online on the council's Consultation Hub ([bristol.gov.uk/consultationhub](https://bristol.gov.uk/consultationhub)) between 6 November and 17 December 2018. Downloadable print and [Easy Read](#) formats were also available on the Consultation Hub.

#### Survey information

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

- an overview of the council's financial position and budget challenge;
- information about the five main council budgets (the General Fund, the Dedicated Schools Grant, the public health budget, the Housing Revenue Account, the capital budget) and council reserves;
- A breakdown of how the General Fund is spent on 'day-to-day' services (based on 2018/19 expenditure);
- Forecasts of how much additional revenue would be raised in 2019/20 by each of the proposed Council Tax options (increases of 0%, 1%, 2%, 3% or 4%<sup>6</sup>);
- The weekly and annual cost increases that would be payable by households in each Council Tax band for each Council Tax option.

#### Survey questions

The survey questions sought feedback on:

- the scale of Council Tax increase in 2019/20, with options of no increase and increases of 1%, 2%, 3% or 4%;
- how citizens would like the council to spend any Council Tax revenue which exceeds the forecast amount needed for day-to-day services;
- respondents' reasons for the level of Council Tax increase they selected and where they would like Council Tax revenue to be spent;
- suggestions for how the council can save money or raise money.

The 'About you' section requested information which helps the council to check if the responses are representative of people across the city who may have different needs:

- 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 we receive responses from people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010;
- other information about respondents'; for example whether they are a council employee, a councillor, or represent a local business;

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<sup>6</sup> 4% is the maximum amount the council can raise Council Tax in 2019/20 without holding a local referendum. This limit is set by government and comprises a maximum increase of 3% for core Council Tax plus an extra 1% levy (the social care precept) on top of core Council Tax, which is dedicated to help pay for adult social care. There was not enough time to hold a local referendum before Full Council decides on its 2019/20 budget in February 2019 so we did not ask if citizens would prefer an increase of more than 4%. In the consultation, it was explained that if the 4% option is approved, 1% (£2m) would be dedicated to help pay for adult social care.

- how respondents found out about the consultation – to help the council publicise future consultations effectively.

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

### **2.1.2 Paper copies**

Paper copies of the survey and alternative accessible formats were available on request. Paper copies of the survey with Freepost return envelopes were available in all libraries, the Citizen Service Point and on request by email and telephone from the council's consultation engagement team.

### **2.1.3 Alternative formats**

The consultation was available in Easy Read format on the Consultation Hub. Other alternative formats (braille, large print, audio, British Sign Language (BSL) and translation to other languages) were available on request.

### **2.1.4 Interview surveys**

A programme of interview surveys was developed in order to increase overall response rates and responses from wards and groups which are often under-represented in providing feedback to consultations; specifically areas with high deprivation<sup>7</sup>, BAME and Muslim citizens and people aged under 18 years.

Ten locations were selected in wards which provided low response rates to city-wide consultations during 2017 and 2018 and which are also areas with high deprivation<sup>8</sup> and/or high populations of black, Asian & minority ethnic (BAME) citizens. Interviewers talked each respondent through the consultation information and recorded their verbal responses to each question via the online survey using 4G-enabled tablets.

Interview surveys were also undertaken at the City of Bristol College, Deanery Road Campus and with the Youth Council to boost the low number of responses from people under 18 years<sup>9</sup>. Most of the responses from the City of Bristol College students were provided through group tutorials which focussed on the budget consultation and provided time for students to complete the survey online.

The interview survey locations and number of responses are summarised in Table 1.

All interview survey responses are included within the overall survey results.

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<sup>7</sup> The measure of deprivation was 'Indices of Multiple Deprivation' (IMD), which takes into account 37 local indicators that cover income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) publishes IMD scores for 263 Census Lower Super Output Areas in Bristol.

<sup>8</sup> The measure of deprivation was 'Indices of Multiple Deprivation' (IMD), which takes into account 37 local indicators that cover health, education, housing and employment. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) publish IMD scores for 263 Census Lower Super Output Areas in Bristol.

<sup>9</sup> Although people aged less than 18 do not pay Council Tax, their views were sought as citizens who may use services provided by the Council and who could be affected by a decision on the level of Council Tax. People aged under 18 can take part in consultations on the same basis as other citizens.

**Table 1: schedule of budget consultation interview surveys**

Ward	Location	Date	Reason for targeted surveys	Number of responses <sup>10</sup>
Central	The Galleries, Broadmead	23 Nov	Very low historic response rate <sup>11</sup> High deprivation 30% BAME Draws diverse citizens from inner wards	67
Southmead	Southmead Library, Greenway Centre	27 Nov	Very low historic response rate Very high deprivation	17
Hartcliffe & Withywood	@Symes, Morrisons, Hartcliffe Library	29 Nov	Very low historic response rate Very high deprivation	56
Hillfields	Morrisons Fishponds	6 Dec	Very low historic response rate High deprivation 22% BAME	55
Easton	Easton Mosque	7 Dec	High deprivation 38% BAME Engage Muslim respondents	45
Lawrence Hill	Barton Hill Mosque	7 Dec	Very low historic response rate Very high deprivation 60% BAME Engage Muslim respondents	28
Stockwood	Hollway Road	10 Dec	Very low historic response rate Low response rate to budget consultation after 4 weeks	29
Multiple wards	City of Bristol College Deanery Rd site	10 Dec	Citizens under 18 years	98
Lockleaze	Gainsborough Sq & Tesco Eastgate	11 Dec	Low historic response rate High deprivation 30% BAME	61
Lawrence Hill	Stapleton Road	12 Dec	Very low historic response rate Very high deprivation 60% BAME	52
Multiple wards	Youth Council	12 Dec	Citizens under 18 years	15
Filwood	The Park and other locations on Daventry Road	14 Dec	Very low historic response rate Very high deprivation	26
<b>Total</b>				<b>553</b>

<sup>10</sup> Number of responses to 2019/20 consultation obtained through interview surveys in each area

<sup>11</sup> Historical response rates are based on responses to city-wide consultations in 2017 and 2018



## **2.2 Public meetings**

Council officers presented details of the Budget 2019/20 Consultation, answered questions and invited survey responses at the following public meetings:

- Bristol Older peoples' Forum on 15 November 2018 (by invitation);
- Team Southmead on 27 November (as part of interview surveys in Southmead);
- Tutorials with students at City of Bristol College on 10 December (as part of interview surveys to engage under 18s in the survey)
- Bristol Youth Council on 12 December.

In addition, members promoted the consultation at public meetings in their wards during the six week consultation period.

All responses received at these meetings were via the online or paper surveys and are included within the overall survey results.

## **2.3 Other correspondence**

Six emails were received in response to the consultation. These are reported separately to the survey responses in chapter 5.

## **2.4 Publicity and briefings**

### **2.4.1 Objective**

The following programme of activity was undertaken to publicise and explain the Budget 2019/20 Consultation. The primary objective was to ensure that information was shared across a wide range of channels, reaching as broad a range of audiences as possible in order to maximise response rates, including feedback by groups that are often under-represented in surveys.

### **2.4.2 Bristol City Council channels**

Copy and electronic material were shared via the following council and partner channels and networks:

- Bristol City Council's website;
- Our City e-newsletter – 1,375 recipients;
- Ask Bristol e-bulletin - 2,200 recipients;
- All Members / Councillors;
- Invitation email sent to 21,997 users of the online Council Tax account system on 29 November. A follow-up email was sent to 20,442 users who had not responded to the survey by 10 December;
- Email to 1,158 members of the Citizen's Panel;
- Advertisement posted on digital screens in BCC offices and libraries with digital screens;
- Messages to notify staff of the consultation launch and encourage engagement with the survey were delivered weekly throughout the six weeks via mass internal email and posts to The Source homepage.

### **2.4.3 Members**

A digital engagement pack including assets for social media and digital advertisement of the consultation was provided to the party offices for Members to use.

## **2.4.4 Bristol City Council Partners**

Details of the consultation were shared widely amongst communications teams for the council's partners including the police, fire service, NHS providers and commissioners, schools, universities and voluntary sector organisations (via VOSCUR) and equalities groups. Almost 100 voluntary and equalities organisations were contacted.

## **2.4.5 Non-domestic rate payers**

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 following activities were undertaken:

- The promotional material and links to the survey were emailed to Business West, The Bristol Junior Chamber, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and Destination Bristol with a request for them to circulate to their contacts;
- Consultation copy and electronic material were shared via email to 4,866 Business Rate payers. Respondents were asked to provide their feedback via the consultation survey;
- Awareness raising through media and social media activity was undertaken as described in 2.4.6 and 2.4.7;

The promotional activities above requested businesses and other organisations to provide their feedback via the consultation survey. The survey responses are reported in chapters 3 and 4.

Six emails about the Budget 2019/20 Consultation were received from citizens in addition to the survey responses. This feedback is described in Chapter 5. There were no direct emails or letters received from Business West, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) or Destination Bristol.

## **2.4.6 Media engagement**

Press releases were distributed on 6 November outlining the council's financial forecast for 2019-2020 and the consultation on options for the level of Council Tax from April 2019.

This resulted in coverage in all regional media outlets including:

- BBC Radio Bristol
- commercial local radio (Heart, Breeze)
- community radio (BCFM, Ujima)
- Bristol Post

Material was also shared with Bristol's hyper-local community titles (The Week In, The Voice series).

## **2.4.7 Social Media – posts, outreach and advertising**

Regular posts on Bristol City Council's social media channels (Twitter and Facebook) were made for the duration of the consultation, with increased posts at launch, 'two weeks left' and in the final days.

85 tweets in total resulted in 516 clicks on links, 60 likes, 114 re-tweets.

Five Facebook posts reached 6,758 people and resulted in 69 likes, comments and shares and 293 clicks.

Paid for Facebook advertising was employed to engage targeted areas of the city and encourage responses to the budget consultation. The target areas were selected by analysing the responses received after four weeks and prioritising wards with low response rates and high populations of those ethnic and faith groups which were under-represented in the responses to date. The paid Facebook advertising was targeted to the following wards:

- Southmead
- Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston
- St George Central
- Hengrove & Whitchurch Park
- Filwood
- Stockwood

During two weeks of paid for Facebook advertising, 6,157 people were reached resulting in 256 clicks, in addition to the five Facebook posts.

#### **2.4.8 Young People**

Information about the budget consultation and weblinks to budget consultation material were shared via:

- Bristol Youth Council;
- Shadow Bristol Safeguarding Children Board;
- Creative Youth Network;
- 1625 Independent People;
- City of Bristol College;
- Watershed;
- Avon Scouts
- Youth Moves;
- Young Carers voice;
- Knowle West Media Centre.

### 3 Survey response rate and respondent characteristics

#### 3.1 Response rate to the survey

The Budget 2019/20 Consultation survey received 4,644 responses of which 3,997 (86%) were self-completed online, 553 (12%) were completed online as interview surveys and 94 (2%) were self-completed using paper surveys.

#### 3.2 Geographic distribution of responses

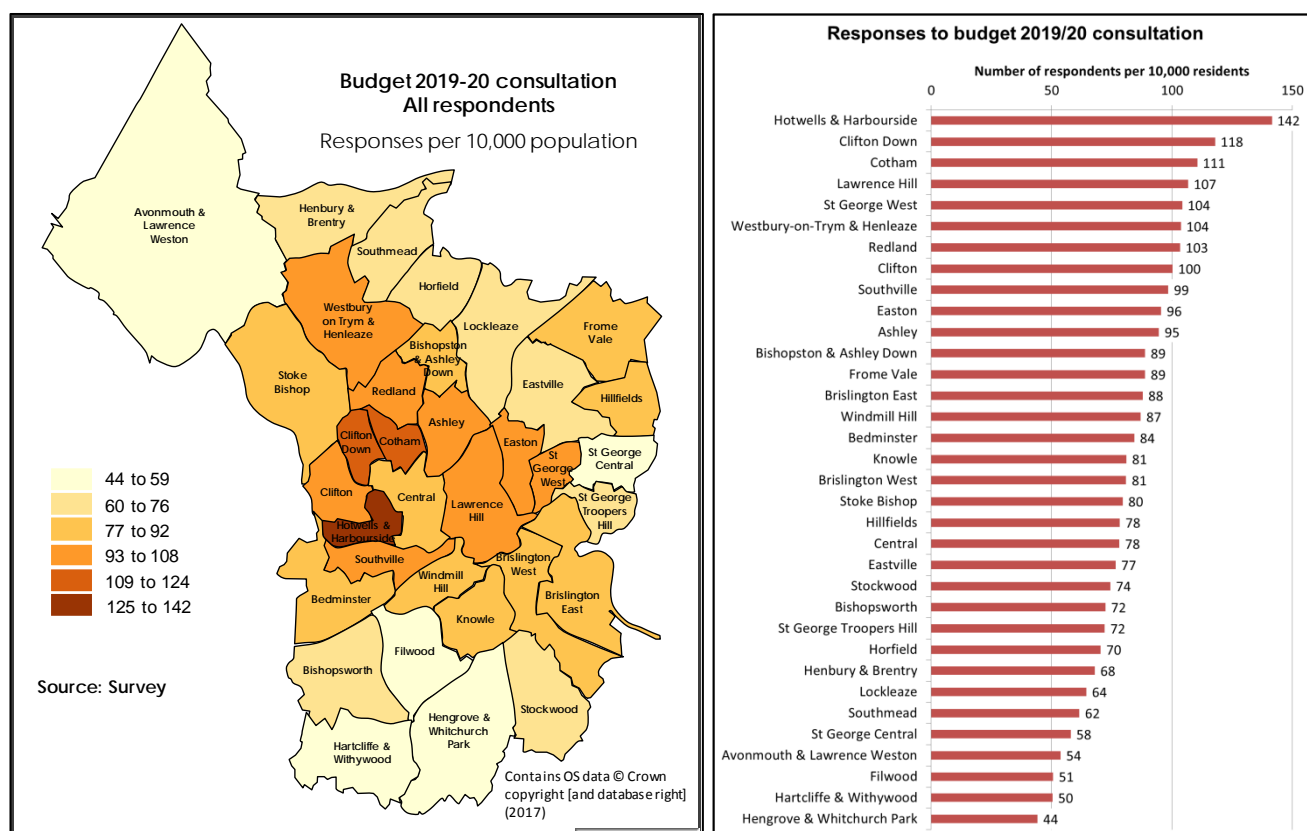
3,989 responses (86%) were received from postcodes within the Bristol City Council area, of which 3,740 responses (81% of all 4,644 respondents) provided full postcodes from which the ward of origin could be identified (Figure 1).

73 (2%) of responses were from North Somerset, Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) or South Gloucestershire, and a further 139 (3%) responses were from unidentifiable locations within the four West of England authorities<sup>12</sup>.

27(1%) of responses were from further afield or were unidentifiable, and 416 (9%) did not provide a postcode.

The geographic distribution of responses from within Bristol<sup>13</sup> is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: geographic distribution of responses in Bristol**



<sup>12</sup> Incomplete postcodes identified the home location as within the WOE authorities area (Bristol, B&NES, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire), but not which authority.

<sup>13</sup> Based on 3,740 responses which provided full postcodes

### 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 city<sup>14</sup> to review if the responses received include a cross-section of people living in more deprived and less deprived areas. This helps the council to know if the views of citizens in more deprived areas differ from people living in 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 2 compares the percentage of Bristol respondents<sup>15</sup> living in each of the deprivation deciles to the percentage of all Bristol citizens who live in each decile.

Figure 2 shows that there was a good response rate from people in all deprivation deciles (red bars) and that this approximately matches the proportion of Bristol citizens living in each deprivation decile (grey bars). Response rates from the two most deprived deciles is slightly lower and response rates from the four least deprived deciles is slightly higher than the proportion of Bristol citizens living in each decile.

### 3.4 Characteristics of respondents

4,476 (96%) people answered one or more of the equalities monitoring questions.

The most common age of respondents was 25-44 years (45%), followed by 45-64 (30%) and 65-74 (12%). The proportion of responses in the age categories 25-44 years, 45-64 and 65-74 was higher than these age groups' proportion of the population in Bristol. Survey responses from children (under 18), young people aged 18-24 and over 75 years were under-represented.

42% of responses were from women and 52% were from men and 0.4% were from people who identified as 'other'. (6% preferred not to say.)

Disabled respondents (7%) were under-represented compared to the proportion of disabled people living in Bristol<sup>16</sup>.

The proportion of White British respondents closely matches the Bristol population. Other white citizens responded in higher numbers than the Bristol population. Black / Black British and Asian / Asian British citizens were under-represented but responded in higher proportions than in the Corporate Strategy 2018-2023 and Budget 2018/19 Consultation. Response rates for Mixed / Dual Heritage and Other Ethnic Group were similar to these citizens' proportion of the population in Bristol.

