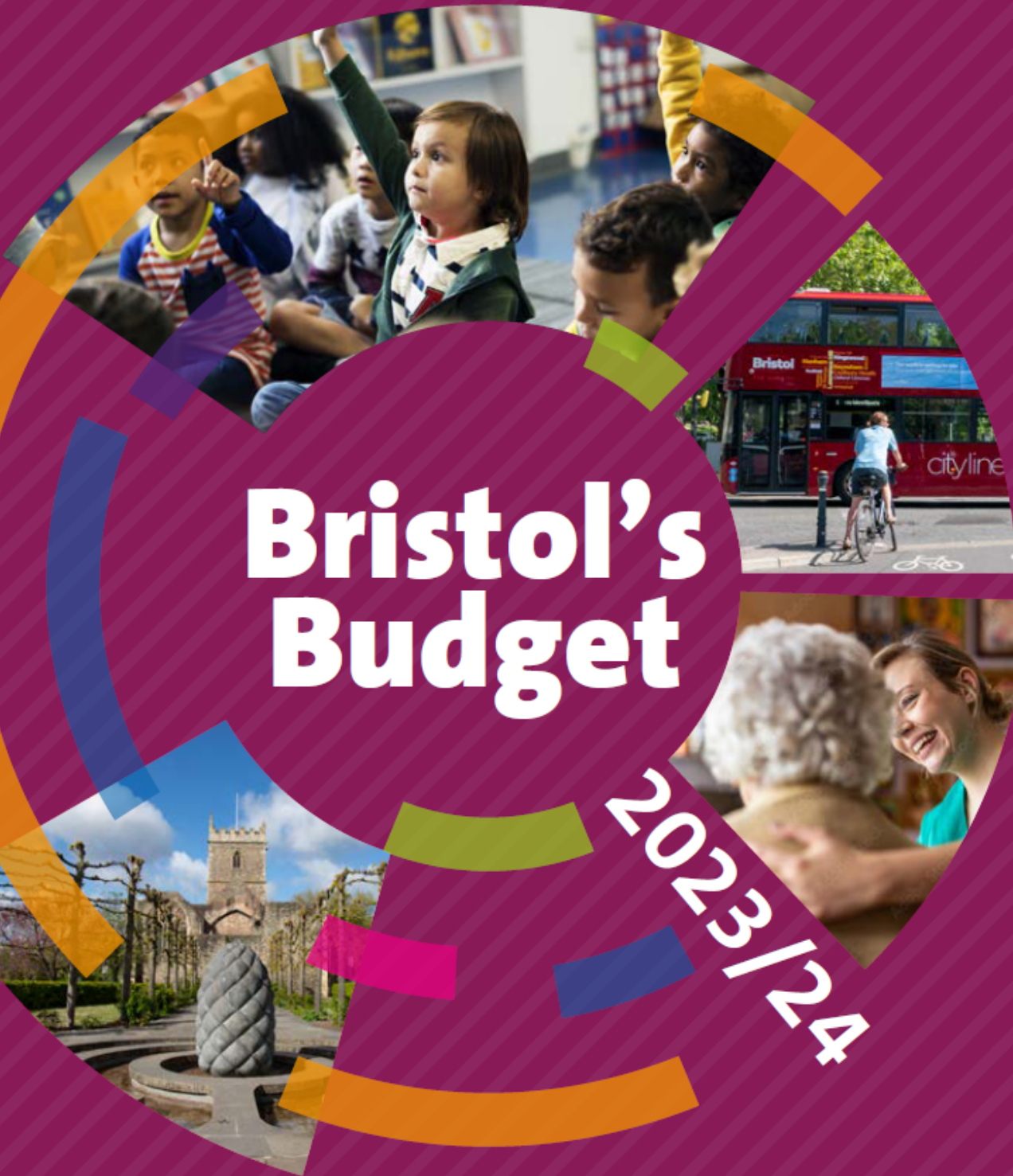


# Consultation and Engagement



## Bristol's Budget

2023/24



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## Executive summary

### ES1 Bristol City Council Budget 2023/24

The council's budget proposals will be considered by Cabinet on 24 January 2023 for recommendation to Full Council to consider and agree on 21 February 2023.

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 Precept<sup>1</sup> for 2023/24.

Bristol City Council is spending around £963 million<sup>2</sup> this year (2022/23) providing services to the people of Bristol. In 2022/23, more than a third of this revenue budget is raised locally through Council Tax (£235 million; 24%) and Business Rates (£137 million; 14%). The remaining 62% (£591 million) funding is made up of grants from the government and other income such as fees and charges we make for some of the services we provide.

The budget decisions for 2023/24 will be made in the context of acute financial pressures due to rising costs, reduced government funding and increasing demand for the services the council provides. Based on our current forecasts, we face a funding gap over the next five years (to 2027/28) of between £40 million and £124.7 million subject to the severity of factors such as funding assumptions and inflation<sup>3</sup>. This is in addition to the £34.3 million of savings and efficiencies proposals for 2022-2027 outlined in the 2022/23 budget.

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 2023/24 referendum limits for Council Tax (up to 3%) and Social Care Precept (2%) in the [Autumn Statement 2022](#) on 17 November 2022. This was after the start of the council's budget consultation.

Each 1% increase in Council Tax would raise approximately £2.5 million. If the council increases Council Tax by 3%<sup>4</sup> and adds an additional Social Care Precept of 2% in 2023/24, we estimate there would remain a substantial funding gap in the council's core budget in 2023/24. If we do not increase Council Tax or levy a Social Care Precept, the funding gap would be even greater; by up to £12.5 million more. With such a significant challenge the budget cannot be balanced without additional funding, making greater efficiencies (doing the same for less money) and, in some cases, stopping doing some things entirely.

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

<sup>2</sup> The £963 million is general fund revenue and excludes capital and ringfenced funds

<sup>3</sup> The budget consultation referred to a forecast budget gap of between £37.5 million and £87.6 million, which was the best estimate in November 2022.

<sup>4</sup> The council is permitted to raise Council Tax by **up to 3%** in 2023/24. Where we refer to a 3% increase in Council Tax, this is shorthand for an increase of 2.99%

## ES2 The Budget 2023/24 consultation

The Budget 2023/24 consultation took place between 11 November and 23 December 2022<sup>5</sup>. It sought views from the public (including businesses and organisations which represent non-domestic rate payers<sup>6</sup>) on options for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept in 2023/24 and proposals for how the council might save money and generate income to help bridge the forecast funding 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 2023.

The Budget 2023/24 consultation sought feedback on the following.

- Options for the level of core Council Tax people would prefer in 2023/24. Options were no increase, a 1% increase, a 2% increase or a 3% increase, each of which would have different implications for how much money the council could spend on general services.
- Options for the level of Social Care Precept people would prefer in 2023/24 to support the delivery of adult social care, in addition to the increase in core Council Tax for general services. Options were no Social Care Precept, a 1% Social Care Precept, a 2% Social Care Precept, or a 3% Social Care Precept<sup>7</sup>.
- Whether respondents would be prepared to pay an increase of more than 3% in core Council Tax or Social Care Precept, if the government permits this in 2023/24. The [Autumn Statement 2022](#) set out that these larger increases would not be permitted.
- The extent to which respondents agree or disagree with each of [30 proposals](#) for how the council might save money and generate income to help bridge the forecast funding gap.
- Respondents' reasons for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept they would prefer, why they agree or disagree with the savings proposals, and any other suggestions they have for how the council could save money or generate income.

The budget consultation comprised [information about the council's financial position](#) and an [online survey](#). [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.

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<sup>5</sup> Because Easy Read versions were not available until 14 December, the deadline for responses using Easy Read was extended until 8 January 2023 to give additional time for users of Easy Read to respond.

<sup>6</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 2.2.4.

<sup>7</sup> In the Autumn Statement 2022 on 17 November 2022, the government announced that the maximum level of Social Care Precept in 2023/24 will be 2%. This was after the start of the council's budget consultation. The consultation option of a 3% Social Care Precept would not be a permitted option.

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

This consultation report for Full Council describes the methodology and presents the feedback received in the Budget 2023/24 consultation. It includes quantitative data for all 4,550 survey responses and analysis of the 1,734 survey free text responses (question 35) and 41 email 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 2023/24, 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 2023/24. The final proposals are included in a separate report which, together with an earlier draft of this consultation report, was considered by Cabinet on 24 January 2023. Full Council will take into consideration this consultation report when making its decisions about the 2023/24 budget at the Full Council meeting on 21 February 2023.

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 2022/23 consultation - Key findings**

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

The Budget 2023/24 consultation survey received 4,550 responses.

3,208 responses (71%) were received from postcodes within the Bristol City Council area, 53 (1%) were from South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES), and North Somerset. A further 34 (0.7%) were from unspecified locations within the four West of England authorities<sup>8</sup>. 1,254 (28%) 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. People with the following protected characteristics were under-represented compared to the proportion of people in these groups living in Bristol:

- Children and young people (aged 24 and younger) and people aged 85 and older
- Females
- People of Black, Asian, Gypsy / Roma / Irish Traveller ethnicity, mixed ethnicity, and other ethnic background
- Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus and Sikhs

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.

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<sup>8</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 Level of Council Tax increase and Social Care Precept in 2022/23

### Core Council Tax

Of the 4,185 people who stated their preference for the level of Council Tax, a majority (3,226 respondents; 77%) favour an increase in core Council Tax to support general services in 2023/24.

- 1,714 (41%) would prefer a 3% increase in core Council Tax. This is the option with the highest support
- 884 (21%) favour a 2% increase
- 628 (15%) favour a 1% increase
- 959 (23%) respondents would prefer 'no increase to Council Tax' in 2023/24. This is the option with the second highest support
- 365 respondents did not give a view on Council Tax.

### Social Care Precept

Of the 4,320 people who stated their preference for the level of Social Care Precept, a majority (3,044 respondents; 72%) favour some Social Care Precept (on top of core Council Tax) to support the delivery of social care in 2023/24.

- 1,353 (32%) would prefer a 3% Social Care Precept. This is the option with the highest support but, following the announcement in the [Autumn Statement 2022](#), 3% is not a permitted option<sup>9</sup>.
- 631 (15%) favour a 2% Social Care Precept
- 1,060 (25%) favour a 1% Social Care Precept
- 1,186 (28%) respondents would prefer no Social Care Precept in 2023/24. This is the option with the second highest support
- 320 respondents did not give a view on Social Care Precept.

### Combinations of core Council Tax and Social Care Precept

Figure ES1 shows the percentage of 4,550 survey respondents who prefer each combination of Council Tax increase (0%, 1%, 2% or 3%) and Social Care Precept (0%, 1%, 2% or 3%) proposed in the consultation. The 3% Social Care Precept option is not permitted.

In Figure ES1, each of the coloured rectangles represents a combination of one Council Tax option (0%, 1%, 2% or 3%) and one Social Care Precept option (0%, 1%, 2% or 3%). For example, the top left green rectangle is the combination of no increase to Council Tax and no Social Care Precept. 17% of respondents favour this option. Options with lower support appear red; those with higher support are green. None of the combinations that include a 3% Social Care Precept (shown with red borders) is permitted.

The numbers in the coloured circles show the total percentage increase in Council Tax plus Social Care Precept for each combination. For example, ② indicates a 2% total increase.

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<sup>9</sup> In the Autumn Statement 2022 on 17 November 2022, the government announced that the maximum level of Social Care Precept in 2023/24 will be 2%

### Figure ES1: Preferred combinations for Council Tax and Social Care Precept

Percentage of respondents who would prefer each combination of Council Tax and Social Care Precept

	No additional Social Care Precept	An additional 1% Social Care Precept	An additional 2% Social Care Precept	An additional 3% Social Care Precept	No view on Social Care Precept
No increase to Council Tax	17% <span style="color: red;">0</span>	3% <span style="color: red;">1</span>	0.5% <span style="color: red;">2</span>	1% <span style="color: red;">3</span>	0.2%
1% increase to Council Tax	4% <span style="color: red;">1</span>	9% <span style="color: red;">2</span>	1% <span style="color: red;">3</span>	0.4% <span style="color: red;">4</span>	0.1%
2% increase to Council Tax	3% <span style="color: red;">2</span>	7% <span style="color: red;">3</span>	7% <span style="color: red;">4</span>	2% <span style="color: red;">5</span>	0.1%
3% increase to Council Tax	3% <span style="color: red;">3</span>	4% <span style="color: red;">4</span>	5% <span style="color: red;">5</span>	26% <span style="color: red;">6</span>	0.3%
No view on Council Tax	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%	6%

**Key**

- 0 No change to Council Tax or Social Care Precept
- 1 1% increase from Council Tax plus Social Care Precept
- 2 2% increase from Council Tax plus Social Care Precept
- 3 3% increase from Council Tax plus Social Care Precept
- 4 4% increase from Council Tax plus Social Care Precept
- 5 5% increase from Council Tax plus Social Care Precept
- 6 6% increase from Council Tax plus Social Care Precept
- Options involving 3% Social Care Precept are not permitted

Figure ES1 shows that:

- The option with highest support (26% of 4,550 respondents) is a 3% increase in core Council Tax and a 3% Social Care Precept. This is the maximum increase proposed in the consultation but is not permitted under the government limits announced in the Autumn Statement 2022.
- The second most popular option (17% of 4,550 respondents) is no increase in core Council Tax and no Social Care Precept.
- The four most popular options balance equal levels of Council Tax and Social Care Precept; 26% support a 3% Council Tax increase with 3% Social Care Precept, 17% support 0% with 0%, 9% support 1% with 1%, 7% support 2% with 2%.
- For options where Council Tax and Social Care Precept are not the same, more respondents favour a higher increase in Council Tax than Social Care Precept. This is shown by the higher percentages in the bottom left of the table and lower percentages in the top right of the table.
- The permitted option which would raise the highest income is a 3% increase in core Council Tax with a 2% Social Care Precept. This was favoured by 5% of respondents. For the purposes of this report, taking into account comments in favour of increasing Council Tax and Social Care Precept, it is assumed that much of the support (26% of respondents) for the 3% Council Tax with 3% Social Care Precept option (which is not permitted) would transfer to the 3% Council Tax with 2% Social Care Precept option, if the latter option had been the highest income-raising option in the consultation.



### ES4.3 Differences in views on the level of Council Tax in areas of high and low deprivation

Views on the preferred level of core Council Tax increase (0%, 1%, 2% or 3%) were compared for respondents in areas with different levels of deprivation (Figure ES2). The comparison looked at levels of deprivation in 10 bands (known as ‘deciles’) from decile 1 (most deprived) to decile 10 (least deprived).

Figure ES2 also shows the views of people who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode, and the combined views of all respondents.

**Figure ES2: Preference in each deprivation decile for the core Council Tax options**

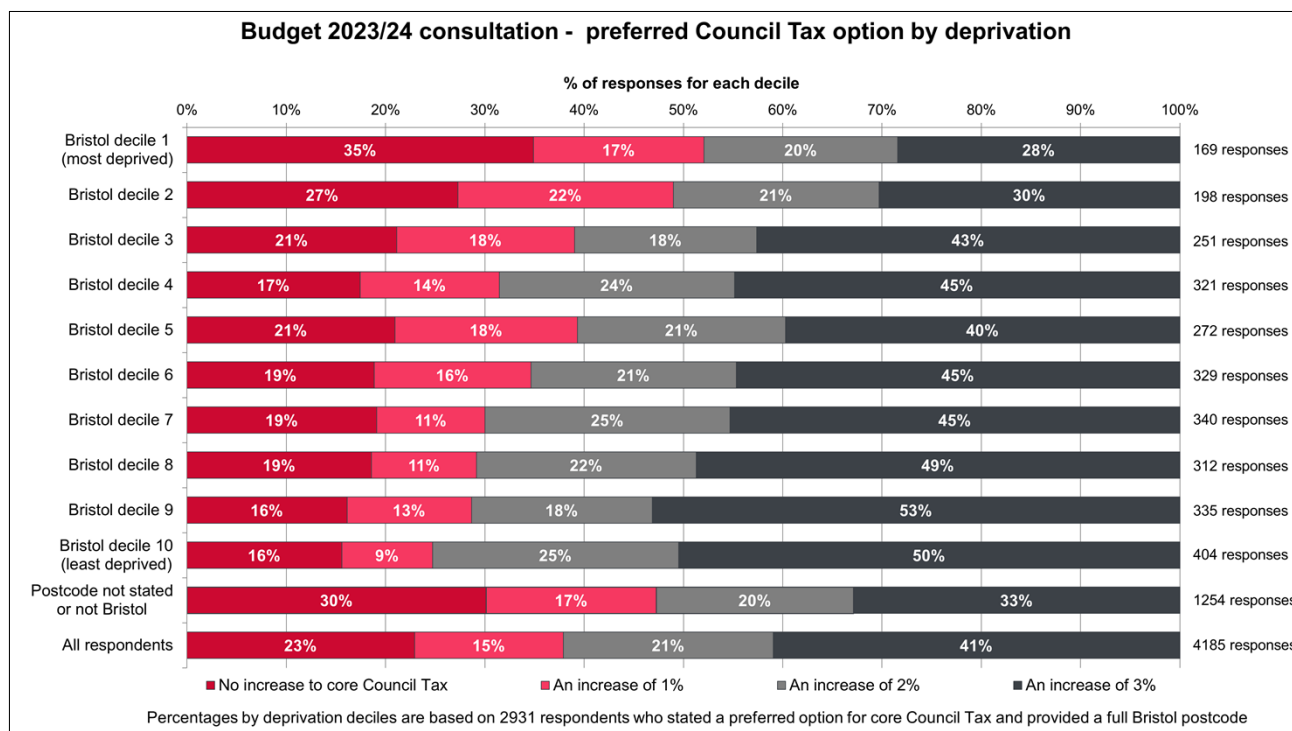


Figure ES2 shows that people living in less deprived areas tend to support higher levels of core Council Tax

Support for the maximum **3% increase** in Council Tax is highest in the least deprived 20% of Bristol, with 53% of respondents favouring a 3% increase in decile 9 and 50% in decile 10. Support for a 3% increase is lowest in the most deprived 20% of Bristol; decile 1 (28%) and decile 2 (30%). A 3% increase in Council Tax is the most popular option in all deciles except the most deprived decile 1.

Support for **no increase** in core Council Tax is highest among respondents in the most deprived 10% of Bristol (decile 1), with 35% of respondents favouring no increase. Support for no increase in Council Tax reduces to 16% in decile 10 (the least deprived 10%). No increase is the most popular option (35% of respondents) in decile 1.

Support for 1% and 2% increases in Council Tax broadly follows a similar trend of greater willingness to pay more in less deprived areas.

