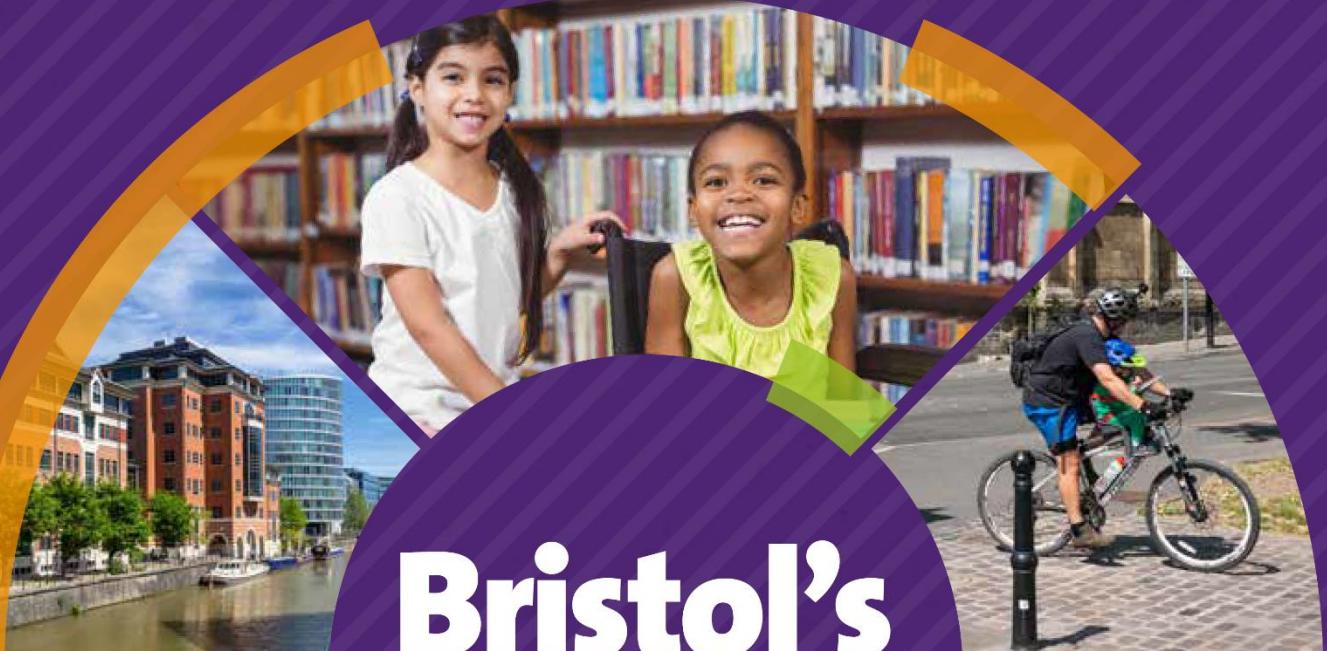


Consultation and Engagement



Bristol's Budget

2022-2023



**Budget 2022/23 Consultation
Consultation Report v5**

10 January 2022

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Executive Summary

ES1 Bristol City Council Budget 2022/23

The council's budget proposals will be considered by Cabinet on 18 January 2022 for recommendation to Full Council to consider and agree on 15 February 2022.

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 2022/23.

Bristol City Council currently spends around £1 billion each year providing services to the people of Bristol. In 2021/22, over a third of the revenue budget was raised locally through Council Tax (£236 million; 23%) and Business Rates (£134 million; 13%). The remaining 64% (£669 million) funding came in grants from the government, and other income such as fees and charges we make for some of the services we provide.

This year, budget decisions will be made in the context of acute financial pressures due to impacts on the council's income caused by the COVID-19 disruption and increasing costs – including providing for the needs of a growing and ageing population, and ongoing support for citizens and businesses with the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 levy. The government announced the proposed 2022/23 referendum limits for Council Tax (up to 2%) and Social Care Precept (1%) in the [Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021](#) on 27 October 2021, that will be laid before the House of Commons for approval at the time of the final local government settlement.

Each 1% increase in Council Tax would raise £2.4 million. If the council increases Council Tax by 1.99% and adds an additional Social Care Precept of 1% in 2022/23, we still expect a funding gap in the region of £19.5 million². If we do not increase Council Tax or levy a Social Care Precept, the funding gap would be greater than £19.5 million. With such a significant challenge the budget cannot be balanced without additional funding, making greater efficiencies (doing the same for less money) or by transforming the way we do things.

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

² The budget consultation referred to a budget gap of £23.1 million, which was forecast in November 2021. The annual determination of funding to local government has revised the budget gap to £19.5m for 2022/23.

ES2 The Budget 2022/23 consultation

The Budget 2022/23 consultation took place between 5 November and 17 December 2021 and sought views from the public (including businesses and organisations which represent non-domestic rate payers³) on options for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept in 2022/23 and other approaches to bridge the budget gap. The responses to the consultation have helped to inform final budget recommendations and will be taken into consideration by the Cabinet and by Full Council when making their decisions in January and February 2022.

The Budget 2022/23 consultation sought feedback on the following.

- Six approaches the council might take to save money, work more efficiently and generate income to help bridge the forecast funding gap⁴ in 2022/23. These are described in Section 1.3.2.
- Options for the level of Council Tax they would prefer in 2022/23. Options were no increase, a 1% increase or a 2% increase, each of which would have different implications for the amount of money the council could spend on general council services.
- Options for the level of Social Care Precept they would prefer in 2022/23 to support the delivery of adult social care, in addition to the increase in Council Tax for general services. Options were no Social Care Precept or a 1% Social Care Precept.
- Respondents' reasons for the Council Tax and Social Care Precept options they selected, an explanation for their views on the six proposed savings approaches, and any other suggestions for balancing the budget.

The Budget 2022/23 consultation comprised information about the council's financial position and an online survey. Downloadable print and Easy Read formats were also available online on the Consultation and Engagement Hub. Paper copies of the survey 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.

³ 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.

⁴ The funding gap forecast in November 2021 was £23.1 million and the budget consultation referred to this forecast figure. The annual determination of funding to local government has revised the budget gap from £23.1m to £19.5m for 2022/23.

ES3 Scope and use of this report

This report describes the methodology and presents the outcome of the Budget 2022/23 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 or Social Care Precept (if any) in 2022/23, nor an assessment of the feasibility of any of the suggestions received. The consultation feedback in this report is taken into consideration by officers in developing final proposals for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept, and ways to balance the budget gap in 2022/23. The final proposals are included in a separate report which, together with this consultation report, will be considered by Cabinet on 18 January 2022. Full Council will also take into consideration this consultation report when making its decisions about the 2022/23 budget at the Full Council meeting on 15 February 2022.

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

ES4 Budget 2022/23 consultation - Key findings

ES4.1 Response rate

The Budget 2022/23 consultation survey received 1,304 responses.

1,035 responses (79%) were received from postcodes within the Bristol City Council area, 11 (1%) were from South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES), and North Somerset. A further seven (0.5%) were from unspecified locations within the four West of England authorities⁵. 251 (19%) did not provide a postcode.

Analysis of respondents' postcodes shows that there was under-representation of responses from the most deprived 30% of the city, and response rates from the least deprived 30% of the city were over-represented.

Responses from young people (aged 24 and younger) and people aged 85 and older were under-represented compared to the proportion of people in these age groups living in Bristol. Female respondents, people of Black, Asian and mixed ethnicity, and people of faith were under-represented compared to the proportions of these groups in the Bristol population.

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.

⁵ 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.

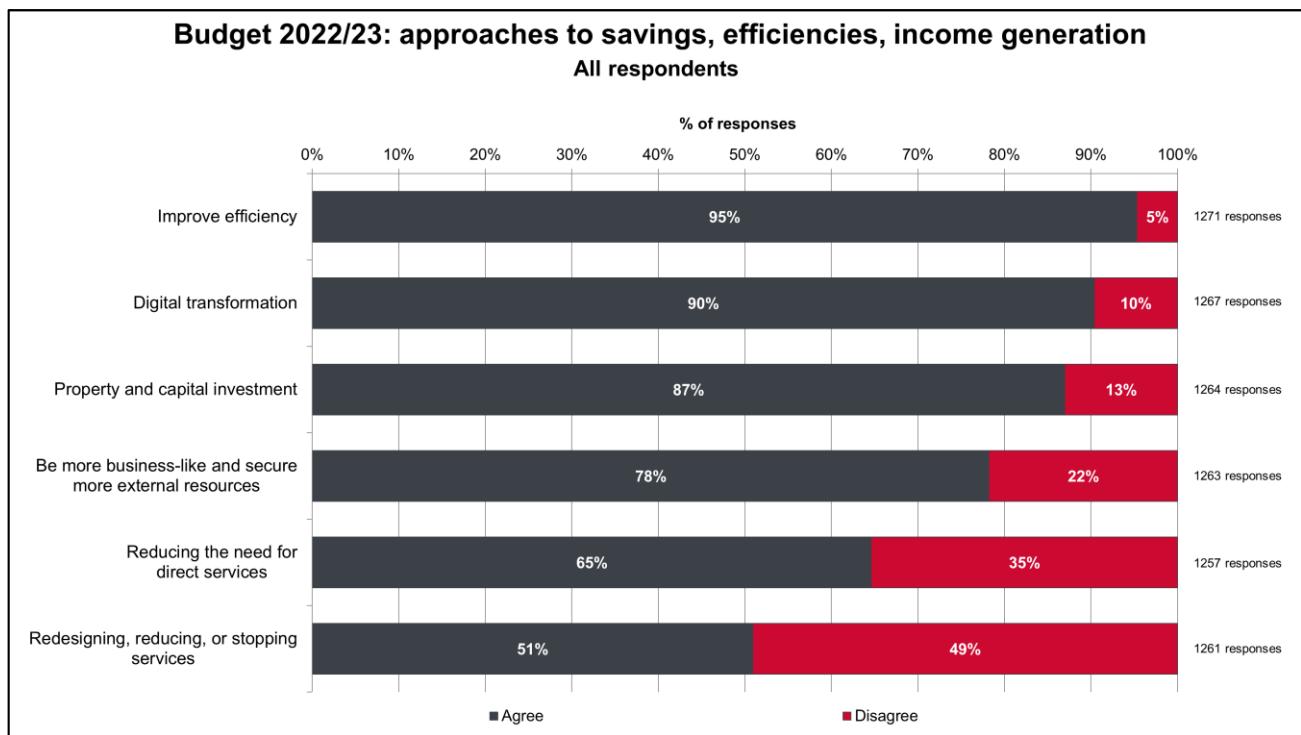
ES4.2 Six proposed approaches to saving money and generating income

1,281 (98%) of the survey respondents gave their views on one or more of the six money saving and income generating approaches that are proposed to bridge the forecast budget gap⁶ in 2022/23. All six approaches were approved of by at least half the respondents, but some approaches received much higher support than others (Figure ES1).

The approach with the highest support is 'improving efficiency', by joining up services, reducing duplications and getting better value in procurement. Of 1,271 respondents who expressed a view, 95% agree and 5% disagree with this approach.

The proposed approaches with lowest support are 'reducing the need for direct services' (65% agree / 35% disagree) and 'redesigning, reducing or stopping services' to fund the highest priorities (51% agree / 49% disagree).

Figure ES1: Proportion of respondents who agree with each of the six approaches



Views on each money saving / income generation approach were compared for people in areas of high and low deprivation to check for any significant differences in support.

Although views vary for different deprivation deciles, there are no strong trends which indicate people in more deprived areas show a strong preference for different approaches compared to respondents in less deprived areas. This is described further in Section 4.2.

347 respondents provided free text comments on the six money saving approaches. These are summarised in Section 4.3. 142 respondents suggested other ways to save money or generate income (Section 4.4).

⁶ The budget consultation referred to budget gap of £23.1 million; the forecast figure in November 2021. The annual determination of funding to local government has revised the budget gap to £19.5m in 2022/23.

ES4.3 Level of Council Tax increase and Social Care Precept in 2022/23

Core Council Tax

Of the 1,304 people who responded to the consultation, a majority (842 respondents; 65%), favour an increase in core Council Tax to support general services in 2022/23. Of these:

- 582 (45%) favour a 2% increase in core Council Tax;
- 260 (20%) would prefer a 1% increase;
- 444 (34%) respondents would prefer ‘no increase to Council Tax’ in 2022/23;
- 18 (1%) did not give a view on Council Tax.

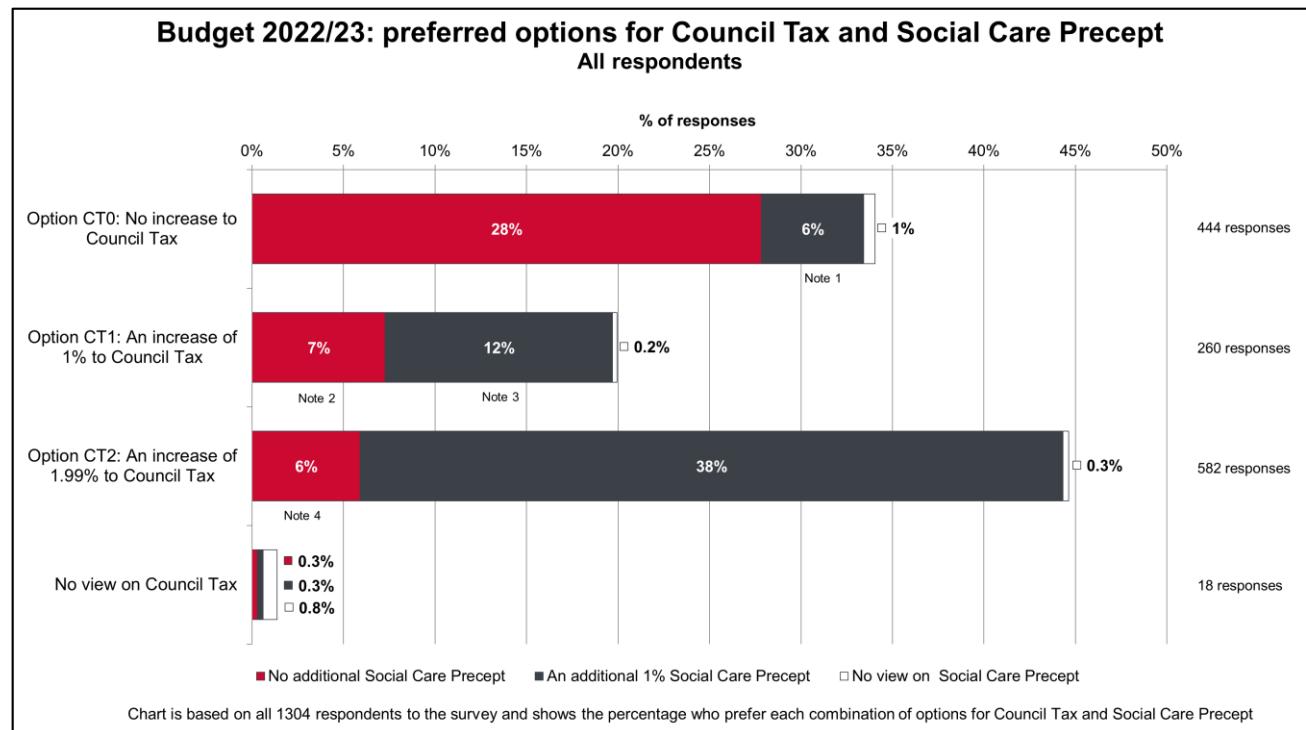
Social Care Precept

Of the 1,304 people who responded to the consultation, a majority (740 respondents; 57%), favour an additional 1% Social Care Precept (on top of core Council Tax) to support the delivery of social care in 2022/23.

- 539 (41%) respondents would prefer no increase to Social Care Precept in 2022/23.
- 25 (2%) did not give a view on Social Care Precept.

Figure ES2 shows the proportions of the 1,304 respondents who prefer each combination of Council Tax increase (0%, 1% or 2%) and Social Care Precept (0% or 1%)⁷.

Figure ES2: preferred options for Council Tax and Social Care Precept



⁷ In Figure ES2, each bar shows the percentage of respondents who would like each Council Tax option, 0%, 1% or 2%. The fourth bar shows respondents who did not give their views on Council Tax, some of whom did give their views on Social Care Precept. Each bar is subdivided into the percentage who opted for each Social Care Precept option; red for 0% Social Care Precept, grey for 1% and white for no view on Social Care Precept.

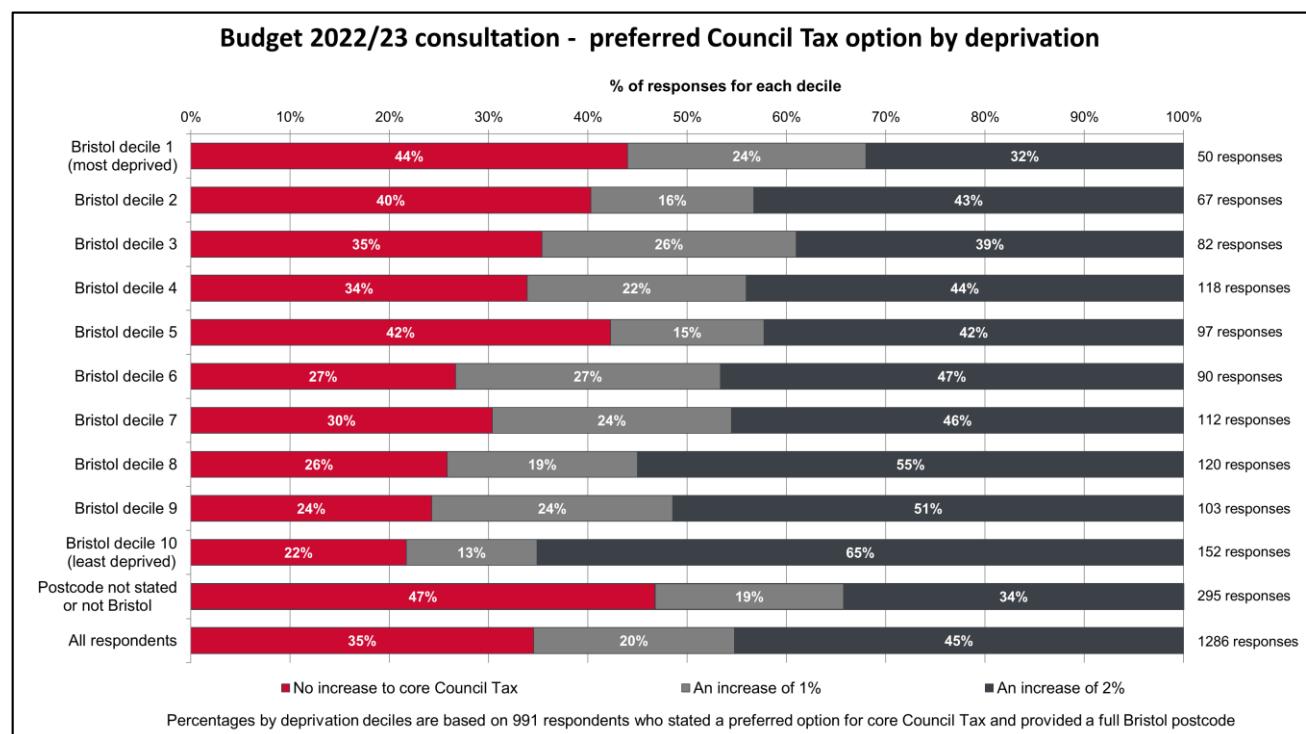
Figure ES2 shows the following.