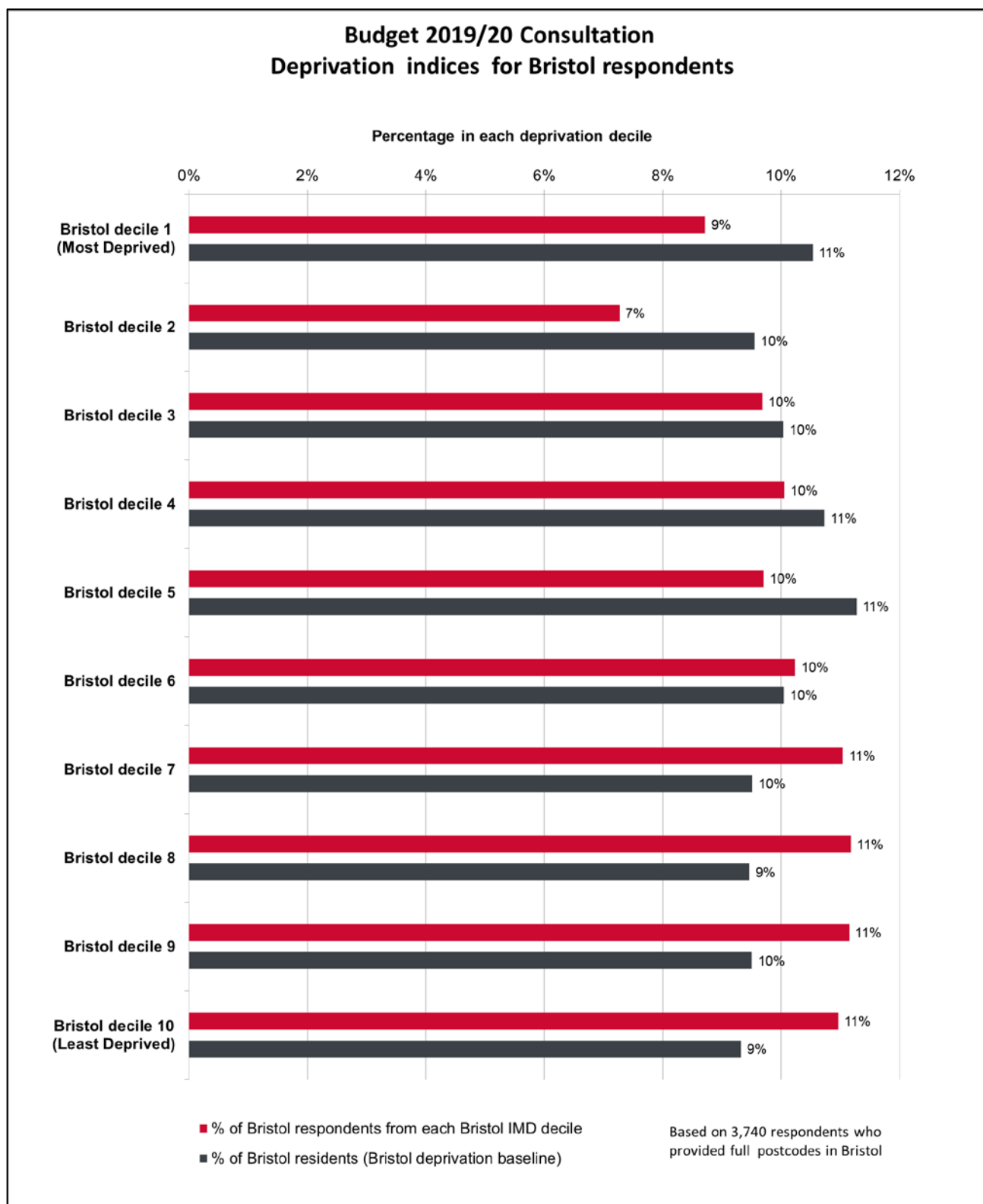
People with no religion were over-represented and Christians were under-represented. People of all other faiths responded in similar proportions to the faith proportion in the Bristol population.

A full breakdown of respondent equalities monitoring characteristics is found in Figure 3.

<sup>14</sup> The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes information about deprivation for 32,844 small areas - known as 'Lower Super Output Areas' (LSOAs) - throughout England. For each of these areas, a measure of deprivation is published called 'Indices of Multiple Deprivation' (IMD), which takes into account 37 aspects of each area that cover income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment. The home location of respondents to the consultation was compared with the IMD scores for the 263 Lower Super Output Areas that cover the Bristol City Council area.

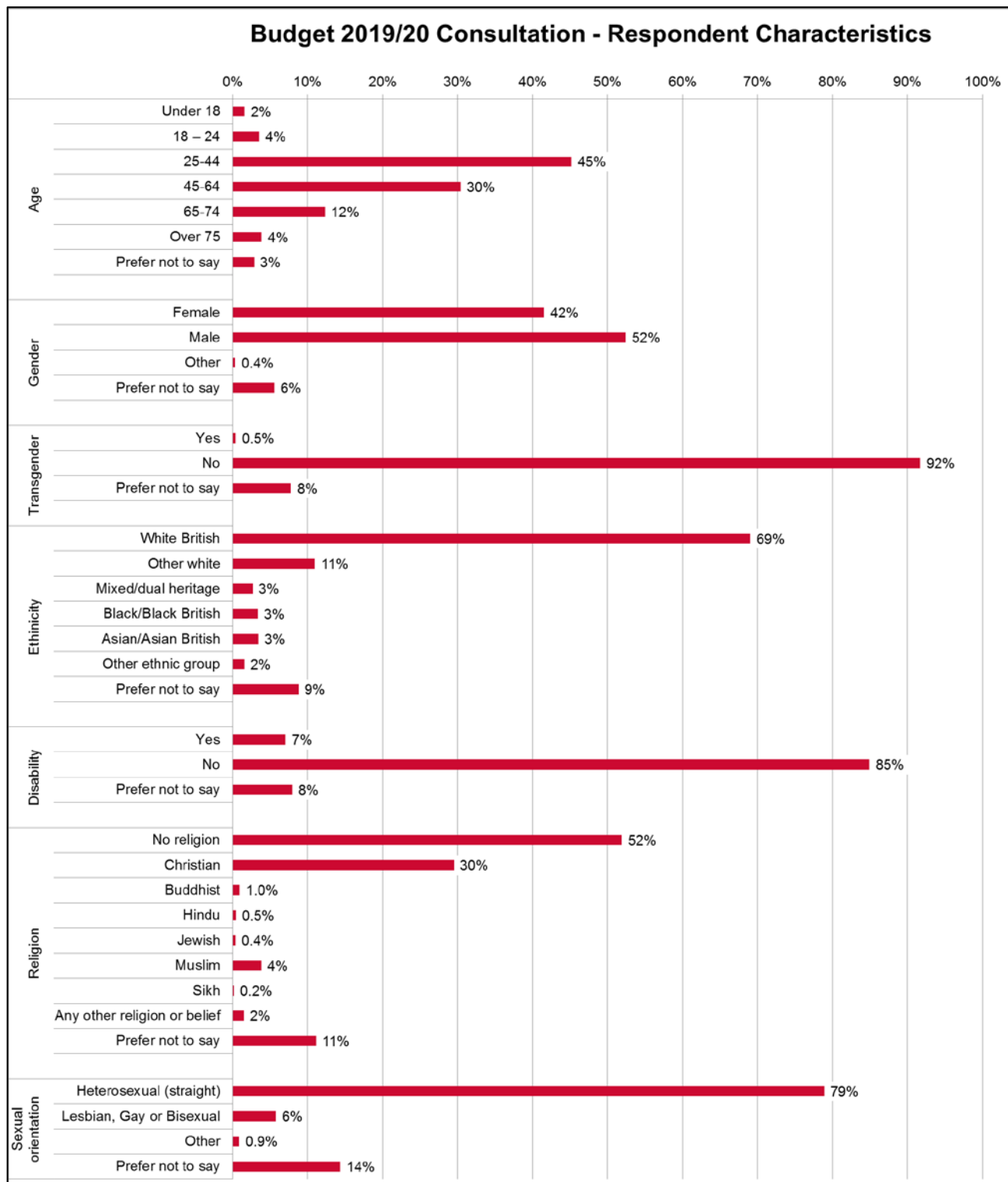
<sup>15</sup> Based on 3,740 respondents who provided full postcodes

<sup>16</sup> Data on disability rates in the Bristol population are based on people who identified in the 2011 Census that their day-to-day activities are limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months.

**Figure 2: Comparison of response rate from areas of high and low deprivation**

(Percentages in Figure 2 are given to the nearest integer. The length of bars in the chart reflects the unrounded percentage; hence bars shown as 10% may be slightly different in length.)



**Figure 3: Respondent characteristics – equalities monitoring**

4,424 (95%) respondents provided other details of their personal situation as listed below:

- 4227 (96% of respondents) were residents
- 154 (3%) were Bristol City Council employees
- 118 (3%) represent and/or own a local business
- 75 (2%) represent or work for a health / social care provider
- 71 (2%) represent or work for a voluntary / community / Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisation
- 41 (1%) represent a housing association or live in a housing association property
- 39 (1%) work in Bristol but live elsewhere
- 8 (<1%) were councillors
- 5 (<1%) were MPs
- 5 (<1%) represent transport providers
- 103 (2%) selected 'other'

Of the 103 respondents who selected 'other':

- 20 described their employment, of whom three were teachers, three worked in the NHS and five worked or volunteered for charities;
- 19 were in education (school, further or higher education);
- 16 were retired;
- 2 were carers;
- 20 described their housing situation, of whom six were landlords, four were home owners, four were BCC tenants and four lived with parents;
- 7 stated that they live and or work in Bristol;
- 7 stated that they currently live elsewhere at least part of the time;
- 12 made other comments.

## 4 Survey responses

### 4.1 Level of Council Tax increase in 2019/20

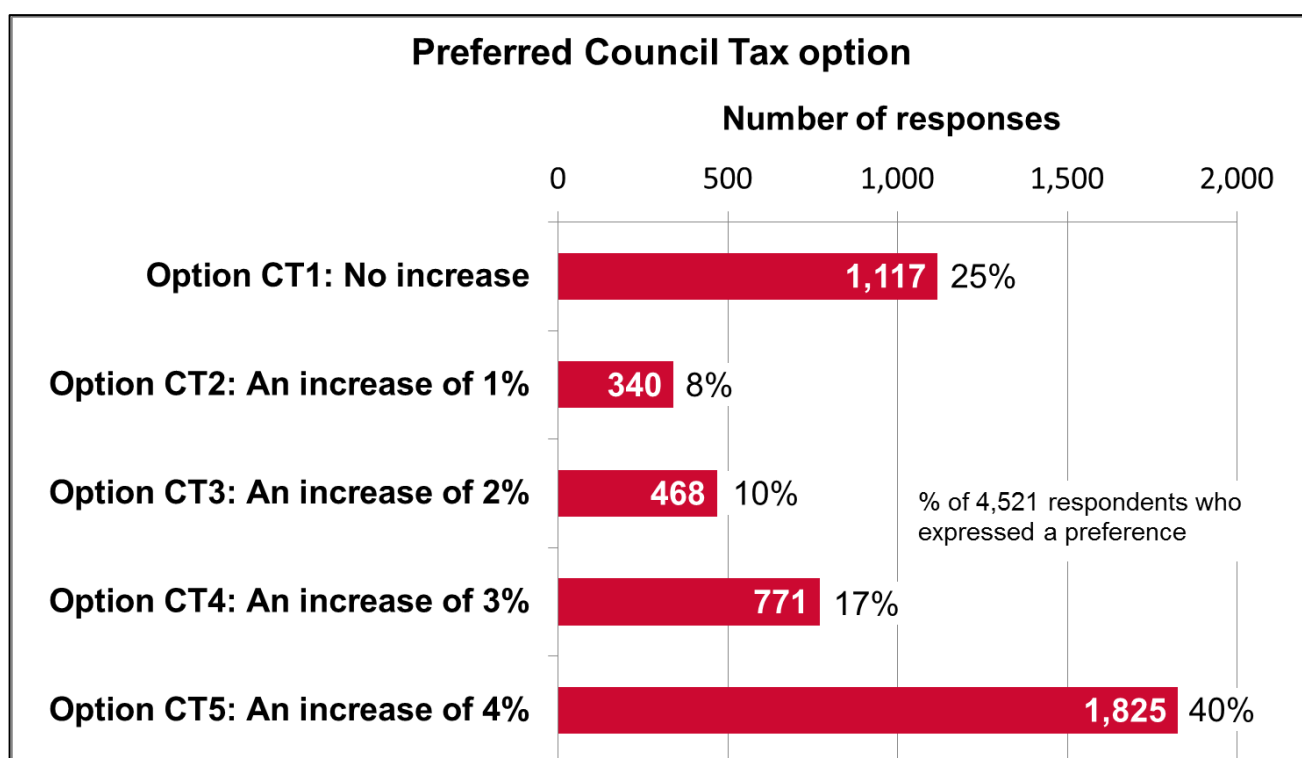
#### 4.1.1 Council Tax preference - all respondents

Respondents were asked to state which level of Council Tax increase they would prefer in 2019/20, choosing from the following five options:

- Option CT1: No increase to Council Tax
- Option CT2: An increase of 1% to Council Tax
- Option CT3: An increase of 2% to Council Tax
- Option CT4: An increase of 3% to Council Tax
- Option CT5: An increase of 4% to Council Tax.

Of the 4,644 people who responded to the budget consultation, 4,521 (97%) expressed a preference for the level of Council Tax increase. Figure 4 shows the numbers who supported each option. 123 people did not answer this question.

**Figure 4: Preferred level of Council Tax increase in 2019/20**



1,825 (40%) favoured a 4% increase in Council Tax. This is the maximum increase permitted without requiring a referendum (see explanation in section 2.1).

The option with the second highest level of support – 1,117 respondents (25%) - was 'no increase to Council Tax' in 2019/20.

771 (17%) would prefer a Council Tax increase of 3%. This is the level of Council Tax increase which the council's early forecasts indicated would be needed to balance the 2019/20 budget, together with £17.1m of previously agreed savings.

468 (10%) would support a 2% increase.

340 (8%) would prefer a 1% increase.

#### 4.1.2 Differences in Council Tax preference in areas with different levels of deprivation

Views on the preferred level of Council Tax were compared for respondents from areas with different levels of deprivation. 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.

##### 4% increase in Council Tax

Figure 5 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who stated they would support a 4% increase in Council Tax in 2019/20. This is based on the 1,565 Bristol respondents who support a 4% increase and provided a full postcode<sup>17</sup>.

**Figure 5: Preference for 4% Council Tax increase in each deprivation decile**

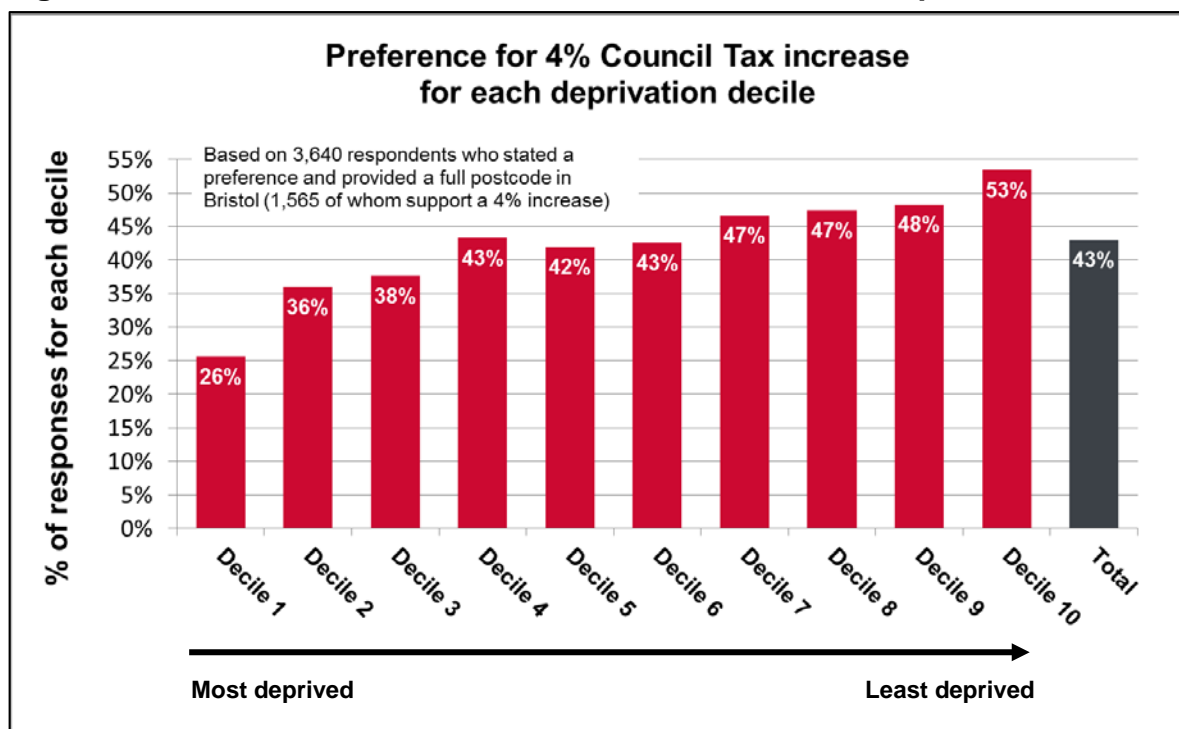


Figure 5 shows that there is highest support for a 4% Council Tax increase among respondents from areas of least deprivation. However, there is still substantial support for the 4% option in the most deprived areas (26% support for the 4% option in decile 1 and 36% support in decile 2). This rises to 53% support for a 4% increases in the least deprived decile 10.