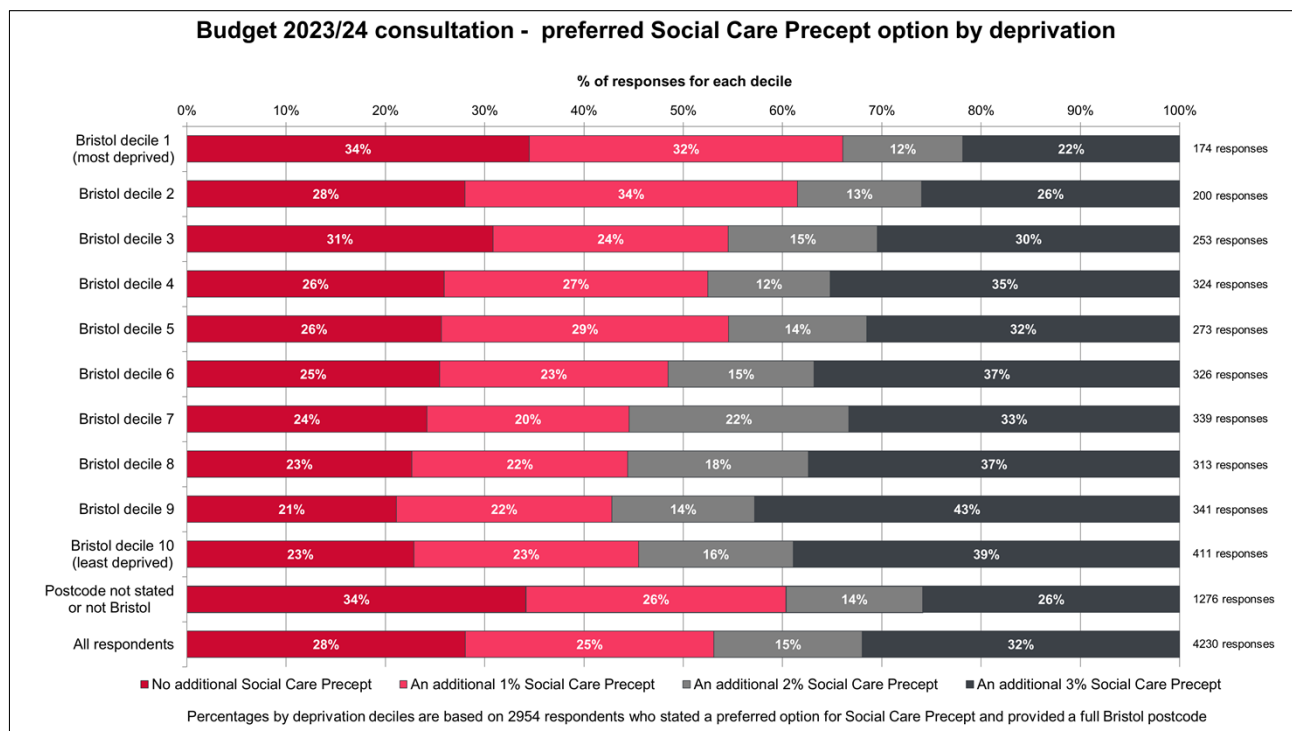
The views of respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode are similar to an average of the most deprived deciles 1 and 2. 30% in this group favour no increase and 33% support a 3% increase.

### ES4.4 Views on the level of Social Care Precept in areas of high and low deprivation

Views on the preferred level of Social Care Precept (0%, 1%, 2% or 3% ) were also 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 Social Care Precept options**



As with core Council Tax, support for a Social Care Precept is highest in the least deprived areas.

Support for no Social Care Precept ranges from 34% in decile 1 (most deprived) to 21% in decile 9 (with a slightly higher figure of 23% in decile 10). Correspondingly, support for 3% Social Care Precept increases from 22% in decile 1 to 43% in decile 9 (39% in decile 10).

A 3% Social Care Precept is the most popular option in deciles 4 to 10. For respondents in the three most deprived deciles 1, 2 and 3, support for no Social Care Precept exceeds preference for a 3% option.

The views of respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode are similar to an average of the most deprived deciles 1, 2 and 3. In this group, 34% favour no increase and 26% support a 3% increase.

Comparison of Figures ES2 and ES3 shows a greater willingness to pay more Council Tax than Social Care Precept, for all deprivation deciles. More respondents favour a 3% and a 2% Council Tax increase compared to a 3% or 2% Social Care Precept. This is also the case for respondents who didn't provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode.

## ES4.5 Views on the proposals to save money and generate income

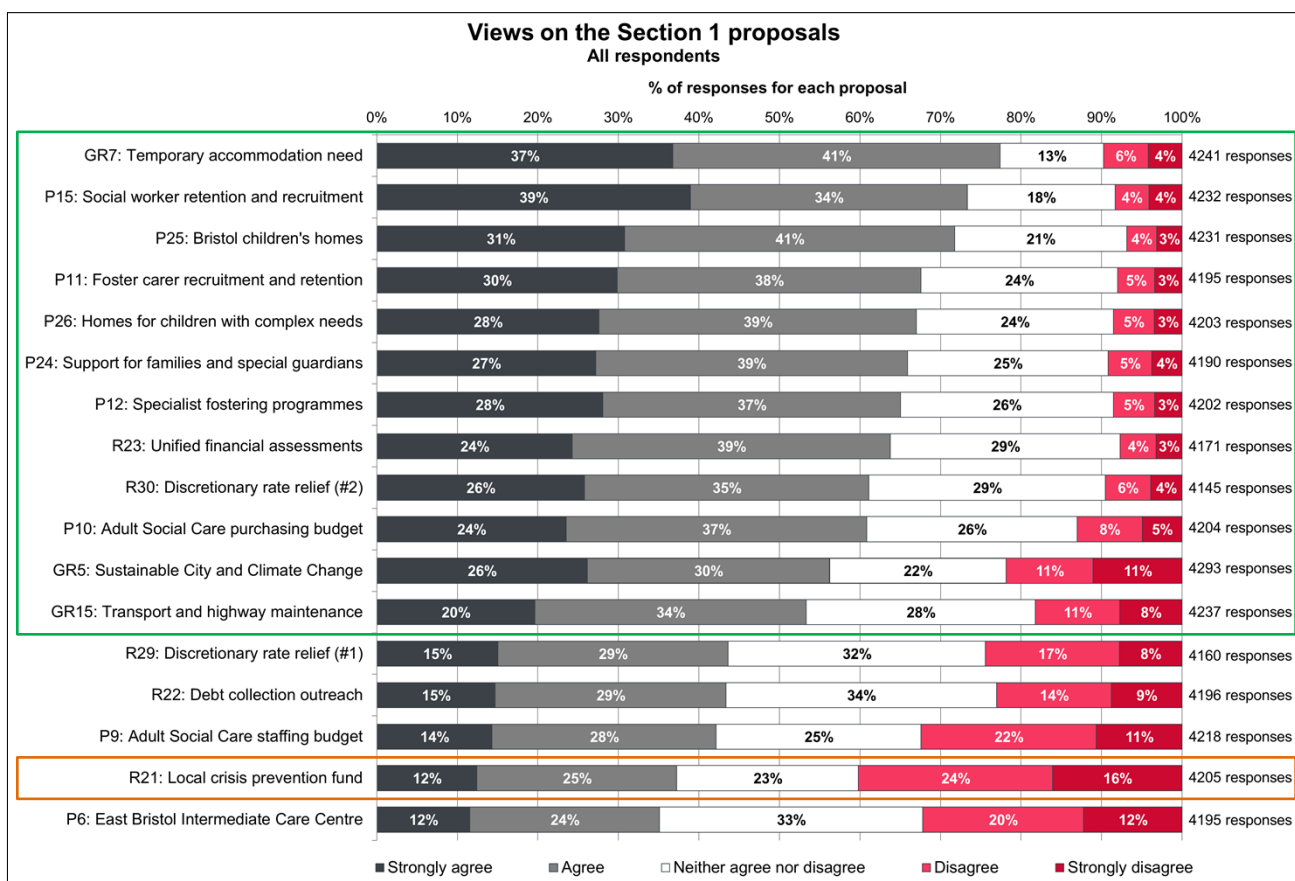
The consultation asked for views on two categories of proposals:

- [Section 1 proposals](#): open for consultation as part of the budget consultation. For these 17 proposals, we consulted on both the forecast saving and how we propose to make the savings
- [Section 2 proposals](#): other ideas – consultation may be required and may follow. These 13 proposals are newer and many will need more work to shape the proposals. Some will require further public consultation and assessment if they proceed.

### Section 1 proposals

4,376 (96%) respondents gave their views on one or more of the 17 [Section 1 proposals](#). Figure ES4 shows there is wide variation in the level of support for the Section 1 proposals. In Figure ES4, the proposals at the top received the highest support (the highest percentage who agree and strongly agree with the proposal); those at the bottom have the lowest percentage who agree and strongly agree.

**Figure ES4: Views on the Section 1 savings proposals**



Percentages shown in each bar may not add up to 100% due to rounding to the nearest whole number.

Note 1: For all proposals within the green rectangle, 50% or more of respondents agree or strongly agree

Note 2: For the proposal within the orange rectangle, fewer respondents agree and strongly agree than the percentage who disagree and strongly disagree

The Section 1 proposal with highest support is GR7: Temporary accommodation need, which has 77% who agree or strongly agree and 10% who disagree or strongly disagree.

The Section 1 proposal with lowest support is P6: East Bristol Intermediate Care Centre, for which 35% of respondents agree or strongly agree and 32% disagree or strongly disagree.

The top 12 proposals were approved of by at least half of the respondents. (See note 1 in Figure ES4). These are:

- GR7: Temporary accommodation need (77% agree or strongly agree)
- P15: Social worker retention and recruitment (73% agree or strongly agree)
- P25: Bristol children's homes (72% agree or strongly agree)
- P11: Foster carer recruitment and retention (68% agree or strongly agree)
- P26: Homes for children with complex needs (67% agree or strongly agree)
- P24: Support for families and special guardians (66% agree or strongly agree)
- P12: Specialist fostering programmes (65% agree or strongly agree)
- R23: Unified financial assessments (64% agree or strongly agree)
- R30: Discretionary rate relief (#2) (61% agree or strongly agree)
- P10: Adult Social Care purchasing budget (61% agree or strongly agree)
- GR5: Sustainable City and Climate Change (56% agree or strongly agree)
- GR15: Transport and highway maintenance (53% agree or strongly agree).

One proposal had fewer respondents who agree and strongly agree than those who disagree and strongly disagree (Note 2). This proposal is R21: Local crisis prevention fund for which 37% agree or strongly agree compared to 40% who disagree or strongly disagree.

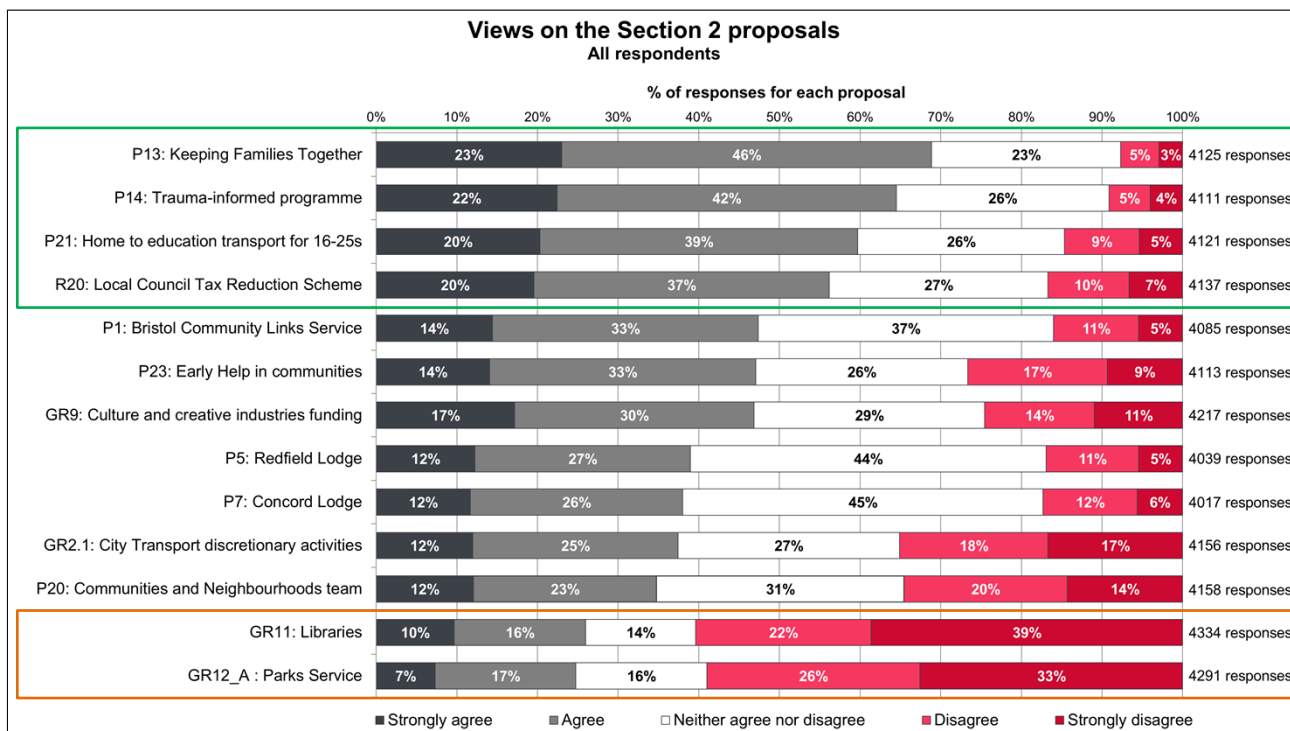
## **Section 2 proposals**

4,480 (98%) respondents gave their views on one or more of the 13 [Section 2 proposals](#).

Figure ES5 shows there is also wide variation in the level of support for the Section 2 proposals, ranging from 69% who agree or strongly agree with proposal P13: Keeping Families Together, to 25% who agree or strongly agree with GR12\_A: Parks Service. There is even greater variation in the percentage who disagree or strongly disagree, ranging from 8% for proposal P13: Keeping Families Together to 59% for GR12\_A: Parks Service and 60% for GR11: Libraries.

The most popular Section 2 proposals have less support than the most popular Section 1 proposals. The least popular Section 2 proposals also have less support than the least popular Section 1 proposals.

**Figure ES5: Views on the Section 2 savings proposals**



Percentages shown in each bar may not add up to 100% due to rounding to the nearest whole number.

Note 1: For all proposals within the green rectangle, 50% or more of respondents agree or strongly agree

Note 2: For the proposal within the orange rectangle, fewer respondents agree and strongly agree than the percentage who disagree and strongly disagree

The top four proposals were approved of by at least half of the respondents (Note 1 in Figure ES5). These are

- P13: Keeping Families Together
- P14: Trauma-informed programme
- P21: Home to education transport for 16-25s
- R20: Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

The Section 2 proposals with lowest support are:

- GR11: Libraries, for which 26% of respondents agree or strongly agree and 60% disagree or strongly disagree
- GR12\_A: Parks Service, for which 25% of respondents agree or strongly agree and 59% disagree or strongly disagree.

These two proposals had fewer respondents who agree and strongly agree than the percentage who disagree and strongly disagree (Note 2 in Figure ES5).

**Views on the savings proposals in areas with different levels of deprivation**

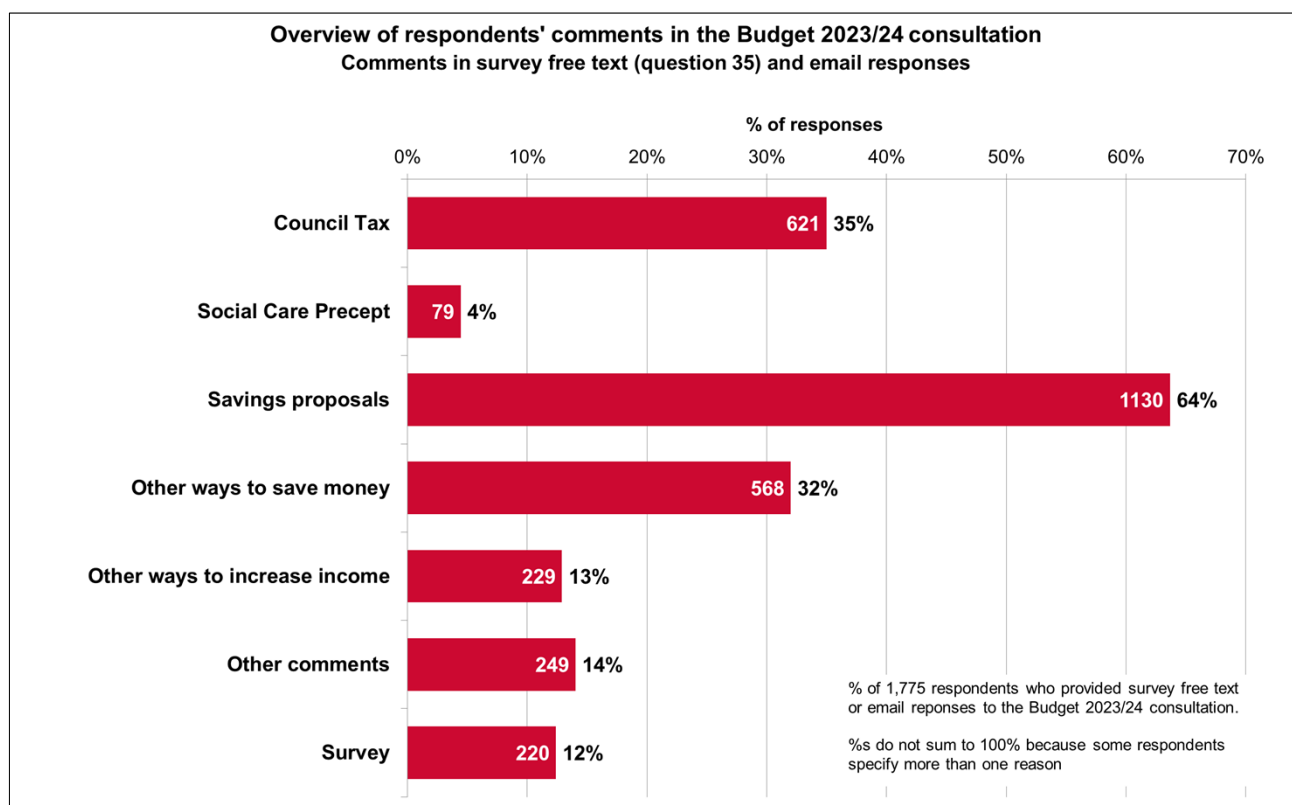
Views on each of the 30 Section 1 and Section 2 savings / income generation proposals were compared for people in areas of high and low deprivation, to check if support for the proposals varies with deprivation. The trends observed are described in Section 5.3.