- The option with highest support (38% of 1,304 respondents) is a 2% increase in core Council Tax and a 1% Social Care Precept. This is the maximum increase possible.
- The second most popular option (28% of 1,304 respondents) is 0% increase in core Council Tax and 0% Social Care Precept.
- For respondents who favour a 1% increase overall, 6% would like this as 1% Social Care Precept with no core Council Tax increase (see Note 1 on Figure ES2). This is a similar number to the 7% who would prefer a 1% increase in core Council Tax with no Social Care Precept (Note 2 on Figure ES2).
- For respondents who favour a 2% increase overall, 12% would prefer to share this as 1% increase in core Council Tax and 1% Social Care Precept (Note 3). This compares to 6% who want 2% on core Council Tax and 0% Social Care Precept (Note 4).

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% or 2%) were compared for respondents in areas with different levels of deprivation (Figure ES3). Figure ES3 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 ES3: Preference in each deprivation decile for the core Council Tax options



Preference for higher levels of core Council Tax tends to increase with reducing deprivation.

Support for **no increase** in core Council Tax is highest among respondents in the most deprived 10% of Bristol (decile 1), with 44% of respondents favouring no increase and 24% preferring a 1% increase. Support for no increase in Council Tax reduces to 22% in decile 10 (least deprived 10%).

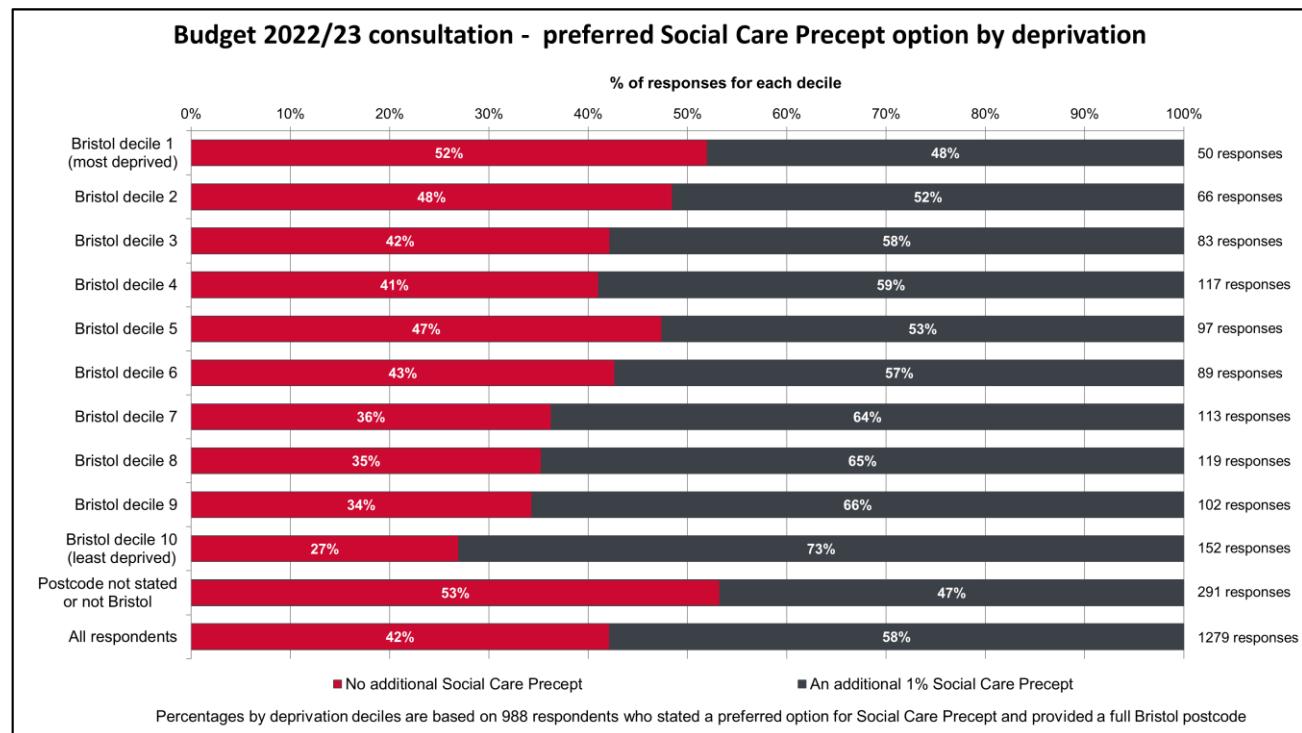
Support for the maximum **2% increase** is lowest (32%) in the most deprived 10% of Bristol (decile 1) and is highest (65%) in the least deprived decile 10. Support for a 2% increase exceeds 50% in deciles 8, 9 and 10.

Respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode were the least in favour of paying more core Council Tax. 47% in this group favour no increase and only 34% support a 2% increase – this is similar to decile 1 (most deprived 10% of Bristol).

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% or 1%) were also compared for respondents in areas with different levels of deprivation (Figure ES4).

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



As with core Council Tax, support for a Social Care Precept follows an inverse trend with deprivation.

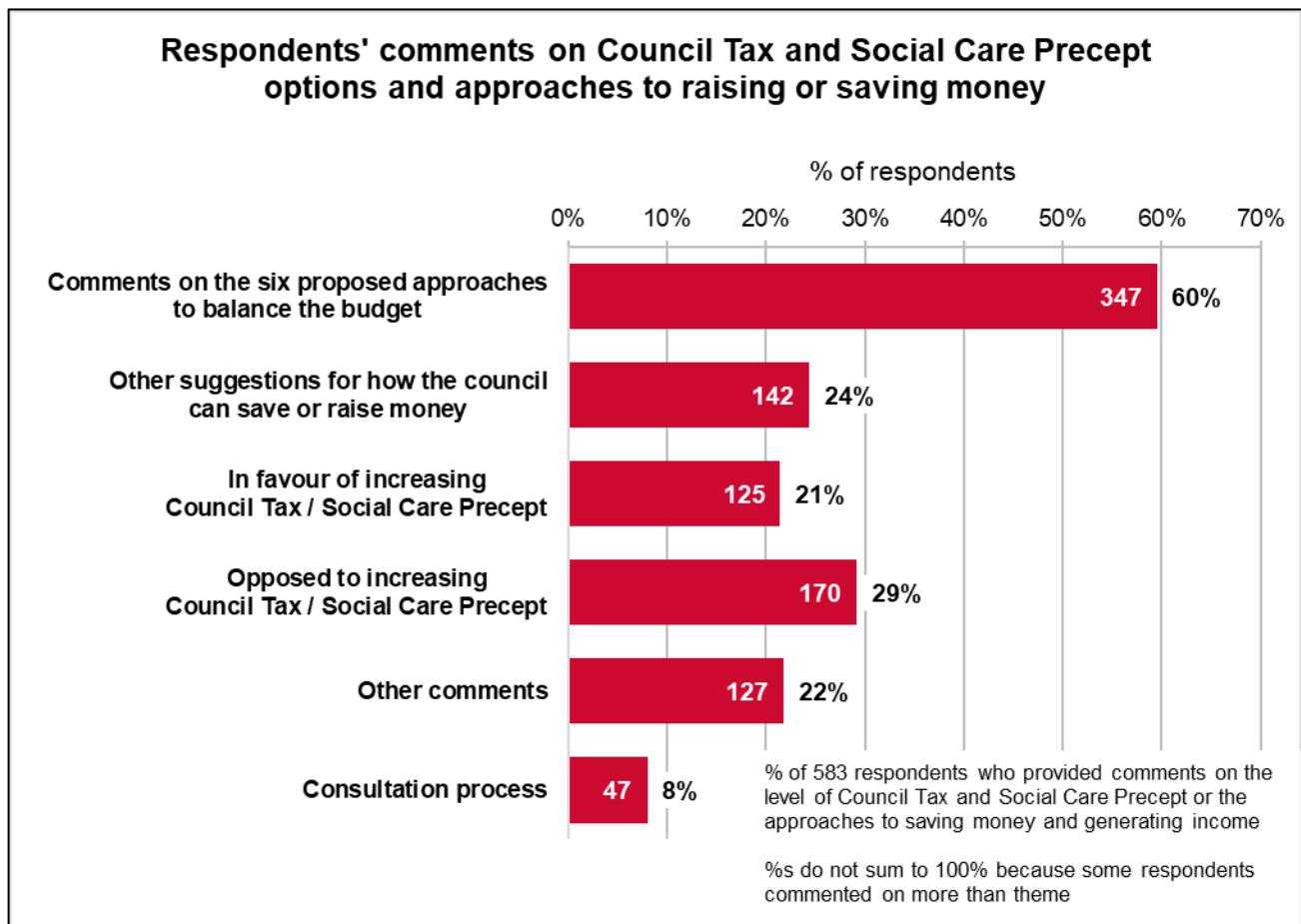
Support for no Social Care Precept ranges from 52% in decile 1 (most deprived) to 27% in decile 10 (least deprived). Correspondingly, support for 1% Social Care Precept increases from 48% in decile 1 to 73% in decile 10 and exceeds 50% in all deciles from 2 to 10.

Respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode were the least in favour of paying a Social Care Precept. 53% in this group prefer no Social Care Precept and only 47% support a 1% Social Care Precept - similar to decile 1 (most deprived).

ES4.6 Free text comments on the budget proposals

583 (45%) of the survey respondents provided free text responses which explained their views on the six savings / income generation approaches, their preference for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept, and their suggestions for other ways the council could save money or generate more income. All the comments were categorised into themes (Figure ES5).

Figure ES5: Overview of free text comments about the budget



- 347 (60% of 583 respondents) provided comments on one or more of the six proposed approaches to reducing the budget gap. A breakdown is provided in section 4.3.
- 142 (24%) suggested other ways the council could save or raise money (section 4.4).
- 125 (21%) said why they support an increase in Council Tax and/or Social Care Precept (section 5.4.1)
- 170 (29%) said why they oppose an increase in Council Tax and/or Social Care Precept (section 5.4.2).
- 127 (22%) provided other comments or suggestions (section 5.4.3).
- 47 (8%) provided comments about the consultation process (section 5.4.3).

The total number of comments exceeds 583 because some respondents addressed several themes.

1 Introduction

1.1 The council's budget

Bristol City Council spends around £1 billion each year providing a range of services to the people of Bristol. The money the council has available to spend on delivering day-to-day services to citizens is called the revenue budget. In 2021/22, more than a third of this budget is raised locally through Council Tax (£236 million; 23%) and Business Rates (£134 million; 13%). The remaining 64% (£669 million) funding comes from grants from the government (e.g. schools funding) and other income such as fees and charges we make for some of the services we provide.

On 15 February 2022, Full Council will set the council's budget for the 2022/23 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 Precept⁸ for 2022/23. This year, these decisions will be made in the context of acute financial pressures due to increasing costs and ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.2 Funding pressures and uncertainty

Councils are facing unprecedented financial pressures because more money is needed to support citizens and businesses with the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and to help more people than ever with mental health and social care services. In Bristol, we also need to help provide for the needs of a growing and ageing population.

At the same time, the pandemic caused the council to receive less income from business rates, commercial rentals, parking, sports facilities, and our museums, shops and cafes. The UK Government has provided no indication of ongoing general local COVID-19 response funding for 2022/23 and beyond.

The council is able to increase Council Tax by up to 2%⁹ to help fund general services in 2022/23, without a local referendum. This would raise an additional £4.7 million. A Social Care Precept of up to 1% can be added to support the delivery of adult social care. This would raise £2.4 million and is in addition to the permitted increase of up to 2% in core Council Tax for general services. These limits are set by government¹⁰. There was not enough time to hold a local referendum on increases above these limits before Full Council decides on its 2022/23 budget in February 2022.

⁸ Social Care Precept is a levy on top of core Council Tax, which is dedicated to help pay for adult social care.

⁹ Where we refer to a 2% increase in Council Tax, we are using 2% as shorthand for an increase of 1.99%.

¹⁰ The limits of a 2% increase in Council Tax and 1% for Social Care Precept were announced in the government's [Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021](#) on 27 October 2021.

If we increase Council Tax by 2% and levy a Social Care Precept of 1% next year, we estimate there would remain a potential funding gap in the region of £19.5million¹¹ in the council's core budget in 2022/23¹². If we do not increase Council Tax or levy a Social Care Precept, the funding gap would be greater than £19.5 million. With such a significant challenge the budget cannot be balanced without additional funding, making greater efficiencies (doing the same for less money) or by transforming the way we do things.

1.3 Budget 2022/23 consultation

1.3.1 Overview

The Budget 2022/23 consultation took place between 5 November and 17 December 2021 and sought views from the public (including businesses and organisations which represent non-domestic rate payers¹³) on the following:

- six approaches the council might take to save money, work more efficiently and generate income to help bridge the forecast funding gap¹⁴ in 2022/23. These are described in Section 1.3.2;
- options for the level of Council Tax they would prefer in 2022/23. Options were no increase, a 1% increase or a 2% increase, each of which would have different implications for the amount of money the council could spend on general council services;
- options for the level of Social Care Precept they would prefer in 2022/23 to support the delivery of adult social care, in addition to the Council Tax for general services. Options were no Social Care Precept or a 1% Social Care Precept

1.3.2 Proposed approaches to save money and generate more income

The Budget 2022/23 consultation described six approaches the council might use to save money, work more efficiently and generate income to help balance the budget in 2022/23. Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree with each of the approaches. The six approaches are summarised below and can be read in full in the online [consultation survey](#).

¹¹ The budget consultation referred to a forecast budget gap of £23.1 million, which was the best estimate in November 2021. The annual determination of funding to local government has revised the budget gap from £23.1m to £19.5m for 2022/23.

¹² Source: Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 - 2026/27, Bristol City Council

¹³ 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

¹⁴ The budget consultation referred to budget gap of £23.1 million; the estimate current in November 2021.

Proposed approaches to save money and generate more income

- **Property and Capital Investment** - how we get the best use of our assets, reduce our office accommodation and find new ways to share building space with partners and/or community groups. This may include increasing rents, prioritising preventive maintenance and reducing carbon emissions from our estate.
- **Be more business-like and secure more external resources** – this could involve charging clients, partners or citizens for goods or services at market rates and reducing subsidies by other taxpayers. We may seek more grants and external funding for services and activities, and collect debts ethically and more effectively.
- **Improve efficiency** - by joining up services, removing unnecessary duplication, doing things once and buying our goods and services to make sure we get great value from our suppliers.
- **Digital transformation** - making more use of digital technology to help remove or reduce costs, whilst improving outcomes by targeting services to those who need them and addressing digital exclusion (those who can't access digital services or find using them difficult or unaffordable).
- **Reducing the need for direct services** - working to develop and enable other organisations, communities, and individuals to take things on, where possible doing less directly ourselves. Working to build resilience and intervening early to support independence and prevent problems escalating in people's lives.
- **Redesigning, reducing, or stopping services** - different ways we can deliver services whilst saving costs, such as merging, redesigning, or allowing others to deliver services on our behalf. Where necessary, stopping, reducing, changing, or pausing services to make savings, without there necessarily being any replacement for them, based on the need to fund our highest priorities.

The Budget 2022/23 consultation did not include specific savings proposals. We may need to consult on more detailed saving proposals before we make any final decisions about them in future.

1.4 Scope of this report

This consultation report describes the consultation methodology and the feedback received, which will be considered by Cabinet and Full Council before decisions on the 2022/23 budget are made by Full Council in February 2022.

Chapter 2 of this report describes the Budget 2022/23 consultation methodology. The consultation information and questions are summarised in section 2.1.1 and the full consultation survey can be viewed online.

Chapters 3 to 5 present the Budget 2022/23 consultation survey results:

- Chapter 3 presents the survey response rate and respondent characteristics;
- Chapter 4 summarises respondents' views on the six proposed approaches to save money, work more efficiently and generate income to help bridge the forecast budget gap in 2022/23;
- Chapter 5 describes the survey feedback on the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept;

Chapter 6 describes feedback received in other correspondence (emails and letters).

Chapter 7 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 2022/23 consultation survey was available on the council's Consultation and Engagement Hub (bristol.gov.uk/consultationhub) between 5 November and 17 December 2021. Downloadable print and Easy Read formats were also available on the Consultation and Engagement Hub.

Survey information

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

- Details of the council's revenue budget (the money available to spend on delivering day-to-day services). This included an overview of where the money comes from, a breakdown of how Council Tax revenue is spent (based on 2021/22 expenditure) and details of three other budgets (the Dedicated Schools Grant, the public health budget, and the Housing Revenue Account), which the council must keep separate from its main day-to-day spending.
- Details of the forecast budget shortfall of £23.1 million¹⁵ in 2022/23 due to increasing costs, reducing UK Government funding and due to loss of other council income during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Details of the assistance the council is providing to low-income households in meeting their Council Tax bills and the assistance the council is providing to households experiencing hardship as a result of COVID-19.
- An outline of the council's capital investment programme in 2022/23.
- An explanation of council reserves.
- A description of the six approaches to reduce costs and increase income which the council proposes to bridge the budget gap.
- Forecasts of how much additional revenue would be raised in 2022/23 by each of the proposed core Council Tax options (increases of 0%, 1% or 2%) and each of the options for the level of Social Care Precept (0% or 1%).
- Details of how much the funding gap would be if Council Tax is not increased and Social Care Precept is not levied.
- 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.

¹⁵ The budget consultation referred to budget gap of £23.1 million; the estimate current in November 2021. The annual determination of funding to local government has revised the budget gap from £23.1m to £19.5m for 2022/23.

Survey questions

The survey questions sought respondents' views on the following.

- The six approaches the council proposes to save money, work more efficiently and generate income to help bridge the forecast funding gap¹⁶ in 2022/2023.
- The level of core Council Tax to support the delivery of general council services in 2022/23, with options of no increase, a 1% increase or a 2% increase.
- The level of Social Care Precept in addition to the increase in core Council Tax, with options of no precept or a 1% precept.
- Respondents' reasons for their views on the six savings/income generation approaches, their preferred level of Council Tax and the level of Social Care Precept, 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 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 people with specific protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 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

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

2.1.3 Other correspondence

Two emails and one letter (received via email) were received in response to the consultation. These are reported separately to the survey responses in Chapter 6.

¹⁶ The budget consultation referred to budget gap of £23.1 million; the estimate current in November 2021. The annual determination of funding to local government has revised the budget gap to £19.5m in 2022/23.

2.2 Publicity and briefings

2.2.1 Objective

The following programme of activity was carried out to publicise and explain the Budget 2022/23 consultation. The primary 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 other ways the council proposes to bridge the forecast budget gap.

To achieve this, information was shared across a wide range of channels, reaching as broad a range of audiences as possible to maximise response rates. Areas of the city that tend to respond to surveys in low numbers were targeted part way through the consultation.

2.2.2 Bristol City Council channels

Online and paper versions of the consultation document were shared via the following council and partner channels and networks:

- BCC weekly business e-newsletter - at launch and with a week to go - 2,450 recipients
- Ask Bristol e-bulletin – 5,167 recipients
- COVID citizen e-newsletter – at launch and again with a week to go – 46,913 recipients
- MPs (via email)
- Emails to 4,771 users of the online Council Tax account system sent on 19 November, with follow-up emails to those who had not yet responded sent on 9 and 16 December
- Communications through the One City Economy Board
- Headteachers' newsletter bulletin
- Paper copies in libraries

2.2.3 Internal communications

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

- Cabinet
- Directors, 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.
- Chairs of scrutiny committees
- Chair of HR committee
- Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) member task and finish group
- Trade unions (with an in-person briefing)
- Staff-led groups, and all staff
- Youth Council and Youth Mayors
- Mayoral Commissions (Women's, Race, Disability, History)
- Wholly owned companies (Bristol Holding Company, Bristol Waste, Goram Homes).