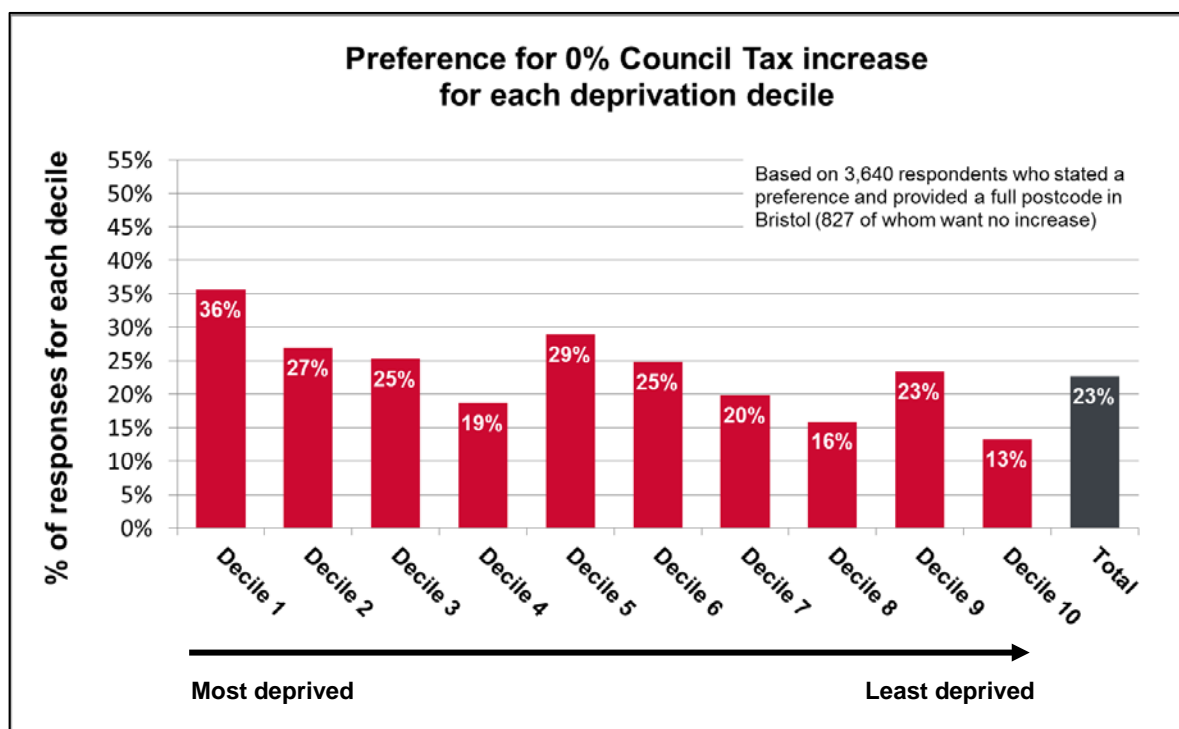
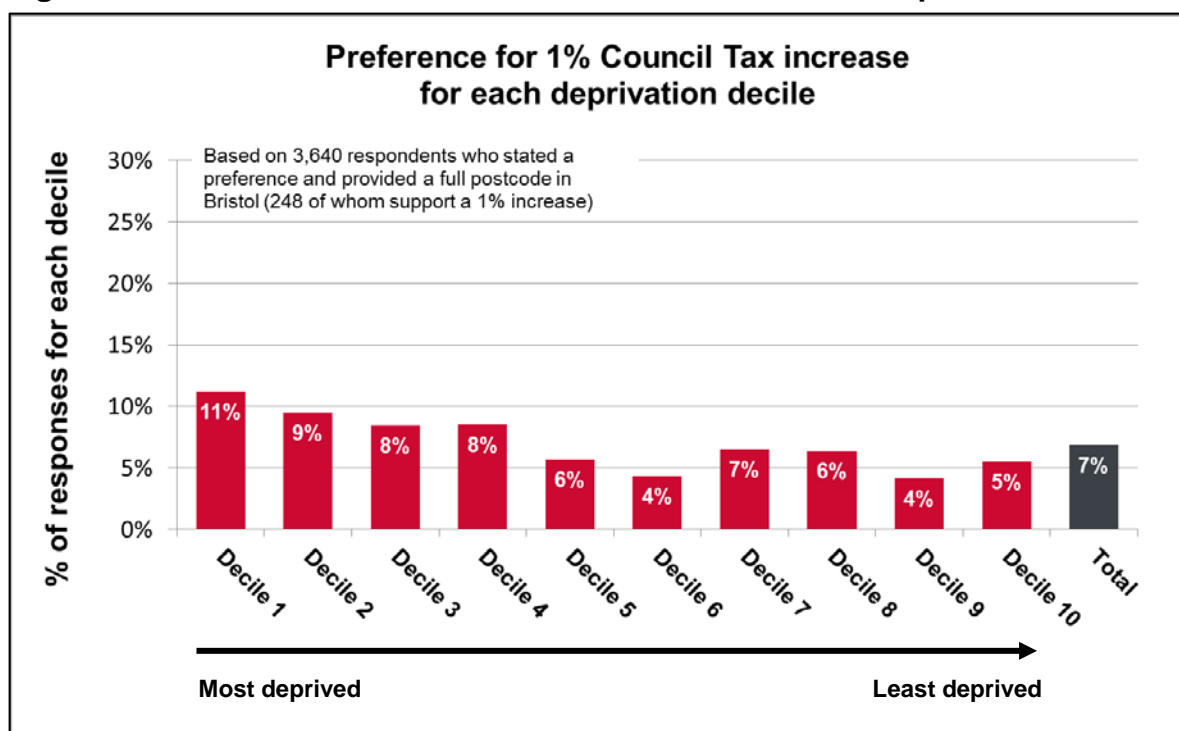
##### No increase and a 1% increase in Council Tax

Figure 6 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who want no increase in Council Tax in 2019/20. This is based on the 827 Bristol respondents who want no increase and provided a full postcode.

Figure 7 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who want a 1% increase in Council Tax, based on 248 respondents who provided a full postcode.

Figure 6 (no increase) and Figure 7 (1% increase) show the opposite trend to Figure 5 (4% increase); there is more support for no increase, or a 1% increase, in Council Tax in the more deprived areas than in less deprived areas, albeit the trend is less clear.

<sup>17</sup> Incomplete postcodes cannot be matched to the deprivation data.

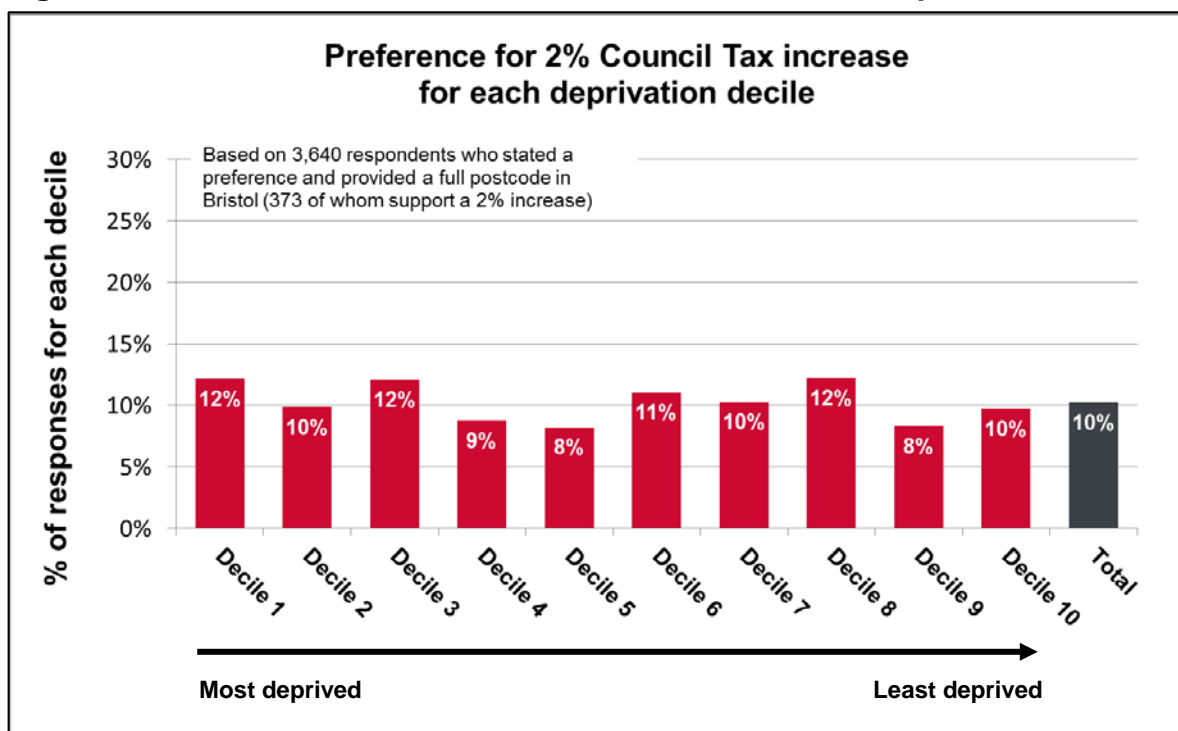
**Figure 6: Preference for no Council Tax increase in each deprivation decile****Figure 7: Preference for 1% Council Tax increase in each deprivation decile**

Figures 8 and 9 show the support for a 2% increase and 3% increase respectively, for each deprivation decile.

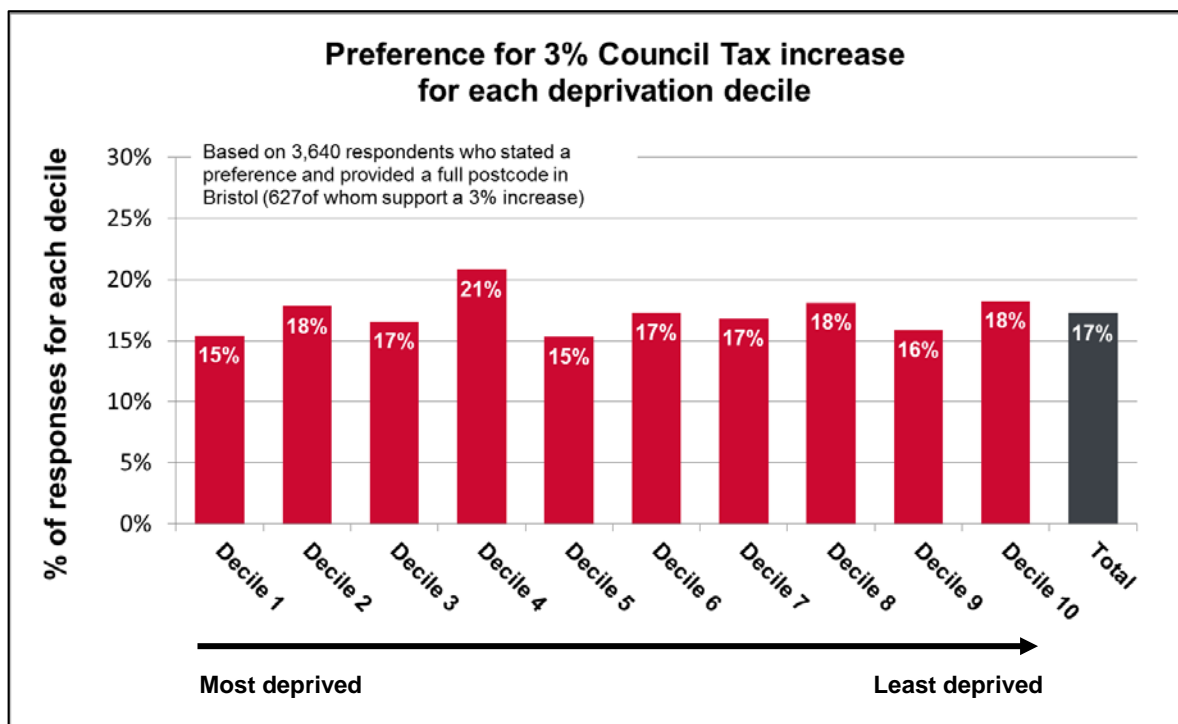
Figures 8 and 9 show no clear trend between deprivation and support for the 2% and 3% options<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Note that the percentages for the 'Total' columns in Figures 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 differ slightly from the values in Figure 4. This is because Figure 4 shows the views of all 4,521 respondents who answered question 1 whereas Figures 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 show the views of 3,640 Bristol residents who provided a full postcode. (The full postcode is needed to match against deprivation data.)

**Figure 8: Preference for 2% Council Tax increase in each deprivation decile**



**Figure 9: Preference for 3% Council Tax increase in each deprivation decile**





## 4.2 How to use an additional £2m which would be raised by a 4% increase in Council Tax

### 4.2.1 Context

Council Tax is an important source of income to the council's 'General Fund', which pays for 'day-to-day services'. Day-to-day services comprise adult social care, children's services, bin/recycling collection, transport, highways, culture and tourism, sport and leisure, neighbourhood/communities activities, energy, borrowing costs and a variety of other activities.

In addition to the General Fund, there are four other budget areas the council manages that it must keep separate from its main day-to-day spending budget. These are the capital budget, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), the public health budget and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Further Information about the General Fund and these four other budgets is provided in Appendix A. This information was included in the consultation.

In 2019/20, Council Tax would raise £208.1m if there is no increase from 2018/19 levels (Option CT1) or £214.2m if there is a 3% increase on 2018/19 levels (Option CT4)<sup>19</sup>.

A 4% increase in Council Tax (Option CT5) would raise £2m more than the council's early forecast indicates we would need for day-to-day services<sup>20</sup>. The council could use some or all of the additional £2m raised to pay for day-to-day services (i.e. the General Fund) or to help pay for the council's capital programme, or for the schools budget or public health activities<sup>21</sup>.

For respondents who had selected a 4% increase in Council Tax, question 2 asked which of the above budgets respondents would like the extra £2m to be spent on. The question was directed to respondents who selected the 4% option because only a 4% increase would raise enough money to cover the forecast cost of day-to-day services and release additional funds which could be used for other budgets.

### 4.2.2 Spending preferences between day-to-day services and 'other budgets' (capital, schools, public health)

2,357 (51%) respondents stated their preference for spending the additional £2m on the three following options:

- Spend the £2m on day-to-day services (i.e. the General Fund); or
- Spend the £2m on the capital programme, or on schools or public health activities; or
- Spend some of the £2m on day-to-day services and some on the 'other budgets' (capital, schools, public health).

Of the 2,357 respondents to the question, 1,795 had selected a Council Tax increase of 4%. (562 had selected Council Tax options of less than 4%.)

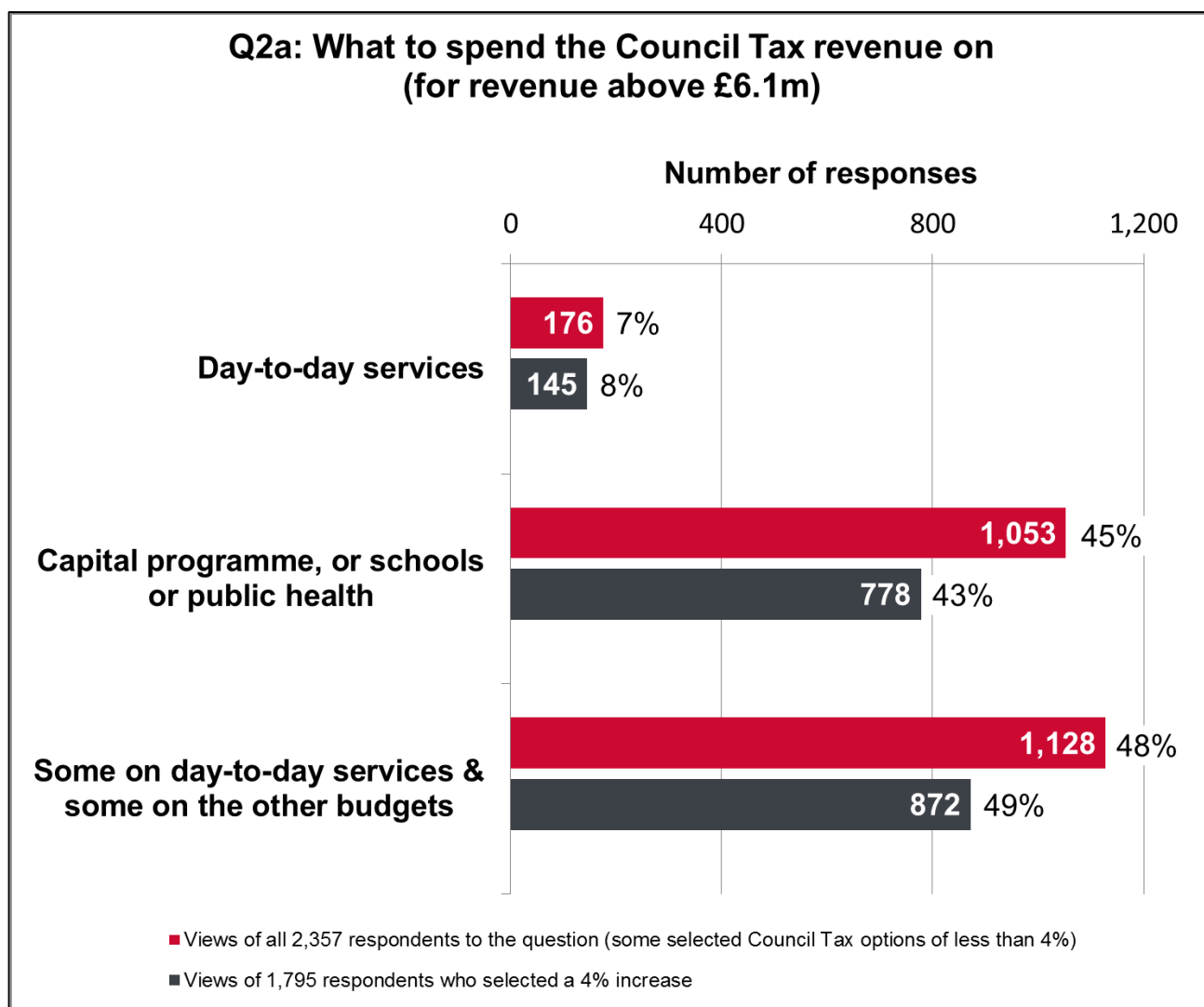
Figure 10 shows the results separately for all 2,357 respondents to the question (in red) and for the 1,795 respondents who support a 4% increase in Council Tax (in grey). The proportions of respondents who support each option are very similar for both groups.

<sup>19</sup> Other funding sources for the General Fund are business rates (£128.8m forecast for 2019/20) and grants (£21.6m forecast).

<sup>20</sup> Of the Council's spending on day-to-day services in 2018/19, approximately 40% is being used to provide adult social care. A 4% increase in Council Tax (Option CT5), if approved, would comprise an increase of 3% for core Council Tax plus an extra 1% levy (the social care precept) on top of core Council Tax, which is ringfenced to help pay for adult social care. These are maximum levels (set by government) of core Council Tax and social care precept which Bristol City Council can raise in 2019/20

<sup>21</sup> The council is not permitted to spend Council Tax on the Housing Revenue Account

**Figure 10: Spending preferences between day-to-day services and ‘other budgets’ (capital, schools, public health) for additional Council Tax revenue above £6.1m**



- The highest support is for dividing the extra £2m between day-to-day services and the ‘other budgets’ (capital, schools, public health). This option is preferred by 48% of all respondents to the question and 49% of those who support a 4% Council Tax increase.
- Almost as many people would prefer all the £2m to be spent on the capital or schools or public health budgets. This option is supported by 45% of all respondents to the question and by 43% of respondents who support a 4% increase in Council Tax.
- Few respondents want all the additional £2m to be spent on day-to-day services supported by the General Fund (7% of all respondents; 8% of respondents who selected a 4% increase).