### ES4.6 Free text comments on the budget proposals

1,775 (39%) of the 4,550 survey and 41 email respondents provided free text comments which explained their preference for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept, their views on the savings / income generation proposals, suggestions for other ways the council could save money or generate more income, and some comments about the consultation.

The 1,775 free text survey and email responses have been categorised into themes (Figure ES6).

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



- 621 (35% of 1,775 respondents) explained their preference for the level of Council Tax or made other comments about Council Tax. A breakdown is provided in section 4.5.2
- 79 (4%) explained their preference for the level of Social Care Precept, or made other comments about Social Care Precept (section 4.5.3)
- 1,130 (64%) provided comments on the savings proposals to reduce the budget gap. A breakdown is provided in section 5.4
- 568 (32%) suggested other ways the council could save money (section 5.5)
- 229 (13%) suggested other ways the council could increase income (section 5.6)
- 249 (14%) provided other comments or suggestions (section 5.7)
- 220 (12%) provided comments about the consultation process (section 5.8).

The total number of comments exceeds 1,775 because some respondents addressed several themes.

#### **ES4.7 Comments about the descriptions of the proposals**

139 respondents (8%) stated in free text survey and email responses that they found the descriptions of the proposals unclear or said that they do not include enough detail to understand the proposals or their impact or to give informed opinions.

The majority of these (119 respondents, 7%) did not specify which proposals they found unclear and did not distinguish between the Section 1 and Section 2 proposals.

15 (1%) said the descriptions of specific Section 1 proposals were unclear.

20 (1%) said the descriptions of specific Section 2 proposals were unclear.

Details of the proposals mentioned are provided in Section 5.8.2.

When prompted in the later question 48 to provide feedback on the survey, 31% of respondents (1,216 of 4,076 who answered the question) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement 'There is enough information for me to answer the questions'.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The council's budget

Bristol City Council is spending around £963 million this year (2022/23) 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<sup>10</sup>. In 2022/23, more than a third of this budget is raised locally through Council Tax (£235 million; 24%) and Business Rates (£137 million; 14%). The remaining 62% (£591 million) of 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.

Every year, the council must agree an annual budget which balances the money we spend with the money we are expecting to receive. On 21 February 2023, Full Council will set the council's budget for the 2023/24 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 Precept<sup>11</sup> for 2023/24.

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

## 1.2 Funding pressures and uncertainty

Councils are facing unprecedented financial pressures because inflation in the UK is at its highest level in decades, affecting the cost of our supply chain of goods, energy and services. At the same time, there have been many years of reductions or changes in local government funding. And in Bristol, demand for services is increasing to provide for the needs of a growing and ageing population.

Based on our current forecasts, we face a funding gap over the next five years (to 2027/28) of between £40 million and £124.7 million<sup>12</sup>. This is in addition to the £34.3 million of savings and efficiencies proposals for 2022-2027 outlined in the 2022/23 budget.

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<sup>10</sup> The £963 million is general fund revenue and excludes capital and ringfenced funds.

<sup>11</sup> Social Care Precept is a levy on top of core Council Tax, which is dedicated to help pay for adult social care.

<sup>12</sup> The budget consultation referred to a forecast budget gap of between £37.5 million and £87.6 million, which was the best estimate in November 2022.



The council is able to increase Council Tax by up to 3%<sup>13</sup> to help fund general services in 2023/24, without a local referendum. This would raise an additional £7.5 million. A Social Care Precept of up to 2% can be added to support the delivery of adult social care. This would raise £5 million and is in addition to the permitted increase of up to 3% in core Council Tax for general services. These limits are set by government<sup>14</sup>. There was not enough time to hold a local referendum on increases above these limits before Full Council decides on its 2023/24 budget in February 2023.

If we increase Council Tax by 3% and levy a Social Care Precept of 2% next year, we estimate there would remain a substantial funding gap in the council's core budget in 2023/24. If we do not increase Council Tax or levy a Social Care Precept, the funding gap would be even greater; by up to £12.5 million more. With such a significant challenge the budget cannot be balanced without additional funding, making greater efficiencies (doing the same for less money) and, in some cases, stopping doing some things entirely.

### 1.3 Budget 2023/24 consultation

The Budget 2023/24 consultation took place between 11 November and 23 December 2022<sup>15</sup>. It sought views from the public (including businesses and organisations which represent non-domestic rate payers<sup>16</sup>) on the following:

- options for the level of core Council Tax they would prefer in 2023/24 to support the delivery of general council services
- options for the level of Social Care Precept they would prefer in 2023/24 to support the delivery of adult social care, in addition to the core Council Tax for general services
- Proposals for how the council might save money, work more efficiently and generate income to help bridge the forecast funding gap. The description of the proposals, the forecast saving in each of five years 2023/24 to 2027/28, and initial equalities considerations are described in the [online guide to savings proposals](#)
- Other ideas or suggestions for how the council might bridge the budget gap.

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

<sup>14</sup> The limits of a 3% increase in Council Tax and 2% for Social Care Precept were announced in the government's [Autumn Statement 2022](#) on 17 November 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Responses from people who had requested an Easy Read version of the consultation were accepted until 8 January 2023. This was to provide additional time for users of Easy Read to respond, because this format was not available until 14 December 2022.

<sup>16</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 2.2.4

## 1.4 Scope of this report

This consultation report describes the consultation methodology and the feedback received, which were considered by Cabinet on 24 January 2023 and will be considered by Full Council before decisions on the 2023/24 budget are made by Full Council in February 2023.

Chapter 2 of this report describes the Budget 2023/24 consultation methodology. The consultation information and questions are summarised in section 2.1.1 and the print versions of the [consultation Information guide](#) and [survey booklet](#) can be viewed online.

Chapters 3 to 5 present the Budget 2023/24 consultation survey results:

- Chapter 3 presents the survey response rate and respondent characteristics
- Chapter 4 describes the survey feedback on the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept
- Chapter 5 summarises respondents' views on 30 proposals to reduce costs and generate more income, which would help to bridge the forecast budget gap over the next five years

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

This report includes analysis of the responses to the multiple choice (nominal and Likert) questions and the 'About You' survey questions for all 4,550 respondents to the survey.

1,734 of the respondents also provided free text comments and suggestions as part of their survey responses (survey question 35). These have been analysed together with the 41 email responses to the consultation. This consultation report for consideration by Full Council includes analysis of all 1,775 free text survey and email responses.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Survey

#### 2.1.1 Online survey

The [Budget 2023/24 consultation survey](#) was available on the council's Consultation and Engagement Hub ([www.ask.bristol.gov.uk](http://www.ask.bristol.gov.uk)) between 11 November and 23 December 2022. From mid-December, Easy Read formats (a [WCAG 2.1-compliant version](#) and an [interactive PDF version](#)) were also available on the Consultation and Engagement Hub, and responses via Easy Read were accepted until 8 January 2023.

#### 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 2022/23 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 as estimated at the time of publication (in November 2022) of between £37.5 million and £87.6 million<sup>17</sup> over the next five years to March 2028, due to increasing costs, reducing UK Government funding and increasing demand for services the council provides
- Details of the assistance the council is providing to low-income households in meeting their Council Tax bills
- An outline of the council's capital investment programme in 2022/23
- An explanation of council reserves
- Forecasts of how much additional revenue would be raised in 2023/24 by each of the proposed core Council Tax options (increases of 0%, 1%, 2% or 3%) and each of the options for the level of Social Care Precept (0%, 1%, 2% or 3%)
- 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
- A description of [49 proposals to reduce costs and generate more income](#), which would help to bridge the budget gap. The proposals are at different stages of development and were presented in three sections:

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<sup>17</sup> The budget consultation referred to a forecast budget gap of between £37.5 million and £87.6 million, which was the best estimate in November 2022. The budget gap is currently forecast to be between £40 million and £124.7 million by 2027/28.

- [Section 1](#): open for consultation as part of the budget consultation. For these 17 proposals, we consulted on both the forecast saving and how we propose to make the savings
- [Section 2](#): other ideas – consultation may be required and may follow. These 13 proposals are newer and many will need more work to shape the proposals. Some will require further public consultation and assessment if they proceed.
- [Section 3](#): other ideas – no consultation required. These 19 proposals are new for the 2023/24 budget. We do not think that they are likely to mean major changes to services the council provides, so we did not seek feedback on them. They were included for information to give a full picture of our savings options.

## Survey questions

The survey questions sought respondents' views on the following:

- The level of core Council Tax they would prefer in 2023/24. Options were no increase, a 1% increase, a 2% increase or a 3% increase, each of which would have different implications for how much money the council could spend on general services
- The level of Social Care Precept they would prefer in 2023/24 in addition to the increase in core Council Tax. Options were no Social Care Precept, a 1% Social Care Precept, a 2% Social Care Precept, or a 3% Social Care Precept<sup>18</sup>
- Whether respondents would be prepared to pay an increase of more than 3% in core Council Tax or Social Care Precept, if the government announced this is permitted in 2023/24. The [Autumn Statement 2022](#) set out that these larger increases would not be permitted in 2023/24.
- The extent to which respondents agree or disagree with each of 30 proposals for how the council might save money, work more efficiently and generate income to help bridge the forecast funding gap. The questions addressed the 17 [Section 1 proposals](#) and 13 [Section 2 proposals](#).
- Respondents' reasons for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept they would prefer, why they agree or disagree with the savings proposals, 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.

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<sup>18</sup> In the Autumn Statement 2022 on 17 November 2022, the government announced that the maximum level of Social Care Precept in 2023/24 will be 2%. This was after the start of the council's budget consultation. The consultation option of a 3% Social Care Precept would not be a permitted option.

- 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

Easy Read versions of the consultation were made available from mid-December on the Consultation and Engagement Hub and were sent to individuals and organisations who had requested them. The deadline for responses using the Easy Read versions was extended until 8 January 2023 to provide additional time for users of Easy Read to respond, because Easy Read versions were not available until 14 December.

Two Easy Read versions were available; a [WCAG compliant Easy Read](#) version and an [interactive PDF Easy Read](#) which could be downloaded, completed and returned by email.

Paper copies (a [consultation Information guide](#) and separate [survey booklet](#)) were distributed with Freepost return envelopes to all libraries in Bristol and were available on request.

Other alternative formats (braille, large print, audio, British Sign Language (BSL) and translation to other languages) were available on request.

### 2.1.3 Other correspondence

41 emails were received in response to the consultation. Section 3.5 describes the types of stakeholders who provided their feedback via email. The email text has been analysed with the free text responses to question 35 of the survey and is reported with the survey free text feedback in the following sections:

- section 4.5 for feedback on Council Tax and Social Care Precept
- section 5.4 for feedback on the savings and income generation proposals
- section 5.5 for suggestions on other ways to save money and generate income.

## 2.2 Publicity and briefings

### 2.2.1 Objective

The following programme of activity was carried out to publicise and explain the Budget 2023/24 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 were observed to have responded in lower 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 - 2,655 recipients
- Ask Bristol e-bulletin – delivered to 6,408 recipients on 1 December 2022, and delivered to 7,086 recipients on 20 December 2022
- Public Health citizen e-newsletter – at launch and again with a week to go – 43,324 recipients
- MPs (via email)
- Emails to 106,443 users of the online Council Tax account system were sent on 25 November inviting citizens to take part in the survey. Follow-up emails were sent on 8 December
- Communications through the One City Economy Board
- Headteachers' newsletter bulletin
- Direct email to over 500 community-based organisations and organisers
- 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 coming year.

Details of the consultation were shared at the launch and with two weeks to go with representatives of business organisations (including Business West, local Business Improvement Districts, and the Federation of Small Businesses), the 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.

Direct emails were sent to 7,363 business rate payers on 29 November 2022, inviting them to respond to the budget consultation survey. Reminder emails were sent on 12 December.

A meeting at Bristol Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People was held at the Vassall Centre on 12 December to brief Deaf people about the budget and signpost them to the consultation. There were 12 Deaf and Hard of Hearing people at the event plus two workers, one volunteer and two British Sign Language interpreters. In the conversation following the presentation, participants discussed ways the council could help Deaf and Hard of Hearing people be active participants in consultation and engagement.

134 survey responses and three email responses were received from people who represent or own a local business and, in addition, there were 19 survey responses from housing associations, health and social care providers and transport providers. 35 survey responses and four email responses were received from voluntary/community/social enterprise organisations. Details are reported in section 3.4.

## **2.2.5 Media engagement**

A news article was published to the BCC Newsroom on 11 November along with a blog from Cllr Cheney outlining the consultation. The External Communications team supported reporting of the budget leading to 24 items of print coverage and many other references to the consultation across broadcast media during the six-week period.

## **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 1.3 million people resulting in 694 survey link clicks.

Paid for Facebook advertising was also employed two weeks before the consultation closed 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.

## **2.2.7 Radio**

The Mayor did a Radio Bristol phone-in focussing on the budget on 17 November, taking questions from listeners and the host, John Darvall. The Mayor also took part in weekly radio phone-ins on Ujima Radio during the consultation period, answering questions from listeners about budget proposals and challenges.

### 3 Survey response rate and respondent characteristics

#### 3.1 Response rate to the survey

The Budget 2023/24 consultation survey received 4,550 responses, of which 4,474 (98%) were completed online, 46 (1%) were paper surveys and 30 (0.7%) were interactive PDF Easy Read versions. In addition, 41 email responses were received.

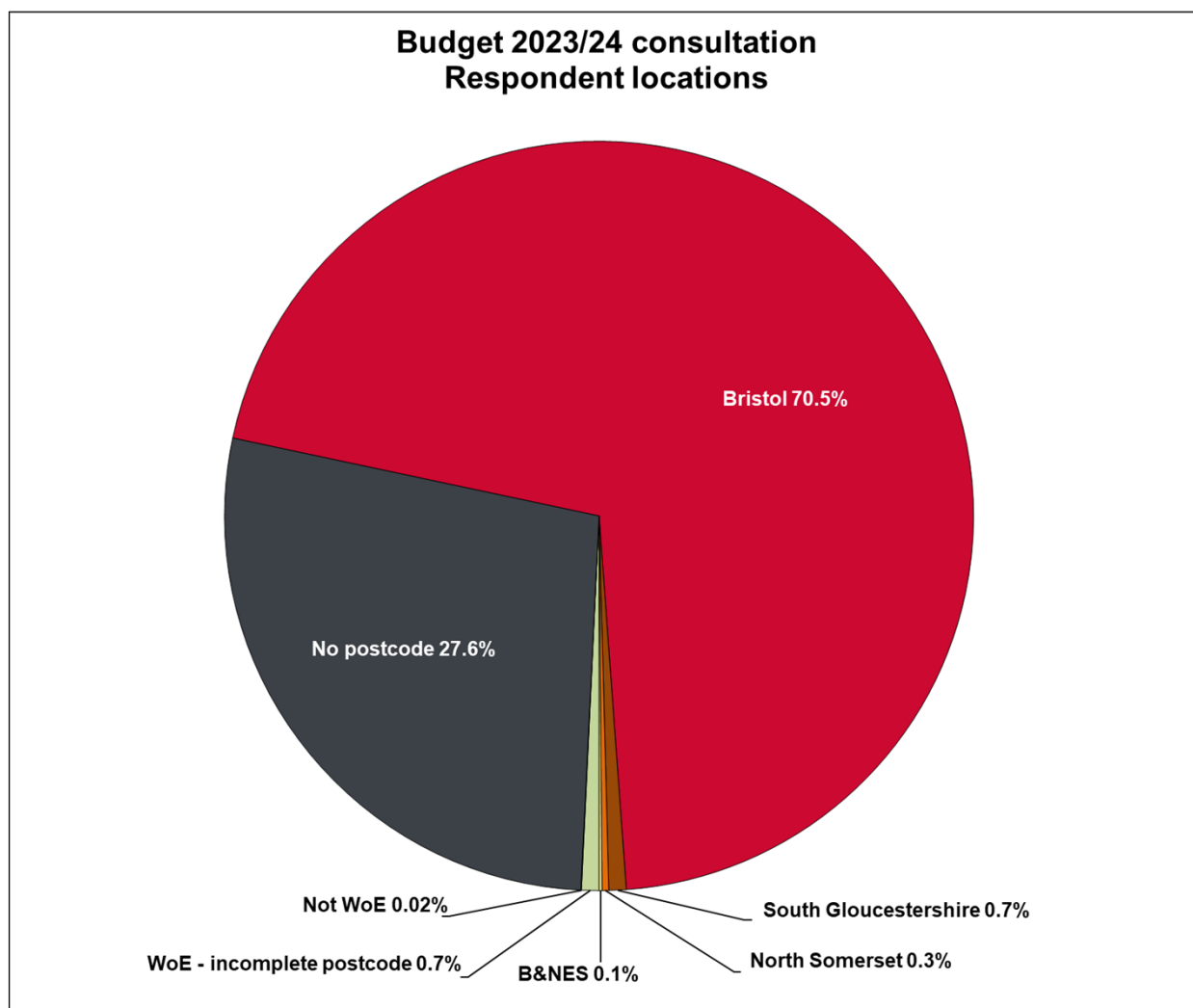
The response rate and respondent details in sections 3.2 to 3.4 below are for respondents to the survey. Details of the email respondents are summarised in section 3.5.

#### 3.2 Geographic distribution of survey responses

3,208 responses (71%) were received from postcodes within the Bristol City Council area, 34 (0.7%) responses were from South Gloucestershire, 13 (0.3%) were from North Somerset and six (0.1%) were from Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES). A further 34 (0.7%) were from unspecified locations within the four West of England authorities<sup>19</sup> (Figure 1).

1,254 (28%) did not provide a postcode.