Staff and elected members were asked to promote the public consultation.

There were reminders throughout November and December through our 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 forthcoming 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), LGA, voluntary sector organisations, public sector/city stakeholders, local health partners, equalities groups and community groups with a request for information to be circulated through their networks.

2.2.5 Media engagement

Press releases were distributed to media contacts and local community newsletters on 2 November and 3 December 2021 outlining the consultation. This resulted in coverage in local community newsletters such as the Voice magazines, plus a Bristol Cable Podcast interview with Cllr Cheney.

2.2.6 Social Media – posts, outreach and advertising

Regular posts on Bristol City Council's social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, Next Door, LinkedIn and Instagram) were made for the duration of the consultation. These organic posts had a potential reach of 2.2 million people resulting in 834 survey link clicks¹⁷.

Marvin Rees recorded a short video encouraging people to complete the survey, this was included in posts on social media.

Paid for Facebook advertising was also employed. Initially an ad was run to encourage responses from all parts of Bristol. Three weeks before the consultation closed, a new ad was created to engage targeted areas of the city where response was low. A week before the consultation closed these targeted areas were reviewed and a new ad was created.

Social media accounted for the following number of responses¹⁸:

- Facebook 10% (128 respondents)
- Twitter 3% (37 respondents)
- Next Door 1.7% (22 respondents)
- Instagram 0.8% (10 respondents).

2.2.7 Radio

Councillor Cheney did an interview with BCFM radio two weeks before the consultation closing date, to encourage people to complete the survey.

¹⁷ The reach figures for Twitter are estimates because Twitter does not report these data.

¹⁸ Based on responses to the survey question 'How did you hear about this consultation?'

3 Survey response rate and respondent characteristics

3.1 Response rate to the survey

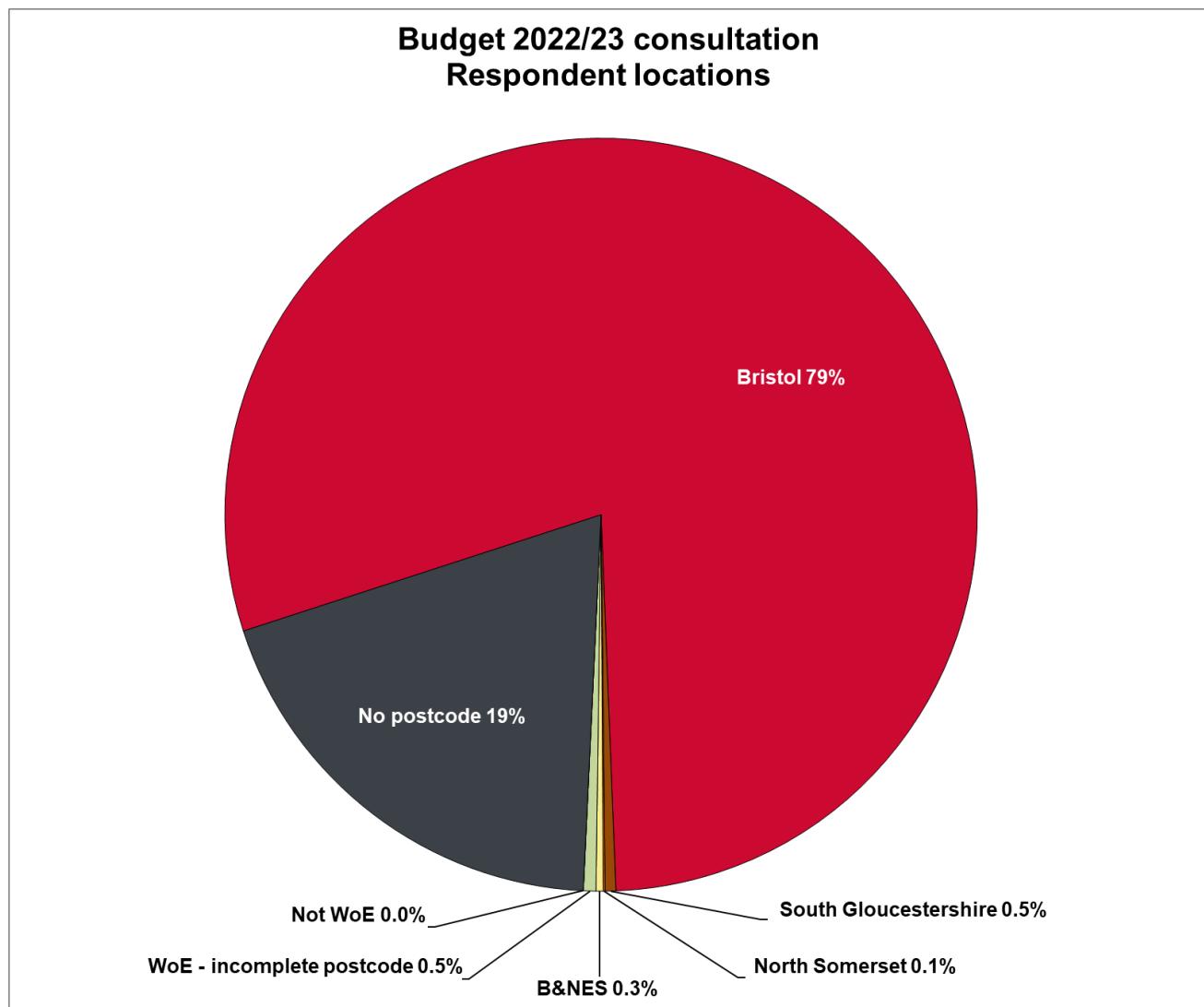
The Budget 2022/23 consultation survey received 1,304 responses, of which 1,290 (99%) were completed online and 14 (1%) were paper surveys.

3.2 Geographic distribution of responses

1,035 responses (79%) were received from postcodes within the Bristol City Council area, Six (0.5%) responses were from South Gloucestershire, four (0.3%) were from Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES), and one (0.1%) was from North Somerset. A further seven (0.5%) were from unspecified locations within the four West of England authorities¹⁹ (Figure 1).

251 (19%) did not provide a postcode.

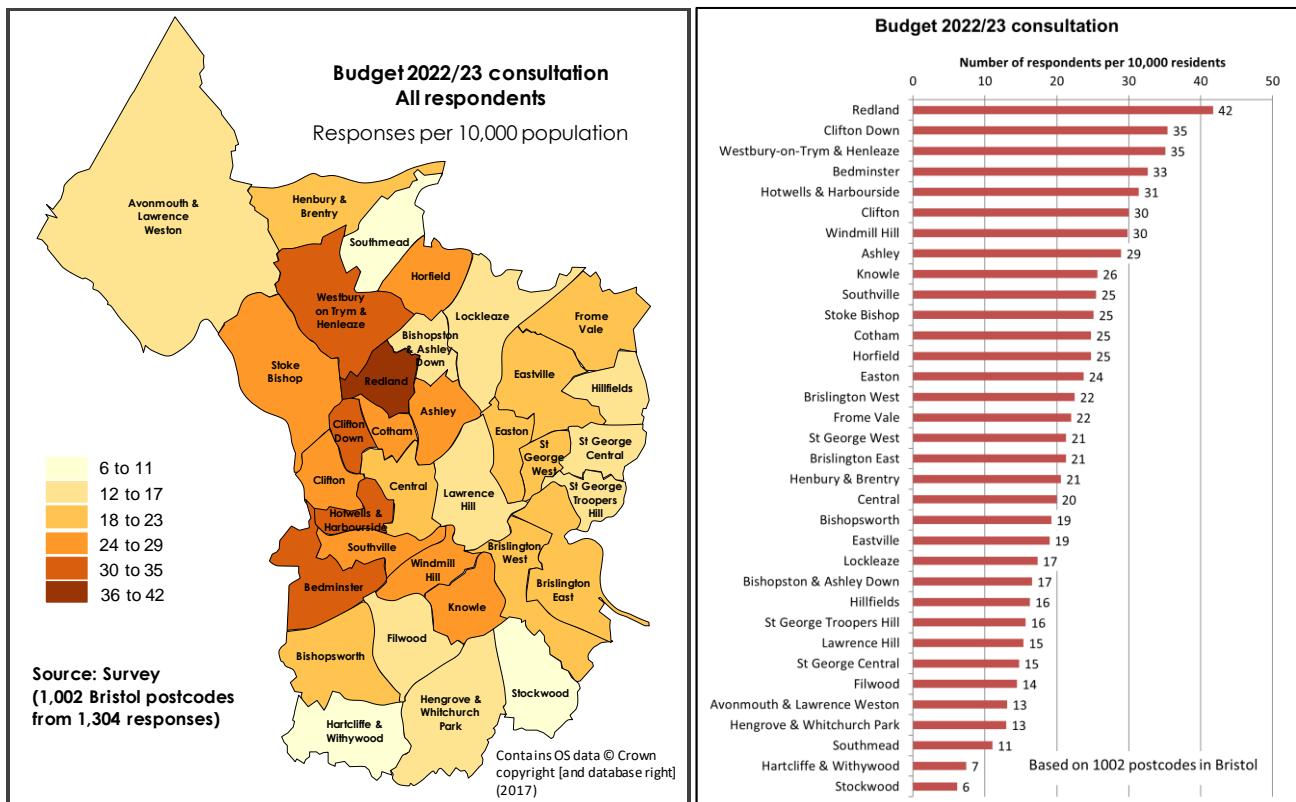
Figure 1: Geographic distribution of responses



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

Of the 1,035 responses from within the Bristol City Council area, 1,002 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. 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 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).

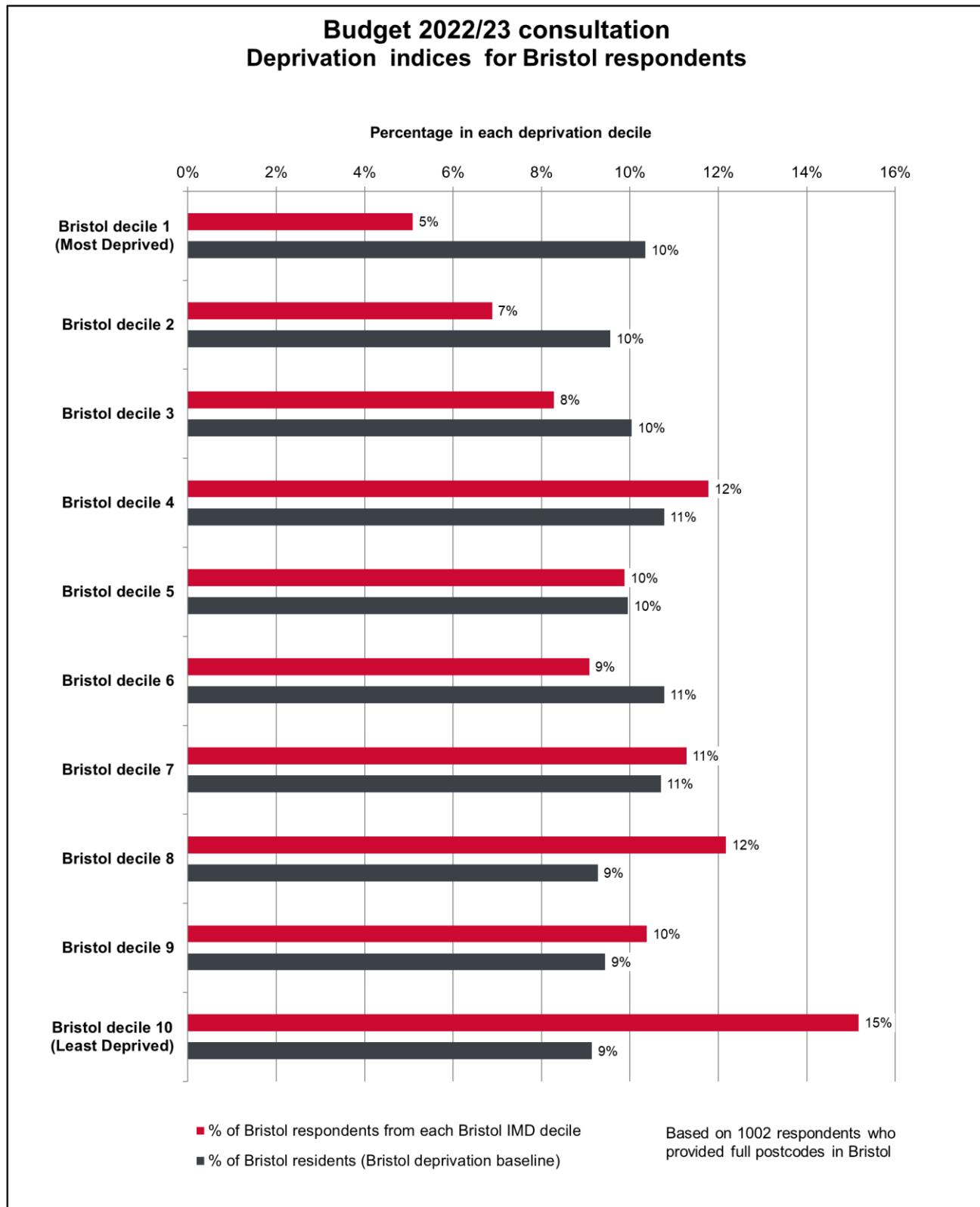
²⁰ The other 33 responses included incomplete postcodes which are within Bristol but do not include enough information to identify a specific ward.

²¹ The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes information about deprivation for 32,844 small areas - known as ‘Lower Super Output Areas’ (LSOAs) - throughout England. For each LSOA, a measure of deprivation is published called ‘Indices of Multiple Deprivation’ (IMD), which takes account of 37 aspects of each area that cover income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment. The postcodes provided by respondents enabled each to be matched to one of the 263 Lower Super Output Areas in the Bristol City Council area 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 1,002 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 30% of the city (deciles 1, 2 and 3) and response rates from the least deprived 30% of the city (deciles 8, 9 and 10) were over-represented. Decile 6 is also under-represented. Responses from deciles 4, 5 and 7 broadly 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 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.)

3.4 Characteristics of respondents

1,255 (96%) people answered one or more of the equalities monitoring questions.

Respondent characteristics are summarised below. The charts compare:

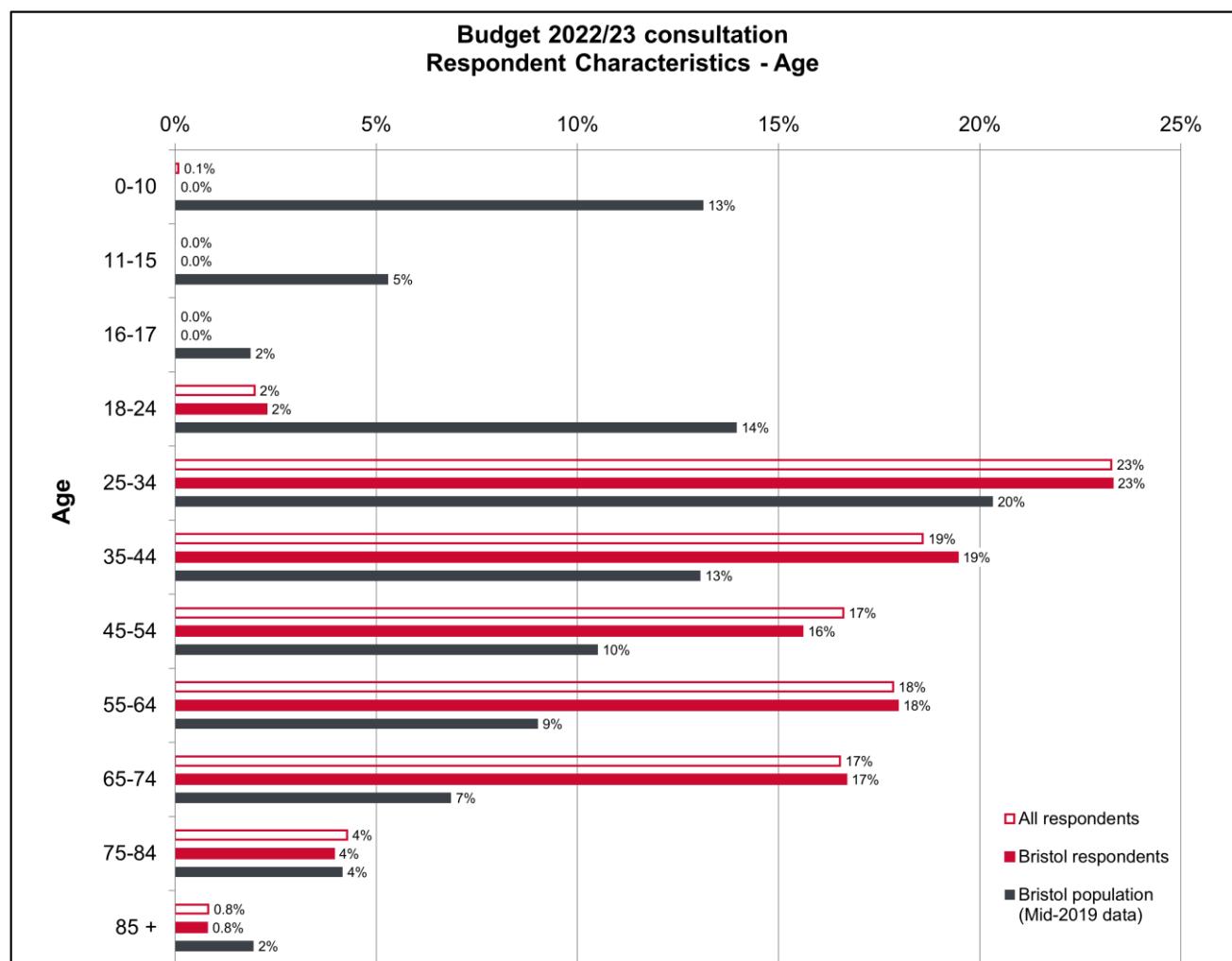
- characteristics for all respondents who answered the equalities questions;
- characteristics of respondents who provided a Bristol postcode;
- characteristics of Bristol's citizens for five protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, ethnicity and religion/faith) for which population data are available from the 2011 Census and subsequent updates.

Note that many of the respondents who did not provide postcodes may also live in the Bristol administrative area, but are not included in figures for 'Bristol respondents'

Age

The highest number of responses were from respondents aged 25-34 years (23%), followed by 35-44 (19%). All age groups between 25 and 74 responded in higher proportions than these ages in the population. Survey responses from children (under 18), young people aged 18-24 and people aged 85 and older were under-represented. In each age category, the proportions of 'all respondents' and 'Bristol respondents' were very similar.