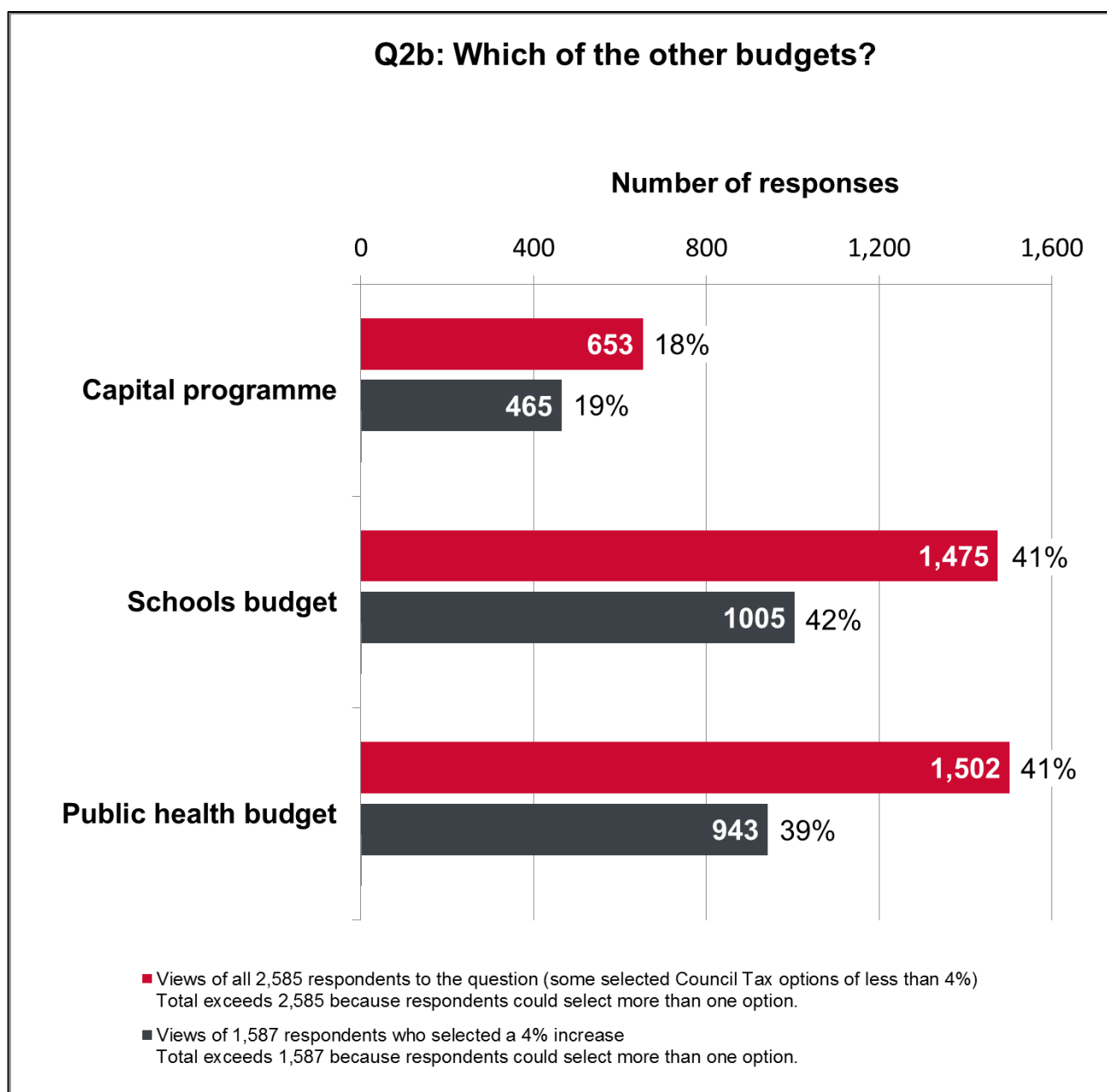
#### 4.2.3 Spending preferences between the capital or schools or public health budgets

2,585 (56%)<sup>22</sup> respondents indicated which of the three ‘other budgets’ (capital, schools and public health) they would like some or all of the additional £2m to be spent on. Of these, 1,587 were respondents who had selected a 4% increase in Council Tax and 998 had selected smaller increases in Council Tax.

<sup>22</sup> 2,585 respondents who expressed a preference for which of the three ‘other budgets’ is more than the number of respondents (2,181) who indicated that they wanted some or all of the £2m spent on the ‘other budgets’ in the first part question 2 (Figure 10). This is because some respondents chose between the capital budget, schools budget and public health budget but did not answer the first part of the question 2.

Figure 11 shows the results for all 2,585 respondents to the question (in red) and for the 1,587 respondents who support a 4% increase in Council Tax (in grey). The proportions of respondents who support each option are very similar for both groups.

**Figure 11: Spending preferences between capital, schools or public health budgets**



Support for additional spending on the schools budget and the public health budget are both high:

- 41% of all respondents (42% of respondents who opted for a 4% Council Tax increase) would prefer some or all of the £2m to be spent on the schools budget.
- 41% of all respondents (39% of respondents who want a 4% Council Tax increase) would like some or all of the £2m to be spent on the public health budget.

Fewer respondents support some or all of the £2m to be spent on the capital programme; 18% of all respondents (19% of respondents who opted for a 4% Council Tax increase) support this option.

#### 4.2.4 Differences in spending preferences in areas with different levels of deprivation

Responses to question 2 were compared for respondents from different deprivation deciles.

##### Spending preferences between day-to-day services and ‘other budgets’

Figure 12 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who stated they would prefer all of the £2m to be spent on day-to-day services (i.e. the General Fund).

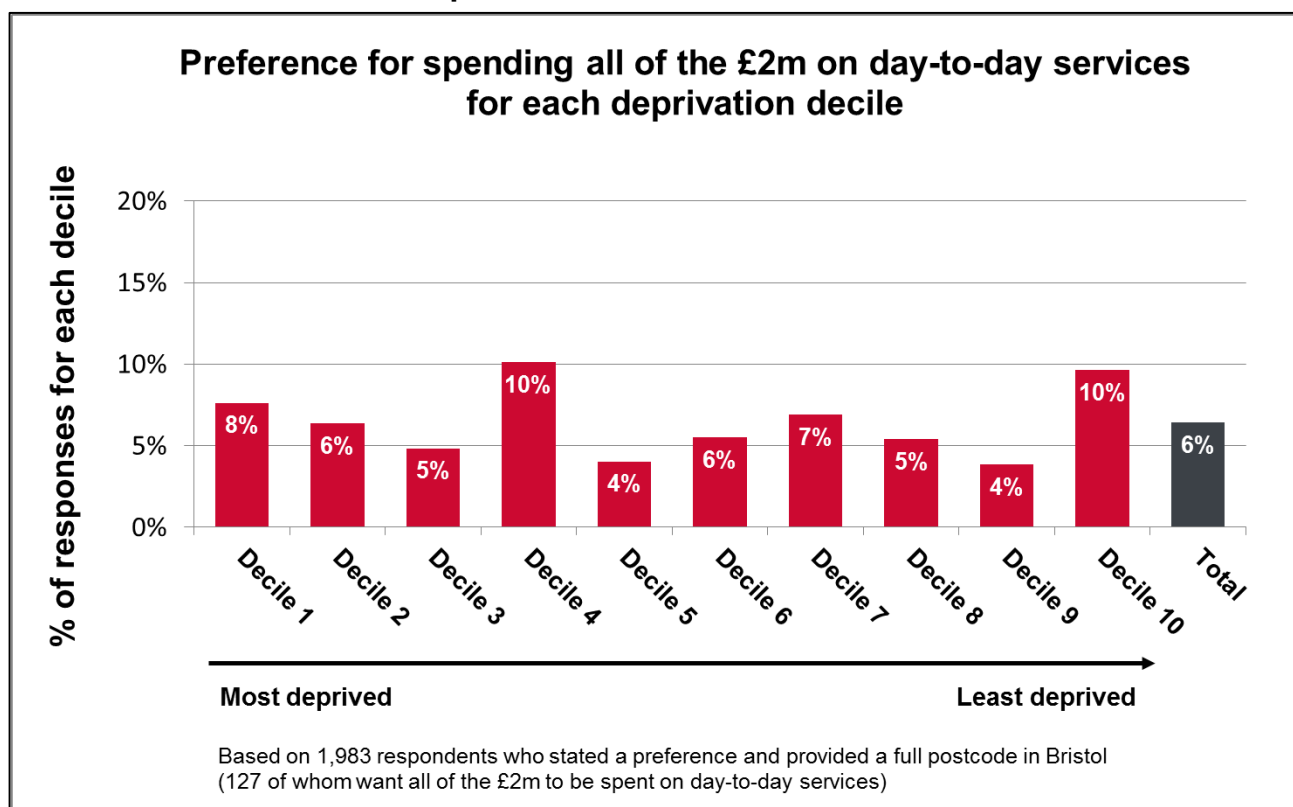
Figure 13 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who stated they would prefer all of the £2m to be spent on the capital programme, or on schools or public health activities.

Figure 14 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who stated they would prefer some of the £2m to be spent on day-to-day services and some to be spent on the ‘other budgets’ (capital, schools, public health).

Figures 12, 13 and 14 show the results for all respondents to the question (including those who had selected a Council Tax option of less than 4%) who also provided a full postcode in Bristol<sup>23</sup>. (This is the breakdown of the responses in red in Figure 10.)

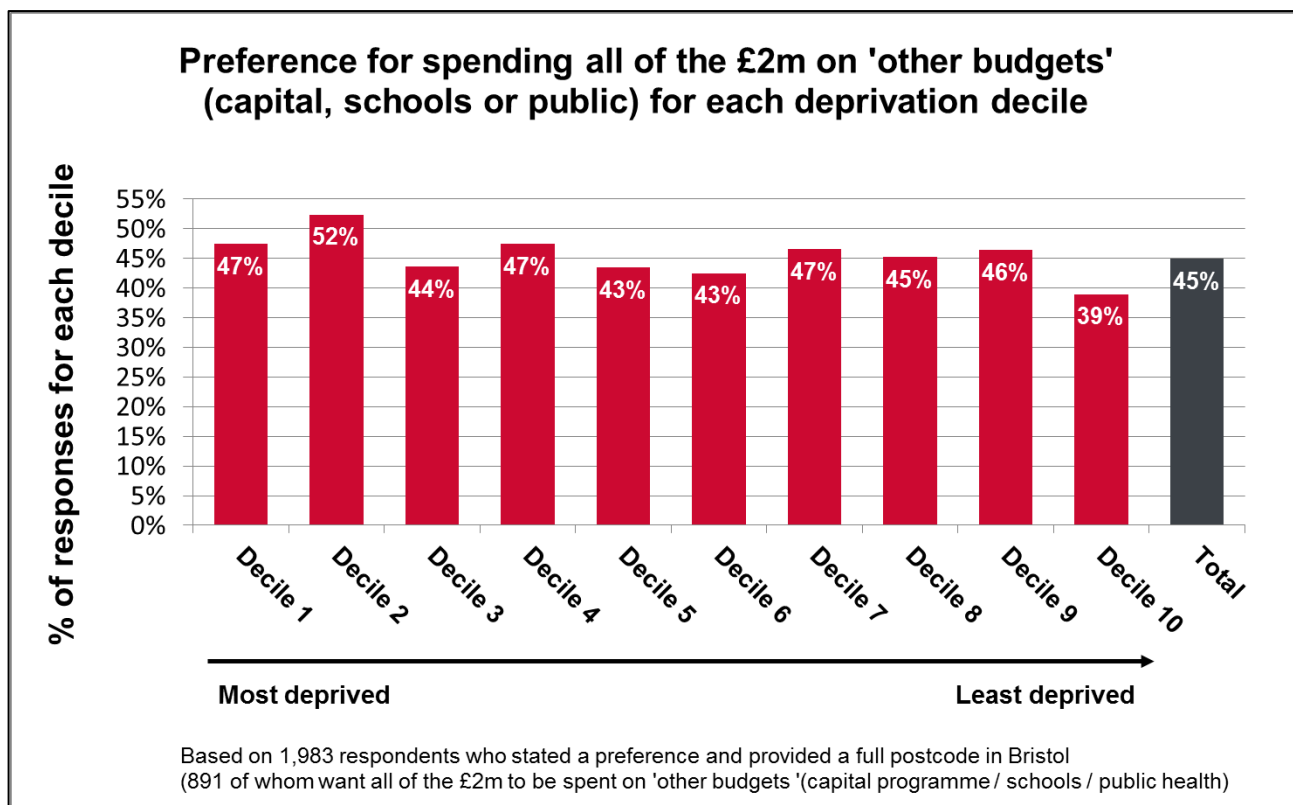
Figures 12, 13 and 14 indicate no clear trends in the level of support for any of the options between areas of high and low deprivation.

**Figure 12: Preference for all of the £2m to be spent on day-to-day services – variation between areas of different deprivation**

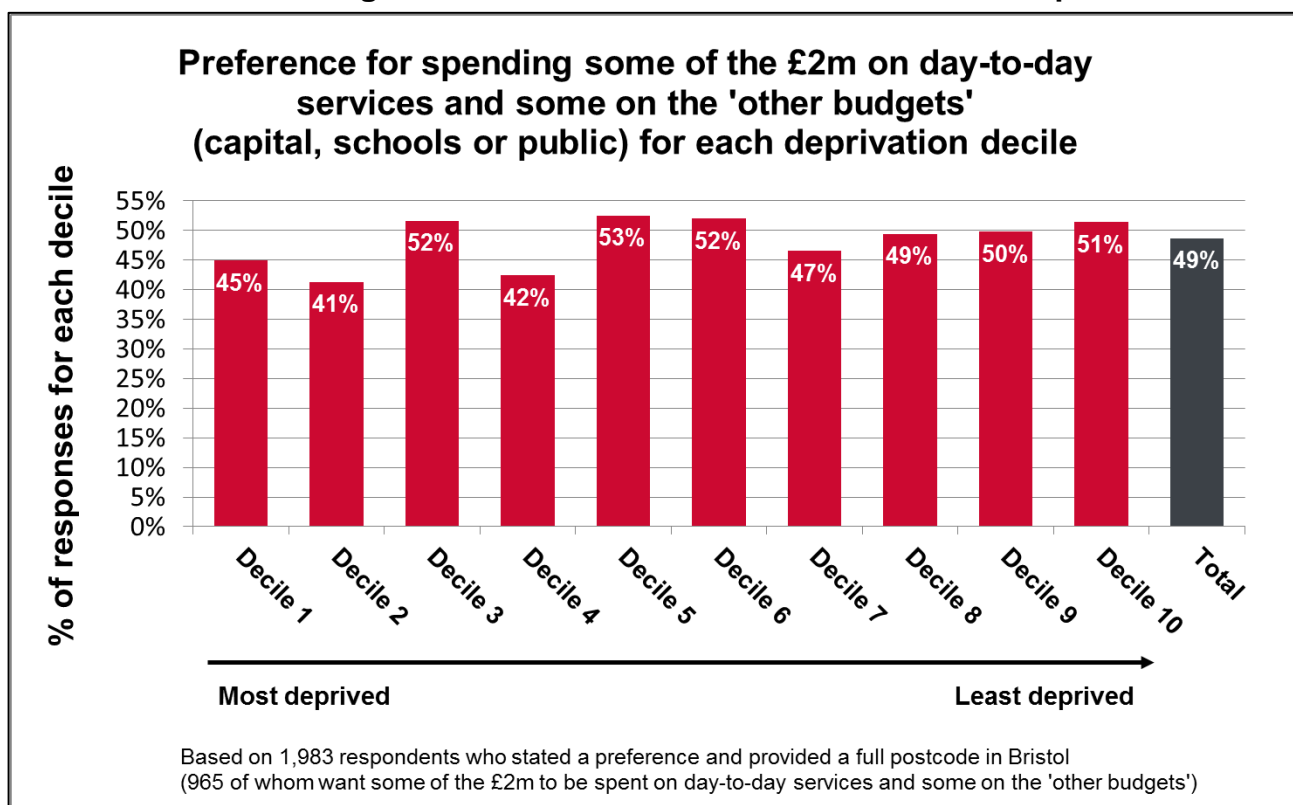


<sup>23</sup> A full postcode in Bristol is required to match a response to a deprivation decile

**Figure 13: Preference for all of the £2m to be spent on the capital programme, or on schools or public health activities – variation between areas of different deprivation**



**Figure 14: Preference for some of the £2m to be spent on day-to-day services and some on the 'other budgets' – variation between areas of different deprivation**