**Figure 1: Geographic distribution of responses**

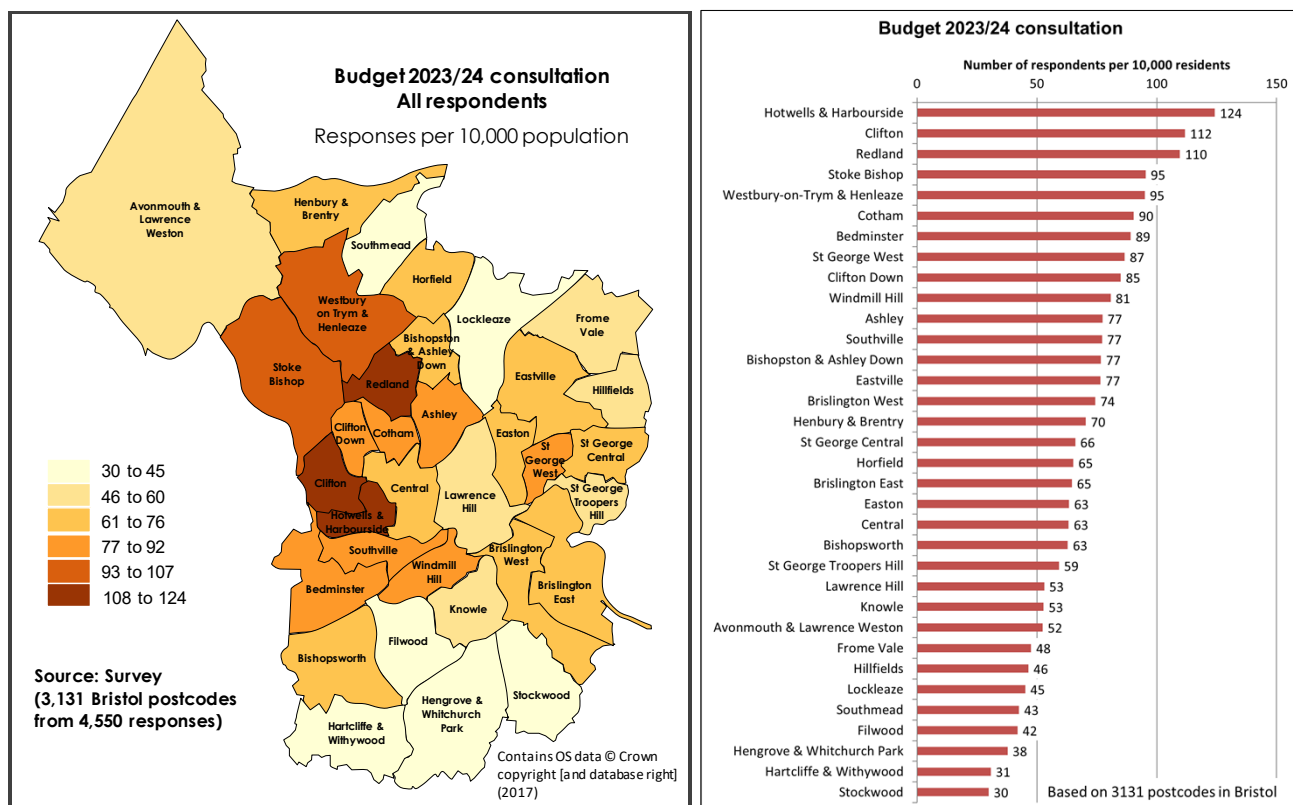


<sup>19</sup> Incomplete postcodes identified the home location as within the WOE authorities area (Bristol, B&NES, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire), but not which authority.



Of the 3,208 responses from within the Bristol City Council area, 3,131 provided full or partial postcodes from which the ward of origin could be identified<sup>20</sup> (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 city<sup>21</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 3 compares the percentage of Bristol respondents<sup>22</sup> living in each of the deprivation deciles (red bars) to the percentage of all Bristol citizens who live in each decile (grey bars).

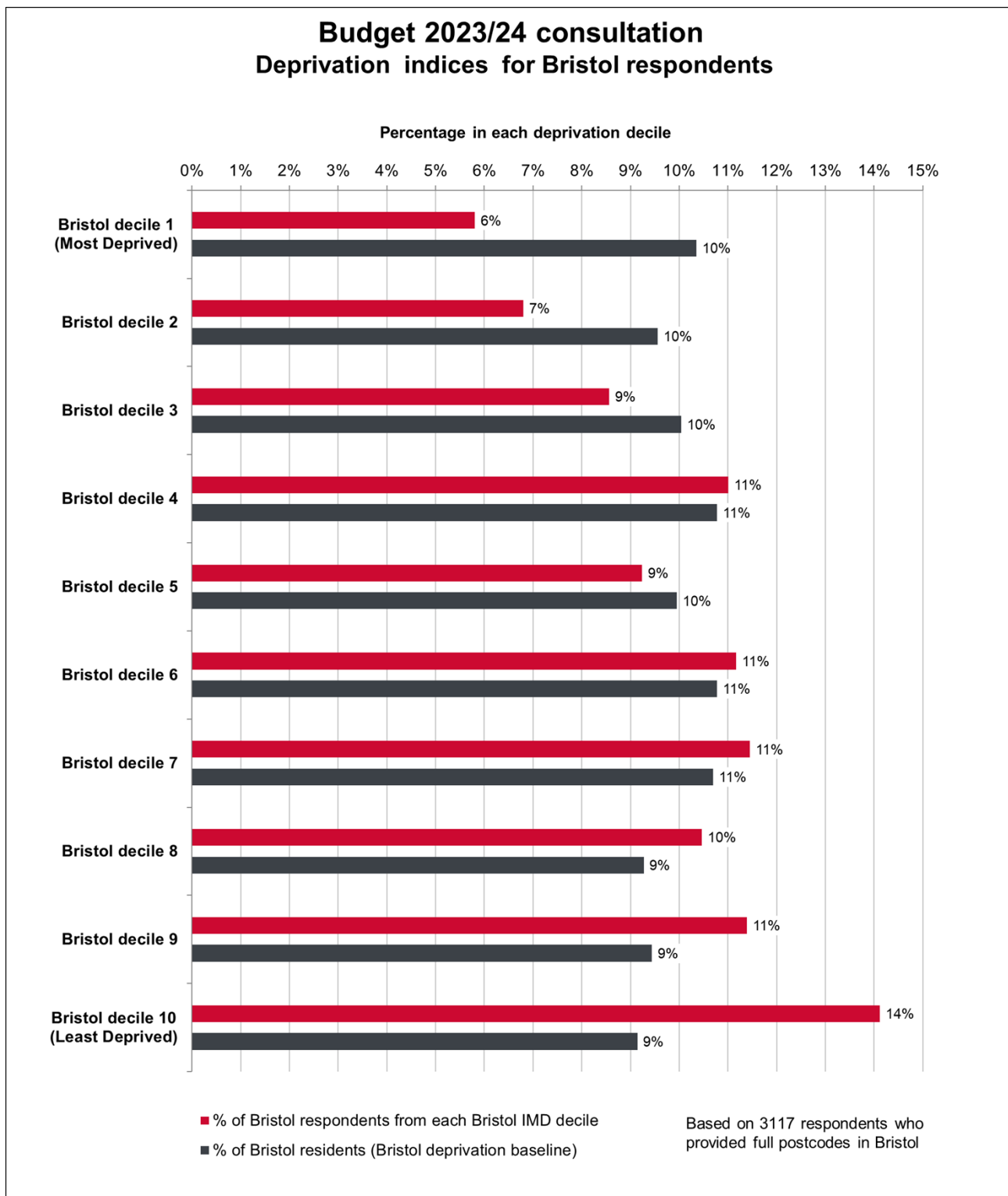
<sup>20</sup> The other 77 responses included incomplete postcodes which are within Bristol but do not include enough information to identify a specific ward.

<sup>21</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 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.

<sup>22</sup> Based on 3,117 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. Responses from deciles 4, 5, 6 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 11% may be slightly different in length.)

### 3.4 Characteristics of survey respondents

4,164 (92%) people answered one or more of the equalities monitoring questions.

Respondent characteristics are summarised below. The charts compare:

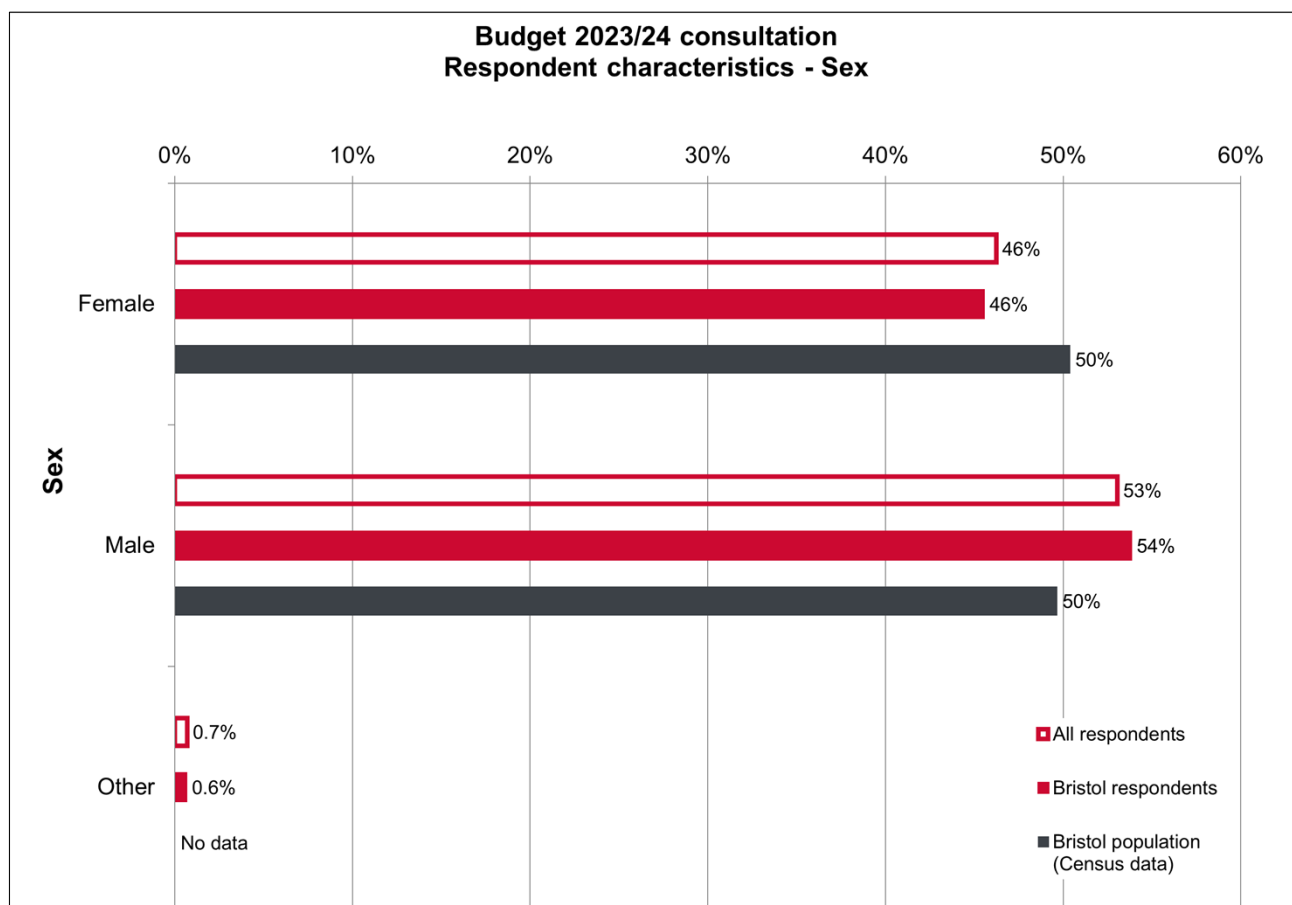
- characteristics for all respondents who answered the equalities questions
- characteristics of respondents who provided a Bristol postcode
- characteristics of Bristol’s citizens for five protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, ethnicity and religion/faith) for which population data are available from the latest available Census and subsequent updates<sup>23</sup>

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’

#### Sex

46% of all survey responses were from women and 53% were from men. 0.7% 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 4: Sex of respondents**



<sup>23</sup> Bristol population data for sex, ethnicity and religion are draft ward level Census 2021 data, which are subject to final publication by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Age data are mid-2020 population estimates published by ONS. Disability data are from the 2011 Census.

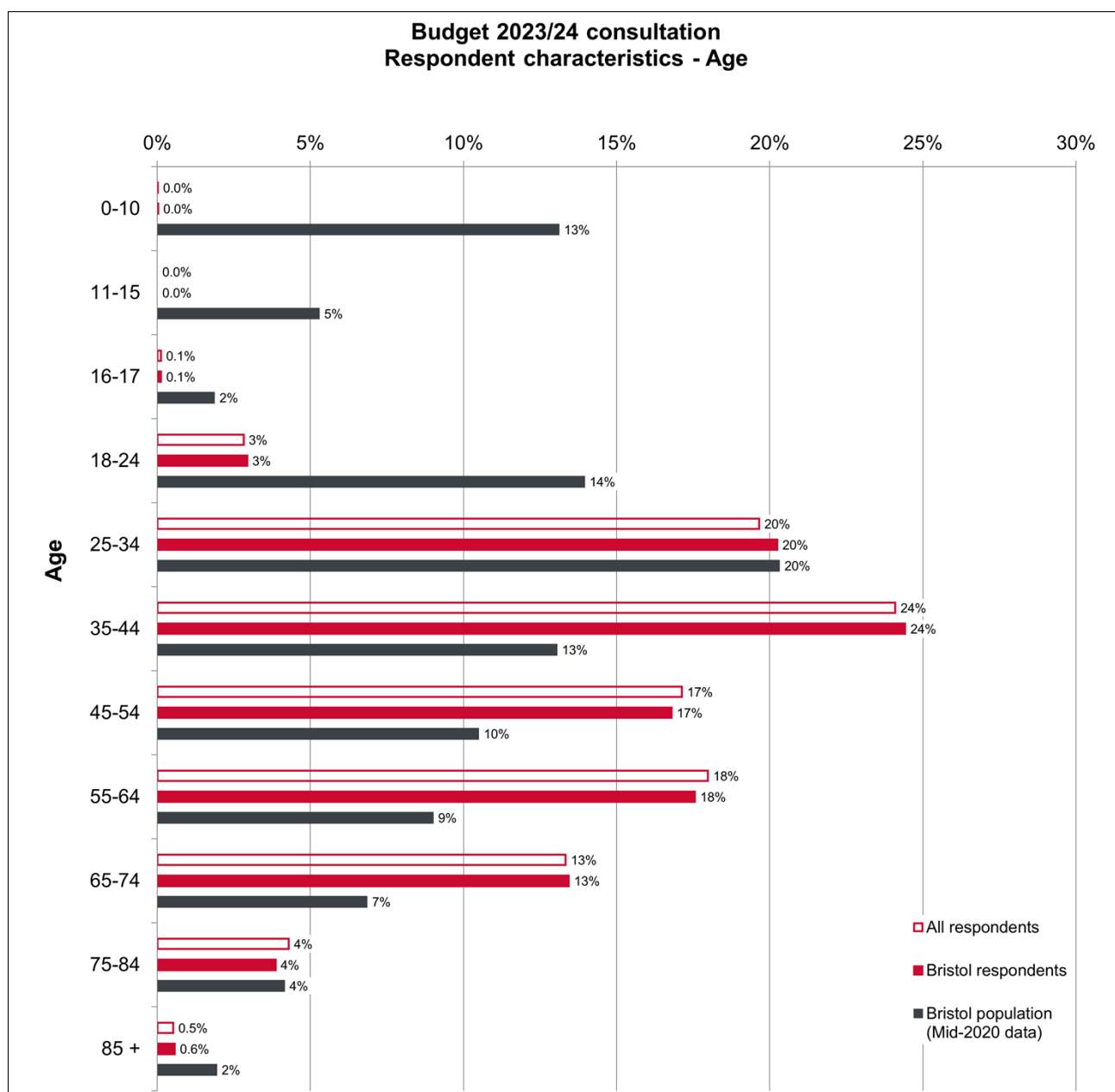
## Age

The highest number of responses were from respondents aged 35-44 years (24%), followed by 25-34 (20%).

All age groups between 35 and 74 responded in higher proportions than these ages in the population. Response rates from people aged 25-34 years and 75-84 years closely match the proportion of these age groups in Bristol’s population. Survey responses from children (under 18), young people aged 18-24 and people aged 85 and older were under-represented. These percentages exclude the 3% of respondents (2% of Bristol respondents) who answered ‘prefer not to say’.

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

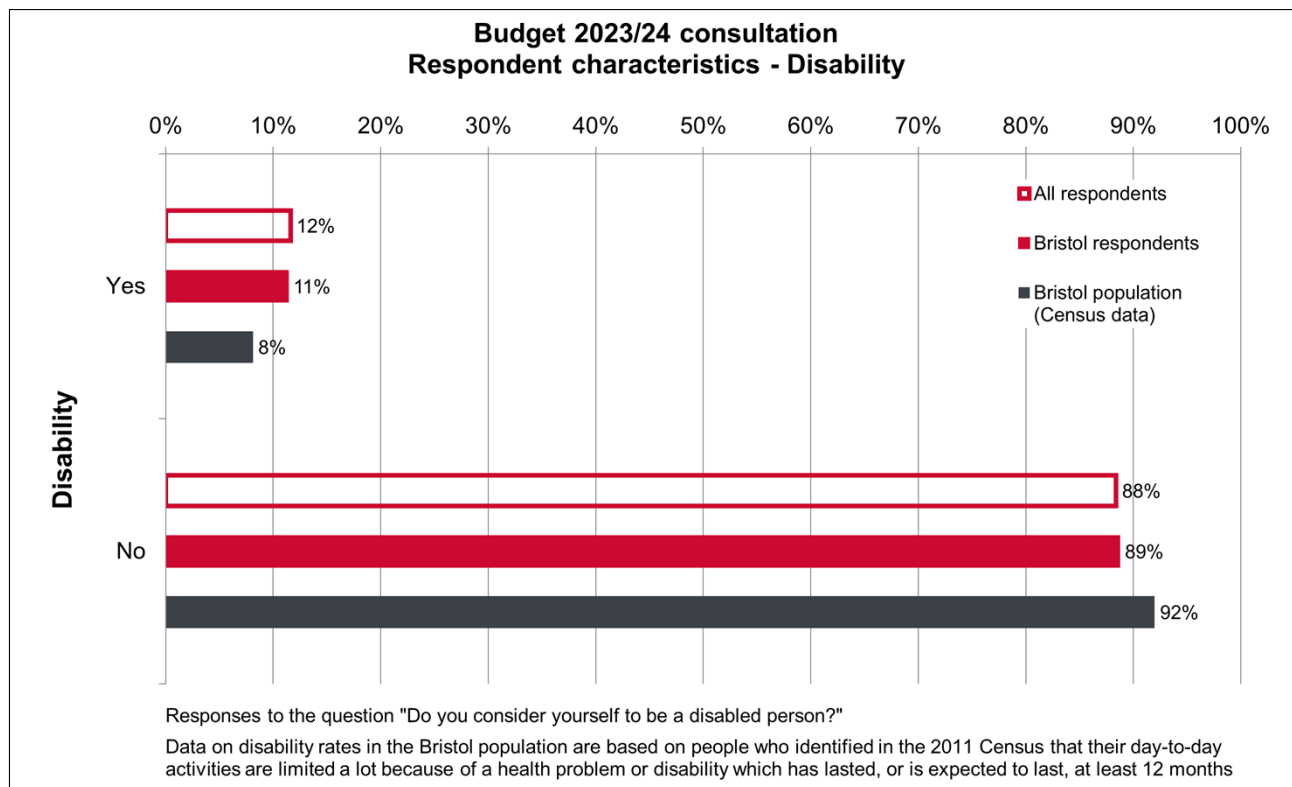
**Figure 5: Age of respondents**



## Disability

The proportion of disabled respondents (12% of all respondents; 11% of Bristol respondents) is greater than the proportion of disabled people living in Bristol. These percentages exclude the 6% 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 (12%) is higher than the proportion of these citizens in the Bristol population.