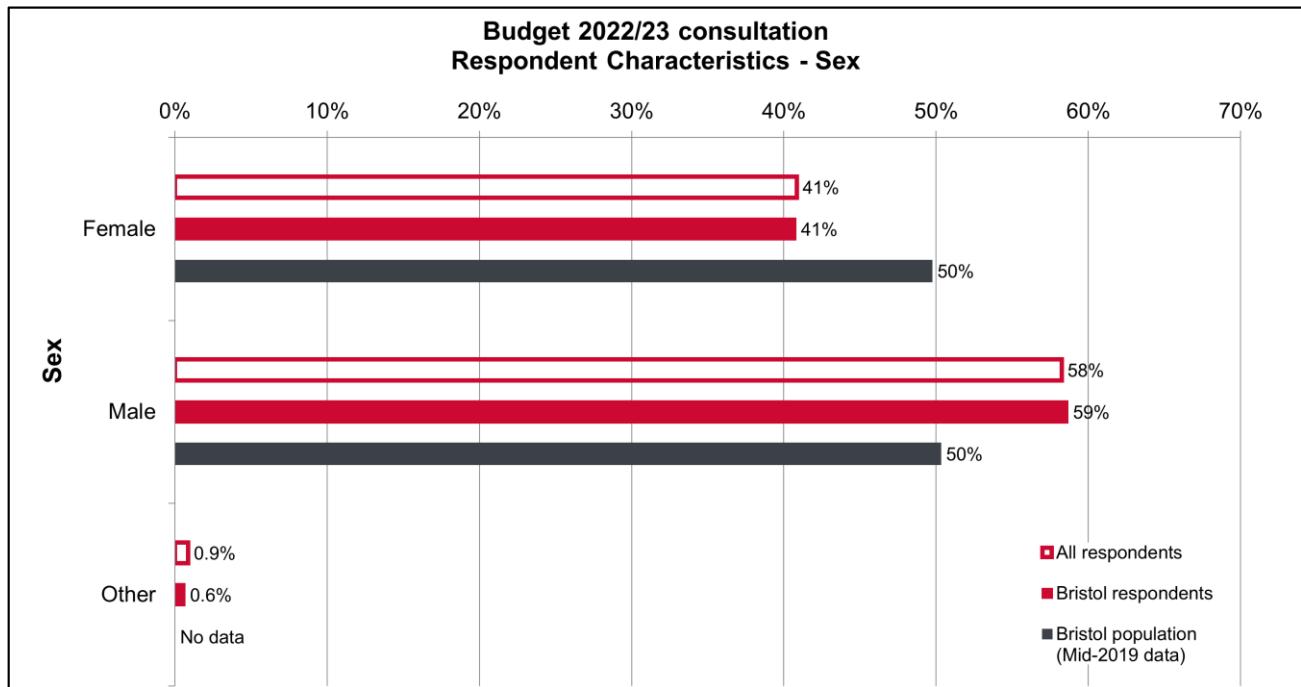
Figure 4: Age of respondents



Sex

41% of all responses were from women and 58% were from men. 0.9% were from people who identified as ‘other’. These percentages exclude the 9% of respondents (7% of Bristol respondents) who answered ‘prefer not to say’)

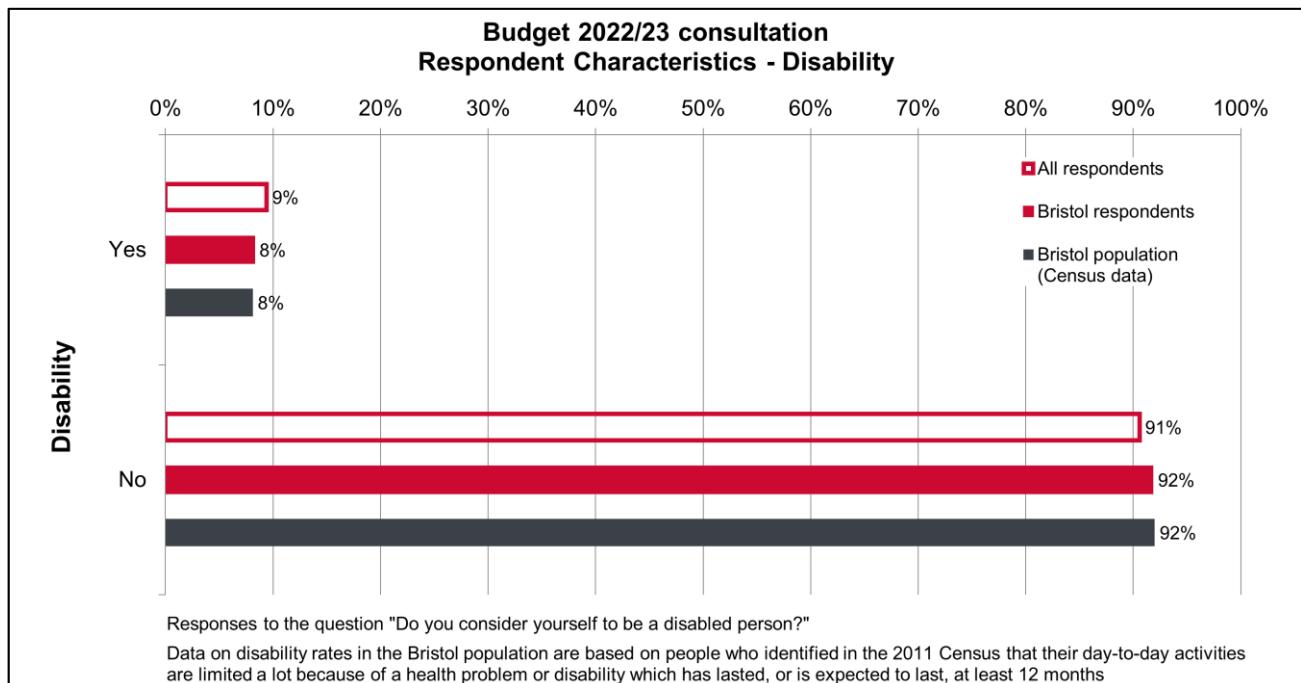
Figure 5: Sex of respondents



Disability

The proportion of disabled respondents (9% of all respondents; 8% of Bristol respondents) is similar to the proportion of disabled people living in Bristol. These percentages exclude the 7% of respondents (5% of Bristol respondents) who answered ‘prefer not to say’)

Figure 6: Disability



Ethnicity

The response rate from White British respondents (77%) and White Other respondents (13%) is higher than the proportion of these citizens in the Bristol population.

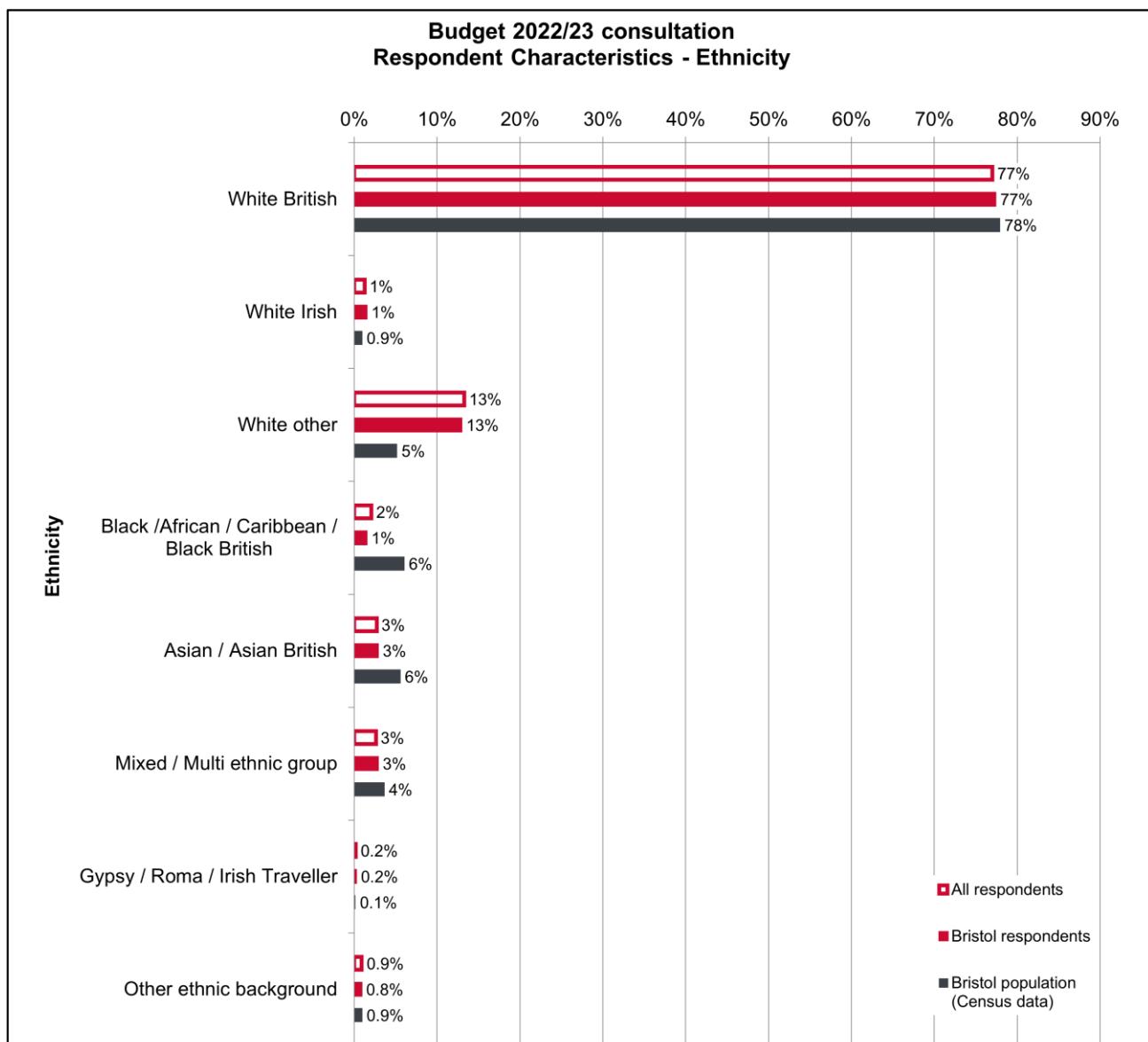
The proportion of White Irish (1%), Gypsy / Roma / Traveller people (0.2%) and people of ‘other ethnic background’ matches the proportion of these citizens in the Bristol population.

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British citizens, Asian/Asian British and mixed/multi-ethnic citizens were under-represented in the response rates compared to the proportion of people in each of these ethnic groups living in Bristol.

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

Proportions of each ethnicity for all respondents closely matches respondents who provided a Bristol postcode, with the exception of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British citizens.

Figure 7: Ethnicity of respondents



Religion/Faith

People with no religion (63% of respondents) responded in higher proportion than people of no religion in Bristol's population (41%). Buddhists (1.5%) and people with 'Other faith' (2%) also responded in greater numbers than the proportions of these faiths in Bristol.

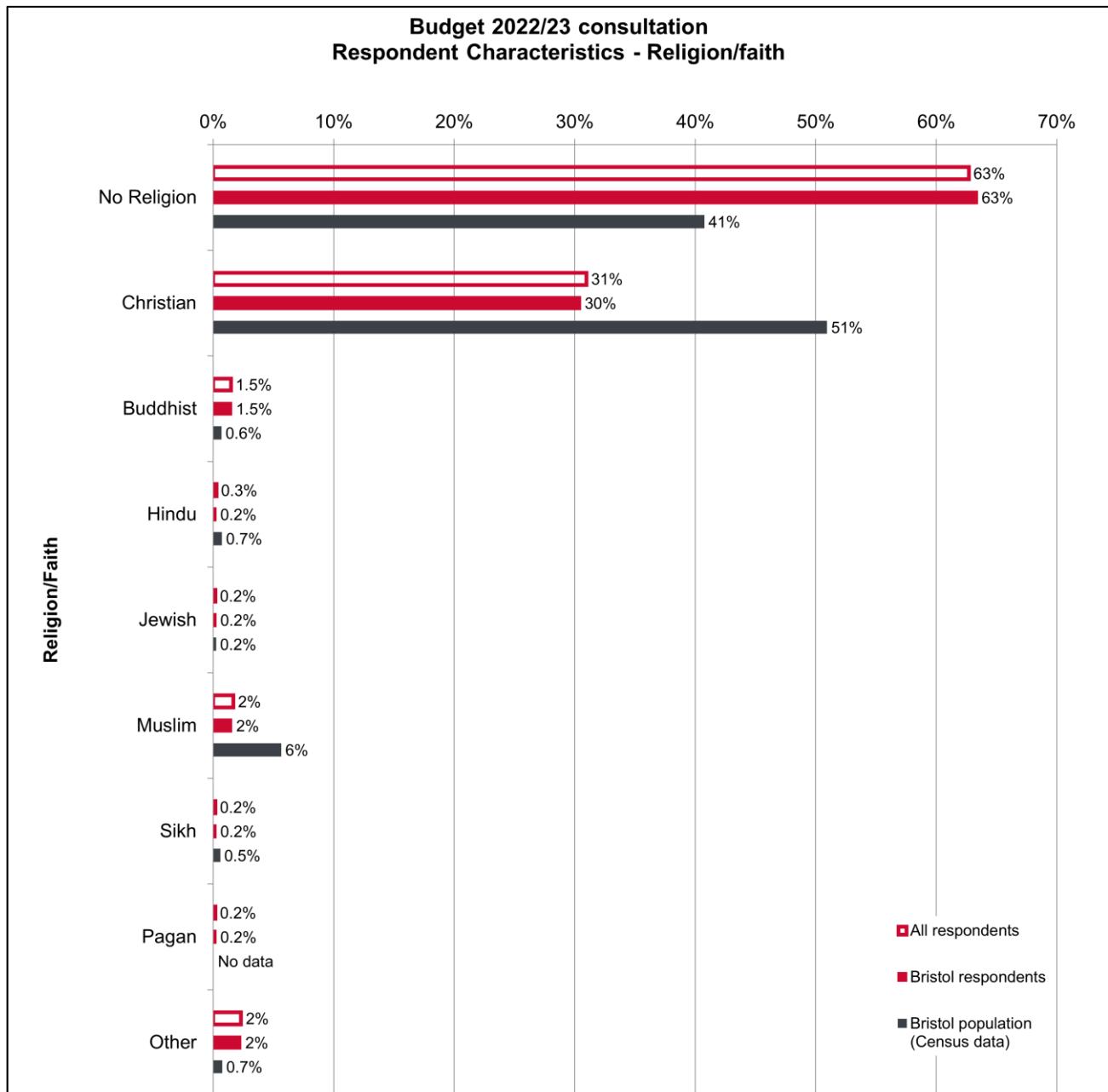
The proportion of Jewish respondents (0.2%) matches the Bristol population.

Christians (31%), Muslims (2%), Hindus (0.3%) and Sikhs (0.2%) were under-represented compared to the proportions of these faiths living in Bristol.

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

The proportion of each religion/faith for all respondents closely matches Bristol respondents.

Figure 8: Religion/faith of respondents



Other protected characteristics and refugee/asylum status

The survey also asked respondents about three other protected characteristics (sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and recent maternity) 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 9, 10, 11 and 12 show the proportions of all respondents and Bristol respondents for each of these characteristics. The proportion of each characteristic for all respondents broadly matches the proportion for Bristol respondents.