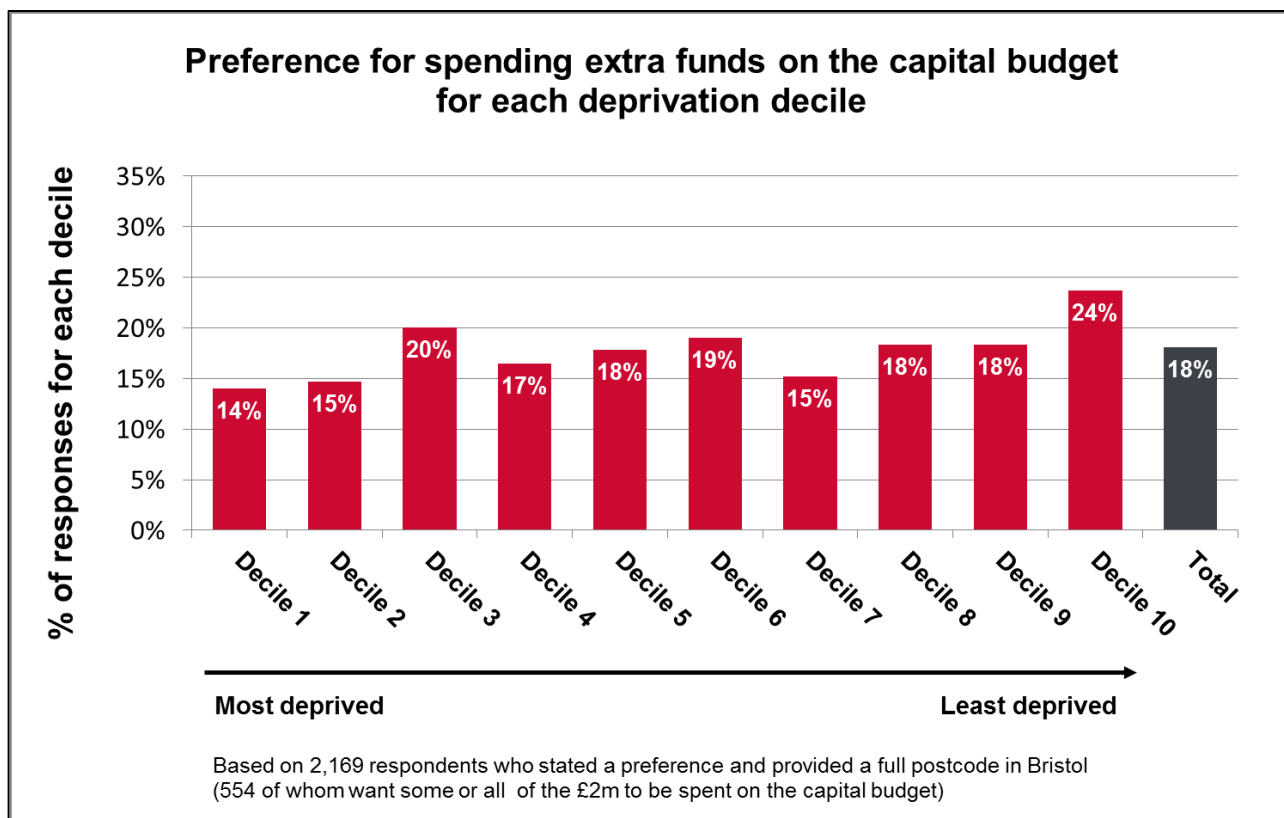


## Spending preferences between the capital or schools or public health budgets

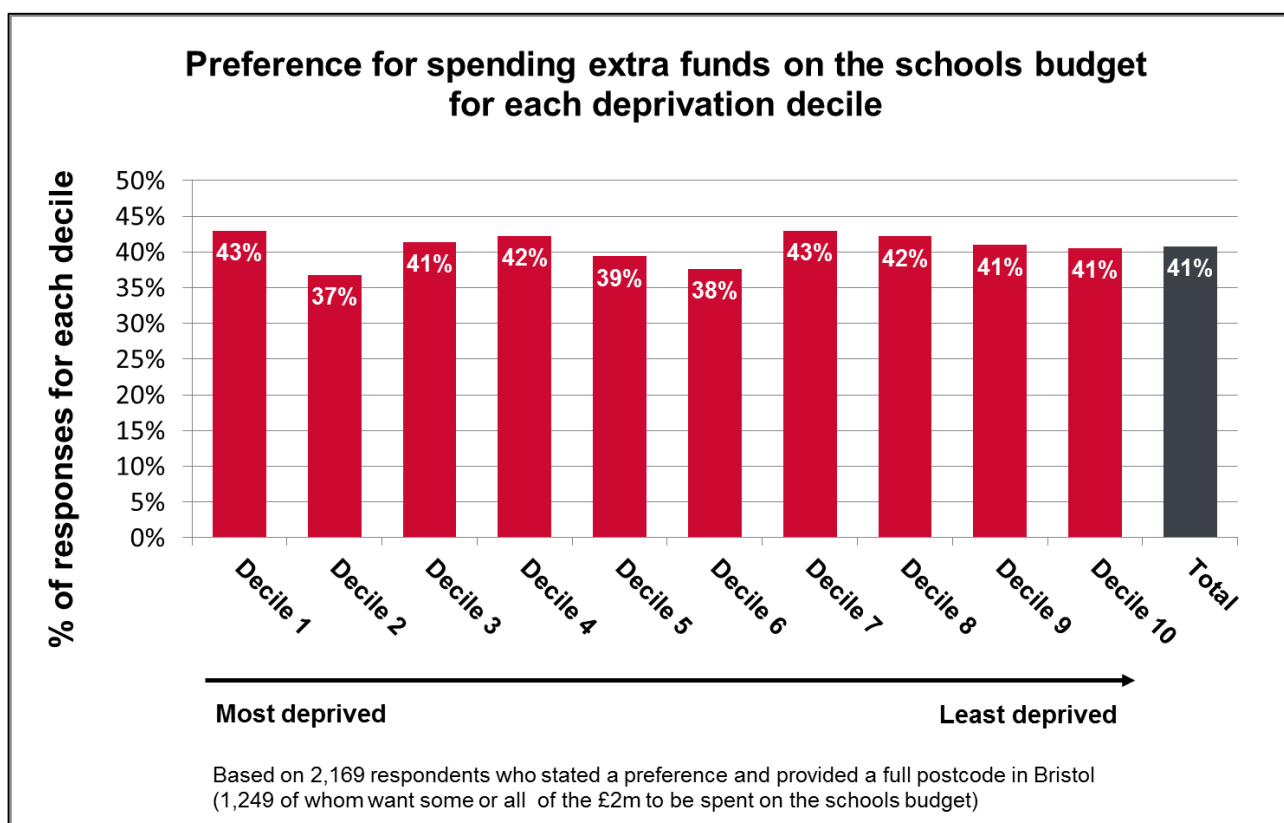
Figure 15 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who stated they would prefer some or all of the £2m to be spent on the capital budget.

Figures 16 and 17 show the equivalent preference, by deprivation decile, for spending additional funds on the schools budget and public health budget, respectively.

**Figure 15: Preference by deprivation decile for extra spending on the capital budget**



**Figure 16: Preference by deprivation decile for extra spending on the schools budget**





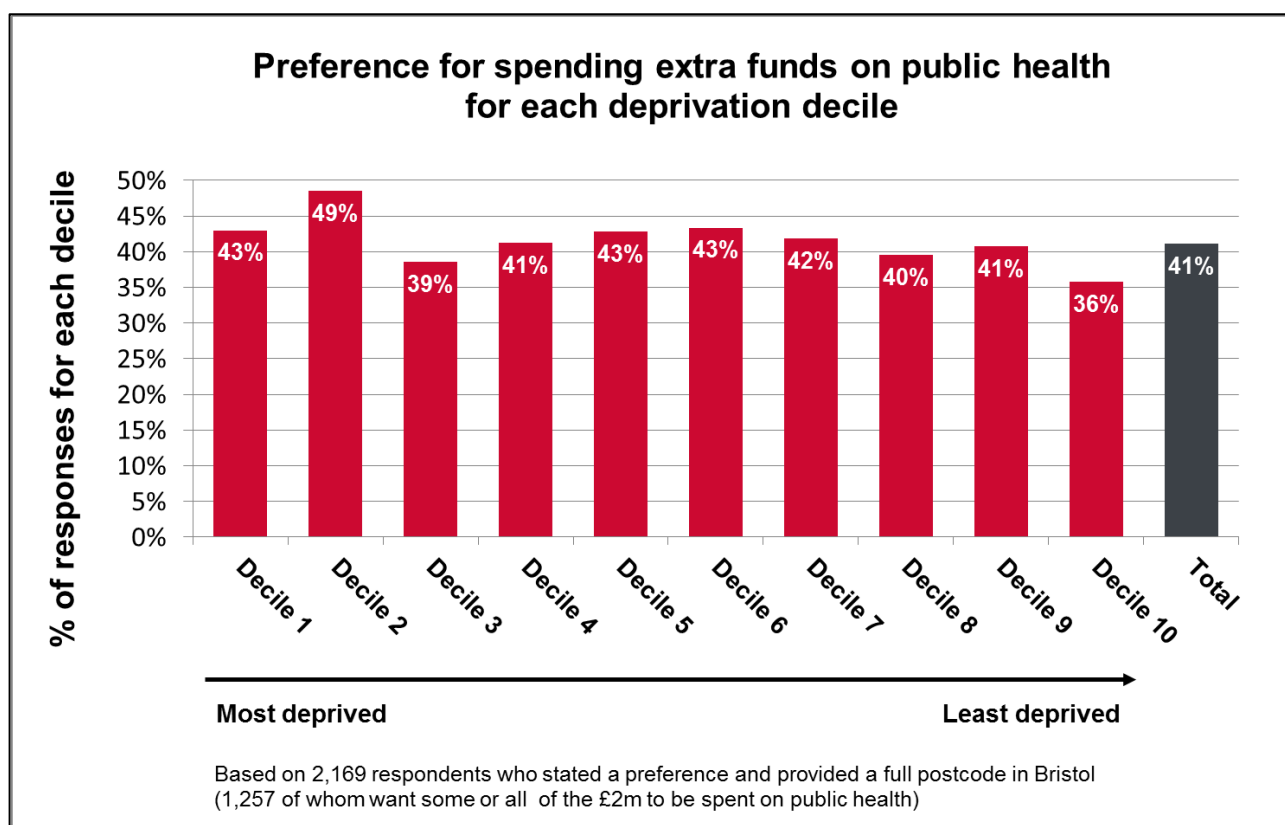
**Figure 17: Preference by deprivation decile for extra spending on public health**

Figure 15 appears to show that support for additional spending on the capital budget may be higher in areas of lower deprivation, although deciles 3 and 7 do not fit this trend.

Figures 16 and 17 show no apparent trends between deprivation and the level of support for additional spending on schools or public health.

### 4.3 Reasons for respondents' preferred Council Tax increase and spending priorities

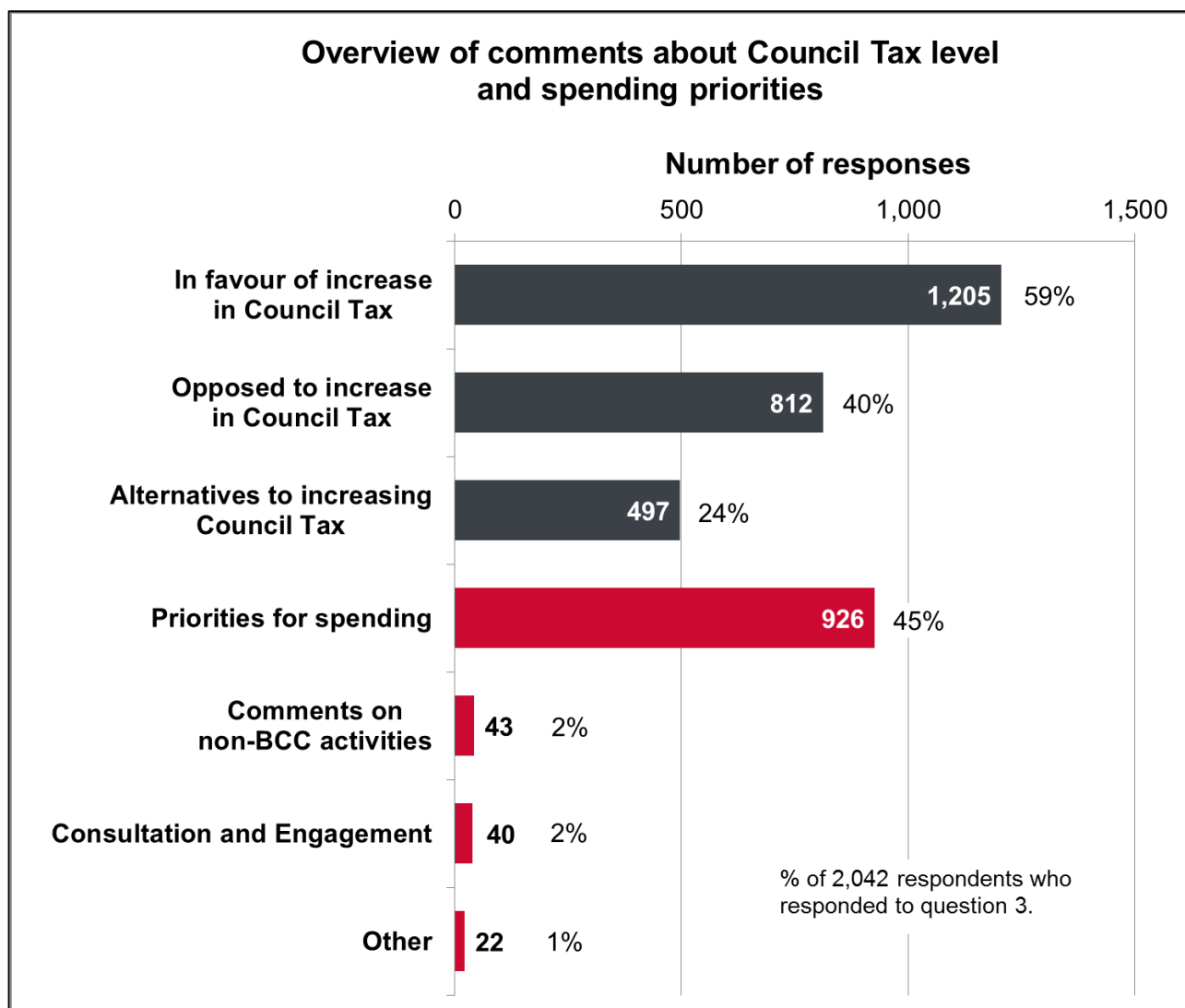
#### 4.3.1 Overview

In question 3, respondents were invited to explain why they had chosen their preferred option for the level of Council Tax increase (question 1) and their preference for how to spend the additional £2m which could be raised by a 4% increase (question 2).

2,042 (44%) of the respondents provided free text feedback to this question. All comments were categorised into themes and themes put forward by 10 or more people are summarised below and in Figure 18.

- 1,205 (59% of respondents to question 3) provided reasons why they were in favour of increasing Council Tax. A breakdown is provided in section 4.3.2);
- 812 (40%) stated why they opposed an increase in Council Tax (section 4.3.3);
- 497 (24%) suggested alternatives to increasing Council Tax (section 4.3.4). (These were in addition to the respondents' suggestions in question 4);
- 926 (45%) identified their priorities for spending available budget (section 4.3.5);
- 43 (2%) made recommendations for activities for which Bristol City Council is not responsible (e.g. the NHS or emergency services).
- 40 (2%) provided comments about the consultation.
- There were 22 (1%) comments on other themes.

The total number of comments for the above themes exceeds 2,042 because some respondents addressed several themes.

**Figure 18: Overview of comments about Council Tax level and spending priorities**

#### 4.3.2 Comments in favour of increasing Council Tax

1,205 (59%) respondents provided their reasons for supporting an increase in Council Tax (Figure 19).

928 (45%) said that an increase in Council Tax is necessary to preserve or improve services provided by the council.

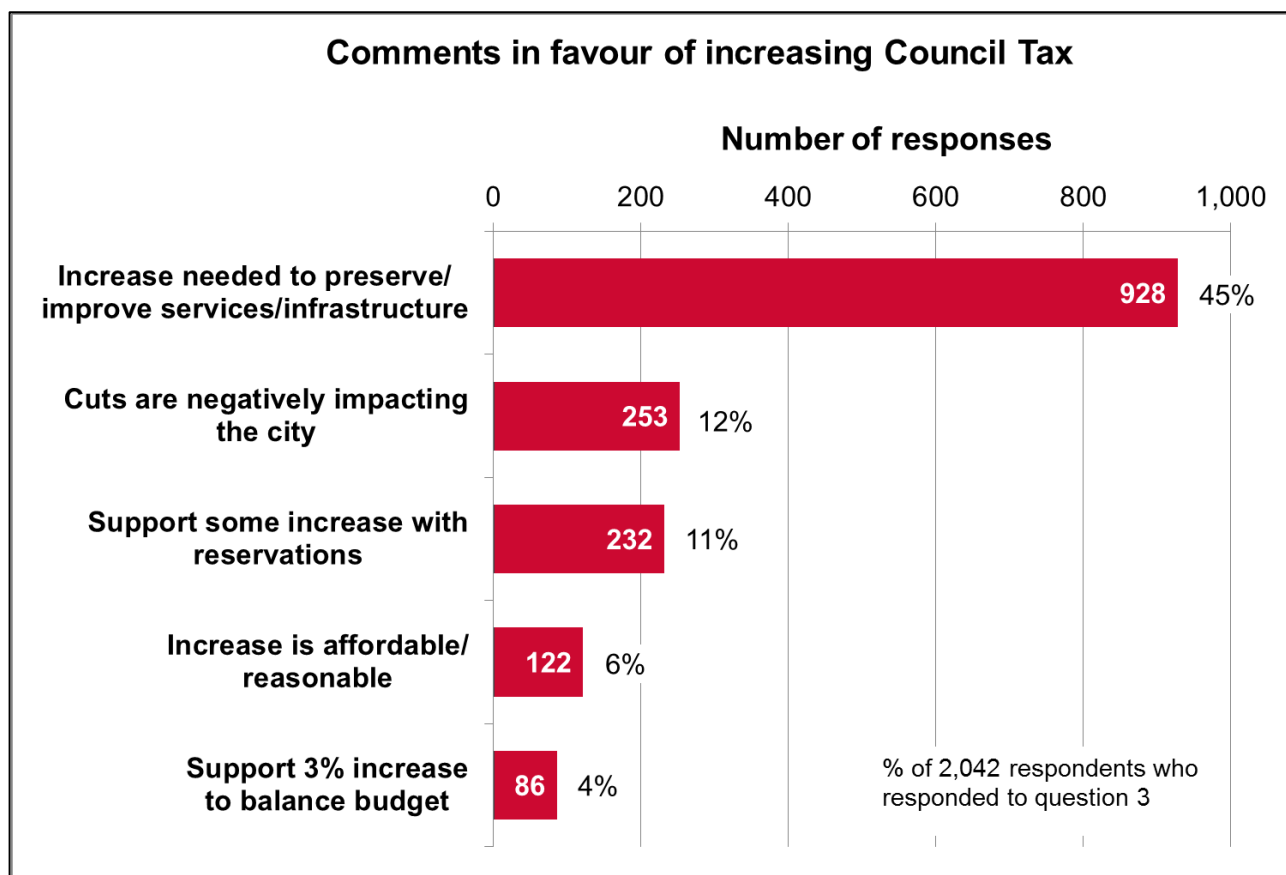
253 (12%) said that cuts were having negative impacts on the city, of whom, 190 (9%) were angry or concerned about the past decade of austerity.

232 (11%) supported some increase in Council Tax but with reservations, of whom:

- 106 (5%) said the increase they had chosen was proportionate to inflation or to low increases in their wages or pension;
- 80 (4%) supported some increase but were concerned about other people who might be unable to pay;
- 67 (3%) supported some increase alongside further cost savings and/or income generation by the council to balance its budget.

122 (6%) said that the increase they chose was affordable, of whom 93 (5%) selected an increase of 3% or 4% and the remaining 29 (1%) selected an increase of 1%, 2% or 3%.

86 (4%) respondents stated that they had selected a 3% increase to balance the budget but were not prepared to pay more than was required.

**Figure 19: Comments in favour of increasing Council Tax**

#### 4.3.3 Comments opposed to increasing Council Tax

812 (40%) respondents provided their reasons for opposing an increase in Council Tax (Figure 20).

523 (26%) said that an increase would be unaffordable of whom 302 (15%) noted that wages, pensions or benefits had not increased in recent years to keep pace with Council Tax increases.