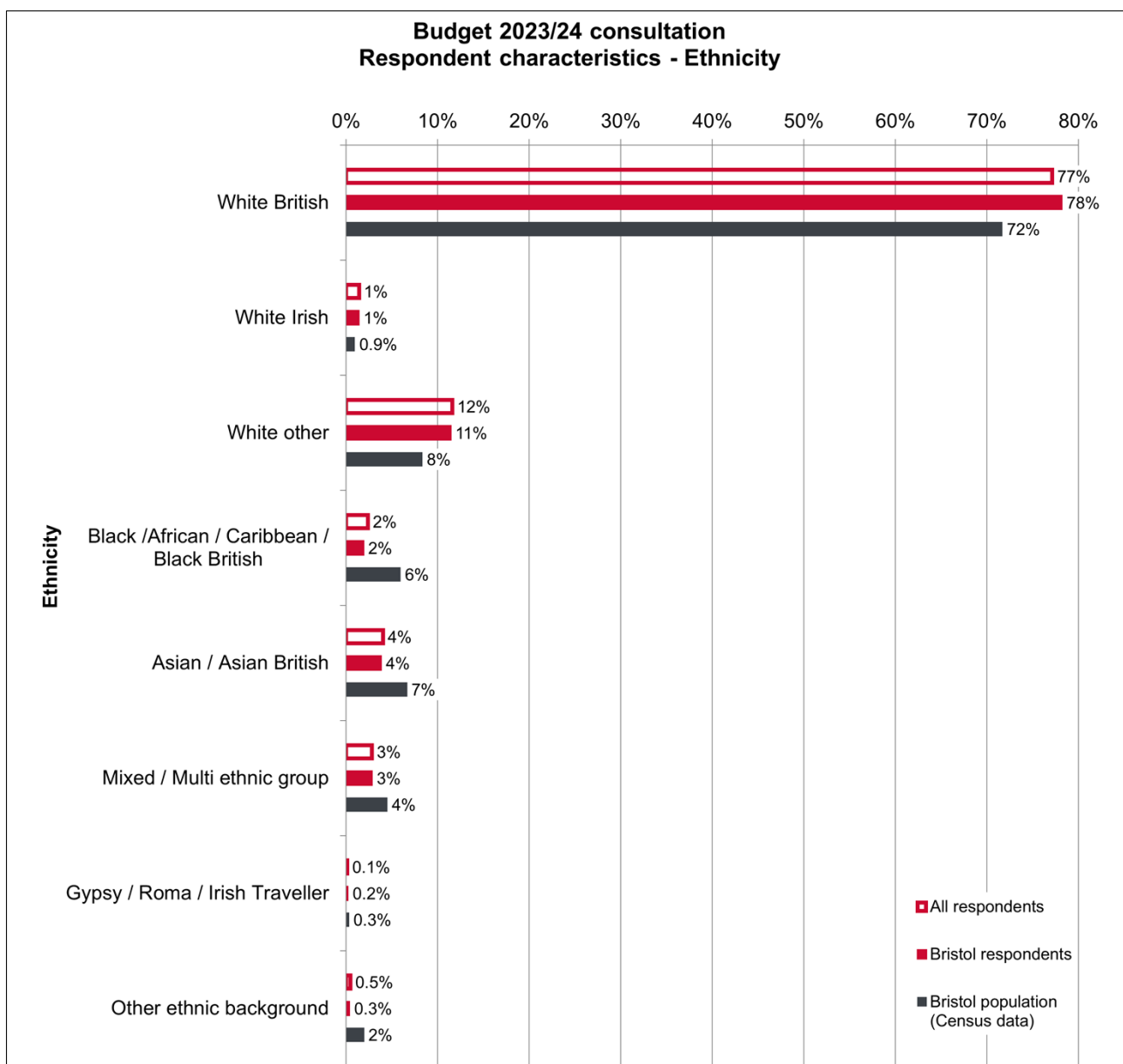
The proportion of White Irish (1%) respondents matches the proportion of these citizens in the Bristol population.

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

- Black / African / Caribbean / Black British (2% of respondents)
- Asian / Asian British (4%)
- Gypsy / Roma / Irish Traveller (0.1%)
- Mixed / multi-ethnic (3%)
- Other ethnic background (0.5%)

These percentages exclude the 10% of respondents (8% of Bristol respondents) who answered ‘prefer not to say’. Proportions of each ethnicity for all respondents are similar to respondents who provided a Bristol postcode.

**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 (55%). Buddhists (1%) and people with ‘Other faith’ (2%) also responded in greater numbers than the proportions of these faiths in Bristol.

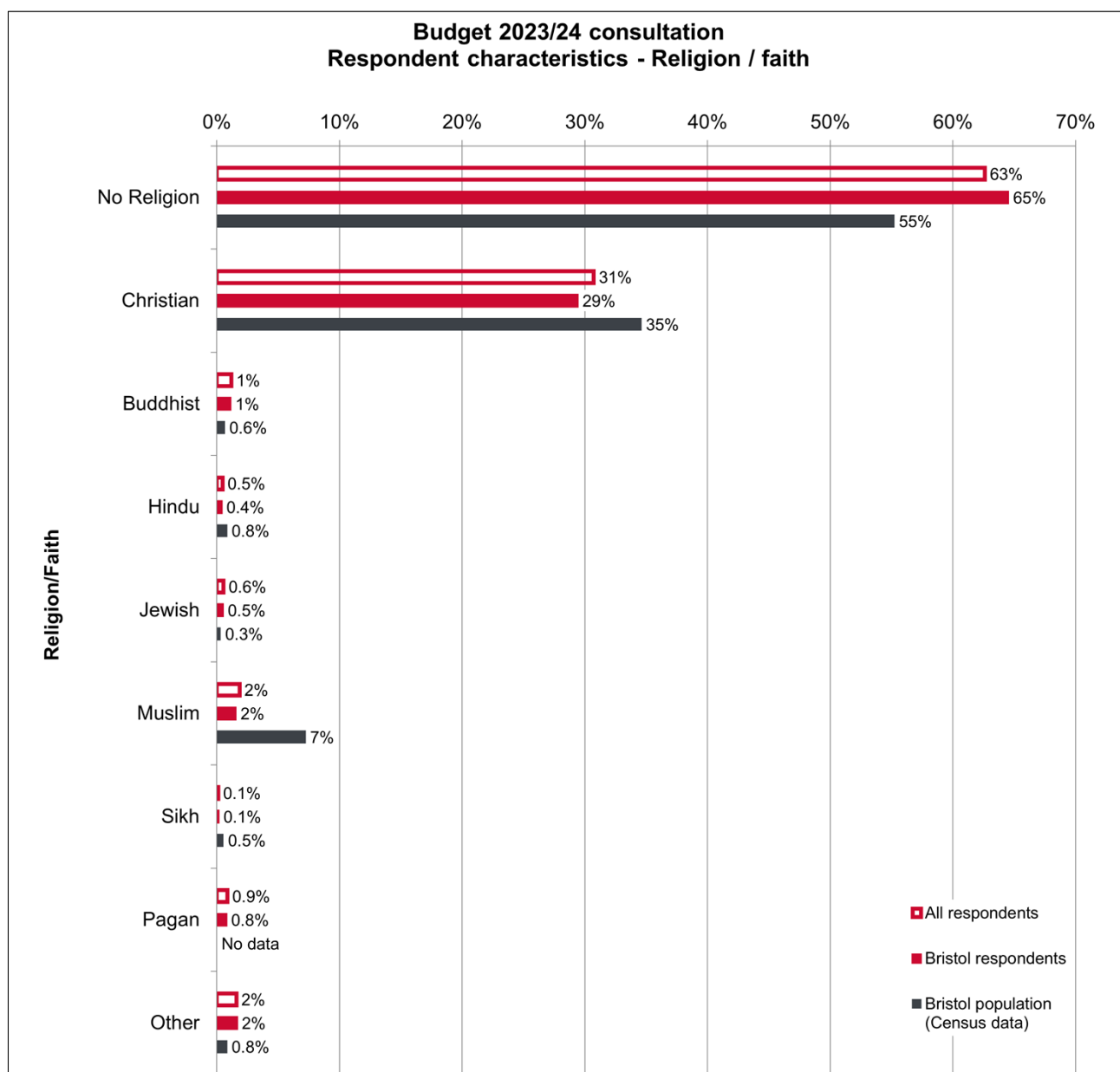
Christians (31%), Muslims (2%), Jews (0.6%), Hindus (0.5%) and Sikhs (0.1%) were under-represented compared to the proportions of these faiths living in Bristol.

0.9% of respondents are Pagan. There are no data from the Census for the proportion of Pagans 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, with the exception of people with no religion and Christians, for which the proportions differ by two percentage points.

**Figure 8: Religion/faith of respondents**

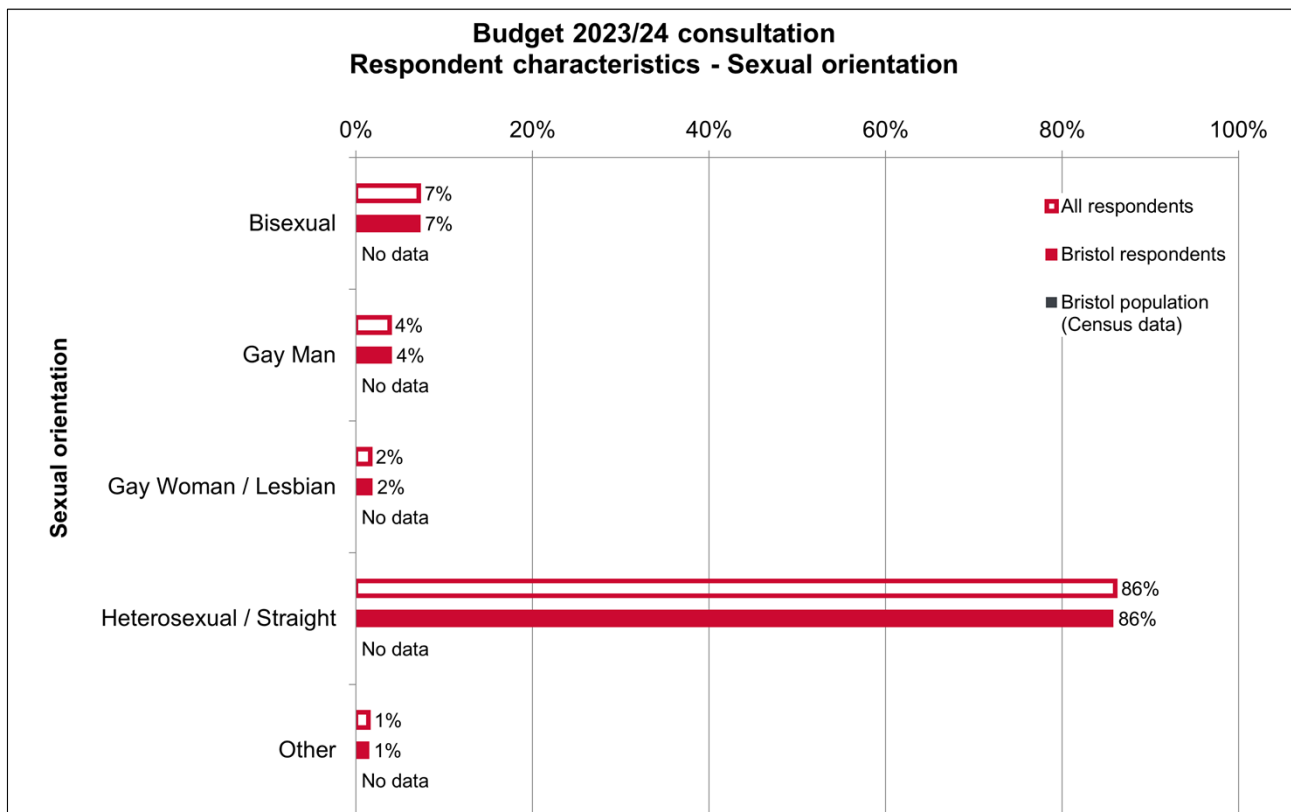


**Other protected characteristics and refugee/asylum status**

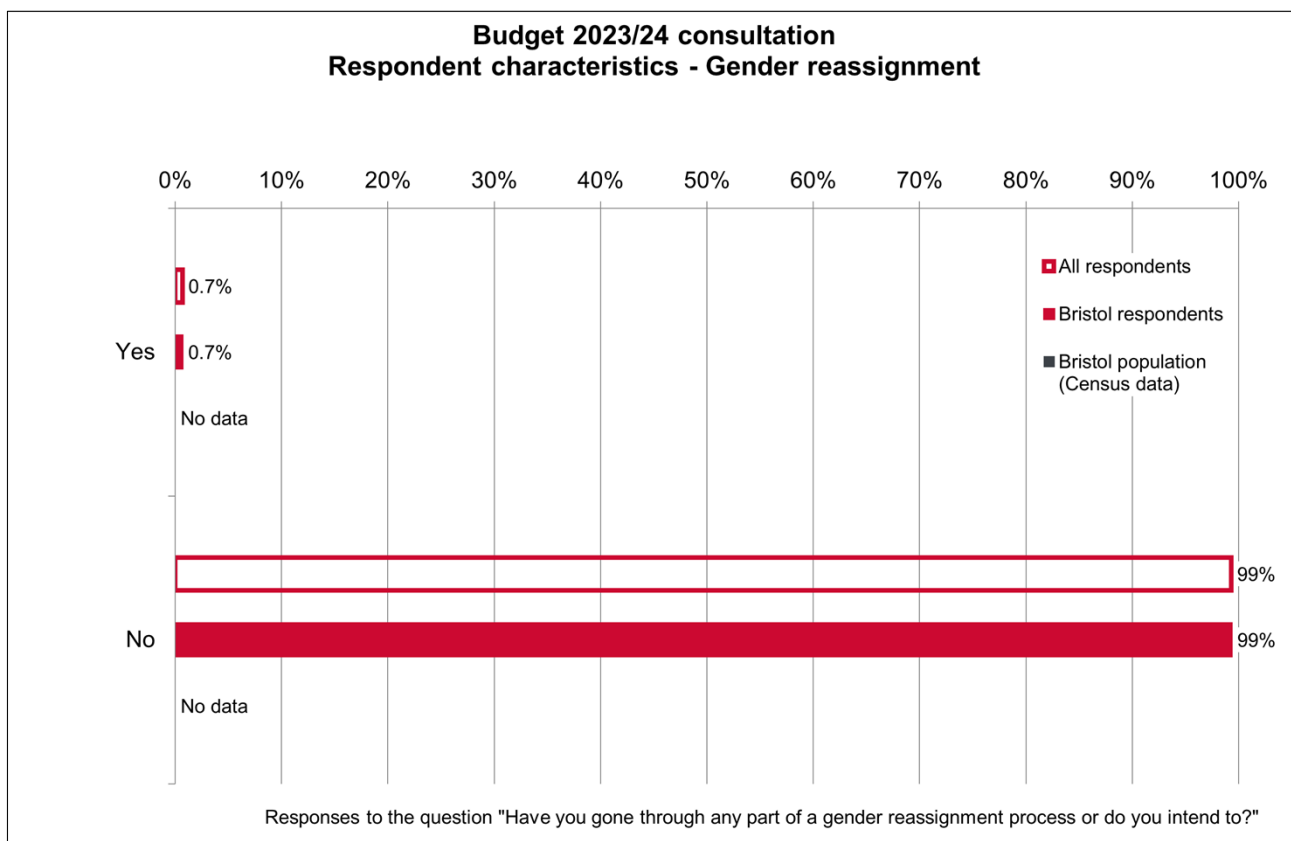
The survey also asked respondents about three other protected characteristics (sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and recent maternity) and if they are a refugee or asylum seeker.

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 closely matches the proportion for Bristol respondents.