Figure 9: Sexual orientation

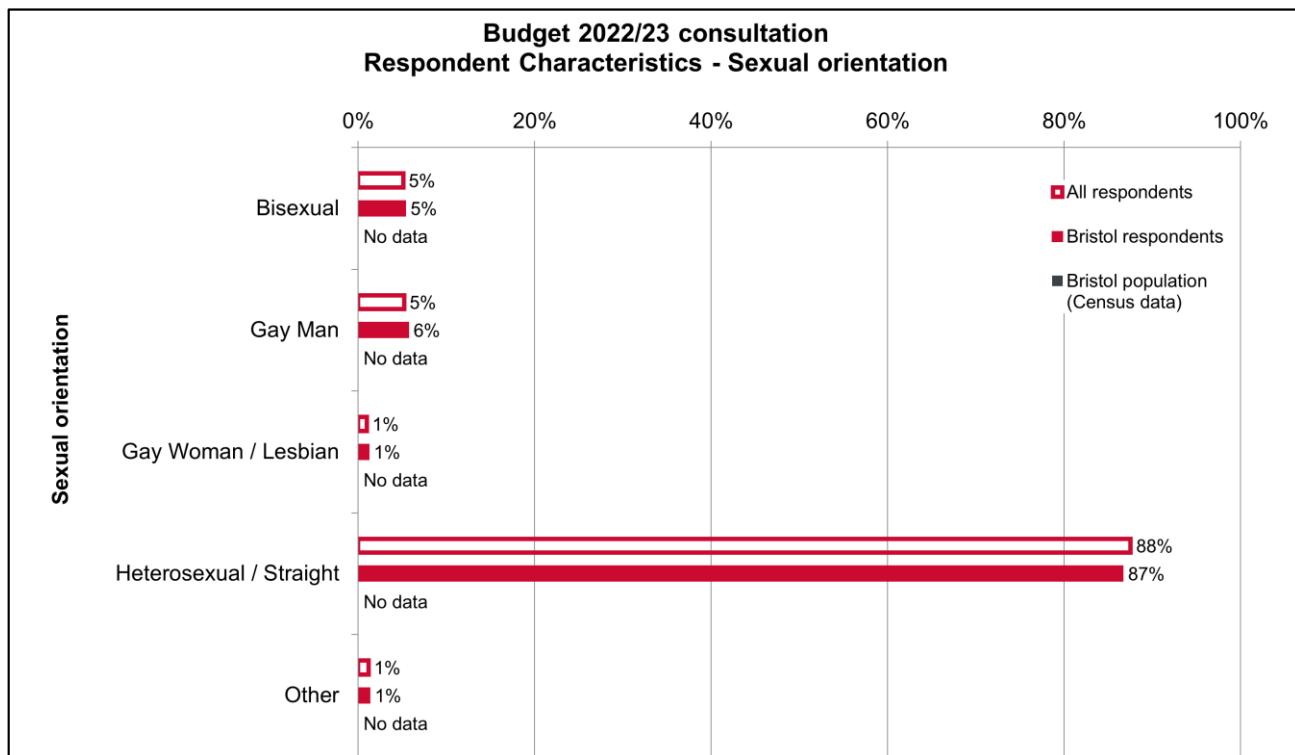


Figure 10: Gender reassignment

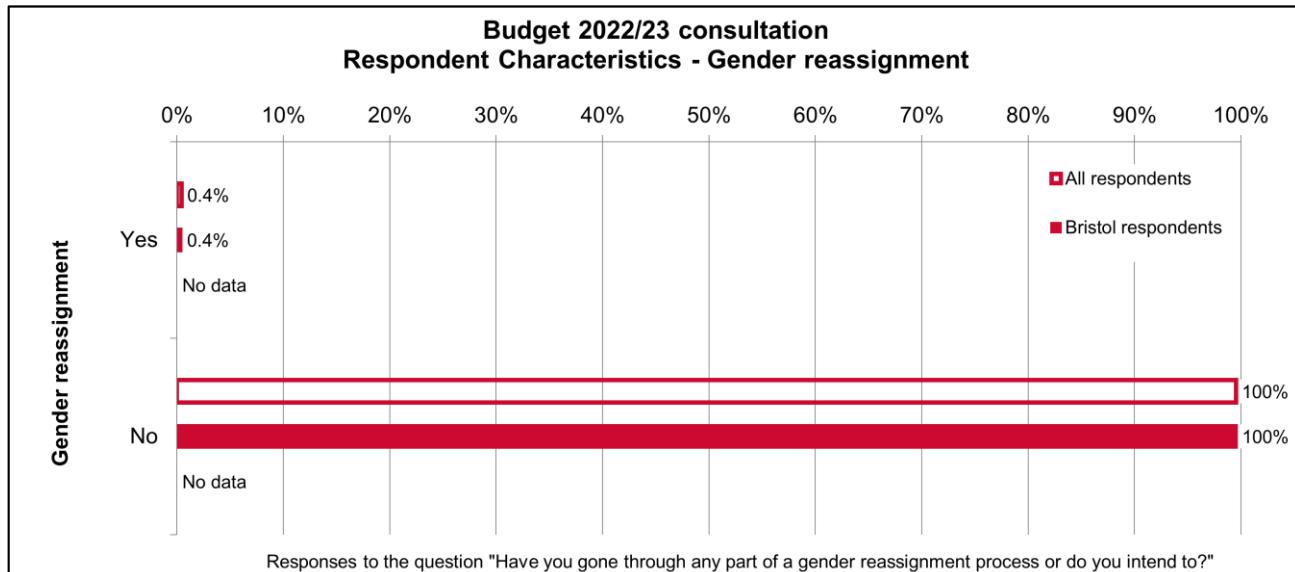


Figure 11: Pregnancy/Maternity

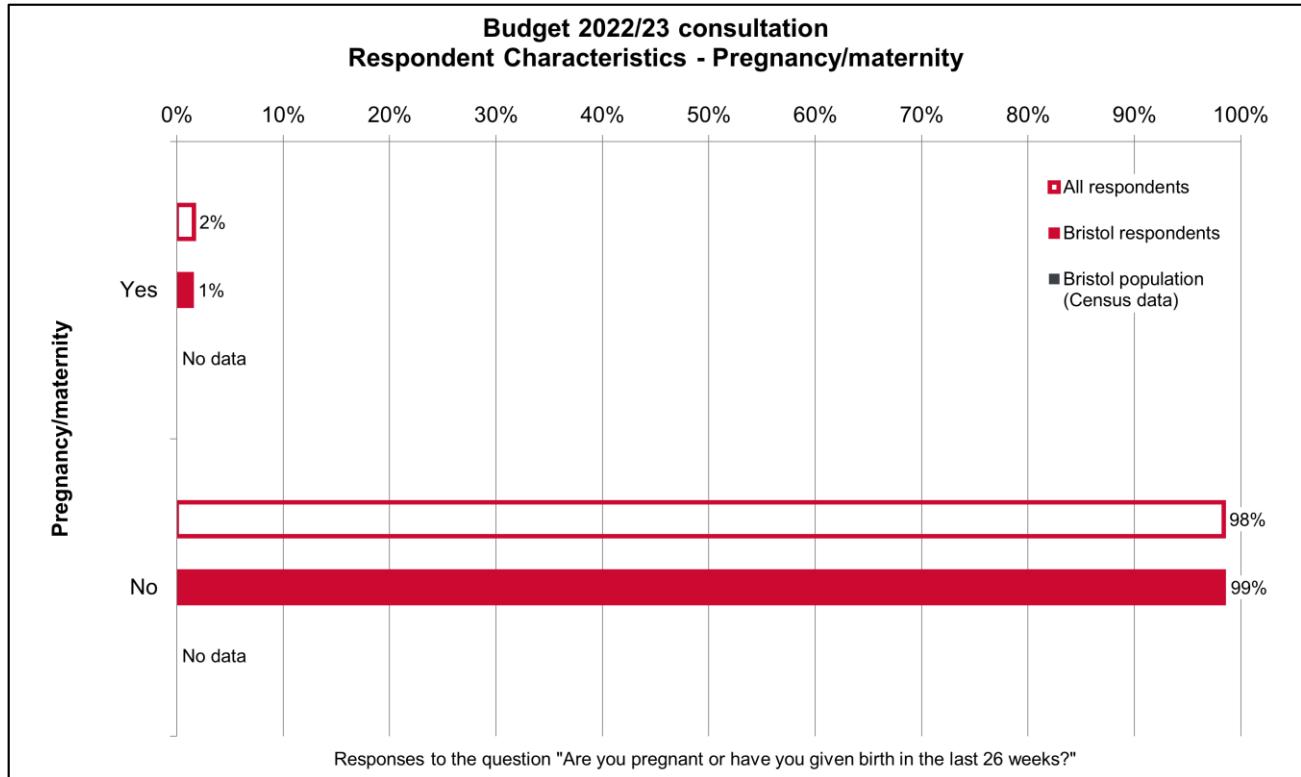
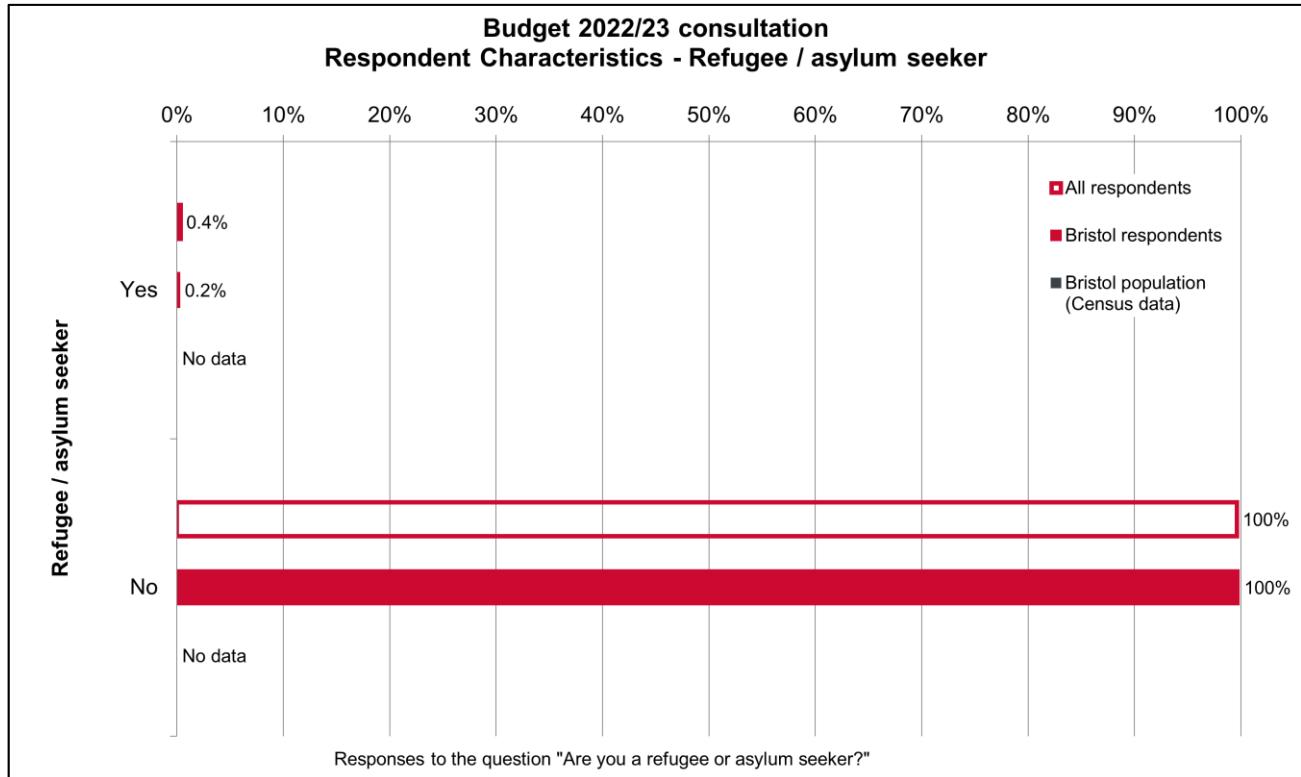


Figure 12: Refugee or asylum seeker



Other respondent characteristics

1,251 (96%) respondents provided other details of their personal situation, selecting from a list of 11 options:

- 1,200 (96% of the 1,251 respondents who answered the question) are Bristol residents
- 12 (1%) work in Bristol but live elsewhere
- 20 (2%) are Bristol City Council employees;
- 5 (0.4%) represent and/or own a local business;
- 2 (0.2%) were responses on behalf of a Voluntary/Community/Social Enterprise;
- 1 (0.1%) response was on behalf of a Housing Association;
- 1 (0.1%) is a councillor;
- 10 (1%) selected 'other'.

Of the 10 respondents who selected 'other', two are landlords, one owns empty property in Bristol, three do not live in the Bristol administrative area, one is a former council employee, one described themselves as an immigrant, and two selected 'other' but did not specify details.

4 Survey results: approaches to saving money and generating income

4.1 Views on the six approaches – all respondents

Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree with each of six money saving and income generating approaches that are proposed to bridge the forecast budget gap²³ in 2022/23.

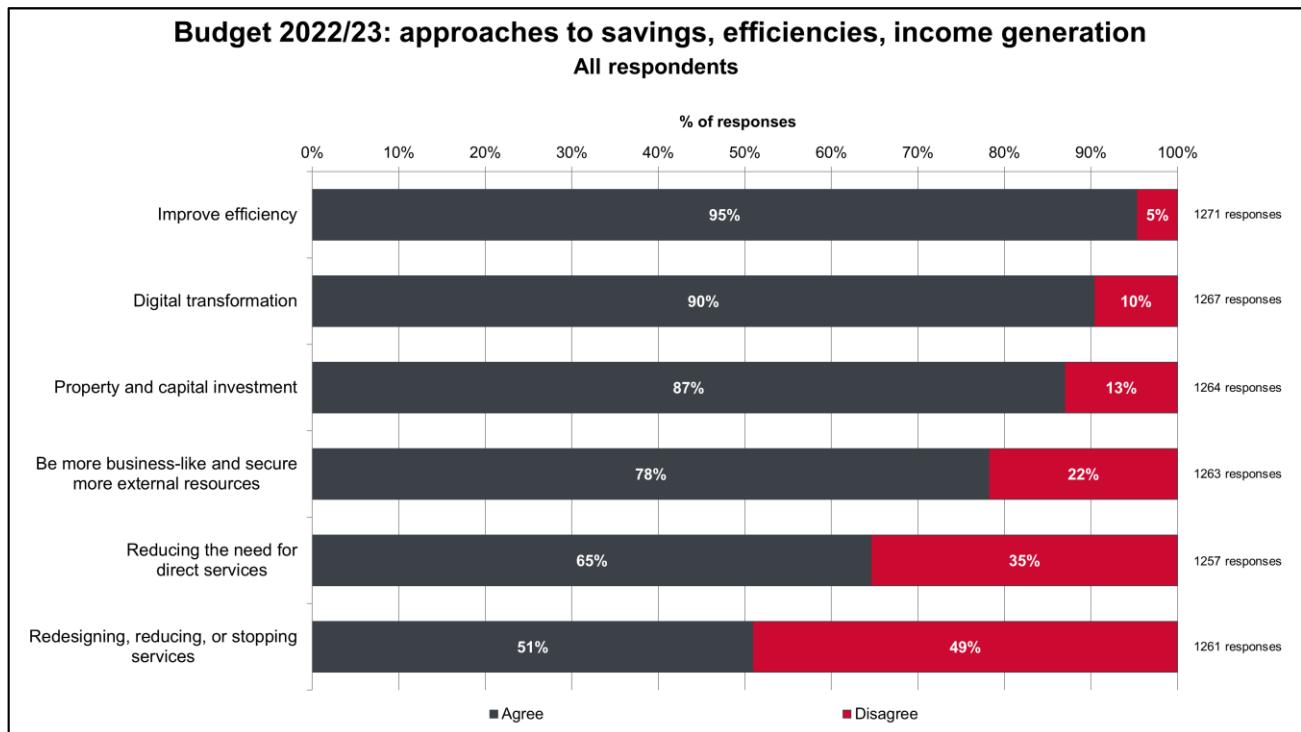
Of the 1,304 respondents to the survey, 1,281 (98%) gave their views on one or more of the approaches. All six approaches were approved of by at least half of the respondents, but respondents indicated much higher support for some approaches than others (Figure 13).

The approach with the highest support is ‘improving efficiency’, by joining up services, reducing duplications and getting better value in procurement. Of 1,271 respondents who expressed a view, 95% agree and 5% disagree with this approach.

Using ‘digital transformation’ to reduce costs and improve outcomes by targeting services to those with greatest need had the second highest support (90% agree / 10% disagree).

The proposed approaches with lowest support are ‘reducing the need for direct services’ (65% agree / 35% disagree) and ‘redesigning, reducing or stopping services’ to fund the highest priorities (51% agree / 49% disagree).

Figure 13: Proportion of respondents who agree with each of the six approaches



²³ The budget consultation referred to budget gap of £23.1 million; the estimate current in November 2021. The annual determination of funding to local government has revised the budget gap to £19.5m in 2022/23.

4.2 Views on each approach in areas with different levels of deprivation

Views on each money saving / income generation approach were compared for people in areas of high and low deprivation, to check for any significant differences in support. The comparison used postcodes provided by respondents in Bristol to match each response to one of 10 deprivation bands (deciles) as described in section 3.3.

Figures 14 to 19 show the views of respondents in each deprivation decile, as well as the views of people who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode, and the aggregate views of all respondents.

Although views differ by deprivation decile, there are no strong trends which indicate people in more deprived areas show a strong preference for different approaches compared to respondents in less deprived areas. The following was observed:

- **Increasing efficiency:** there is slightly greater support for increasing efficiency in the least deprived 50% of areas compared to the most deprived 50%. Support levels range from 92% in decile 3 to 98% in decile 6 (Figure 14).
- **digital transformation:** there is no trend between high and low deprivation. Support levels range from 89% in decile 4 to 94% in deciles 3 and 7 (Figure 15).
- **property and capital investment:** there is higher support in the least deprived 20% (deciles 9 and 10) compared to the most deprived 20% of areas (deciles 1 and 2) but there is no discernible trend in the deciles between. Support levels range from 82% in decile 2 to 92% in decile 10 (Figure 16).
- **Be more business-like and secure more external resources:** there is significant variation in support for this approach between deciles but no trend between areas of high and low deprivation; the highest support for this approach is in decile 1 followed by decile 10. Support levels range from 68% in decile 4 to 88% in decile 1 (Figure 17).
- **Reducing the need for direct services:** there is notable variation in support for this approach between deciles but no trend between areas of high and low deprivation; the highest support for this approach is in decile 10 followed by decile 1. Support levels range from 57% in decile 6 to 74% in decile 10 (Figure 18).
- **Redesigning, reducing or stopping services:** There is more support for this approach in deciles 7, 9 and 10 (least deprived) than in the more deprived half of the city. However, the trend is broken by there being the lowest support for this approach in decile 8. Support levels range from 43% in decile 8 to 59% in decile 9 (Figure 19)

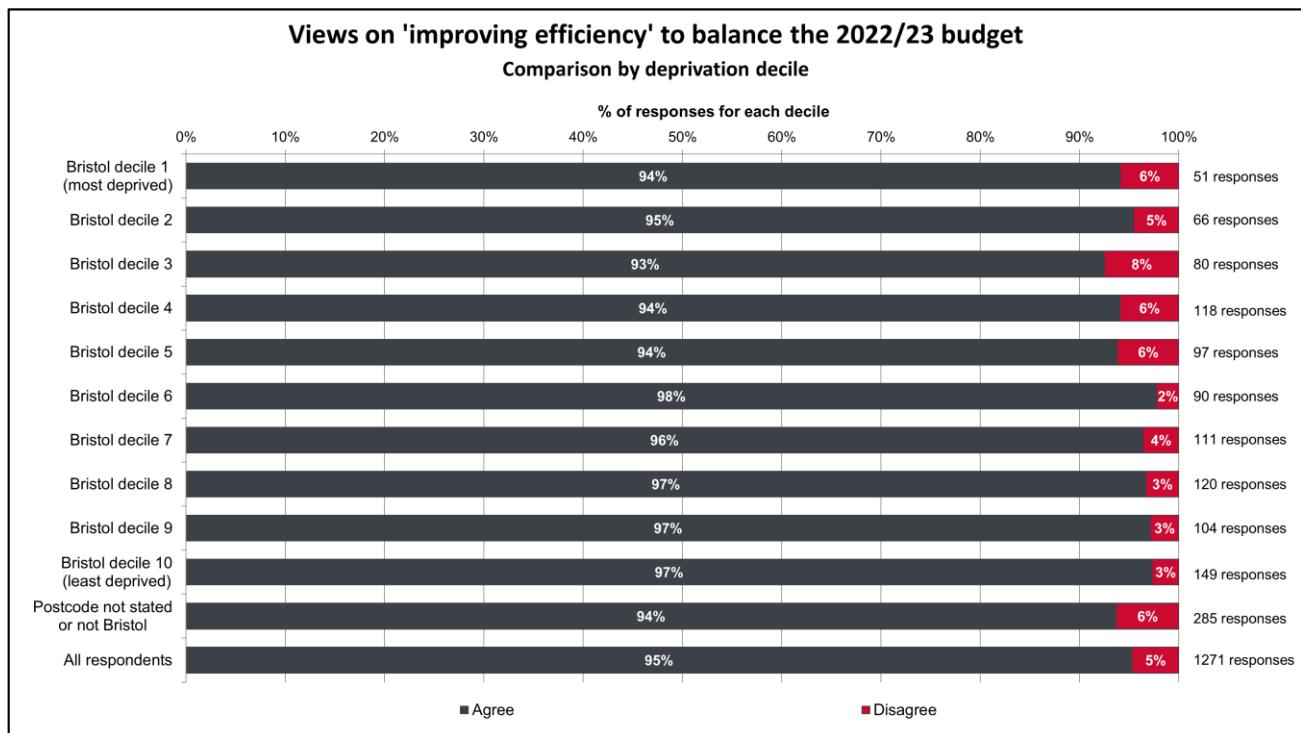
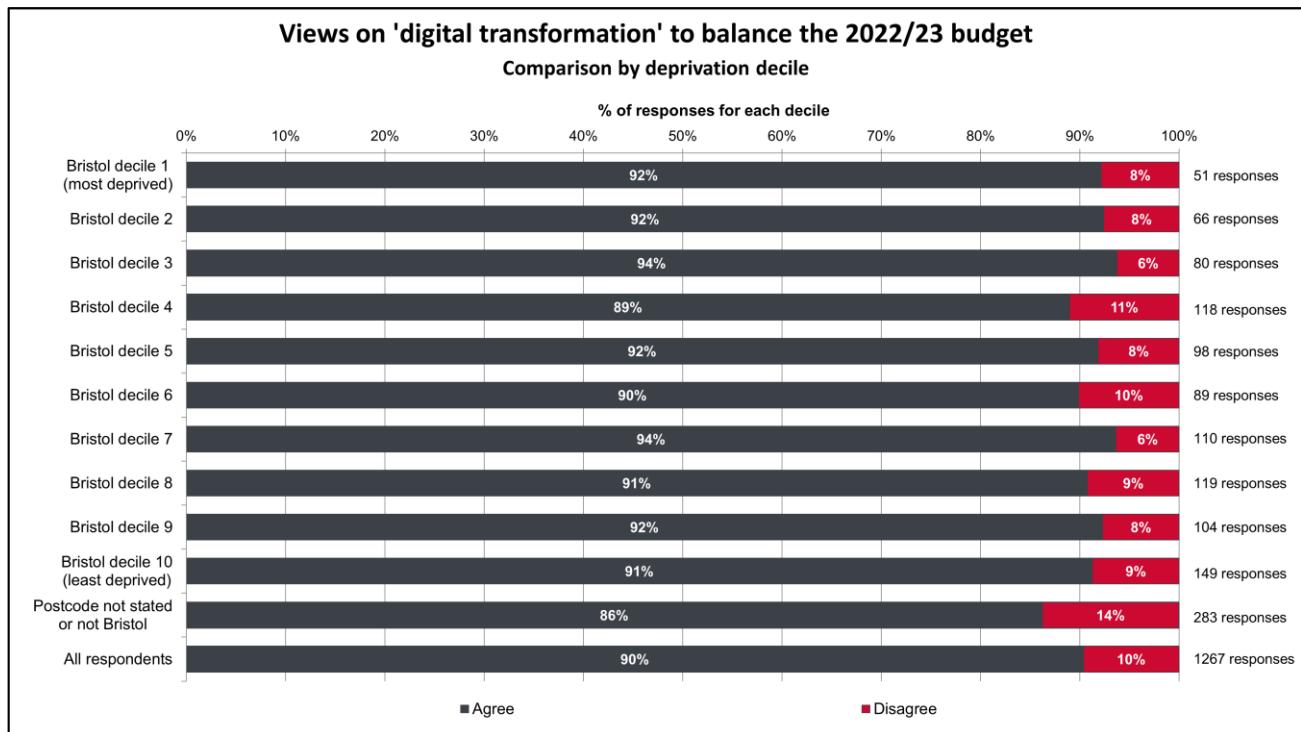
Figure 14: Views on ‘improving efficiency’ by deprivation decile**Figure 15: Views on ‘digital transformation’ by deprivation decile**