278 (14%) said that an increase was not justifiable, of whom:

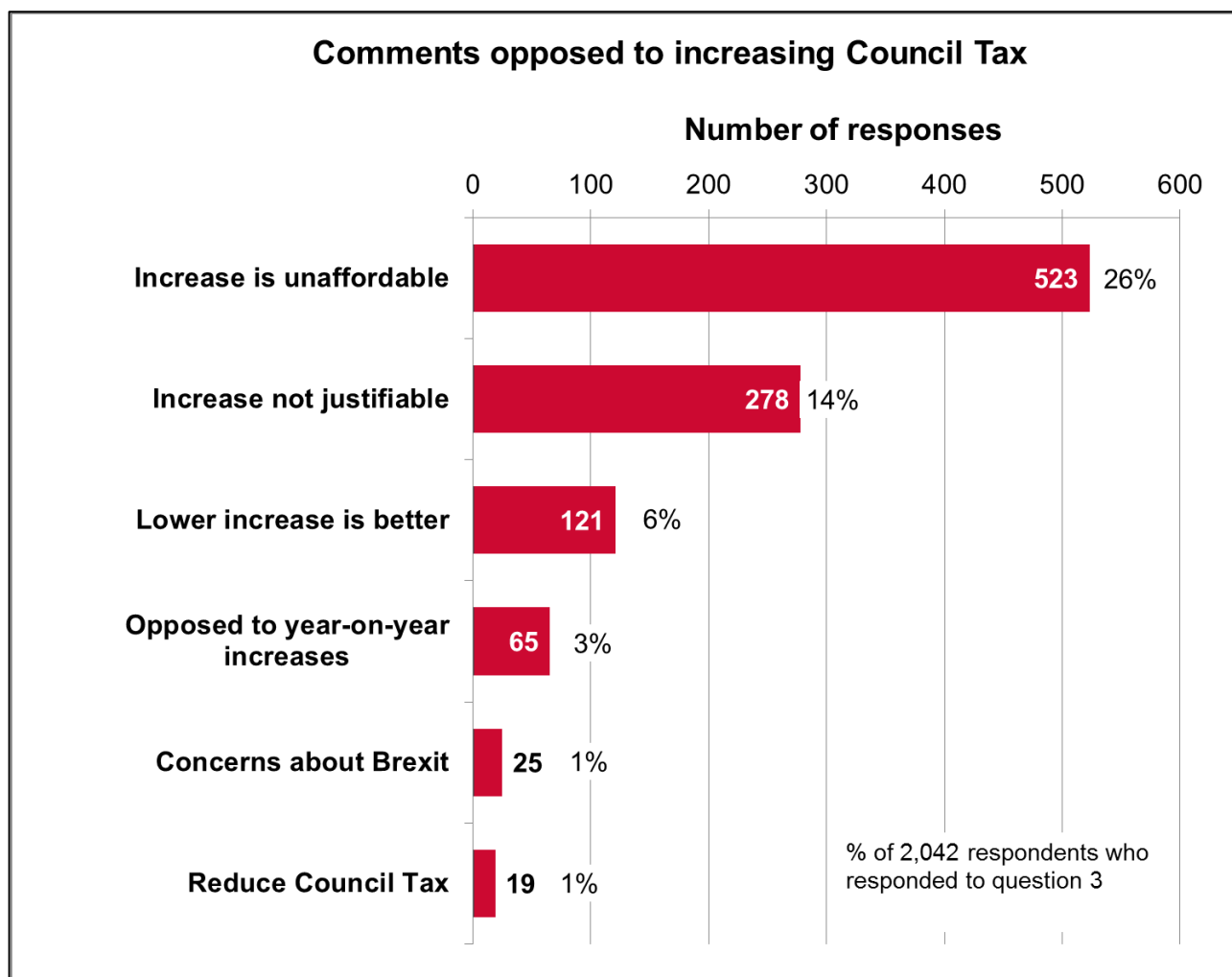
- 153 (7%) thought that the additional tax would not be spent effectively;
- 67 (3%) stated that the Council Tax is high and the quality of services is low;
- 57 (3%) do not use, or feel they do not benefit from, council services and were not prepared to pay more for people who do; and
- 43 (2%) thought it was unfair to expect residents alone to pay for the budget gap.

121 (6%) respondents considered that a low, or no, increase would be better, of whom 89 (4%) expressed their concern for people on low income and 11 (1%) thought a low, or no, increase would encourage the council to continue to seek savings.

65 (3%) respondents said they opposed a Council Tax rise in 2019/20 because of repeated annual increases in recent years.

25 (1%) said that the financial uncertainty around Brexit made them not want an increase in Council Tax.

19 (1%) wanted a reduction in Council Tax.

**Figure 20: Comments opposed to increasing Council Tax**

#### 4.3.4 Alternatives to increasing Council Tax

497 (24%) respondents proposed alternatives to increasing Council Tax to bridge part or all of the budget gap (Figure 21).

183 (9%) suggested that the council should make further savings, cut waste and increase its efficiency in order to save money.

108 (5%) should save money by further cuts to services or projects. Of these:

- 55 (3%) said that the council should stop spending money on “vanity projects”;
- 17 (1%) suggested reducing the social care bill;
- 13 (1%) recommended cutting all/ non-essential services;
- 12 (1%) wanted the council to reduce its spending on major projects

86 (4%) said that central government should pay more, noting that national funding would spread costs between wealthier and poorer parts of the country.

77 (4%) recommended cutting staffing costs by reducing the number and/or cost of senior managers, general staff and/or politicians.

74 (4%) want a fairer form of local taxation. Suggestions included a local income tax, a flat rate of local tax regardless of house size or value, revaluing Council Tax bands to reflect changes in house value, differential rates of annual Council Tax increase with residents in the higher bands receiving a greater percentage increase, or a charging regime based on the amount each household uses council services.

69 (3%) said the council should make more savings.

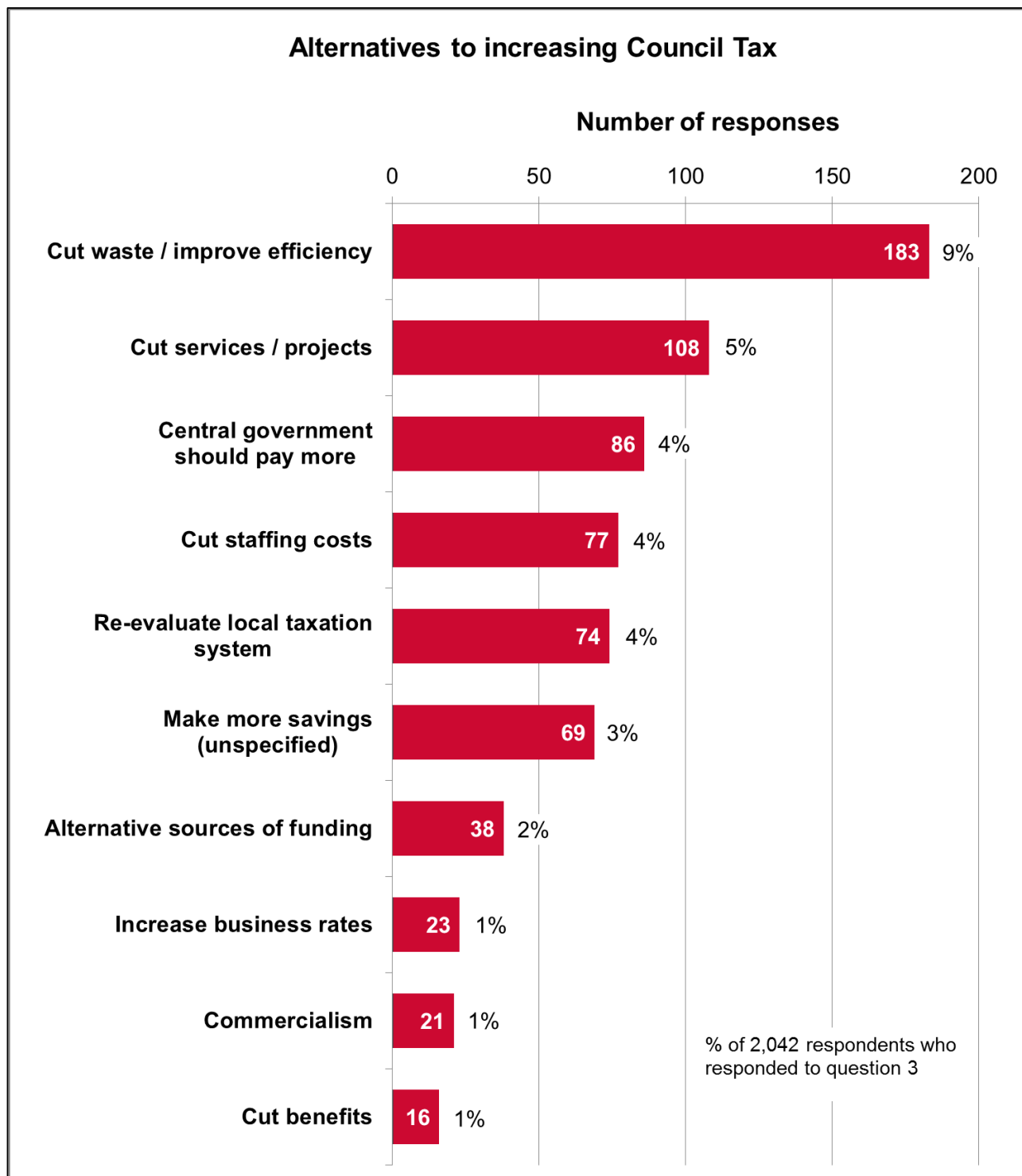
38 (2%) suggested that the council should increase the contribution of alternative sources of funding, including grants, fines and increasing Council Tax collection rates.

23 (1%) proposed raising business rates.

21 (1%) recommended the council should become more commercial; charging for services, hiring or selling its assets and running more businesses.

16 (1%) proposed a reduction on benefits and a crackdown on benefit fraud.

**Figure 21: Alternatives to increasing Council Tax**



### 4.3.5 Suggested priorities for council spending

926 (45%) respondents identified their priorities for spending available budgets in their free text response to question 3 (Figure 22).

#### Education

411 (20%) said that additional funds should be spent on education. Of these:

- 74 (4%) specified that SEND provision should be prioritised;
- 22 (1%) wanted to prioritise Children's Centres and early years education.

#### Public Health

- 211 (10%) said that funding public health should be a priority, of whom 181 (9%) highlighted that this would be a long-term investment in preventing illness and 29 (1%) identified mental health provision as a priority.

#### Capital programme

- 122 (6%) of the respondents said the council should prioritise the capital programme, of whom 57 (3%) specified prioritising transport projects.
- 13 (1%) want the council to reduce or stop spending on the capital programme.

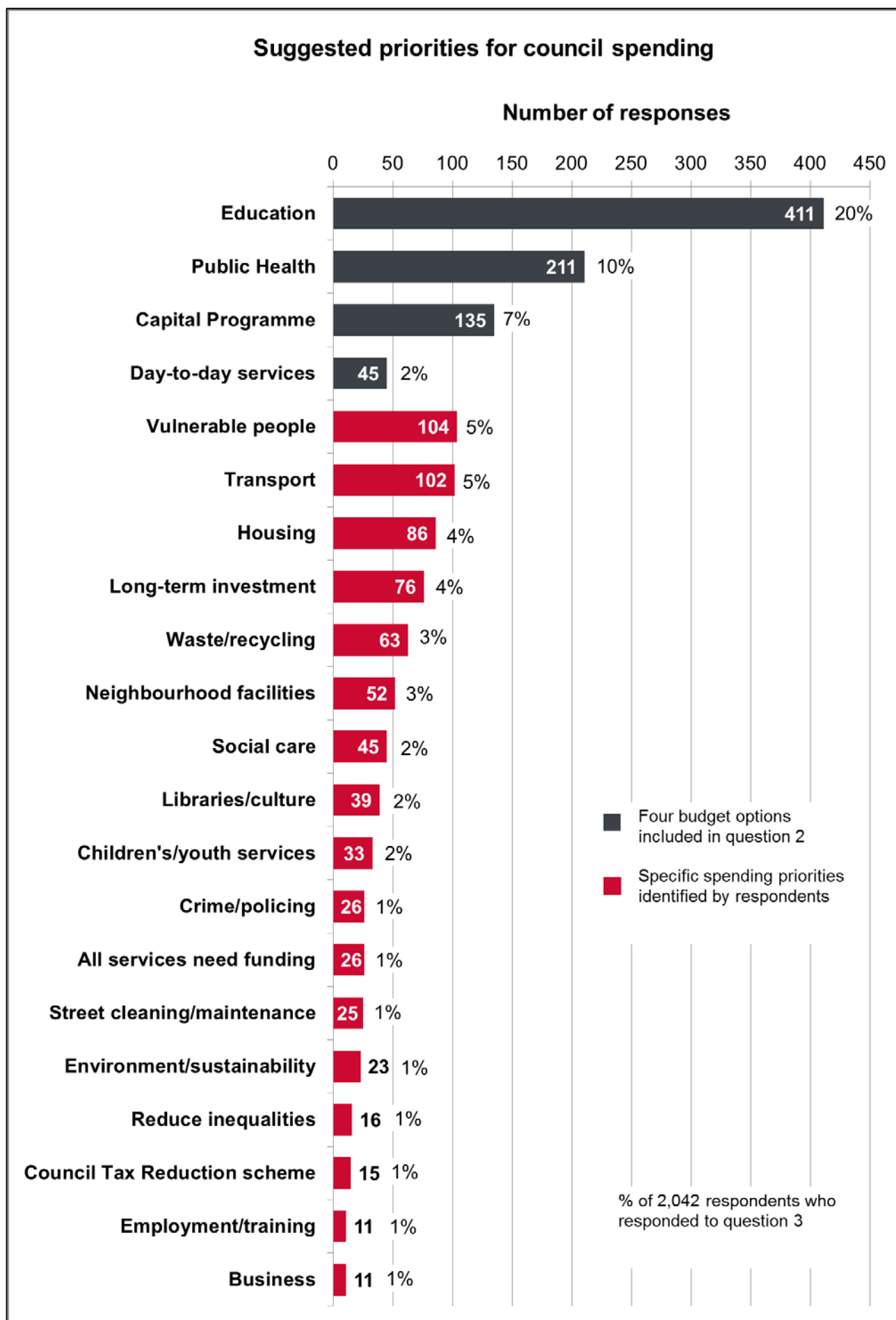
#### Day-to-day services

- 45 (2%) stated that the council should prioritise 'day-to-day services'.

#### Other priorities

926 (45%) of respondents identified specific services as priorities. Many of these services can also be described as 'day to day' services but have not been added to the 2% above.

- 104 (5%) wanted to prioritise services to help vulnerable people.
- 102 (5%) said that transport should receive more funding.
- 86 (4%) suggested that the council should prioritise housing.
- 76 (4%) said that investment must be sufficient to have a long-term effect.
- 63 (3%) suggested that refuse collection and recycling should be prioritised.
- 52 (3%) wanted to safeguard spending on neighbourhood facilities including parks and green spaces and public toilets.
- 45 (2%) would prioritise social care.
- 39 (2%) want to preserve funding for libraries and culture.
- 33 (2%) want to fund children's and youth services.
- 26 (1%) want to direct funds for crime prevention and policing.
- 26 (1%) said that all services required more funding.
- 25 (1%) want to improve funding on street cleaning and maintenance.
- 23 (1%) commented that the environment and sustainability should be prioritised.
- 16 (1%) want spending to reduce inequalities.
- 15 (1%) want funding to preserve the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- 11 (1%) want the council to work to reduce unemployment and provide training.
- 11 (1%) want spending to promote and support business.

**Figure 22: Suggested priorities for council spending**



### 4.3.6 Other comments

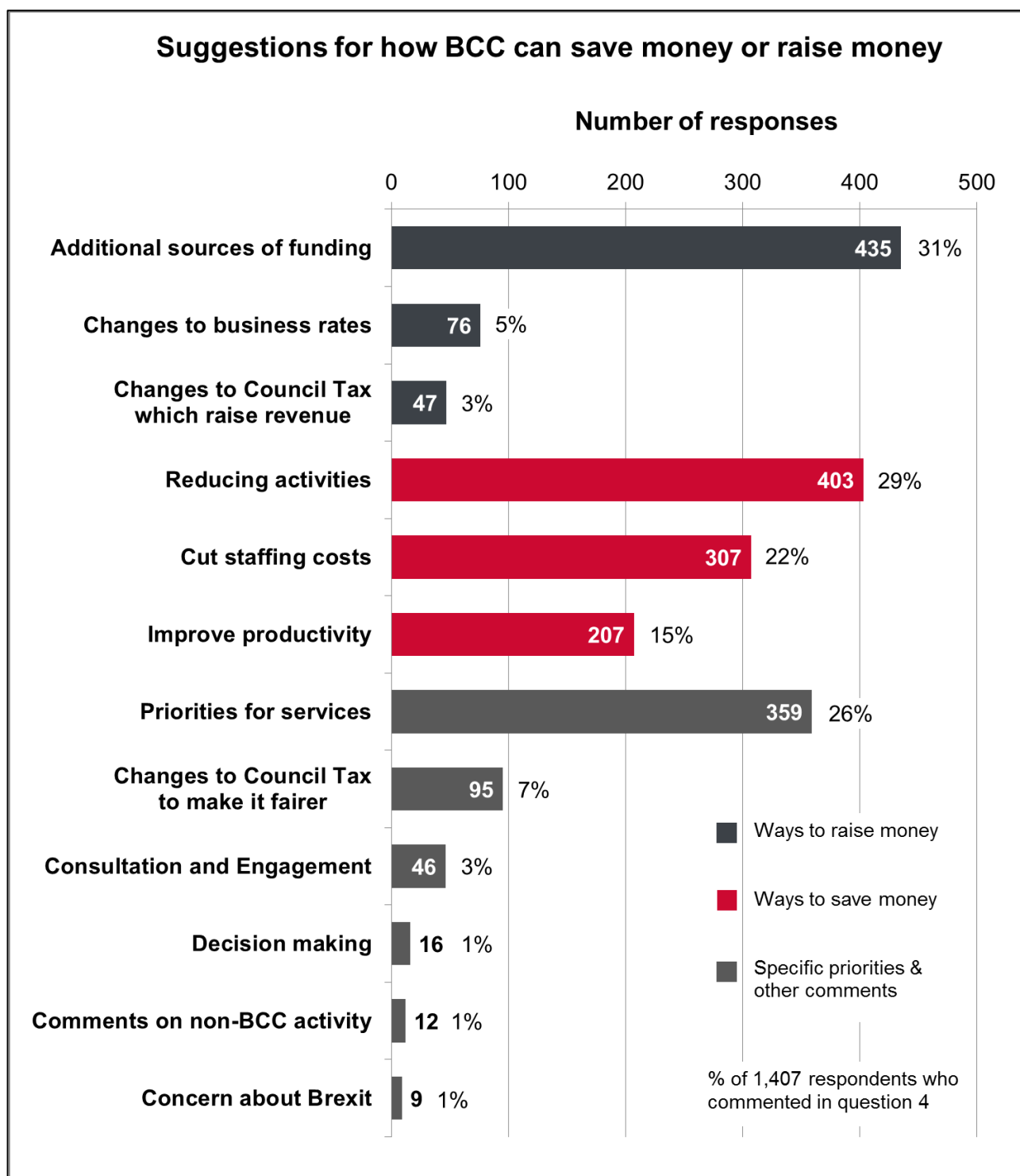
- 40 (2%) made comments about the consultation, saying that they felt they did not have enough information to make a decision
- 10 (<1%) believe that the council will ignore public opinion and will do what it wants.