**Figure 9: Sexual orientation**

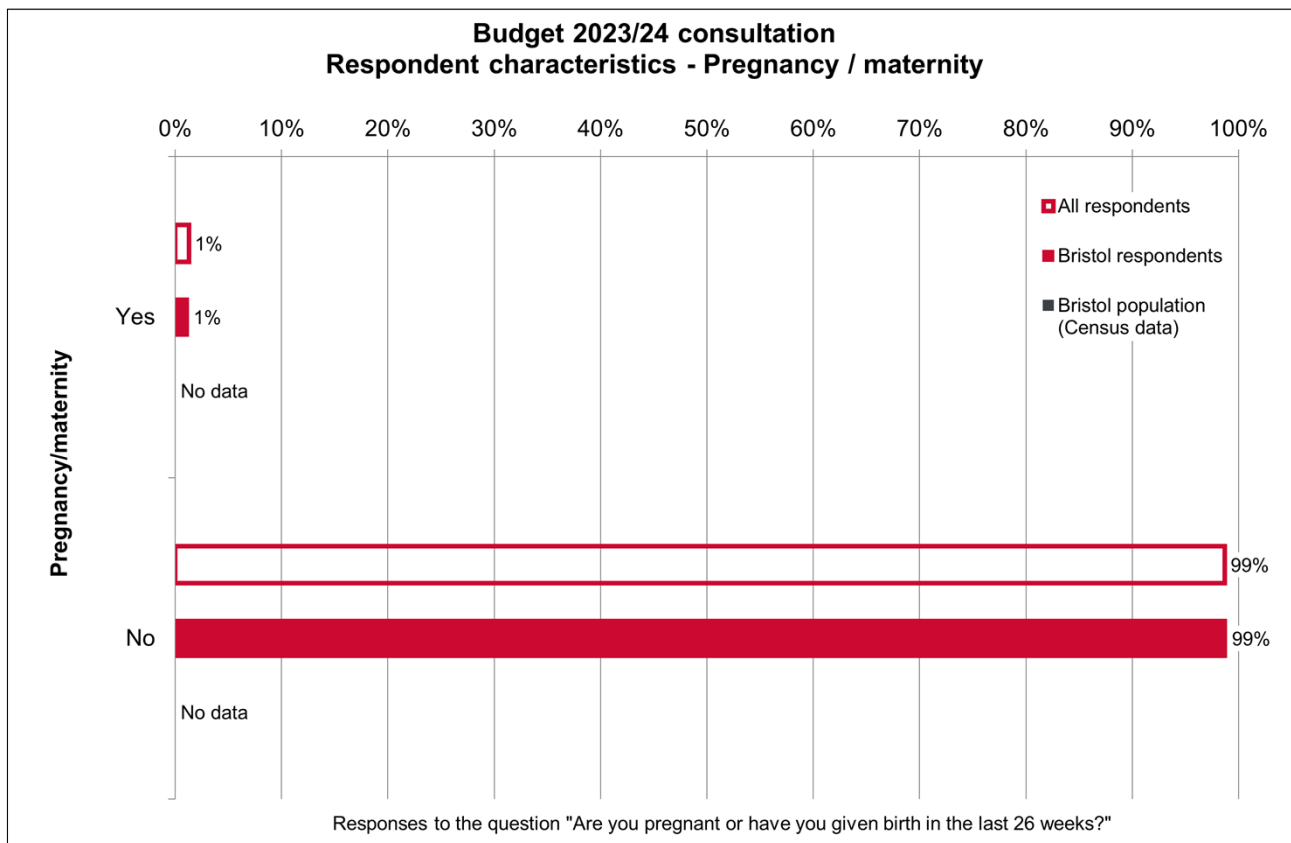


**Figure 10: Gender reassignment**

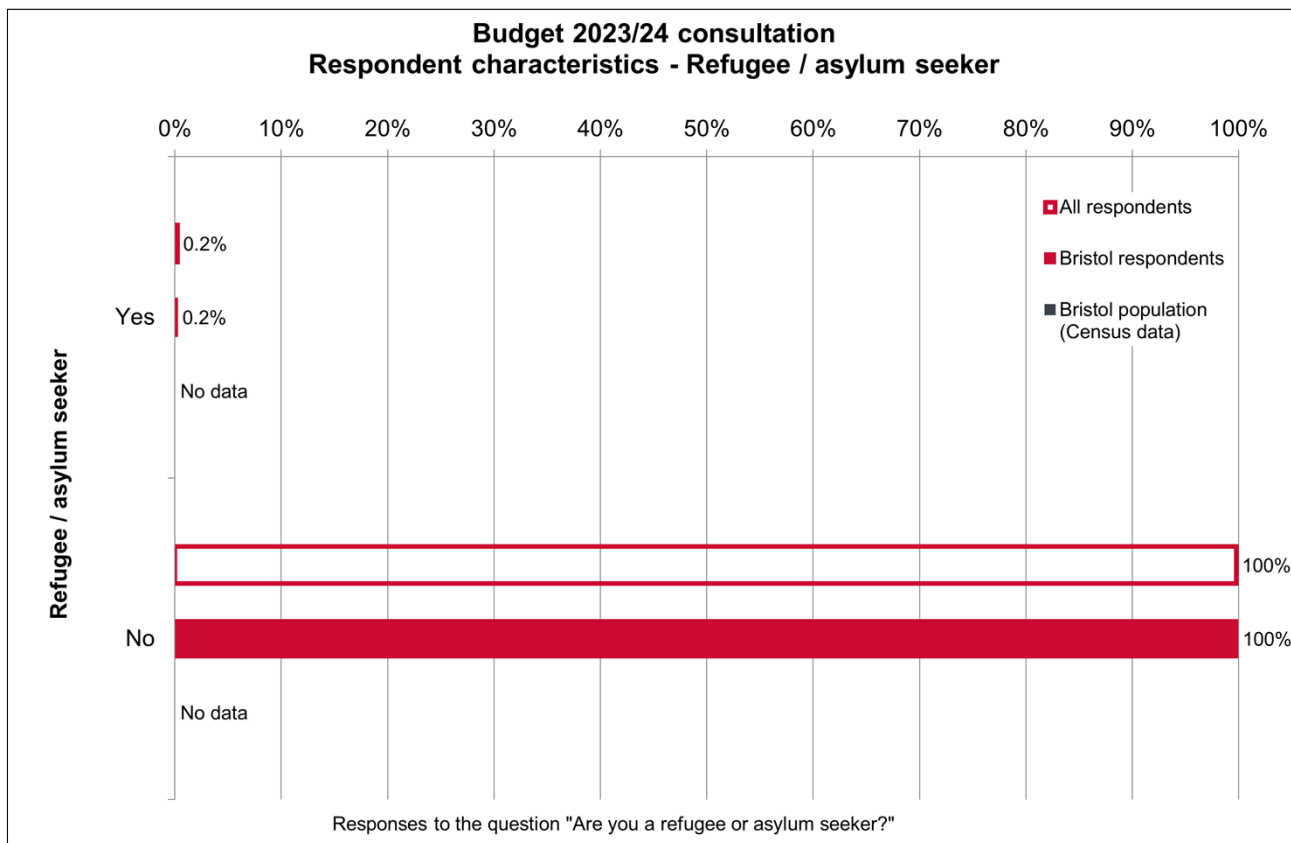




**Figure 11: Pregnancy/Maternity**



**Figure 12: Refugee or asylum seeker**



## Other respondent characteristics

4,129 (91%) respondents provided other details of their personal situation, selecting from a list of 11 options. Because respondents could select more than one option, the percentages below exceed 100%.

- 3,950 (96% of the 4,129 respondents who answered the question) are Bristol residents
- 164 (4%) are Bristol City Council employees
- 134 (3%) represent and/or own a local business
- 111 (3%) work in Bristol but live elsewhere
- 35 (1%) responded on behalf of a Voluntary/Community/Social Enterprise
- 12 (0.3%) responded on behalf of a health or social care provider
- 11 (0.3%) are ward councillors
- 5 (0.1%) responded on behalf of a public transport provider
- 3 (0.1%) are MPs
- 2 (less than 0.1%) responded was on behalf of a Housing Association
- 39 (1%) selected 'other'.

Of the 39 respondents who selected 'other':

- 15 gave details about where they live or work. Of these, one lives and works in Bristol, one lives in Bristol and works elsewhere, two previously lived in Bristol, one lives part time in Bristol, one is a council tenant, one is in temporary accommodation, and one is staying in Bristol but has their main home elsewhere. One stated they use services in Bristol but live outside, one works in Bristol and Bath, and one studies in Bristol. Four stated they are Bristolians
- 8 Stated they are members of, or represented, voluntary groups. These included five parks groups, Friends of Bishopston Library, and a local planning group
- 3 gave details of their profession
- 2 are retired
- 1 response was from St Pauls Advice Centre
- 1 was from an unspecified charity
- 1 is a carer
- 2 stated they are tax payers
- 4 selected 'other' but gave no details.

### **3.5 Respondents who provided email feedback**

41 responses to the consultation were received via email. These are in addition to the 4,550 survey responses.

34 email responses were received from citizens

3 emails were received from businesses.

4 emails were received from Voluntary/Community/Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations. These were:

- Bristol Parks Forum
- Friends of St Andrews Park
- Bristol Museums Development Trust
- VOSCUR

The feedback received via email is reported with the free text responses received as part of the survey in the following sections:

- section 4.5 for feedback on Council Tax and Social Care Precept)
- section 5.4 for feedback on the savings and income generation proposals
- section 5.5 for comments and suggestions on other ways to save money and generate income.

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

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

#### 4.1.1 Core Council Tax

Respondents were asked to state which level of Council Tax they would prefer in 2023/24, choosing from the following four options:

- **Option CT0: No increase to Council Tax.** This option would increase our funding gap by £5.0 million each year on top of funding scenarios / gap already identified<sup>24</sup>.
- **Option CT1: An increase of 1% to Council Tax.** This option would raise £2.5 million to support the delivery of services. This option would increase our funding gap by £2.5m each year on top of funding scenarios / gap already identified.
- **Option CT2: An increase of 2% to Council Tax.** This option would raise £5.0 million to support the delivery of services. This would make no change to the current funding gap assumptions.
- **Option CT3: An increase of 3% to Council Tax<sup>25</sup>.** This option would raise £7.5 million to support the delivery of services. This is £2.5 million more than we assumed in our forecast so it could reduce the amount of savings proposals needed in 2023/24 by £2.5 million.

4,185 respondents (92% of the 4,550 people who responded to the consultation survey), stated their preference for the level of Council Tax. A majority (3,226 respondents; 77%), favour an increase in core Council Tax to support general services in 2023/24 (Figure 13).

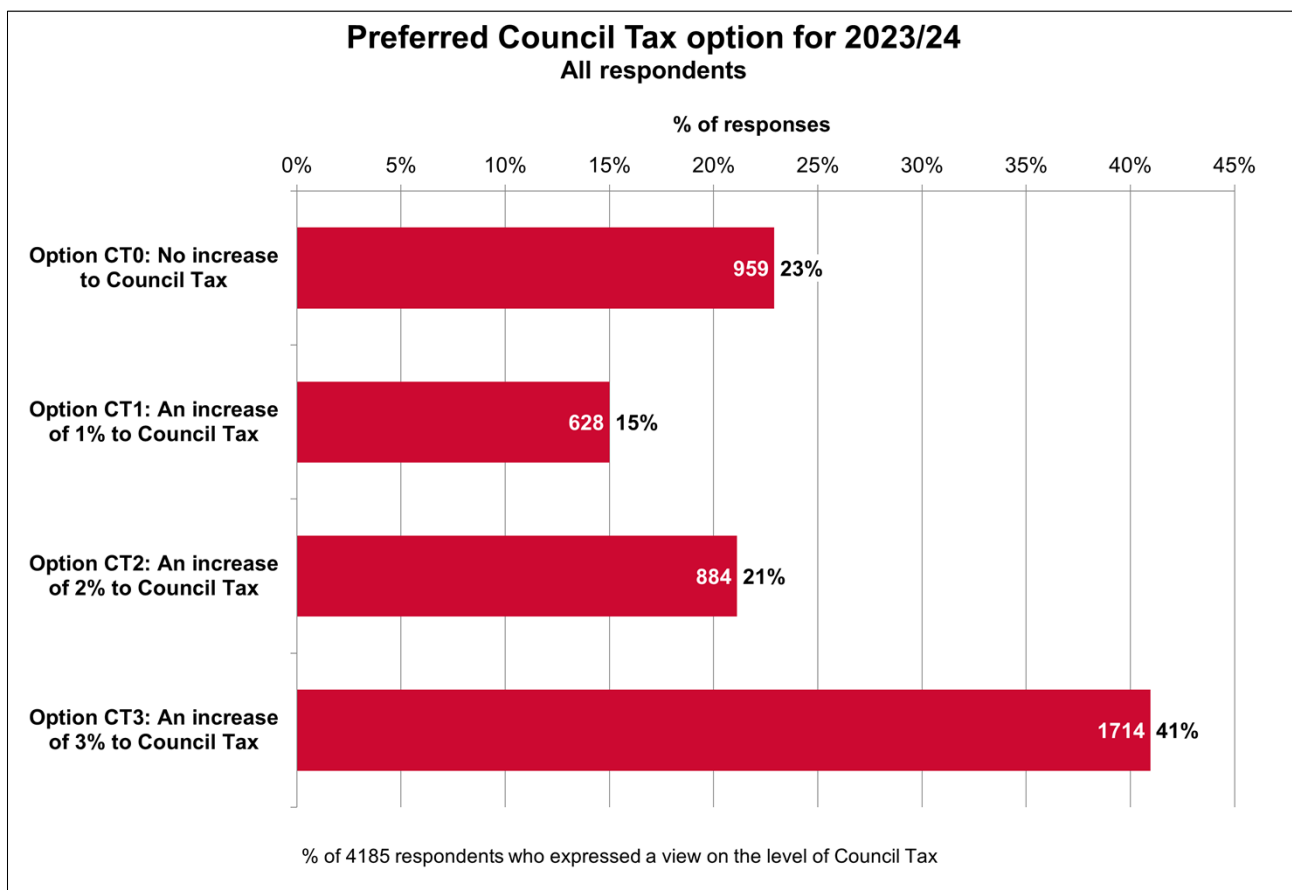
- 1,714 (41%) would prefer a 3% increase in core Council Tax. This is the option with the highest support
- 884 (21%) favour a 2% increase
- 628 (15%) favour a 1% increase
- 959 (23%) respondents would prefer 'no increase to Council Tax' in 2023/24. This is the option with the second highest support
- 365 respondents did not give a view on Council Tax.

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<sup>24</sup> In forecasting the budget gap, our planning assumed an increase in Council Tax of 2% each year and no Social Care Precept. No decision has been taken on the level of Council Tax increase or Social Care Precept; this will be decided by Full Council in February 2023. Every 1% increase in the level of Council Tax would also raise around £2.5 million towards meeting the council's rising costs.

<sup>25</sup> An increase up to 3% in core Council Tax is the maximum permitted without requiring a local referendum.

**Figure 13: Preferred level of core Council Tax increase in 2023/24**



#### 4.1.2 Social Care Precept

Respondents were also asked to state which level of Social Care Precept they would prefer in 2023/24, choosing from four options:

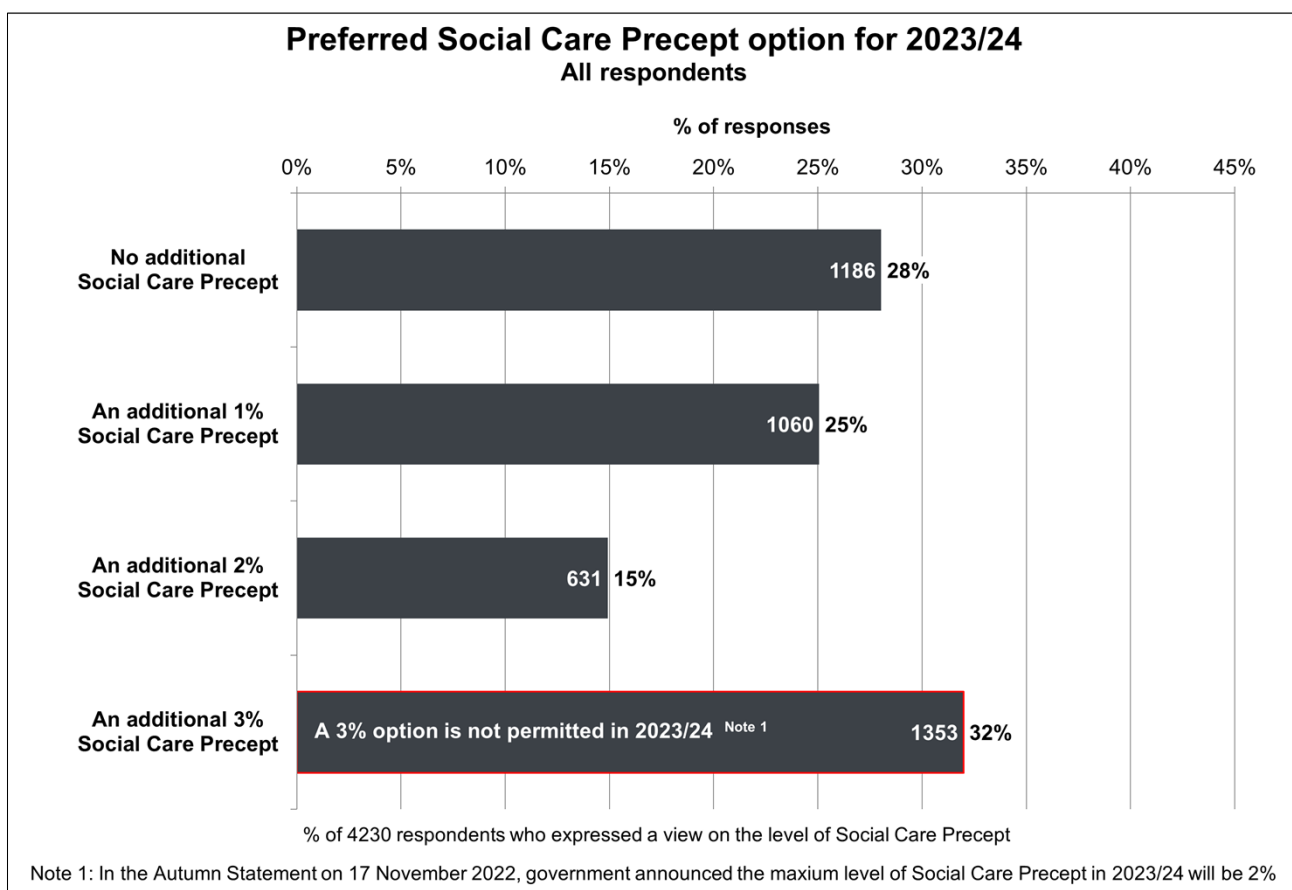
- **No additional Social Care Precept.** This option would raise no extra income to support the delivery of social care in 2023/24
- **An additional 1% Social Care Precept.** This would be an extra 1% increase to Council Tax in addition to any increase in core Council Tax. This option would raise £2.5 million to support the delivery of social care.
- **An additional 2% Social Care Precept.** This would be an extra 2% increase to Council Tax in addition to any increase in core Council Tax. This option would raise £5 million to support the delivery of social care.
- **An additional 3% Social Care Precept<sup>26</sup>.** This would be an extra 3% increase to Council Tax in addition to any increase in core Council Tax. This option would raise £7.5 million to support the delivery of social care.

<sup>26</sup> In the Autumn Statement 2022 on 17 November 2022, the government announced that the maximum level of Social Care Precept in 2023/24 will be 2%. This was after the start of the council’s budget consultation. The consultation option of a 3% Social Care Precept would not be a permitted option.

4,230 respondents (93% of the 4,550 people who responded to the consultation survey), stated their preference for the level of Social Care Precept. A majority (3,044 respondents; 72%), favour some Social Care Precept (on top of core Council Tax) to support the delivery of social care in 2023/24 (Figure 14).

- 1,353 (32%) would prefer a 3% Social Care Precept. This is the option with the highest support but, following the announcement in the Autumn Statement, is not a permitted option<sup>27</sup>.
- 631 (15%) favour a 2% Social Care Precept
- 1,060 (25%) favour a 1% Social Care Precept
- 1,186 (28%) respondents would prefer no Social Care Precept in 2023/24. This is the option with the second highest support
- 320 respondents did not give a view on Social Care Precept.