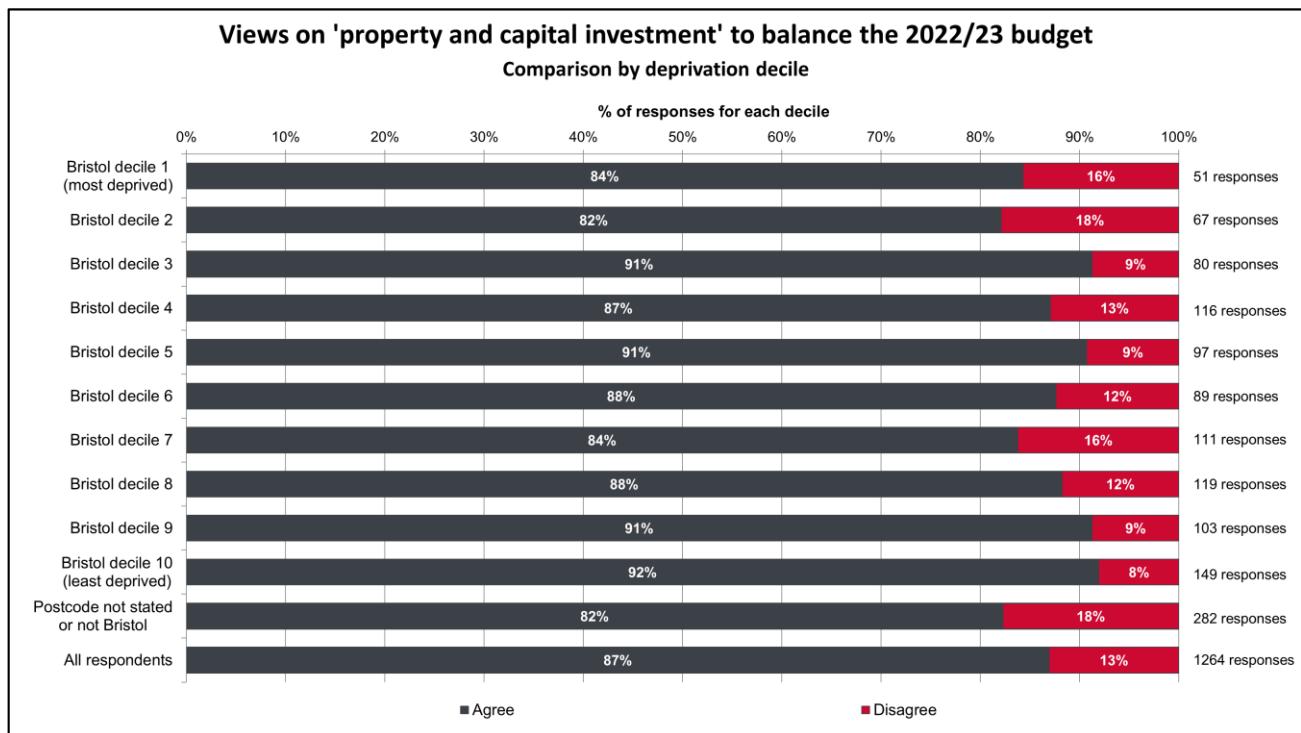
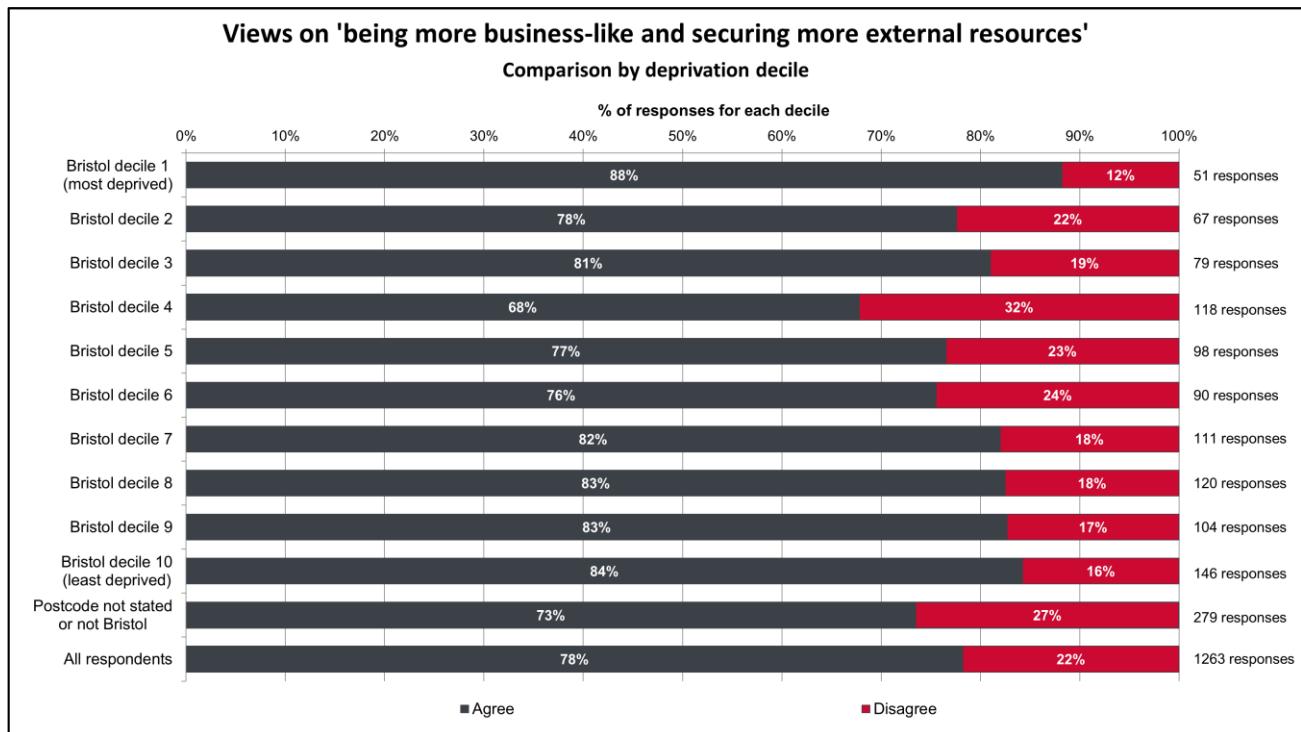
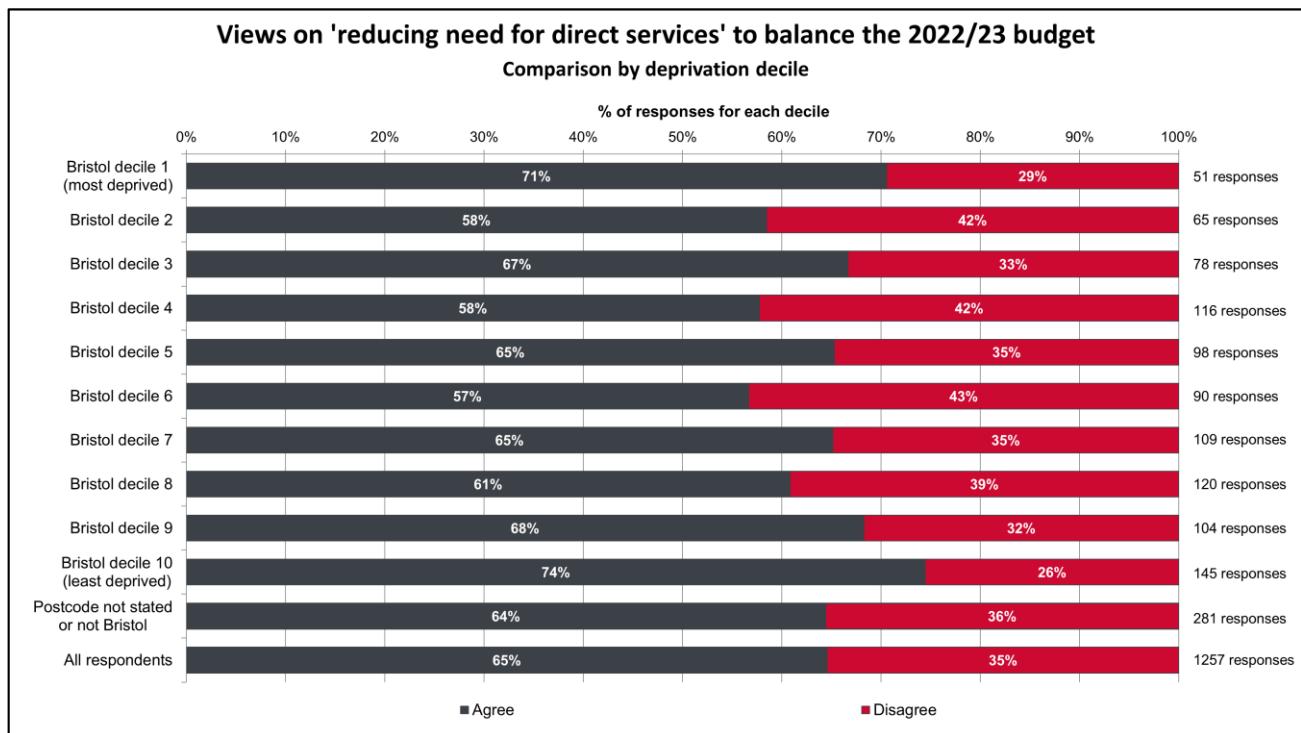
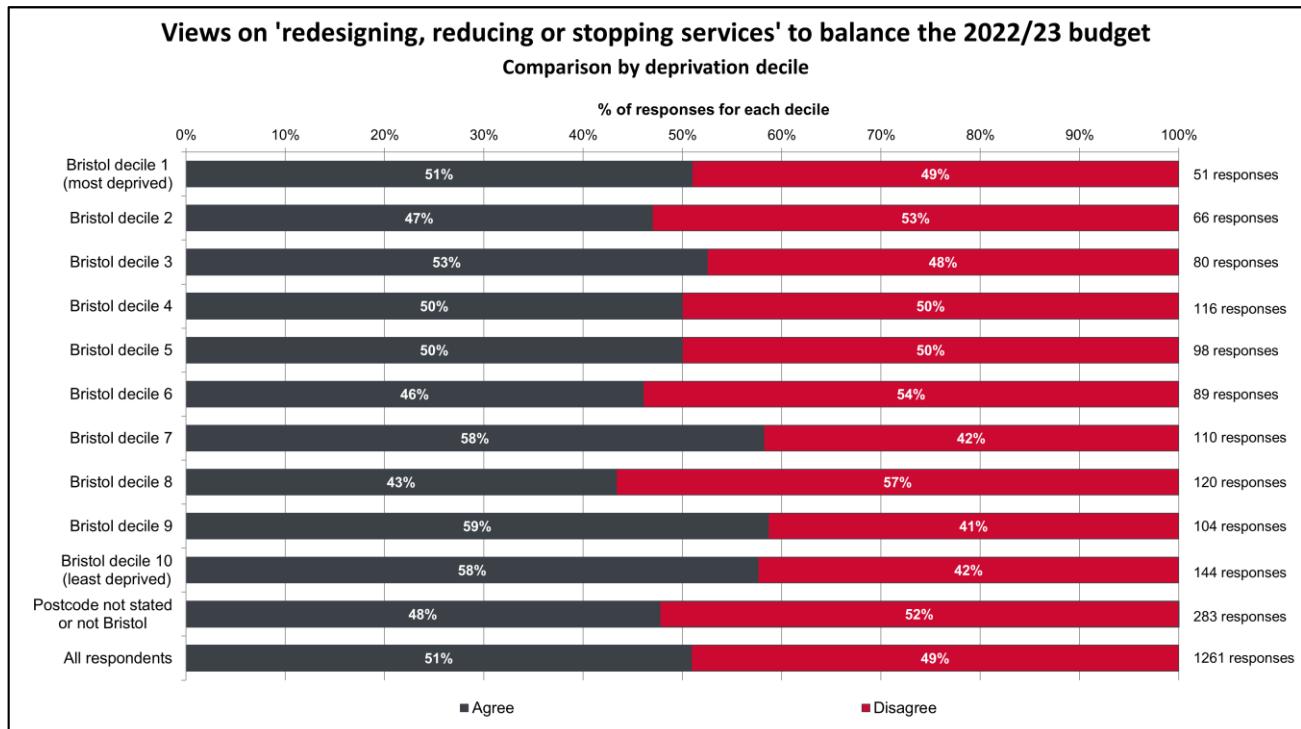
Figure 16: Views on ‘property and capital investment’ by deprivation decile**Figure 17: Views on ‘being more business-like’ by deprivation decile**

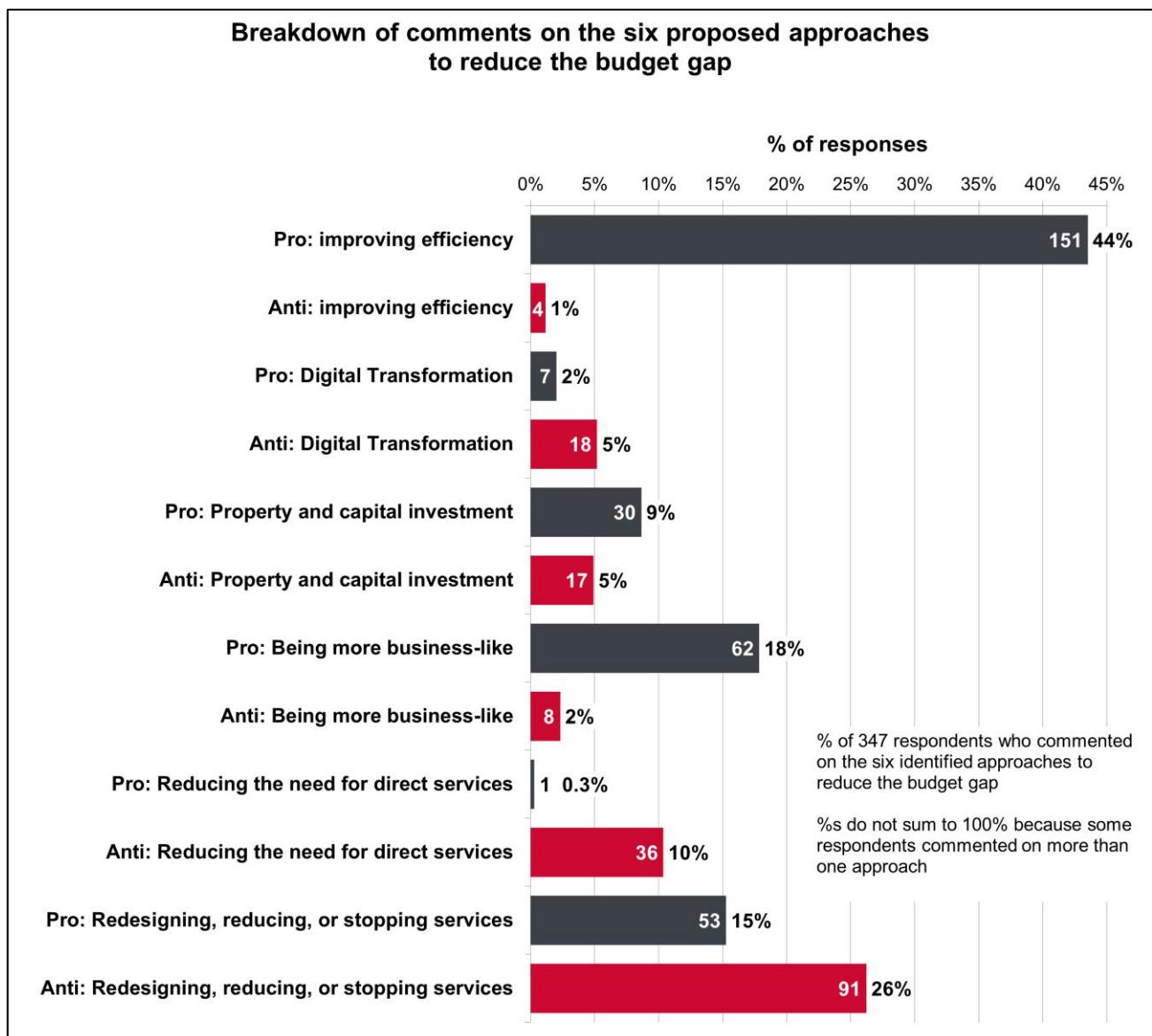
Figure 18: Views on ‘reducing need for direct services’ by deprivation decile**Figure 19: Views on ‘redesigning, reducing or stopping services’ by deprivation decile**

4.3 Free text comments and suggestions on the six approaches

583 respondents provided free text responses which explained the reasons for their views on the six savings / income generation approaches, their preferred level of Council Tax, the level of Social Care Precept or made other suggestions for how the council could save money or generate more income.

347 respondents (60% of respondents who provided free text responses) commented on one of the six identified approaches to reduce the budget gap. Figure 20 shows the number of respondents who provided free text comments that were supportive of (pro - in grey) and opposed to (anti – in red) each of the six approaches. Figure 20 lists the six approaches in the same order as in Figure 13²⁴.

Figure 20: Free text comments and suggestions on the six approaches



²⁴ Figure 13 shows the proportion of 1,281 respondents who stated if they agree or disagree with each approach. Those with higher support are listed above those with less support. Figure 20 shows the number of free text comments for and against each of the approaches, by 347 respondents who commented

Improving efficiency

Of the 347 free text comments:

- 151 (44%) agreed with the council's approach to improving efficiency and reducing waste. 88 (25%) commented that they thought that the council wastes too much money, of whom 21 (6%) stated the council wastes money through mismanagement and 19 (5%) said it wastes money by outsourcing to the private sector. 78 (22%) said the council could save money through making efficiencies and striving for value for money.
- 4 (1%) disagreed with improving efficiency and reducing waste, stating their concern that striving for efficiency may have negative impacts on services or be a false economy.