## 4.4 Suggestions for ways the council can save money or raise more income

### 4.4.1 Overview

In question 4, respondents were invited to provide their suggestions for how the council can save money or raise money. 1,407 (30%) respondents provided their ideas as free text. All comments were categorised into themes and are summarised in Figures 23 and 24.

**Figure 23: Overview of suggestions for how BCC can save or generate more money**



## **Ways to raise money**

435 (31%) suggested a variety of additional sources of funding which are described in section 4.4.2.

In addition, 76 (5%) proposed changes to business rates and 47 (3%) suggested changes to Council Tax which would generate more revenue. Of these:

- 64 (5%) recommended increasing business rates;
- 9 (1%) suggested charging landlords of houses in multiple occupancy (HMOs) business rates or an alternative additional levy;
- 8 (1%) proposed charging universities business rates or an alternative levy equivalent to the Council Tax which is not levied on their students;
- 24 (2%) advocated charging students (or their landlords) Council Tax;
- 18 (2%) suggested a voluntary contribution to Council Tax;
- 2 (<1%) would like to charge Council Tax to people living in vehicles in Bristol;
- 2 (<1%) would like a referendum on increasing Council Tax by more than 4%.

## **Ways to save money**

403 (29%) suggested ways in which the council could scale back its activities to reduce its budget requirement.

307 (22%) recommended approaches to further reduce the council's staffing costs.

207 (15%) proposed ways to improve productivity.

A breakdown of these suggestions is in section 4.4.3.

## **Priorities for services**

As part of their suggestions for saving or raising money, 359 (26%) respondents identified which services were their priorities for continued or increased funding. These are described in section 4.4.4.

## **Other comments**

95 (7%) suggested other changes to Council Tax or a wholesale change to local taxation to make it fairer. These mirrored the comments from question 3 described in section 4.3.4.

46 (3%) made comments about the consultation process, of whom:

- 28 (2%) would like more information in the consultation;
- 11 (1%) were positive about the consultation; and
- 8 (1%) want fewer consultations.

16 (1%) comments were about the council's decision-making process of which 10 (1%) said that councillors and officers are best placed to decide on budget priorities. Six (<1%) said that the council needs to demonstrate to the public that feedback to consultations influences decisions.

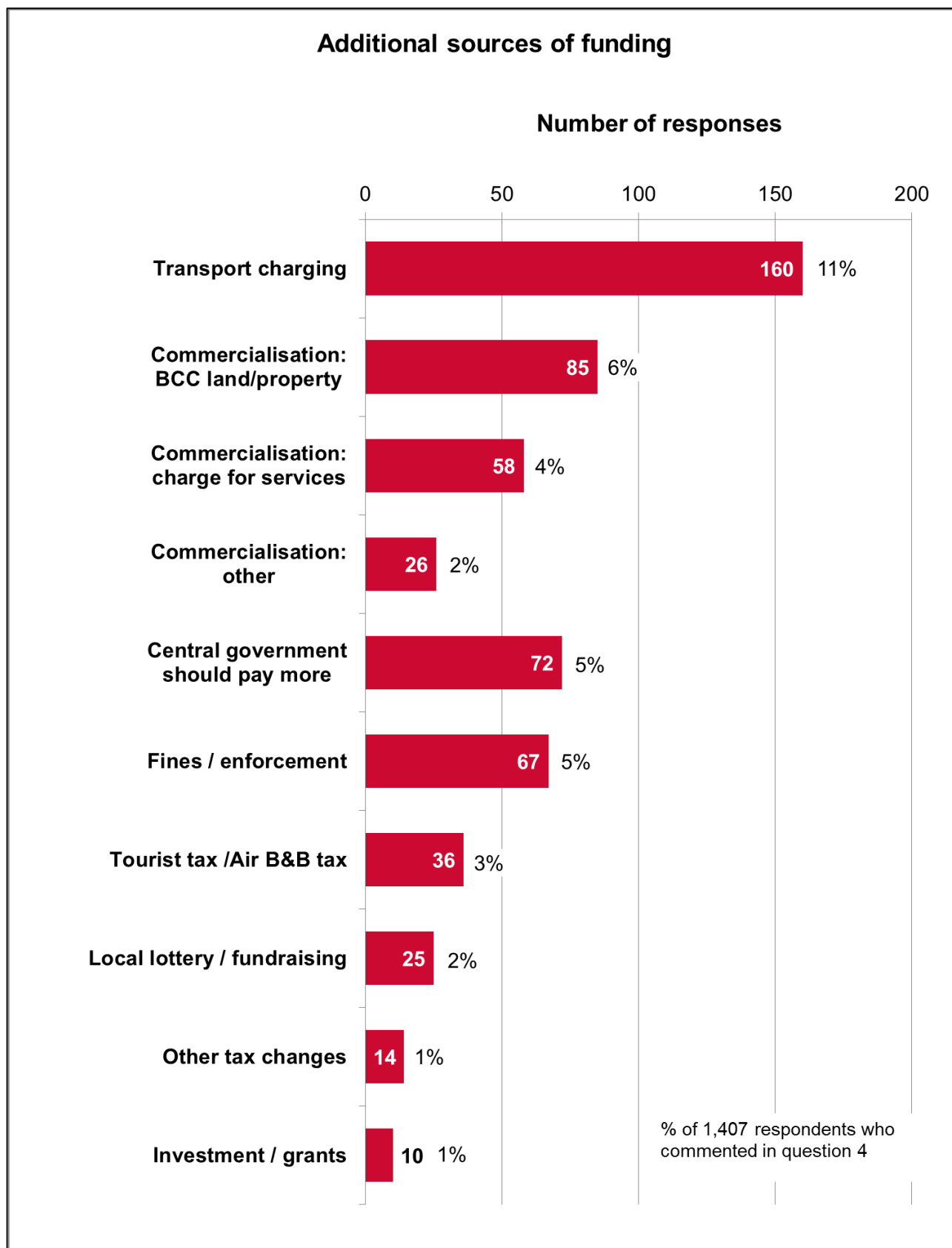
12 (1%) commented on activities which are not part of Bristol City Council's responsibility, including the NHS, emergency services, MP salaries and national taxation.

9 (1%) raised their concerns about anticipated financial effects of Brexit.

#### 4.4.2 Suggestions for ways to raise money

435 (31%) respondents suggested additional sources of funding. These are summarised in Figure 24.

**Figure 24: Respondents' suggestions for additional sources of funding**



160 (11%) respondents proposed potential transport charges. Of these:

- 94 (7%) recommended a congestion charge;
- 58 (4%) supported workplace parking levy and/or residents' parking;
- 22 (2%) proposed a clean air zone.

85 (6%) suggested increased commercialisation of the council's property, including:

- 28 (2%) who advocated retaining and developing council land and buildings to provide a future revenue stream;
- 20 (1%) who recommended selling off council land or buildings to cover the budget gap and or investing to reduce future costs;
- 20 (1%) who thought the council should hire out its buildings and facilities more.

58 (4%) recommended charging for more council services.

26 (2%) suggested other commercial ventures including running more events, selling advertising and selling paintings.

72 (5%) thought central government should fund local authorities more and the council had a role in lobbying for this.

67 (5%) thought income from fines could help bridge the budget gap.

36 (2%) advocated a tourist tax and a tax on Airbnb properties.

25 (2%) suggested a local lottery and local fundraising.

14 (1%) suggested other taxes including additional charges for developers, a Carbon Tax, a local sales tax, a social care (provider) tax and taxing private schools.

10 (1%) recommended that the council seeks more grants and private investment.

#### **4.4.3 Suggestions for ways to save money**

##### **Reducing activities**

403 (29%) respondents suggested ways the council could reduce its activities to reduce its budget requirement. These are summarised below and in Figure 25.

Of the 152 (11%) respondents who recommended cutting services or projects, 79 (6%) referred to "vanity projects" and unnecessary travel, while 71 (5%) feel there is scope to further cut unnecessary schemes and expenditure.

72 (5%) suggested reducing street maintenance. Of these:

- 57 (4%) wanted to cut back on roadworks and construction;
- 10 (1%) recommended turning off some street lights; and
- 7 (<1%) proposed reducing tree planting, pruning and grass cutting.

68 (5%) advised making refuse collection and recycling less frequent and more efficient.

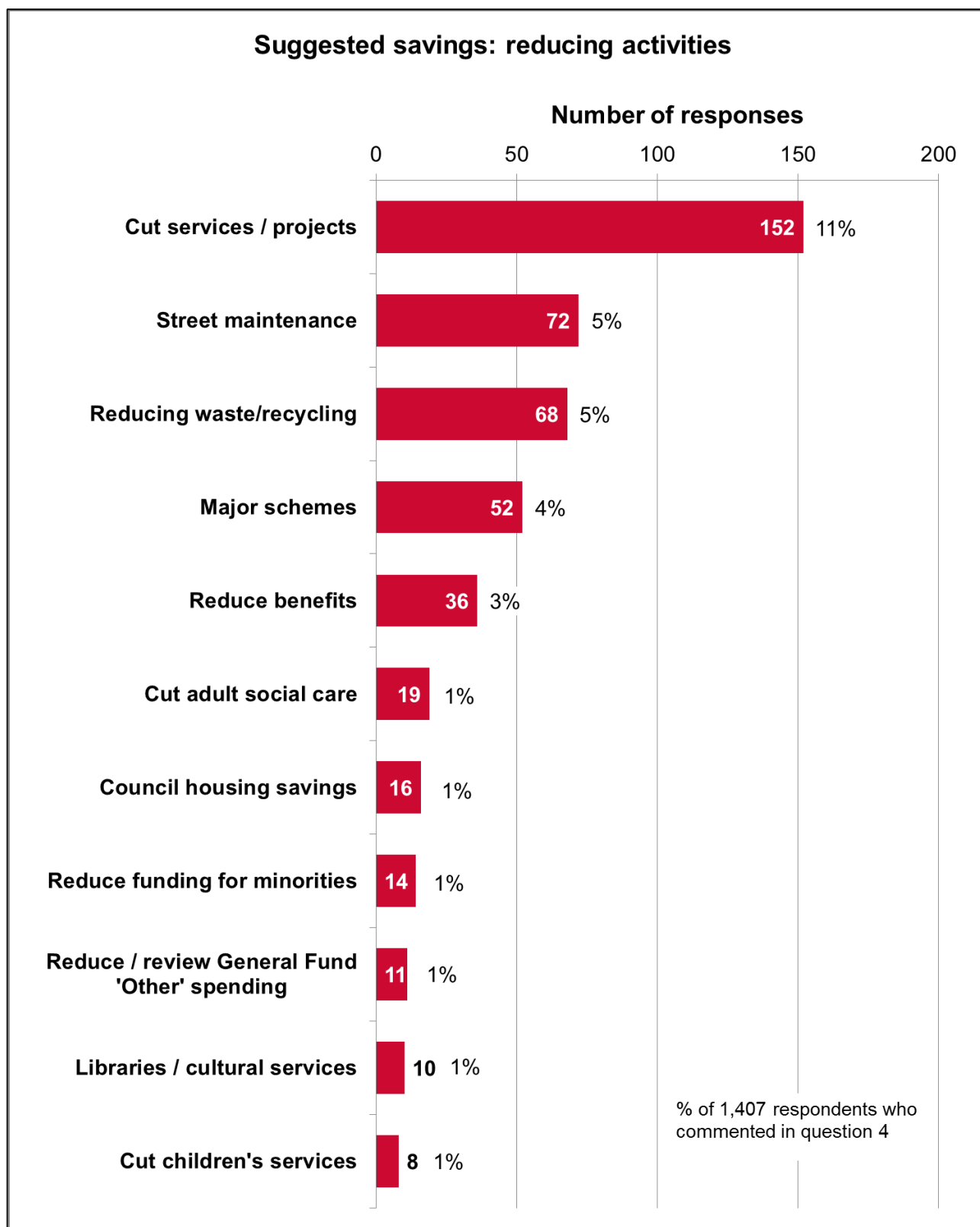
Of the 52 (4%) who would reduce budgets for major schemes:

- 25 (2%) recommended stopping subsidies to Bristol Energy Company; and
- 22 (2%) called for ceasing spending on Metrobus

36 (3%) advocated reducing benefits.

19 (1%) recommended cutting social care.

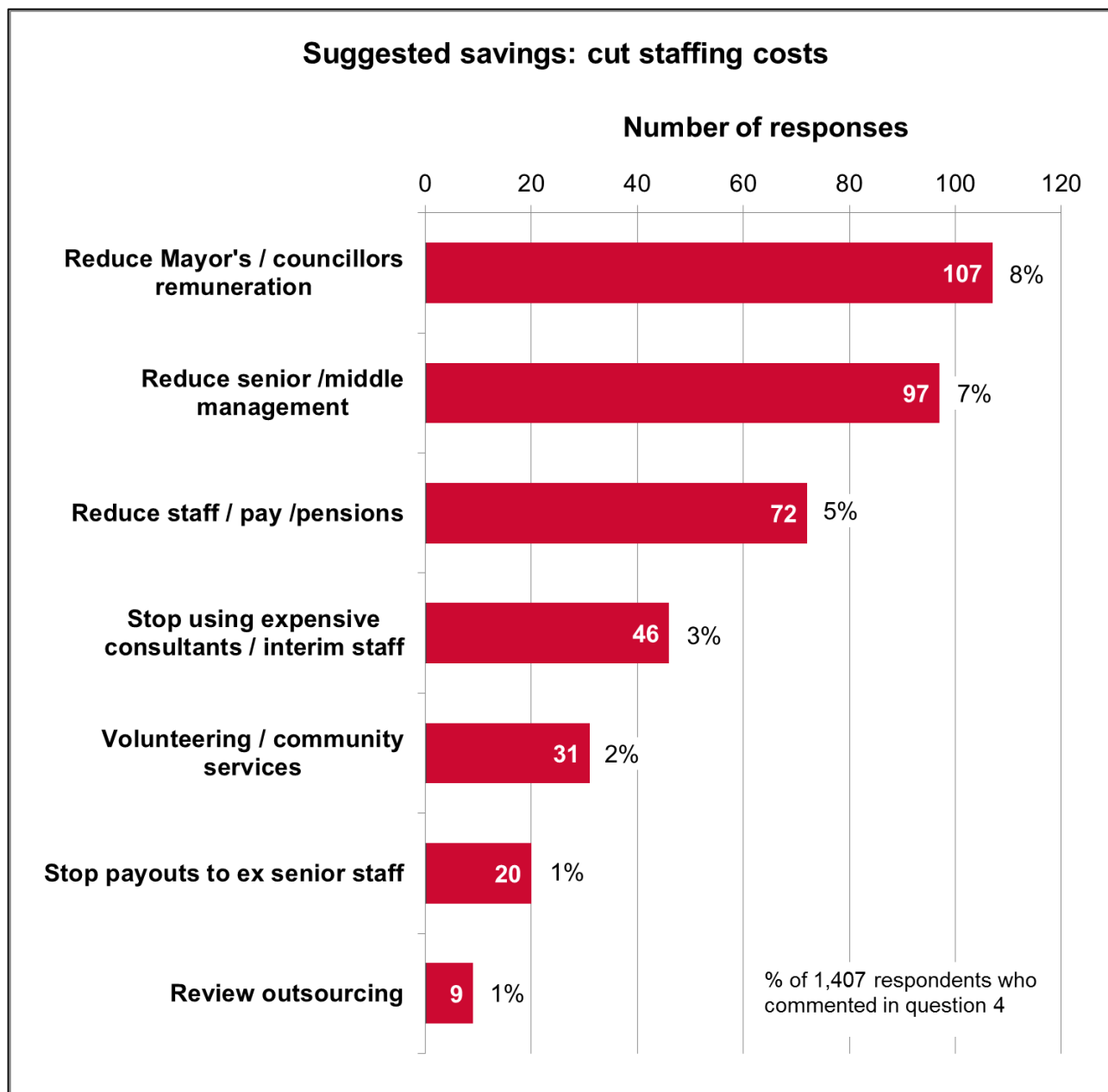
The 16 (1%) who suggested savings from Council housing proposed cutting the amount of council housing, raising rent and penalising 'bad' tenants.

**Figure 25: Suggested savings – reducing council activities**

## Cut staffing costs

307 (22%) of respondents thought savings could be made by reducing staffing costs (Figure 26).

**Figure 26: Suggested savings – cut staffing costs**



107 (8%) of respondents advocated fewer mayors and councillors and reducing their remuneration.

97 (7%) recommended reducing the number and pay of senior and middle managers.

72 (5%) thought the council should cut the number of staff in general, and their pay and/or pensions.

46 (3%) thought the council was too reliant on interim staff and highly paid consultants.