**Figure 14: Preferred level of Social Care Precept in 2023/24**




<sup>27</sup> In the Autumn Statement 2022 on 17 November 2022, the government announced that the maximum level of Social Care Precept in 2023/24 will be 2%

### 4.1.3 Combinations of core Council Tax and Social Care Precept

Figure 15 shows the percentage of the 4,550 respondents who prefer each combination of Council Tax increase (0%, 1%, 2% or 3%) and Social Care Precept (0%, 1%, 2% or 3%) proposed in the consultation. The 3% Social Care Precept option is not permitted.

In Figure 15, each of the coloured rectangles represents a combination of one Council Tax option (0%, 1%, 2% or 3%) and one Social Care Precept option (0%, 1%, 2% or 3%). For example, the top left green rectangle is the combination of no increase to Council Tax and no Social Care Precept. 17% of respondents favour this option. The bottom right green rectangle is a 3% increase to Council Tax and a 3% Social Care precept. None of the combinations that include a 3% Social Care Precept (shown with red borders) is permitted. Options with lower support appear red; those with higher support are green.







The rightmost (white) column shows the percentages of respondents who gave their views on each Council Tax option but did not provide a view on Social Care Precept. The bottom row shows the percentages of respondents who gave their views on each Social Care Precept option but did not provide a view on Council Tax.

The numbers in the coloured circles show the total percentage increase in Council Tax plus Social Care Precept for each combination. For example,  indicates a 2% total increase, which could comprise:

- No Council Tax increase plus 2% Social Care Precept; or
- 1% Council Tax increase plus 1% Social Care Precept; or
- 2% Council Tax increase with no Social Care Precept.

**Figure 15: preferred combinations for Council Tax and Social Care Precept**

Percentage of respondents who would prefer each combination of Council Tax and Social Care Precept

	No additional Social Care Precept	An additional 1% Social Care Precept	An additional 2% Social Care Precept	An additional 3% Social Care Precept	No view on Social Care Precept
No increase to Council Tax	17% 	3% 	0.5% 	1% 	0.2%
1% increase to Council Tax	4% 	9% 	1% 	0.4% 	0.1%
2% increase to Council Tax	3% 	7% 	7% 	2% 	0.1%
3% increase to Council Tax	3% 	4% 	5% 	26% 	0.3%
No view on Council Tax	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%	6%

**Key**

-  No change to Council Tax or Social Care Precept
-  1% increase from Council Tax plus Social Care Precept
-  2% increase from Council Tax plus Social Care Precept
-  3% increase from Council Tax plus Social Care Precept
-  4% increase from Council Tax plus Social Care Precept
-  5% increase from Council Tax plus Social Care Precept
-  6% increase from Council Tax plus Social Care Precept
-  Options involving 3% Social Care Precept are not permitted

Figure 15 shows that:

- The option with highest support (26% of 4,550 respondents) is a 3% increase in core Council Tax and a 3% Social Care Precept. This is the maximum increase proposed in the consultation but is not permitted under the government limits announced in the Autumn Statement 2022.
- The second most popular option (17% of 4,550 respondents) is no increase in core Council Tax and no Social Care Precept.
- The four most popular options balance equal levels of Council Tax and Social Care Precept; 26% support a 3% Council Tax increase with 3% Social Care Precept, 17% support 0% with 0%, 9% support 1% with 1%, 7% support 2% with 2%.
- For options where Council Tax and Social Care Precept are not the same, more respondents favour a higher increase in Council Tax than Social Care Precept. This is shown by the higher percentages in the bottom left of the table and lower percentages in the top right of the table.
- The permitted option which would raise the highest income is a 3% increase in core Council Tax with a 2% Social Care Precept. This was favoured by 5% of respondents. For the purposes of this report, taking into account comments in favour of increasing Council Tax and Social Care Precept, it is assumed that much of the support (26% of respondents) for the 3% Council Tax with 3% Social Care Precept option (which is not permitted) would transfer to the 3% Council Tax with 2% Social Care Precept option, if the latter option had been the highest income-raising option in the consultation.

#### **4.2 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 16 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who want a 0%, 1%, 2% or 3% increase in core Council Tax in 2023/24. This is based on the 2,931 Bristol respondents who stated a preferred option for core Council Tax and provided a full postcode<sup>28</sup>. Figure 16 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.

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<sup>28</sup> Incomplete postcodes cannot be matched to the deprivation data.



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

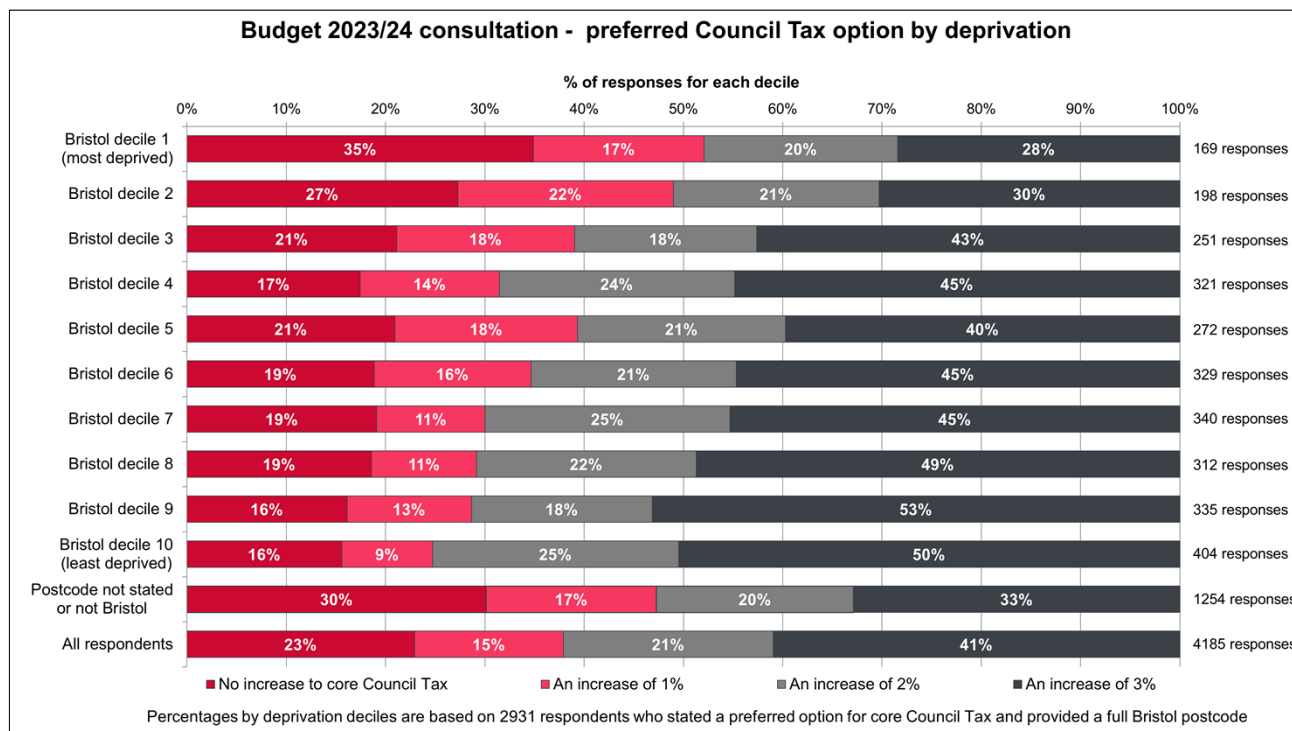


Figure 16 shows that preference for higher core Council Tax tends to increase as deprivation reduces.

Support for the maximum **3% increase** is highest in the least deprived 20% of Bristol, with 53% of respondents favouring a 3% increase in decile 9 and 50% in decile 10. Support for a 3% increase is lowest in the most deprived 20% of Bristol; decile 1 (28%) and decile 2 (30%).

Support for **no increase** in core Council Tax is highest among respondents in the most deprived 10% of Bristol (decile 1), with 35% of respondents favouring no increase. Support for no increase in Council Tax reduces to 16% in decile 10 (least deprived 10%).

A 3% increase in Council Tax is the most popular option in all deciles except the most deprived decile 1. For decile 1, no increase is the preferred option (35% of respondents) and a 3% increase is the second most popular option (28% of respondents).

Support for 1% and 2% increases in Council Tax broadly follows a similar trend of greater willingness to pay more in less deprived areas. The 1% increase in Council Tax is the least popular option in all deciles except the more deprived deciles 2 and 3.

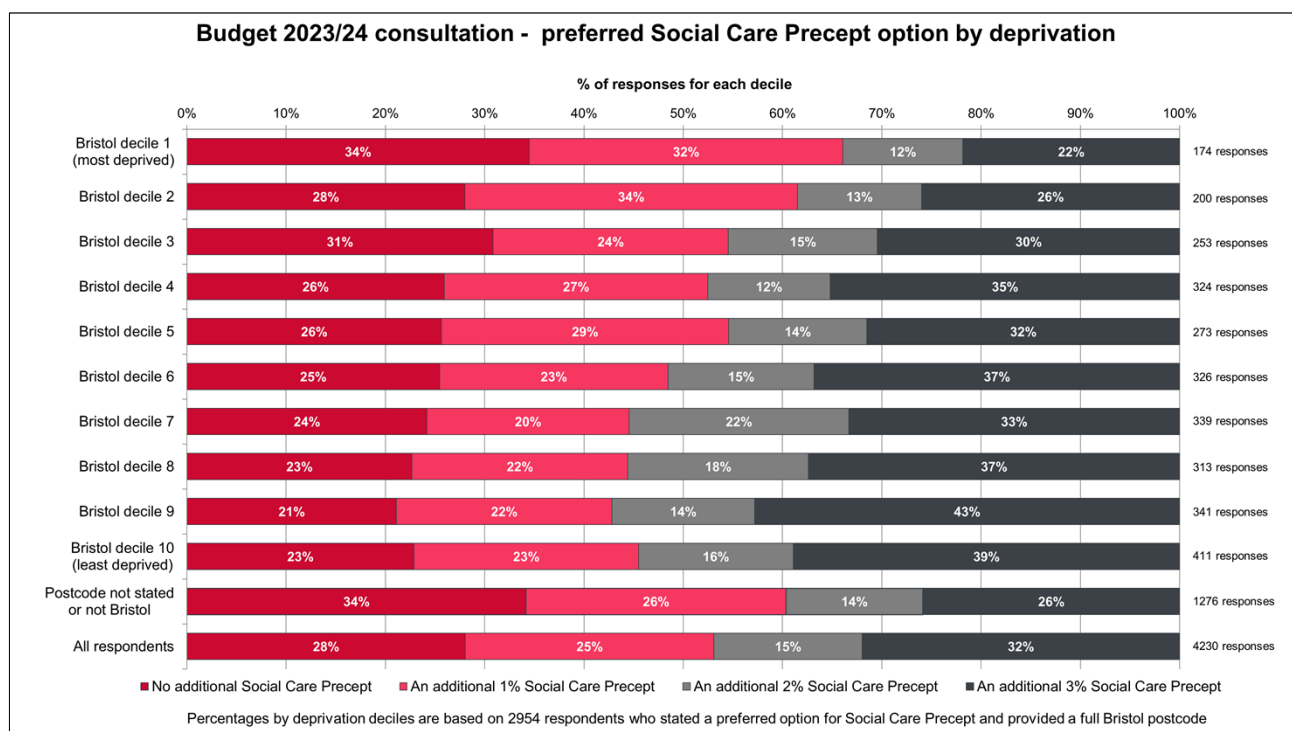
The views of respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode are similar to an average of the most deprived deciles 1 and 2. 30% in this group favour no increase and 33% support a 3% increase.

### 4.3 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 17 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who want a 0%, 1%, 2% or 3% Social Care Precept in 2023/24. This is based on the 2,954 Bristol respondents who stated a preferred option for Social Care Precept and provided a full postcode. Figure 17 also shows the views of people who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode, and the aggregate views of all respondents.

**Figure 17: 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 17).

Support for no Social Care Precept decreases from 34% in decile 1 (most deprived) to 21% in decile 9 (with a slightly higher figure of 23% in decile 10). Correspondingly, support for 3% Social Care Precept increases from 22% in decile 1 to 43% in decile 9 (39% in decile 10).

A 3% Social Care Precept is the most popular option in deciles 4 to 10. For respondents in the three most deprived deciles 1, 2 and 3, support for no Social Care Precept exceeds preference for a 3% option.

The views of respondents who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode are similar to an average of the most deprived deciles 1, 2 and 3. In this group, 34% favour no increase and 26% support a 3% increase.

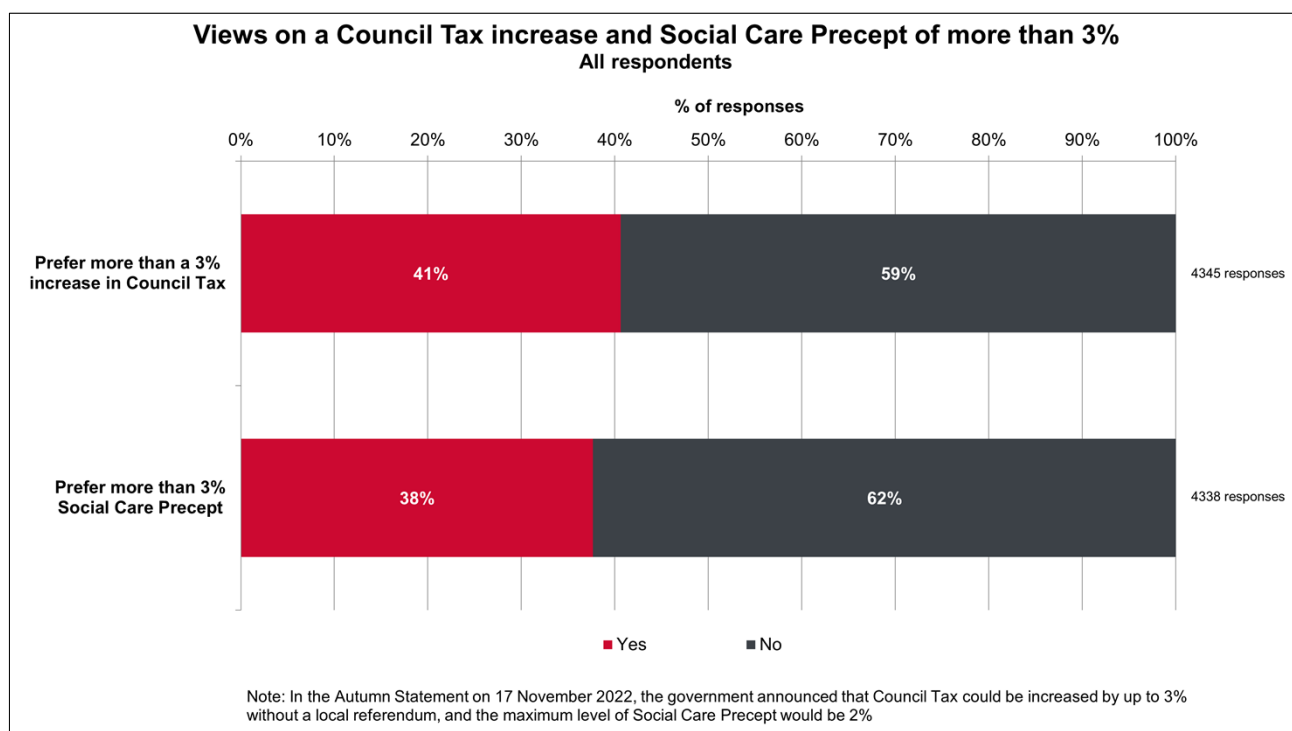
Comparison of Figures 16 and 17 shows a greater willingness to pay more Council Tax than Social Care Precept, for all deprivation deciles. More respondents favour a 3% and a 2% Council Tax increase compared to a 3% or 2% Social Care Precept. This is also the case for respondents who didn't provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode.

#### 4.4 Views on increasing Council Tax and Social Care Precept by more than 3%

The Budget 2023/24 consultation was launched before the government announced the limits for the level of Council Tax increase or Social Care Precept for 2023/24. To ensure we could take into account the public’s views on any possible scenario the government might announce, respondents were asked if would be prepared to pay an increase of more than 3% in core Council Tax and/or Social Care Precept, if the government announced this is permitted in 2023/24.

The [Autumn Statement 2022](#) set out that such larger increases would not be permitted in 2023/24. The views of respondents on increases of more than 3% are shown in Figure 18.

**Figure 18: Views on increases of more than 3% for Council Tax or Social Care Precept**



#### Increases of more than 3% to Council Tax

4,345 respondents gave their views on an increase of more than 3% for core Council Tax. Of these, 41% would support such a larger increase and 59% would not. (Note that 41% is same percentage as stated they would prefer a 3% increase in Council Tax (Figure 13).

#### Increases of more than 3% to Social Care Precept

4,338 respondents gave their views on a Social Care Precept of more than 3%. Of these, 38% would support such a larger increase and 62% would not. (Note that the 38% in favour of an increase above 3% is more than the 32% who stated they would prefer a 3% Social Care Precept (Figure 14).

## 4.5 Reasons for Council Tax and Social Care Precept levels chosen

### 4.5.1 Overview

Of the 1,775 free text survey and email responses, 621 (35%) provided comments and suggestions relating to Council Tax and 79 (4%) commented on Social Care Precept.