Digital transformation

- 7 (2%) commented in favour of digital transformation, stating that the council should embrace digital approaches to improve information and reduce costs.
- 18 (5%) disagreed with the council's approach to digital transformation, stating that digital channels may not be accessible to all, due to knowledge, disability, cultural barriers or access to digital devices.

Property and capital investment

- 30 (9%) agreed with the council's approach to property and capital investment. Of these, 28 (8%) stated that the council should make more money from selling or letting its properties and 2 (1%) thought the council should make money from buying property and selling it at a profit.
- 17 (5%) disagreed with the council's approach to property and capital investment, stating that the capital budget should be increased.

Being more business-like

- 62 (18%) agreed with being more business-like. Of these, 39 (11%) supported increasing council fees and charges (with parking and other car user charges making up 37 of these), 21 (6%) wanted to invest in income-generating services, and 5 (1%) wanted to improve debt collection.
- 8 (2%) disagreed with being more business-like, stating that they think the council should work for social good and address issues that profit-driven businesses do not.

Reducing the need for direct services

- There was one comment in favour of reducing the need for direct services, but only if it is achieved by reducing need for reactive services through early intervention.
- 36 (10%) disagreed with reducing the need for direct services, citing opposition to commercialisation of public services for profit and stating that outsourcing would lead to poorer service, less accountability and further erosion of public trust.

Redesigning, reducing or stopping services

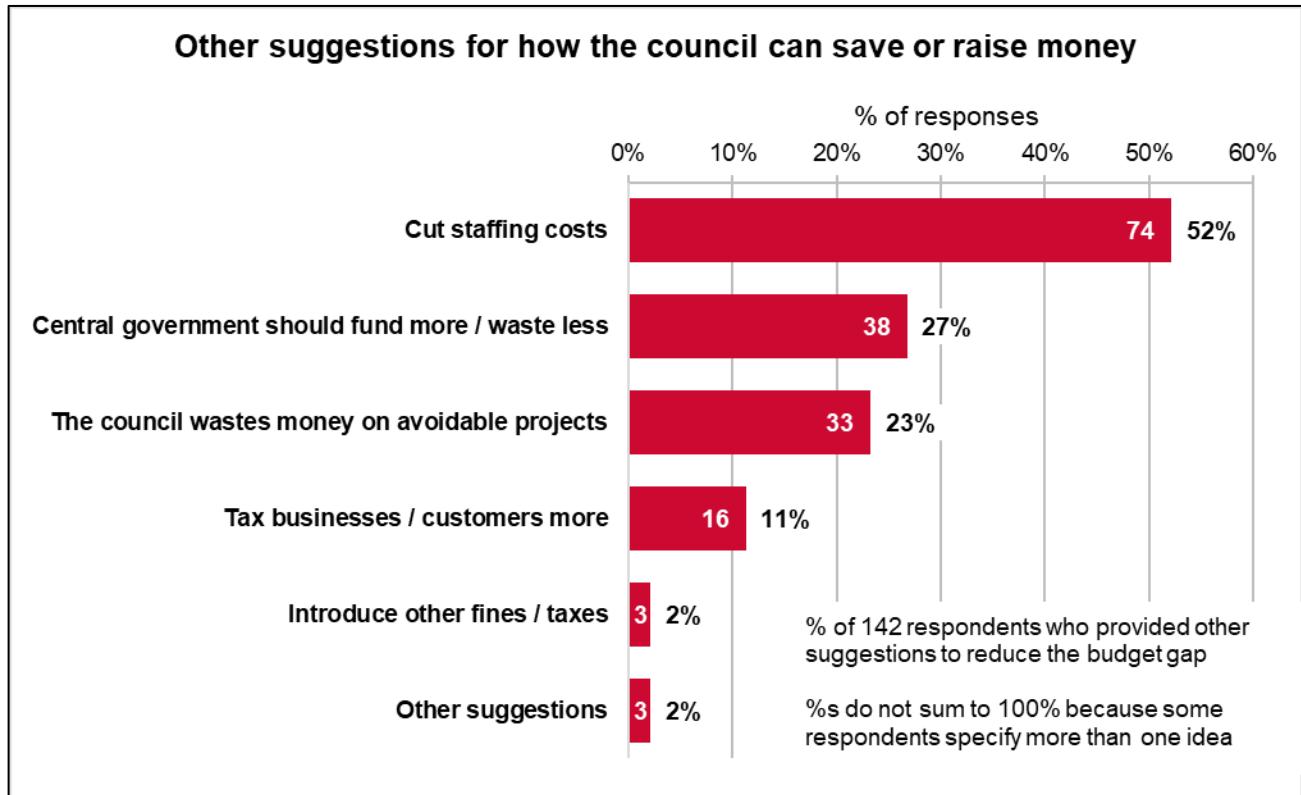
- 53 (15%) agreed with redesigning, reducing or stopping services. Of these, 15 (4%) thought benefits could be cut, 13 (4%) thought that too much is spent on social care, 8 (2%) would support cuts to unspecified services, 7 (2%) suggested reducing refuse collections and 4 (1%) recommended cuts to the Council Tax Reduction scheme.
- 91 (26%) disagreed with redesigning, reducing or stopping services, stating that public services are essential, particularly for more disadvantaged citizens. Respondents commented that would prefer to pay more to avoid cuts. 37 (11%) wanted to see more spent on improving services.

4.4 Other suggestions for ways to save money

142 respondents (24% of respondents who provided free text responses) suggested other ways to reduce the budget gap (Figure 21). Of these:

- 74 (52%) suggested cutting staff costs by rationalising mayoral roles and reducing salaries of elected and officer posts;
- 38 (27%) stated that central government should fund the council more, or waste less;
- 33 (23%) said that the council wastes money on avoidable projects (such as Bristol Energy and Bristol Beacon);
- 16 (11%) said that the council should tax businesses or customers more;
- 3 (2%) suggested the council introduce other fines or taxes;
- 3 (2%) made other suggestions for saving money.

Figure 21: Other suggestions for ways to save money or generate income



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

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

Core Council Tax

Respondents were asked to state which level of Council Tax they would prefer in 2022/23, choosing from the following three options:

- **No increase to Council Tax.** This option would require the council to find a further £4.7 million of savings and/or additional income on top of the £19.5 million budget gap²⁵ expected;
- **An increase of 1% to Council Tax.** This option would raise £2.4 million and require the council to find a further £2.3 million of savings and/or additional income on top of the £19.5 million budget gap expected;
- **An increase of 1.99% to Council Tax²⁶.** This option would raise £4.7 million and would not add to the £19.5 million of savings and/or additional income we expect to need.

Of the 1,304 people who responded to the consultation, a majority (842 respondents; 65%), favour an increase in core Council Tax to support general services in 2022/23. Of these:

- 260 (20%) would prefer a 1% increase in core Council Tax;
- 582 (45%) favour a 2% increase;
- 444 (34%) respondents would prefer ‘no increase to Council Tax’ in 2022/23;
- 18 (1%) did not give a view on Council Tax.

Social Care Precept

Respondents were also asked to state which level of Social Care Precept they would prefer in 2022/23, choosing from two options:

- **No additional Social Care Precept.** This option would require the council to find a further £2.4 million of savings and/or additional income;
- **An additional 1% Social Care Precept²⁷.** This would be an extra 1% increase to Council Tax bills in addition to the increase in core Council Tax. This option would raise £2.4 million to support the delivery of social care and would not add to the £19.5 million of savings and/or additional income we expect to need.

Of the 1,304 people who responded to the consultation, a majority (740 respondents; 57%), favour an additional 1% Social Care Precept (on top of core Council Tax) to support the delivery of social care in 2022/23.

539 (41%) respondents would prefer no increase to Social Care Precept in 2022/23.

25 (2%) did not give a view on Social Care Precept.

²⁵ The budget consultation referred to a budget gap of £23.1 million; the estimate current in November 2021. The annual determination of funding to local government has revised the budget gap to £19.5m in 2022/23.

²⁶ An increase up to 2% in core Council Tax is the maximum permitted without requiring a local referendum.

²⁷ A 1% Social Care Precept is the maximum increase permitted by government in 2022/23

Figure 22 shows the proportions of the 1,304 respondents who prefer each combination of Council Tax increase (0%, 1% or 2%) and Social Care Precept (0% or 1%).

In Figure 22, each bar shows the percentage of respondents who would like each Council Tax option, 0%, 1% or 2%. (The fourth bar shows respondents who did not give their views on Council Tax, some of whom did give their views on Social Care Precept.)

Each bar is subdivided into the percentage who opted for each Social Care Precept option; red for 0% Social Care Precept, grey for 1% and white for no view on Social Care Precept.

For example, the top bar in Figure 22 shows that:

- 28% of 1,304 respondents want 0% Council Tax and 0% Social Care Precept (red)
- 6% want 0% Council Tax and 1% Social Care Precept (grey)
- 1% want 0% Council Tax and did not state a view on Social Care Precept (white)

Figure 22: preferred options for Council Tax and Social Care Precept

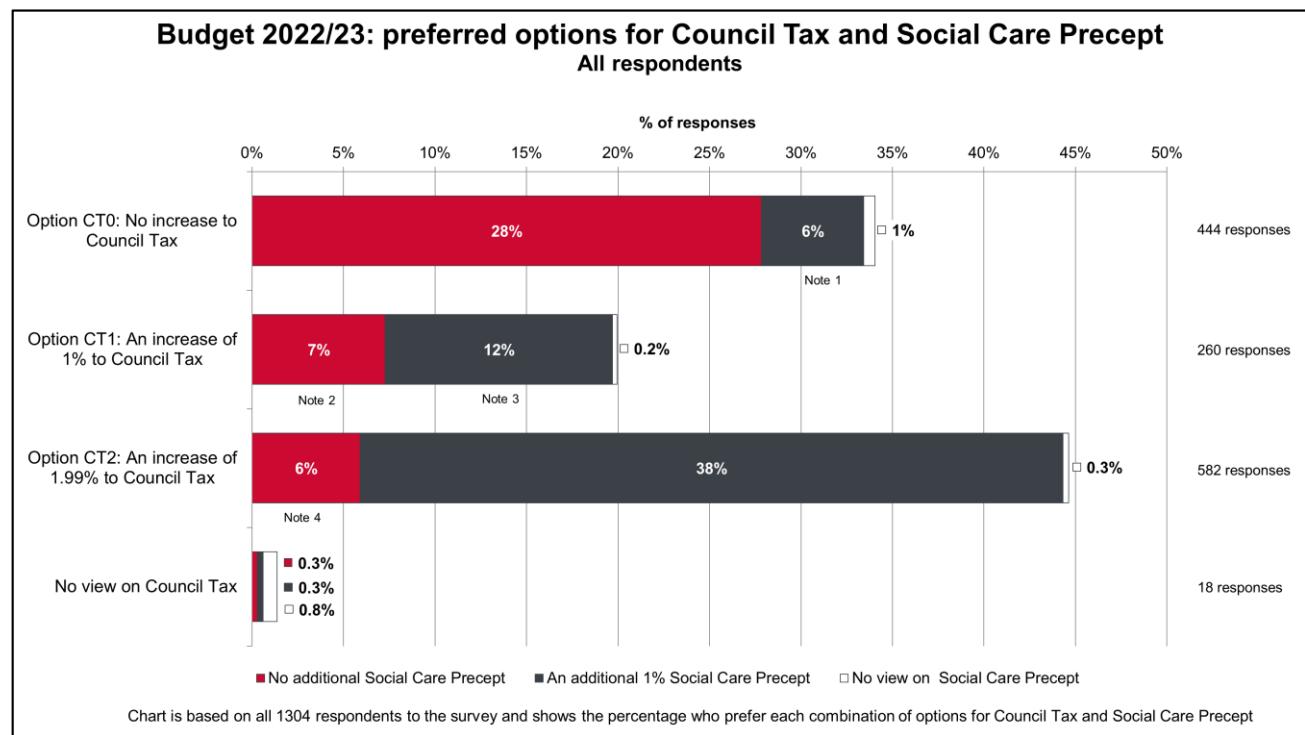


Figure 22 shows that:

- The option with highest support (38% of 1,304 respondents) is a 2% increase in core Council Tax and a 1% Social Care Precept. This is the maximum increase possible.
- The second most popular option (28% of 1,304 respondents) is 0% increase in core Council Tax and 0% Social Care Precept.
- For respondents who favour 1% increase overall, 6% would like this as 1% Social Care Precept with no core Council Tax increase (Note 1 in Figure 22). This is similar to the 7% who would prefer a 1% core Council Tax increase with no Social Care Precept (Note 2).
- For respondents who favour a 2% increase overall, 12% would prefer to share this as 1% increase in core Council Tax and 1% Social Care Precept (Note 3). This compares to 6% who want 2% on core Council Tax and 0% Social Care Precept (Note 4).

A full breakdown of respondents' views shown in Figure 22 is listed below.

For the 0% Council Tax option (top bar in Figure 22):

- 28% of 1,304 respondents want 0% Council Tax and 0% Social Care Precept (red)
- 6% want 0% Council Tax and 1% Social Care Precept (grey)
- 1% want 0% Council Tax and did not state a view on Social Care Precept (white)

For the 1% Council Tax option (second bar in Figure 22):

- 7% want 1% Council Tax and 0% Social Care Precept (red)
- 12% want 1% Council Tax and 1% Social Care Precept (grey)
- 0.2% want 1% Council Tax and did not state a view on Social Care Precept (white)

For the 2% Council Tax option (third bar in Figure 22):

- 6% want 2% Council Tax and 0% Social Care Precept (red)
- 38% want 2% Council Tax and 1% Social Care Precept (grey). This is the maximum increase possible
- 0.3% want 2% Council Tax and did not state a view on Social Care Precept (white)

For the bottom bar (people who did not state their view about core Council Tax):

- 0.3% stated they want 0% Social Care Precept (red)
- 0.3% stated they want 1% Social Care Precept (grey)
- 0.8% did not state a view on Council Tax or Social Care Precept (white)

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

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 in views. 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 23 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who want a 0%, 1% or 2% increase in core Council Tax in 2022/23. This is based on the 991 Bristol respondents who stated a preferred option for core Council Tax and provided a full postcode²⁸. Figure 23 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.

²⁸ Incomplete postcodes cannot be matched to the deprivation data.

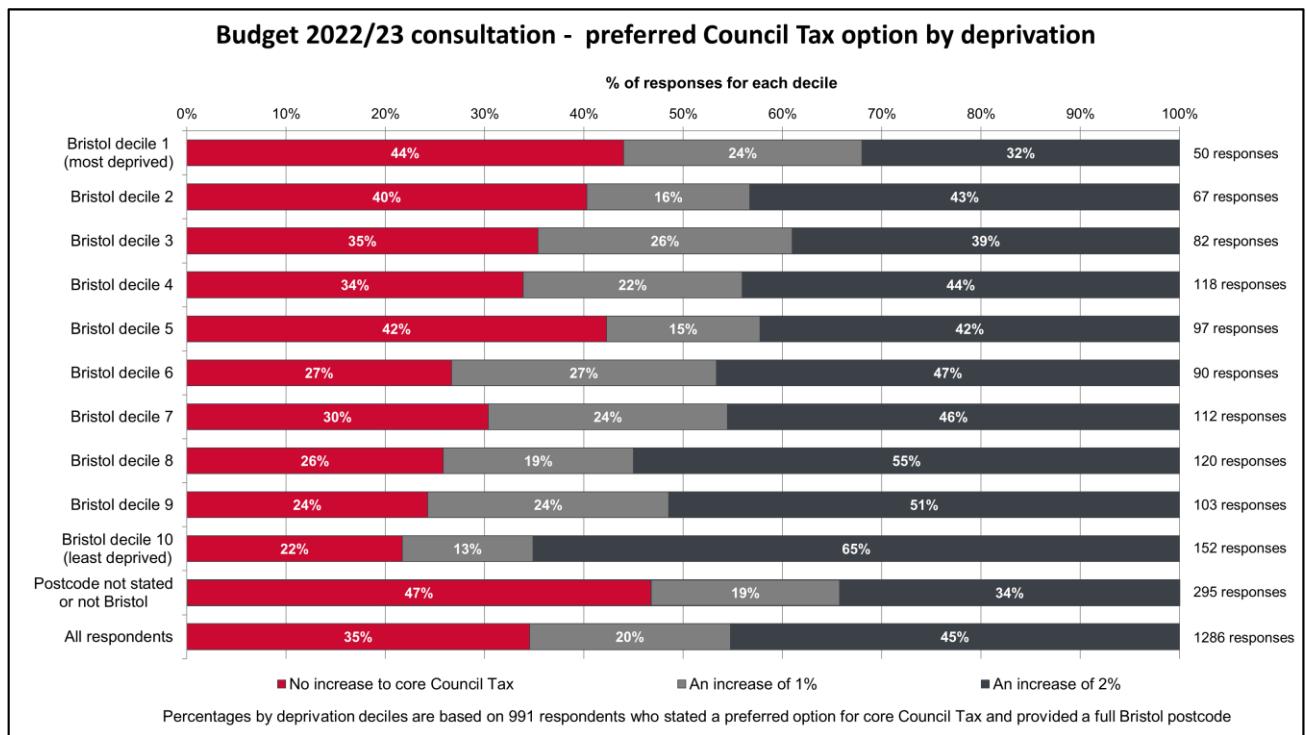
Figure 23: Preference in each deprivation decile for the core Council Tax options

Figure 23 shows that preference for higher core Council Tax tends to increase as deprivation reduces.

Support for **no increase** in core Council Tax is highest among respondents in the most deprived 10% of Bristol (decile 1), with 44% of respondents favouring no increase and 24% preferring a 1% increase. Support for no increase in Council Tax reduces to 22% in decile 10 (least deprived 10%).

Support for the maximum **2% increase** is lowest (32%) in the most deprived 10% of Bristol (decile 1) and is highest (65%) in the least deprived decile 10. Support for a 2% increase exceeds 50% in deciles 8, 9 and 10.

Decile 5 deviates from this trend in that support for no increase (42%) is similar to decile 1 (44%). However, support for a 2% increase in decile 5 aligns with the overall trend because the high support for 0% increase is matched by lower support for a 1% increase.