31 (2%) suggested there is scope to encourage more volunteering and community services to reduce dependence on council services;

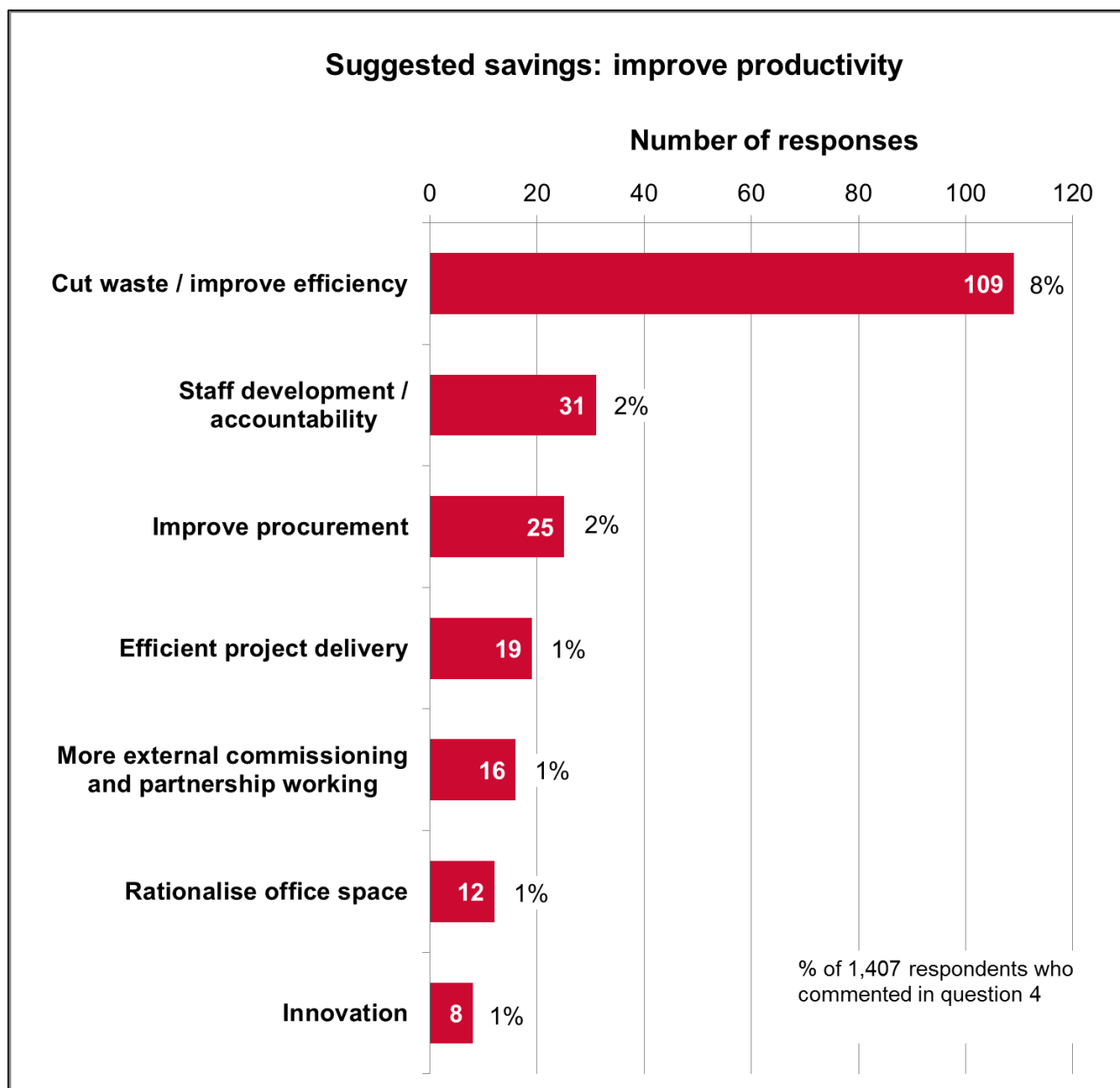
20 (1%) complained about expensive pay to senior staff who have left the council.

9 (1%) recommended a review of outsourcing; views were divided on whether outsourcing reduced costs or increased costs in the longer term

## Improve productivity

207 (15%) respondents recommended ways to improving productivity (Figure 27).

**Figure 27: Suggested savings – improve productivity**



109 (8%) thought savings can be made by rooting out waste, bureaucracy and inefficiencies across the council. Examples of poor communication between departments were provided and 13 respondents stated that the council should be run more like a commercial business.

31 (2%) suggested that training, performance monitoring and increased staff accountability is needed.

25 (1%) recommended improving procurement to minimise costs.

19 (1%) advocated greater attention to finishing projects on time and budget.

16 (1%) thought that more external commissioning and partnership working would streamline council activities.

12 (1%) recommended further streamlining of council properties, sharing office space and relocating out of the centre of Bristol.

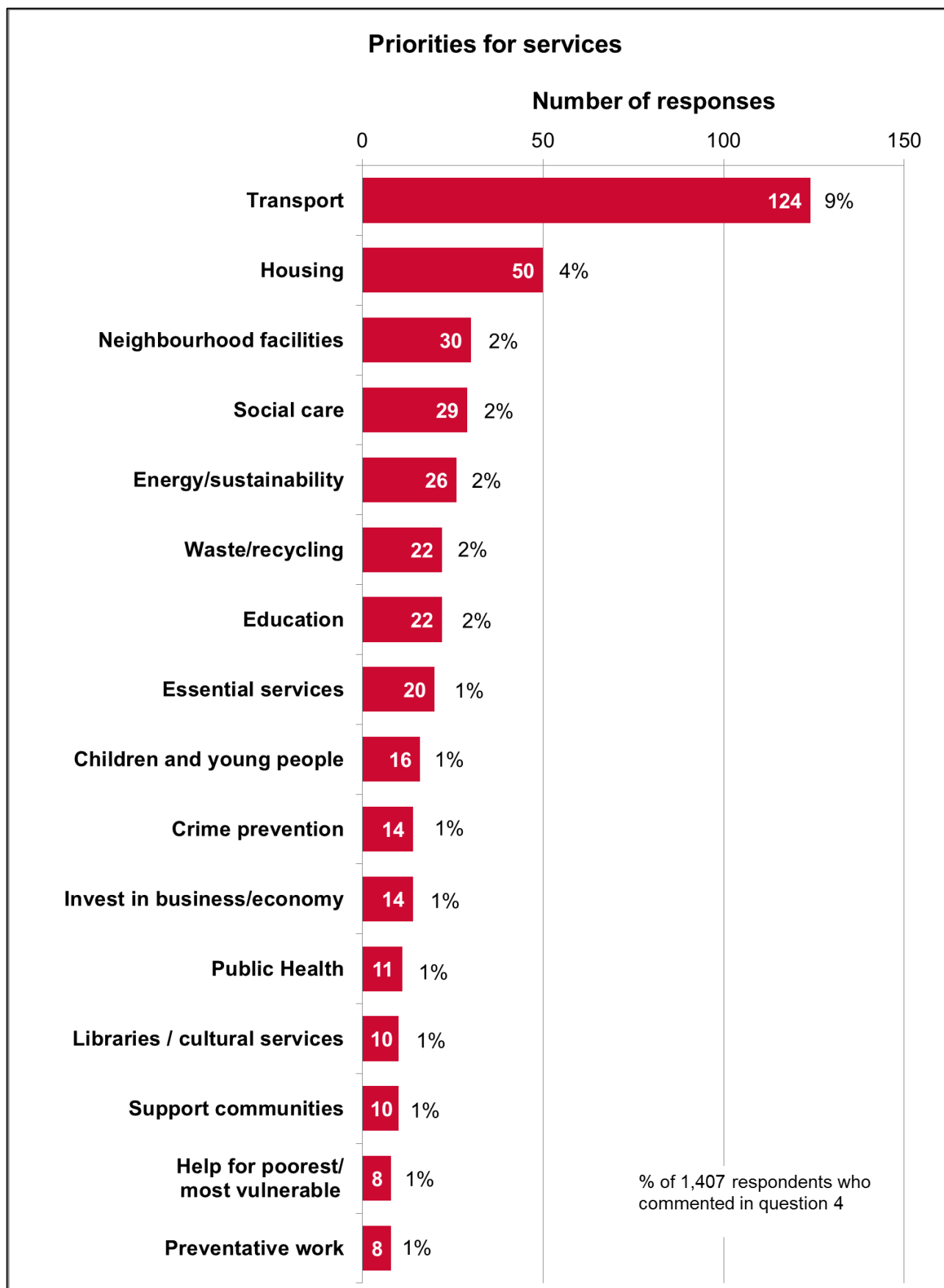
8 (1%) thought the council could innovate more and learn from other local authorities.



#### 4.4.4 Respondents' priorities for maintaining funding

359 (26%) respondents gave their priorities in question 4 for which services should continue to be funded (Figure 28). This can be compared to the priorities identified in the answers to question 3 (Figure 22 in section 4.3.5).

**Figure 28: Respondents' priorities for maintaining services**



124 (9%) stated that transport was a high priority; significantly more respondents than mentioned other services.

Of these:

- 47 (3%) wanted to promote cycling, walking and public transport and reduce public transport costs;
- 44 (3%) wanted to improve the transport system generally, with many mentioning congestion delays and poor air quality;
- 22 (2%) wanted the council to 'force' operators to improve public transport, citing poor bus performance;
- 10 (1%) wanted lower parking charges.

50 (4%) would prioritise housing improvements, with the most common issues being

- building more housing, particularly affordable/council housing (13);
- requiring landlords and the council to maintain and improve properties (13); and
- investing in homelessness services (11).

30 (2%) wanted investment in neighbourhood services – parks and green space and reopening toilets.

29 (2%) wanted to protect social care and care for elderly people.

26 (2%) requested investment in energy saving and sustainable energy, including two who want to invest more in Bristol Energy.

22 (1%) wanted the council to invest in recycling/bin collection, improving street cleaning and resolving litter and fly tipping.

22 (1%) recommended prioritising education, of whom six specified funding for special educational needs and disability (SEND).

16 (1%) would prioritise children and young people as a priority, of whom 12 specified early years and parenting services

14 (1%) wanted more resource to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour.

14 (15) requested investment in business of whom seven wanted investment in local independent businesses and four requested a reduction in business rates.

20 (1%) identified 'essential services' as a priority.

## **5 Other correspondence on the Budget 2019/20 Consultation**

Six emails were received from members of the public in response to the Budget 2019/20 Consultation. These were analysed separately from the survey responses and are summarised by theme below.

Comments in the six emails included stated opposition to an increase in Council Tax, suggested alternatives to increasing Council Tax and alternative spending priorities.

### **Opposed to an increase in Council Tax**

- Two said that they could not afford an increase.
- Two said that they did not feel that additional tax money would be spent effectively.
- Two said that Council Tax is high whilst the quality of services is low.
- One stated that the cost of living was too high and that wage increases and inflation were too low to justify increasing Council Tax by a higher rate than they had chosen.
- One said that Council Tax was already too high.
- One was against continuous year-on-year rises in Council Tax.

### **Alternatives to increasing Council Tax**

- One said that the council should not spend money on “vanity projects”.
- One suggested selling the council’s stake in Bristol Energy.
- One said that central government should pay more.

### **Alternative priorities**

- One said that refuse collection needed improving.
- One suggested that social care should be prioritised.
- One suggested that public toilets should be reopened.

### **Other comments**

- One felt that cuts were negatively impacting the city.
- One criticised the council for excessive pay-outs to leaving senior managers.
- One felt that the council will ignore public opinion and will do what it wants.

## 6 How will this report be used?

This report will be taken into account as final proposals are developed by officers to put to Cabinet to recommend to Full Council. The report will also be considered by Cabinet and Full Council in making its decisions about the 2019/20 budget at the Full Council meeting on 26 February 2019.

Budget decisions will be published through normal procedures for Full Council and Cabinet decisions at [democracy.bristol.gov.uk](https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk).

### How can I keep track?

You can always find the latest consultations online at [www.bristol.gov.uk/consultationhub](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/consultationhub), where you can also sign up to receive automated email notifications about consultations.

All decisions related to the proposals in this consultation will be made publicly at the Full Council meeting on 26 February 2019.

You can find forthcoming meetings and their agenda at [democracy.bristol.gov.uk](https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk).

Any decisions made by Full Council and Cabinet will also be shared at [democracy.bristol.gov.uk](https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk).

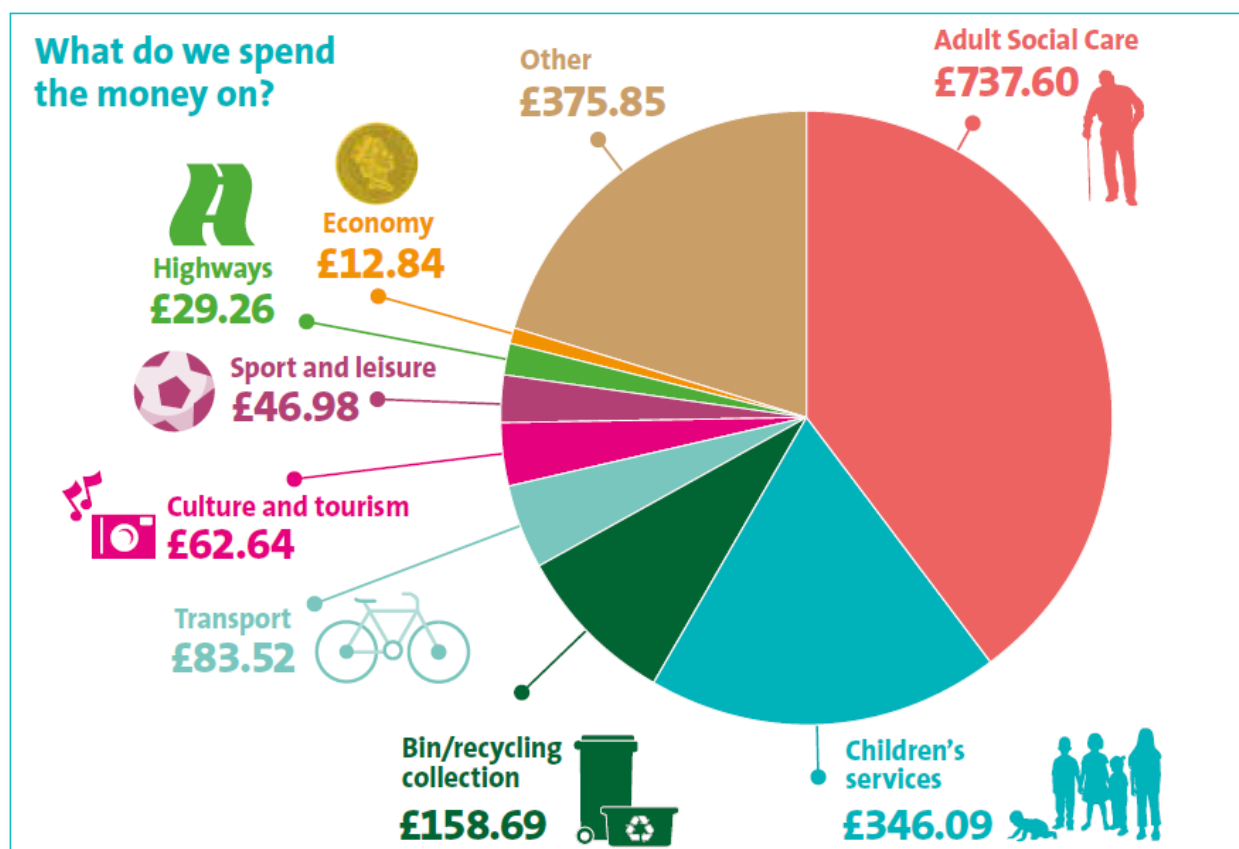
## Appendix A Further information about council budgets

### A.1 The General Fund

The council's 'General Fund' pays for 'day-to-day services'. Day-to-day services include a wide range of activities with a forecast budget of £364.8m in 2019/20, of which almost 60% will be used to support the most vulnerable people in the city, particularly older people, children and people with disabilities. The remainder is spent on bin/recycling collection, transport, highways, culture and tourism, sport and leisure, neighbourhood/communities activities, energy, borrowing costs and other services.

Figure A1 shows a breakdown of the council's spending on day-to-day services, per household, in 2018/19.

**Figure A1: Spending per household on day-to-day services in 2018/19**



Note: 'Other' includes spending on education, citizen services, some housing-related activities, neighbourhood/communities activities, energy, and borrowing costs.

Forecast income to the General Fund in 2019/20 is as follows:

- Council Tax - £214.3m (59%) based on a 3% increase compared to 2018/19 rates
- Business rates - £128.8m (35%)
- Grants - £21.6m (6%)

## **A.2 Other budgets**

### **A.2.1 Introduction**

In addition to the General Fund, there are four other budget areas the council manages that it must keep separate from its main day-to-day spending budget. These are:

- the capital budget
- the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)
- the public health budget
- the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Each of these is funded in different ways and the council can only spend these budgets on specific things. Further information about these four budget areas is provided below.

We did not consult on how the council spends these budgets. However, if the council were to raise Council Tax by 4% in 2019/20, this would raise some additional money which could be spent on day-to-day services (General Fund) or on the capital budget or the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) or the public health budget<sup>24</sup>. Question 2 asked if respondents would prefer the council to spend some of the extra money raised by a 4% increase in Council Tax on day-to-day services, or the capital programme, or on schools or public health activities.

### **A.2.2 The capital budget**

In addition to spending money on running day-to-day services the council also spends hundreds of millions of pounds a year investing in the city.

This investment takes the form of building things like schools and houses, introducing new transport options, investing in other organisations to support big pieces of work like redeveloping the Old Vic and supporting our own major projects to save money in future.

Most of this money comes from grants from the government and the European Union but it is also made up of long term borrowing and money we make from selling things we own.

In the past year we've invested over £180m in the city and plan to invest a further £216m in the coming year. All of the projects we are investing in were previously consulted on and were agreed by councillors in February 2017.

### **A.2.3 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)**

This budget is used to pay for schools and education services for children and young people in Bristol and can only be used for these things.

The money to pay for these schools and services comes from the government every year in a grant called the Dedicated Schools Grant. This grant is split into four parts or blocks:

- Schools Block – money given to Bristol primary and secondary schools and academies;
- Central School Services Block – funding for the council to carry out essential things it needs to do for all schools and academies in the city;
- High Needs Block – dedicated funding for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities or for those who need alternative provision (such as a Pupil Referral Unit);
- Early Years Block – money to fund free nursery and pre-school hours for three and four year olds and for two year olds from households with low incomes.

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<sup>24</sup> The council is not permitted to spend Council Tax on the Housing Revenue Account

This year the council expects to receive in the region of £349m from the government to pay for schools and education services.

#### **A.2.4 The public health budget**

The council receives a yearly grant from the government to promote good mental and physical health in the city and pay for services that help people be healthier and stay healthy.

Last year the council received £32.5m from the government to pay for public health work. This year we expect to get around £31.6m which works out as £68 per person in the city. The council has no say in how much money the government gives us to pay for public health work and we are required to spend the money in line with set guidelines known as the 'Public Health Outcomes Framework'.

#### **A.2.5 The Housing Revenue Account**

The council owns and manages over 28,500 houses and flats from which we collect rent and/or service charges.

The Housing Revenue Account is mostly made up of the rent we collect. This money is used to plan and provide services for people living in council housing, including repairs and improvements.

The Housing Revenue Account has a programme to build new council homes. This year we can use up to £15.7million to invest in building houses in Bristol.

We did not consult on the Housing Revenue Account because it is a ring-fenced budget and we are not proposing any changes to how the money in the HRA is used.