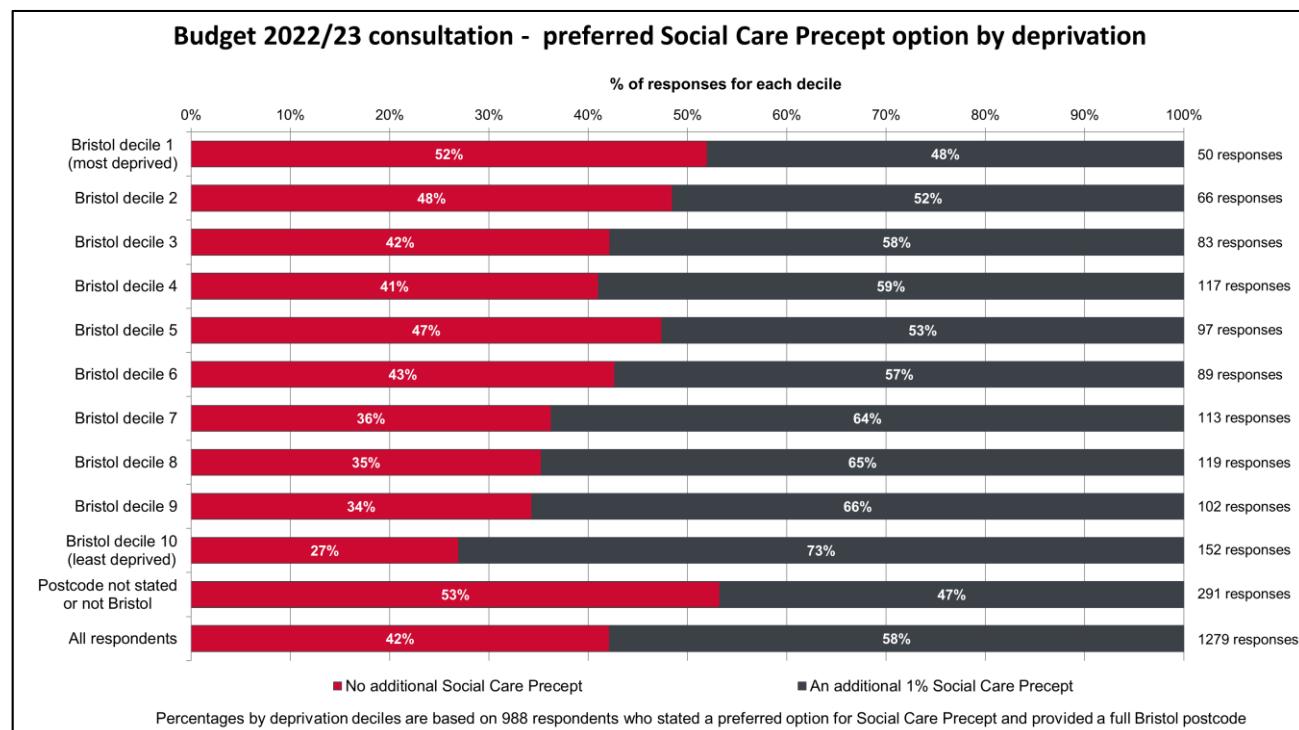
Respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode were the least in favour of paying more core Council Tax. 47% in this group favour no increase and only 34% support a 2% increase - similar to decile 1 (most deprived 10% of Bristol).

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

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 24 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who want a 0% or 1% increase in Social Care Precept in 2022/23. This is based on the 988 Bristol respondents who stated a preferred option for Social Care Precept and provided a full postcode²⁹. Figure 24 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 24: Preference in each deprivation decile for the Social Care Precept options



As with core Council Tax, support for a Social Care Precept follows an inverse trend with deprivation (Figure 24).

Support for no Social Care Precept ranges from 52% in decile 1 (most deprived) to 27% in decile 10 (least deprived). Correspondingly, support for 1% Social Care Precept increases from 48% in decile 1 to 73% in decile 10 and exceeds 50% in all deciles from 2 to 10.

As with core Council Tax, respondents in decile 5 deviate slightly from the trend, with 47% favouring no Social Care Precept and 53% supporting 1% Social Care Precept.

Respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode were the least in favour of paying a Social Care Precept. 53% in this group prefer no Social Care Precept and only 47% support a 1% Social Care Precept - similar to decile 1 (most deprived).

²⁹ Incomplete postcodes cannot be matched to the deprivation data.

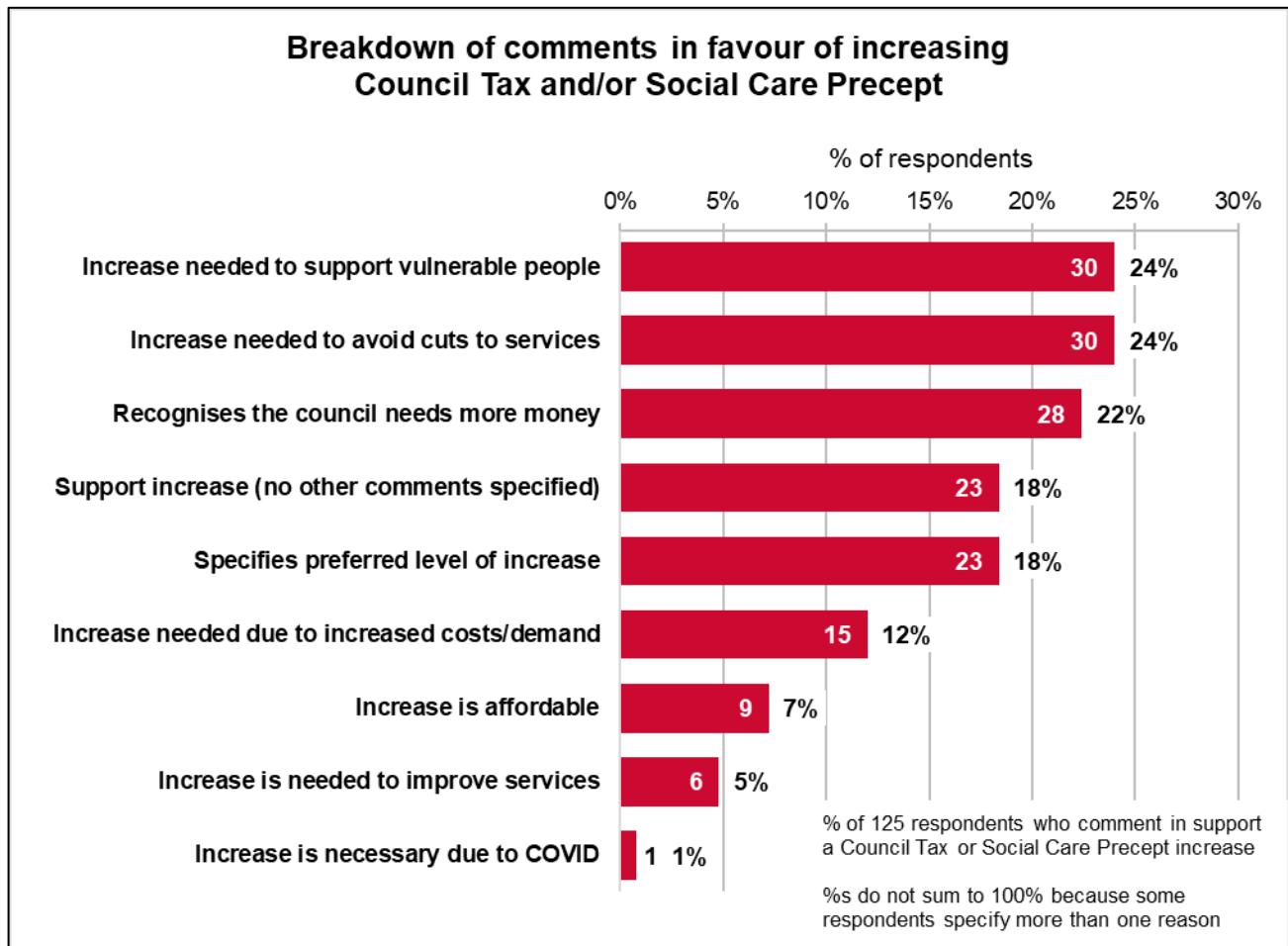
5.4 Reasons for Council Tax and Social Care Precept levels chosen

5.4.1 Comments in favour of increasing Council Tax and/or Social Care Precept

125 respondents who provided free text responses said why they support an increase in Council Tax and/or Social Care Precept (Figure 25). Of these:

- 30 (24%) said that an increase is needed to support vulnerable citizens;
- 30 (24%) said an increase is needed to avoid cuts to services;
- 28 (22%) said they recognise that the council needs more money;
- 23 (18%) stated their support for an increase without specifying any other comments;
- 23 (18%) specified their preferred level of Council Tax or Social Care Precept increase;
- 15 (12%) said an increase is needed due to increased costs and/or demand for services;
- 9 (7%) said an increase is affordable;
- 6 (5%) said an increase is necessary to improve services;
- 1 (1%) said an increase is necessary due to the impacts of COVID-19.

Figure 25: Comments in favour of increasing Council Tax and/or Social Care Precept

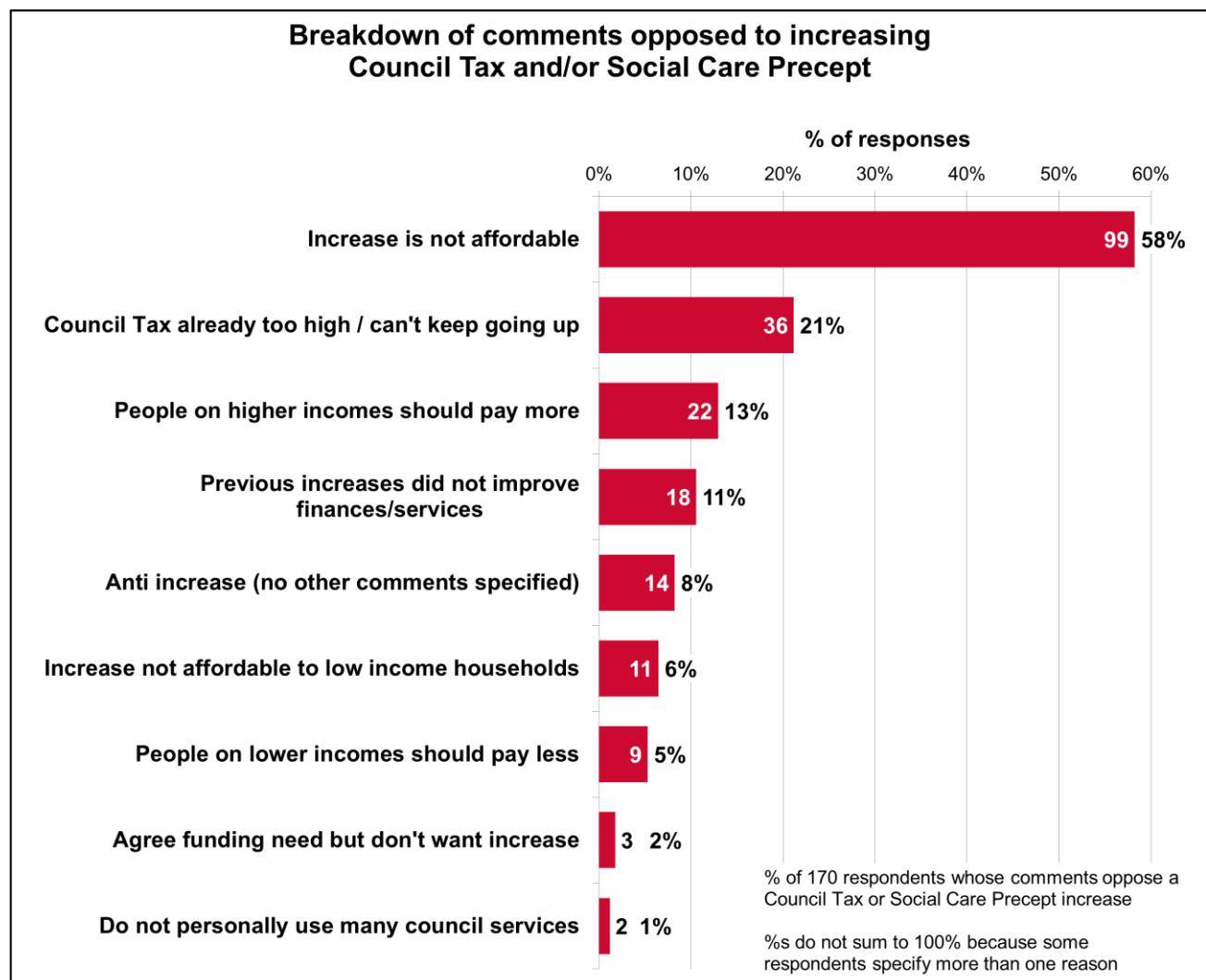


5.4.2 Comments opposed to increasing Council Tax and/or Social Care Precept

170 respondents said why they oppose an increase in Council Tax and/or Social Care Precept (Figure 26). Of these:

- 99 (58%) said that an increase is not affordable;
- 36 (21%) stated that Council Tax is too high already and cannot keep increasing;
- 22 (13%) said that people on higher incomes should pay more;
- 18 (11%) said that previous increases did not improve the council's finances or services;
- 14 (8%) said they disagree with an increase in Council Tax or Social Care Precept but did not provide any other comments;
- 11 (6%) said an increase would be unaffordable to people on low incomes;
- 9 (5%) said that people on low incomes should pay less;
- 3 (2%) agreed that the council needs more funding but do not support an increase in Council Tax or Social Care Precept;
- 2 (1%) wanted to pay less because they do not use many council services.

Figure 26: Comments opposed to increasing Council Tax or Social Care Precept



5.4.3 Other comments and consultation feedback

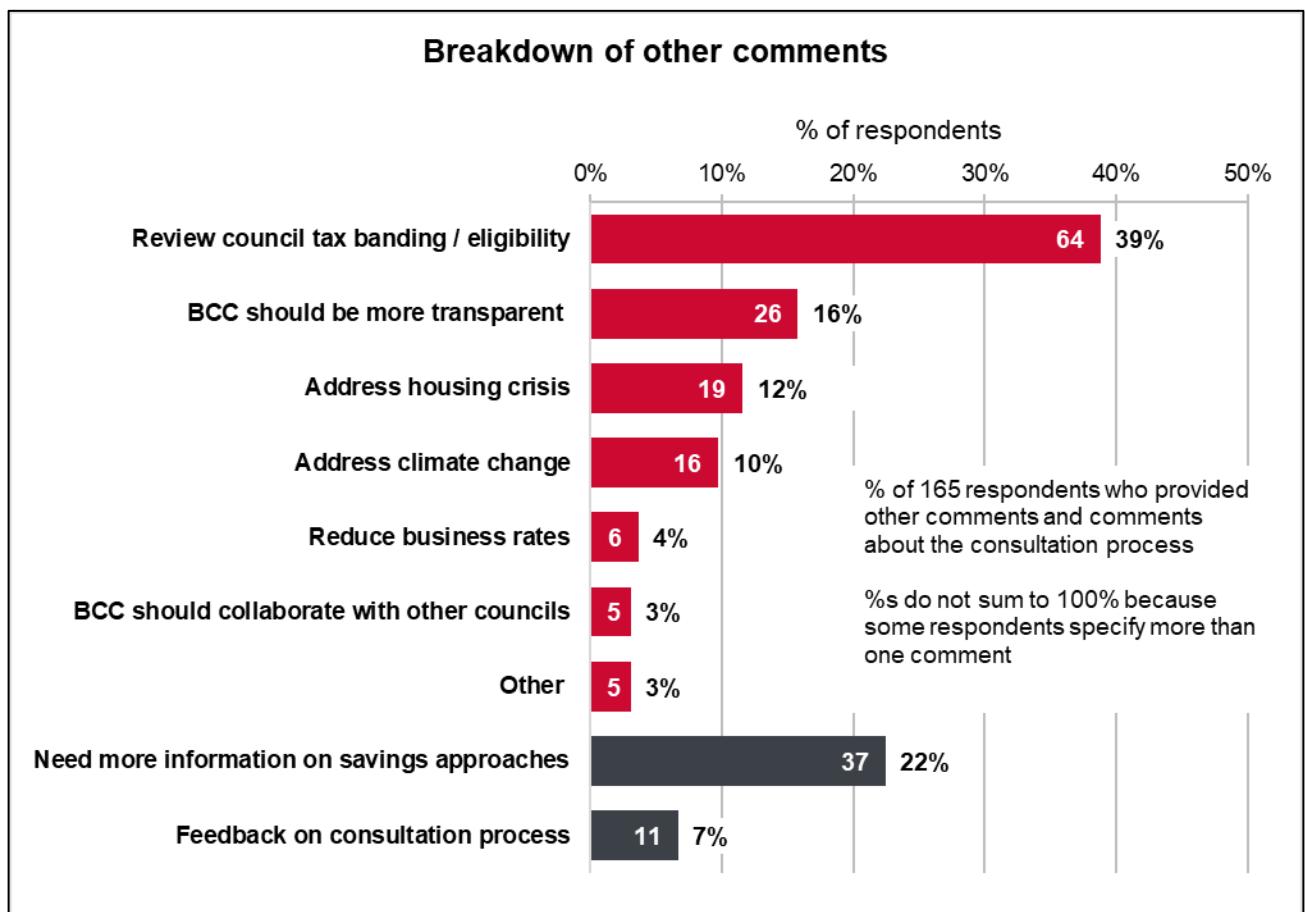
165 respondents provided other comments or suggestions about priorities they want the council to address or ways they would like the council to work (Figure 27). Of these:

- 64 (39%) said Council Tax banding and/or eligibility should be reviewed;
- 26 (16%) said the council should be more transparent;
- 19 (12%) said the housing crisis needs to be addressed;
- 16 (10%) said climate change needs to be addressed;
- 6 (4%) stated that business rates should be reduced;
- 5 (3%) said Bristol City Council should collaborate with other councils;
- 5 (3%) made other comments;

47 respondents commented on the consultation process;

- 37 (22%) said that the description of the six savings approaches was too broad and/or too positively worded to say if they agreed or disagreed; they thought specific proposals, once known, could be positive or negative under each description. They also said the binary nature of the question (agree/disagree) would not yield usefully nuanced feedback;
- 11 (7%) provided other feedback on the consultation, including five who thought their feedback would not make a difference to decisions and three who wanted more information about Social Care Precept.

Figure 27: Other comments and comments about the consultation



6 Other correspondence on the Budget 2022/23 consultation

Two emails were received from members of the public and one from the Bristol Parks Forum in response to the Budget 2022/23 consultation. These were analysed separately from the survey responses and are summarised by theme below.

Comments in the three emails included stated opposition to an increase in Council Tax, suggestions on how the council can save or make money and suggestions that parks and green spaces should be a council priority.

Opposed to an increase in Council Tax

- One person said that they would not support any increase in Council Tax

Suggestions on how the council can save or make money

- One person said transport projects should not be funded during the COVID-19 pandemic
- One person suggested that savings could be made by privatising local tax

Suggestions on council priorities – parks and green spaces

The Bristol Parks Forum provided the following comments and suggestions:

- Parks budget for revenue and capital spending should be increased;
- The pandemic highlighted the importance of parks and green spaces to Bristolians' health and wellbeing;
- COP 26 highlighted importance of parks and green spaces in addressing ecological emergency;
- Parks and green spaces are important for community cohesion;
- Parks and green spaces budget should be increased to meet OCP targets;
- Additional funding is needed to address the ecological emergency;
- More funding for parks and green spaces is needed to address outstanding repairs and maintenance;
- The Parks & Green Spaces Strategy and the Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy need to be concluded;
- Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds should be allocated to improving the quality of parks;
- Housing developments increase pressure on existing parks and new parks and green space are needed;
- A long-term strategy is needed for parks which includes input from local communities.

7 How will this report be used?

The consultation feedback in this report is taken into account by officers in developing final proposals for the 2022/23 budget, including the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept and ways to address the expected £19.5 million³⁰ budget gap. The final proposals are included in a separate report which, together with this consultation report, will be considered by Cabinet on 18 January 2022.

Full Council will also take into consideration this consultation report and responses in making its decisions about the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept as part of the 2022/23 budget at the Full Council meeting on 15 February 2022.

How can I keep track?

You can find the latest consultation and engagement surveys online at www.bristol.gov.uk/consultationhub where you can also sign up to receive automated email notifications about consultations and engagements.

All decisions related to the proposals in this consultation will be made publicly at the Full Council meeting on 15 February 2022.

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

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

³⁰ Forecast for the budget gap current in January 2022