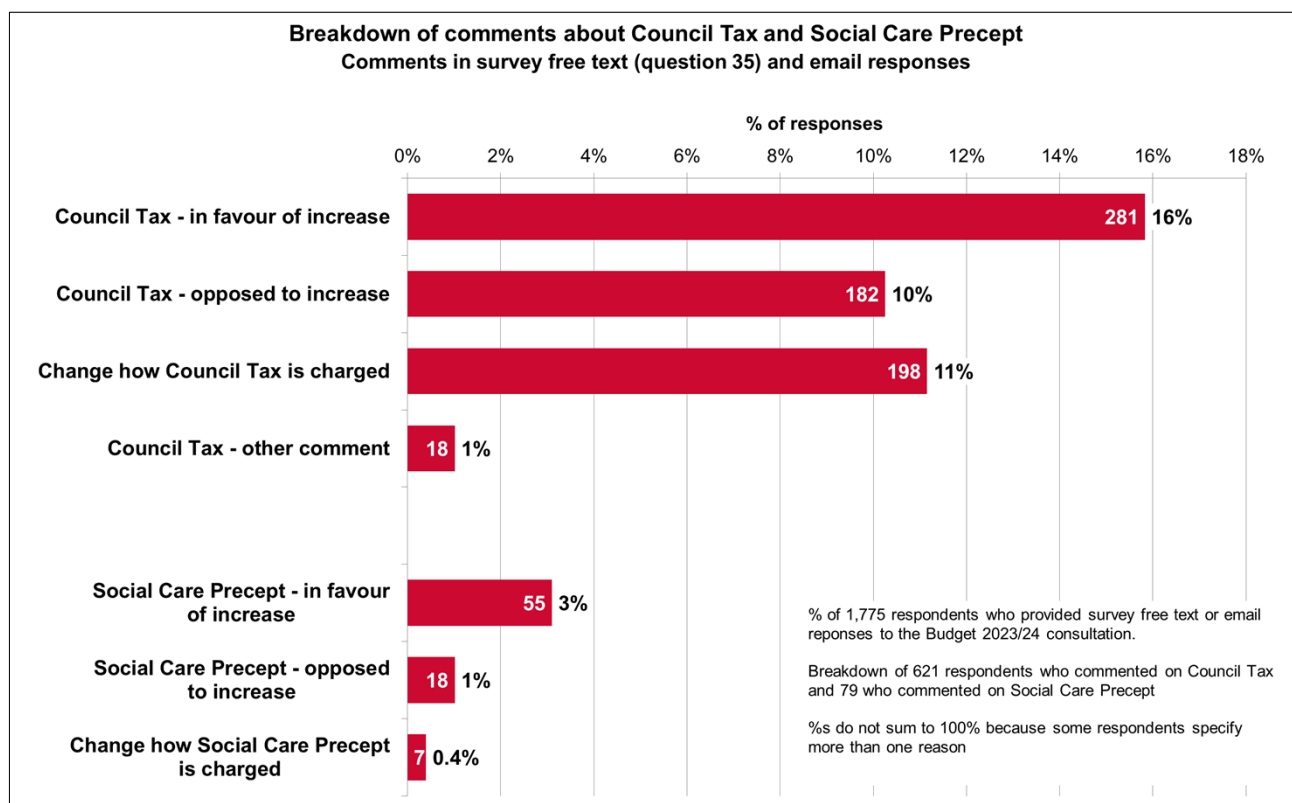
### 4.5.2 Comments about Council Tax

621 respondents (35% of 1,775) explained their preference for the level of Council Tax or made other comments about Council Tax (Figure 19).

- 281 (16% of 1,775 respondents) made comments in favour of increasing Council Tax.
- 182 (10%) gave reasons why they oppose an increase to Council Tax
- 198 (11%) said that they thought that Council Tax should be charged in a different way
- 18 (1%) made other comments about Council Tax

A further breakdown of these comments is provided below. All percentages are percentages of the 1,775 free text survey and email responses. Because a single respondent might comment on several issues, the total percentages will exceed 100%.

**Figure 19: Comments about Council Tax and Social Care Precept**



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

Of the 281 (16%) respondents who stated they would support increasing Council Tax:

- 125 (7%) said they would support an increase to avoid cuts or to ensure more funding is given to essential (in some cases specified) services
- 97 (5% of respondents) stated they support the proposals, without mentioning any conditions
- 19 (1%) would support an increase if low-income households are exempt
- 18 (1%) would support an increase but have concerns, primarily that the increase is not too high
- 17 (1%) stated they would support an increase provided the money is spent fairly and wisely
- 11 (1%) would support an increase if there is no alternative
- 8 (0.5%) supported an increase because central government does not fund local services sufficiently through taxation
- 2 (0.1%) said they would support an increase in Council Tax or Social Care Precept but not both.

### **Comments opposed to increasing Council Tax**

Of the 182 (10%) respondents who said they oppose an increase to Council Tax:

- 132 (7%) stated Council Tax is already too high and they cannot afford to pay more, citing the cost-of-living crisis
- 34 (2%) said they do not support an increase, without saying why
- 25 (1%) said that the quality of services or the council's financial management do not merit an increase in Council Tax
- 3 (0.2%) mentioned specific groups who should be exempt from increases. These are predominantly people in Council Tax bands A and B and people over 65
- 3 (0.2%) did not support an increase because they do not use many council services
- 3 (0.2%) opposed paying the Police Precept, citing an inadequate Police service.

### **Suggestions for how Council Tax should be charged differently**

Of the 198 (11%) who wanted Council Tax to be charged in a different way:

- 73 (4%) wanted people who are high earners or otherwise wealthy to pay more
- 51 (3%) thought there should be higher percentage increases for properties in the highest rated Council Tax bands

- 21 (1%) wanted to charge students Council Tax, 9 (1%) thought landlords of student properties should pay Council Tax, and 6 (0.3%) wanted universities to pay Council Tax on behalf of students
- 20 (1%) advocated a review of Council Tax banding to ensure properties are in the correct Council Tax band and 1 (0.1%) wanted Council Tax Banding to be reviewed whenever a property is upgraded / enlarged
- 14 (1%) wanted a property tax which is proportional to property value
- 13 (1%) would like to charge higher Council Tax to landlords and owners of multiple properties
- 10 (1%) would like an option for people who can afford it to opt in to pay more Council Tax voluntarily
- 9 (1%) thought Council Tax should be charged for each adult in a household, not as a flat rate per property.
- 6 (0.3%) wanted a review of the Council Tax discount on empty homes
- 3 (0.2%) wanted to increase the single person discount, 2 (0.1%) wanted to decrease the discount, 1 (0.1%) wanted the discount reviewed and 4 (0.2%) did not want the single person discount to be changed
- 2 (0.1%) wanted a higher rate for Air B&B properties
- 2 (0.1%) thought property owners and not renters should be charged
- 1 (0.1%) would like a discount for people who use few services
- 1 (0.1%) thought Council Tax should be higher for households with more than one car.

### **Other comments about Council Tax**

Of the 18 (1%) who made other comments about Council Tax:

- 8 (0.5%) were sceptical that the consultation will influence decisions on Council Tax
- 3 (0.2%) would like to reduce the precept that funds Avon and Somerset Police
- 2 (0.1%) wanted more transparency on how Council Tax is spent
- 2 (0.1%) thought citizens should have more choice about how Council Tax is spent
- 1 (0.1%) said all Council Tax payers should receive equality of service and 1 (0.1%) observed that people in less-deprived areas get few services
- 1 (0.1%) would like to scrap Council Tax and raise revenue through Income Tax instead
- 1 (0.1%) thought Council Tax is not lawful.

### 4.5.3 Comments about Social Care Precept

79 (4% of 1,775 respondents) explained their preference for the level of Social Care Precept or made other comments about Social Care Precept (Figure 19 above).

- 55 (3% of 1,775 respondents) said why they favour increasing Social Care Precept.
- 18 (1%) gave reasons why they oppose an increase to Social Care Precept
- 7 (0.4%) said that they thought that Social Care Precept should be charged in a different way

A further breakdown of these comments is provided below.

#### Comments in favour of increasing Social Care Precept

Of the 55 (3%) who said why they favour increasing Social Care Precept.

- 47 (3%) said they would prefer to pay more to safeguard social care services, to help vulnerable people and to relieve bed-blocking affecting the NHS
- 3 (0.2%) would pay more if there is no alternative
- 2 (0.1%) would pay for precept because they think central government does not fund services adequately
- 1 (0.1%) would support an increase provided low-income households are exempt
- 1 (0.1%) would support an increase if the money is spent fairly and wisely.

#### Comments opposed to increasing Social Care Precept

Of the 18 (1%) who said why they oppose an increase in Social Care Precept:

- 7 (0.4%) said they cannot afford to pay more
- 6 (0.3%) thought that individuals should be responsible for their own social care
- 2 (0.1%) stated central government should fund social care
- 1 (0.1%) said that social care is a core council service and should be funded within existing budgets
- 1 (0.1%) objected to an increase without further explanation
- 1 (0.1%) objected to a Social Care Precept stating that it would not make a significant difference to the budget gap.

#### Suggestions for how Social Care Precept should be charged differently

- 5 (0.3%) wanted a higher Social Care Precept increases for properties in the highest rated Council Tax bands, and a lower percentage precept in lower bands.
- 1 (0.1%) would like people to have an option to contribute a higher rate of Social Care Precept voluntarily.
- 1 (0.1%) thought Social Care Precept should not be a separate levy and should be combined with core Council Tax.

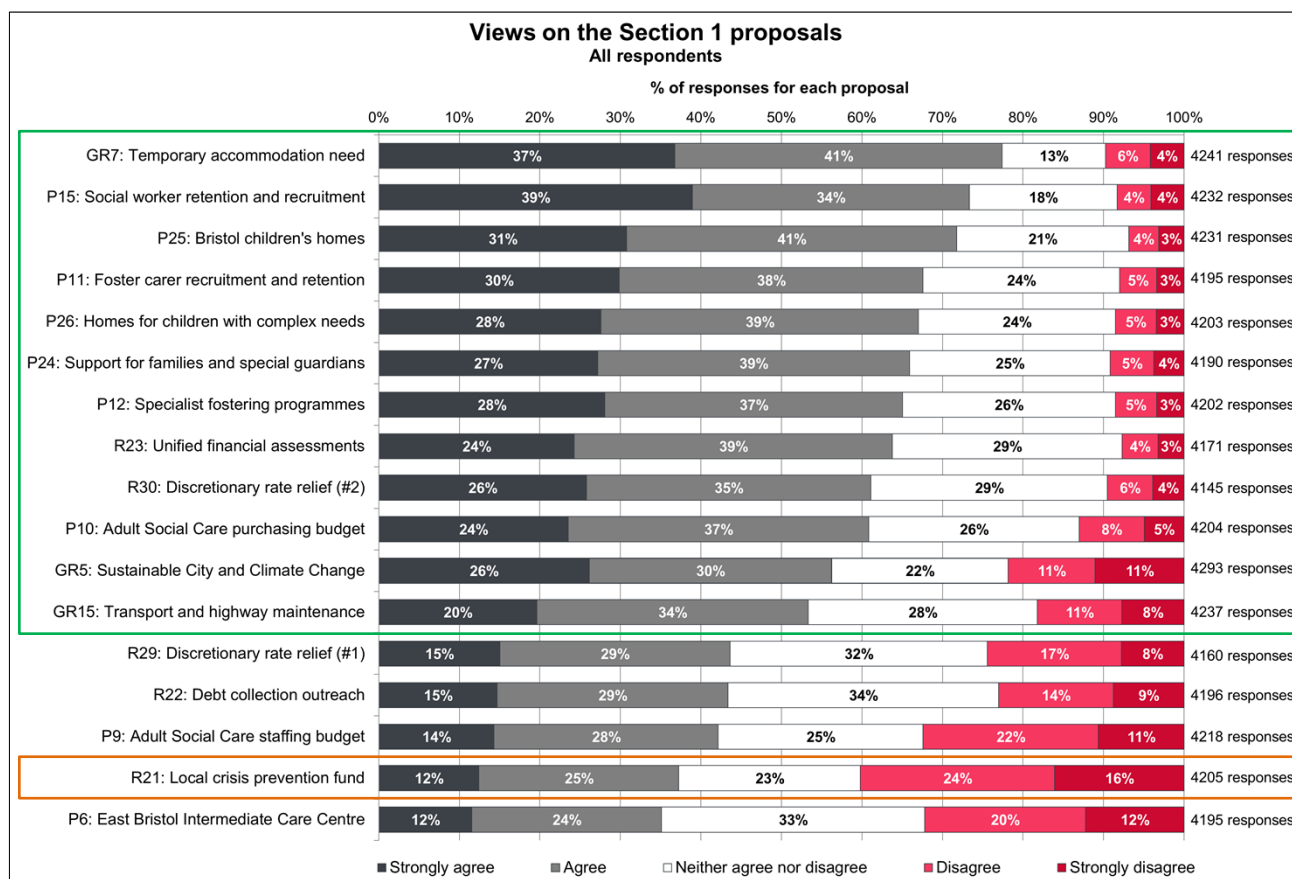
## 5 Survey results: proposals for saving money and generating income

### 5.1 Views on the Section 1 savings proposals

Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree with each of 17 [Section 1 proposals](#) for how the council might save money, work more efficiently and generate income to help bridge the forecast funding gap. These are proposals for which we consulted on both the forecast saving and how we propose to make the savings.

Of the 4,550 respondents to the survey, 4,376 (96%) gave their views on one or more of the Section 1 proposals. Figure 20 shows the percentage of respondents who strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree with each proposal, and the number of people who gave views on each proposal. In Figure 22, the proposals at the top received the highest support (the highest percentage who agree and strongly agree); those at the bottom have the lowest percentage who agree and strongly agree.

**Figure 20: Views on the Section 1 savings proposals**



Percentages shown in each bar may not sum to 100% due to rounding to the nearest integer.

Note 1: For all proposals within the green rectangle, 50% or more of respondents agree or strongly agree

Note 2: For the proposal within the orange rectangle, fewer respondents agree and strongly agree than the percentage who disagree and strongly disagree

Figure 20 shows there is wide variation in the level of support for the Section 1 proposals.

The proposal with highest support is GR7: Temporary accommodation need, which has 77% who agree or strongly agree and 10% who disagree or strongly disagree.



The proposal with lowest support is P6: East Bristol Intermediate Care Centre, for which 35% of respondents agree or strongly agree and 32% disagree or strongly disagree.

The top 12 proposals were approved of by at least half of the respondents (Note 1 in Figure 20). Of these, GR15: Transport and Highway maintenance had the lowest support, with 53% who agree or strongly agree and 18% who disagree or strongly disagree.

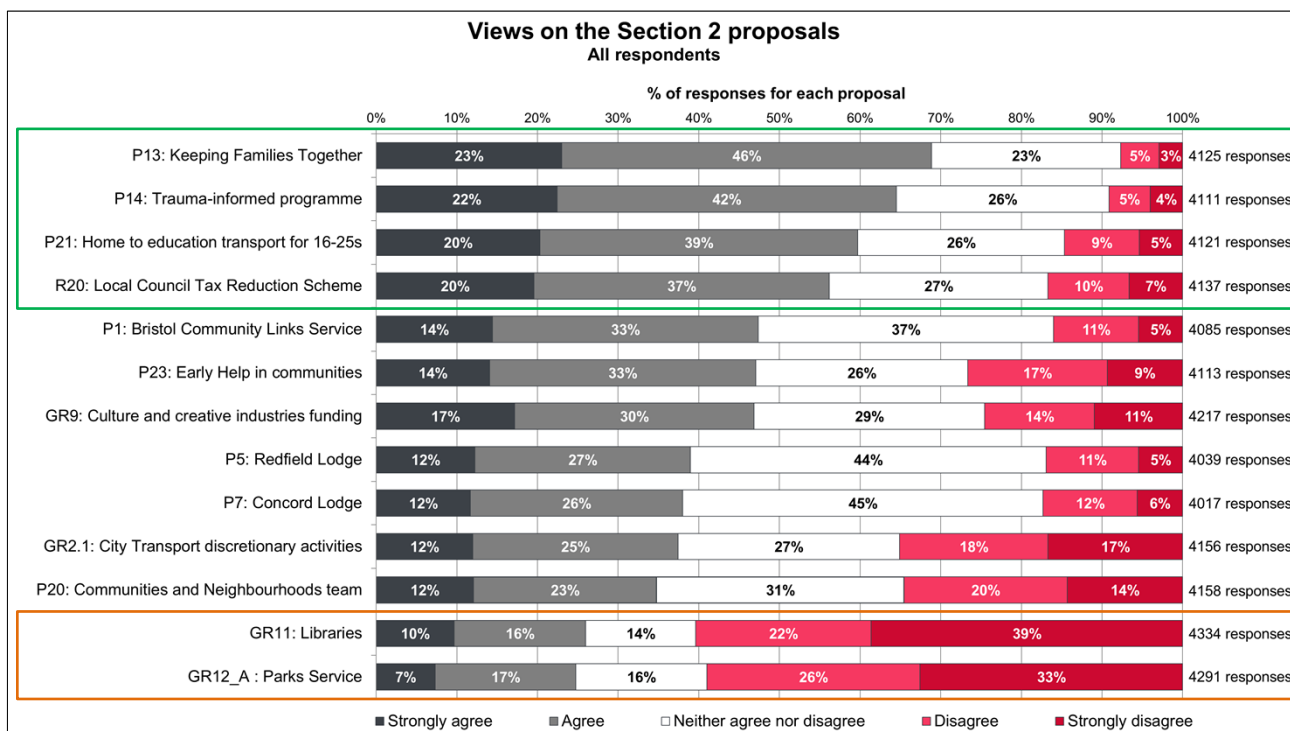
One proposal had fewer respondents who agree and strongly agree than those who disagree and strongly disagree (Note 2). This proposal is R21: Local crisis prevention fund for which 37% agree or strongly agree compared to 40% who disagree or strongly disagree.

## 5.2 Views on the Section 2 savings proposals

Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree with each of 13 [Section 2 proposals](#). These are newer ideas for saving money and generating more income, which need more work to define the proposals. Some will require further public consultation and assessment if they proceed.

Of the 4,550 respondents to the survey, 4,480 (98%) gave their views on one or more of the Section 2 proposals. Figure 21 shows the percentage of respondents who strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree with each proposal, and the number of people who gave views on each proposal. In Figure 23, the proposals at the top received the highest support (the highest percentage who agree and strongly agree); those at the bottom have the lowest percentage who agree and strongly agree.

**Figure 21: Views on the Section 2 savings proposals**



Percentages shown in each bar may not sum to 100% due to rounding to the nearest integer.

Note 1: For all proposals within the green rectangle, 50% or more of respondents agree or strongly agree

Note 2: For the proposal within the orange rectangle, fewer respondents agree and strongly agree than the percentage who disagree and strongly disagree

Figure 21 shows there is wide variation in the level of support for the Section 2 proposals. The most popular Section 2 proposals have less support than the most popular Section 1 proposals. The least popular Section 2 proposals also have less support than the least popular Section 1 proposals.

The Section 2 proposal with highest support is P13: Keeping Families Together, which has 69% who agree or strongly agree and 8% who disagree or strongly disagree.

The top four proposals were approved of by at least half of the respondents (Note 1 in Figure 21). Of these, R20: Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme had the lowest support, with 56% who agree or strongly agree and 17% who disagree or strongly disagree.

The Section 2 proposals with lowest support are:

- GR11: Libraries, for which 26% of respondents agree or strongly agree and 60% disagree or strongly disagree
- GR12\_A: Parks Service, for which 25% of respondents agree or strongly agree and 59% disagree or strongly disagree

These two proposals had fewer respondents who agree and strongly agree than the percentage who disagree and strongly disagree (Note 2 in Figure 21).

### **5.3 Views on the savings proposals in areas with different levels of deprivation**

Views on each of the 30 Section 1 and Section 2 savings / income generation proposals were compared for people in areas of high and low deprivation, to check if support for the proposals varies with deprivation. The comparison used postcodes provided by Bristol respondents to match each response to one of 10 deprivation bands (deciles) as described in section 3.3.

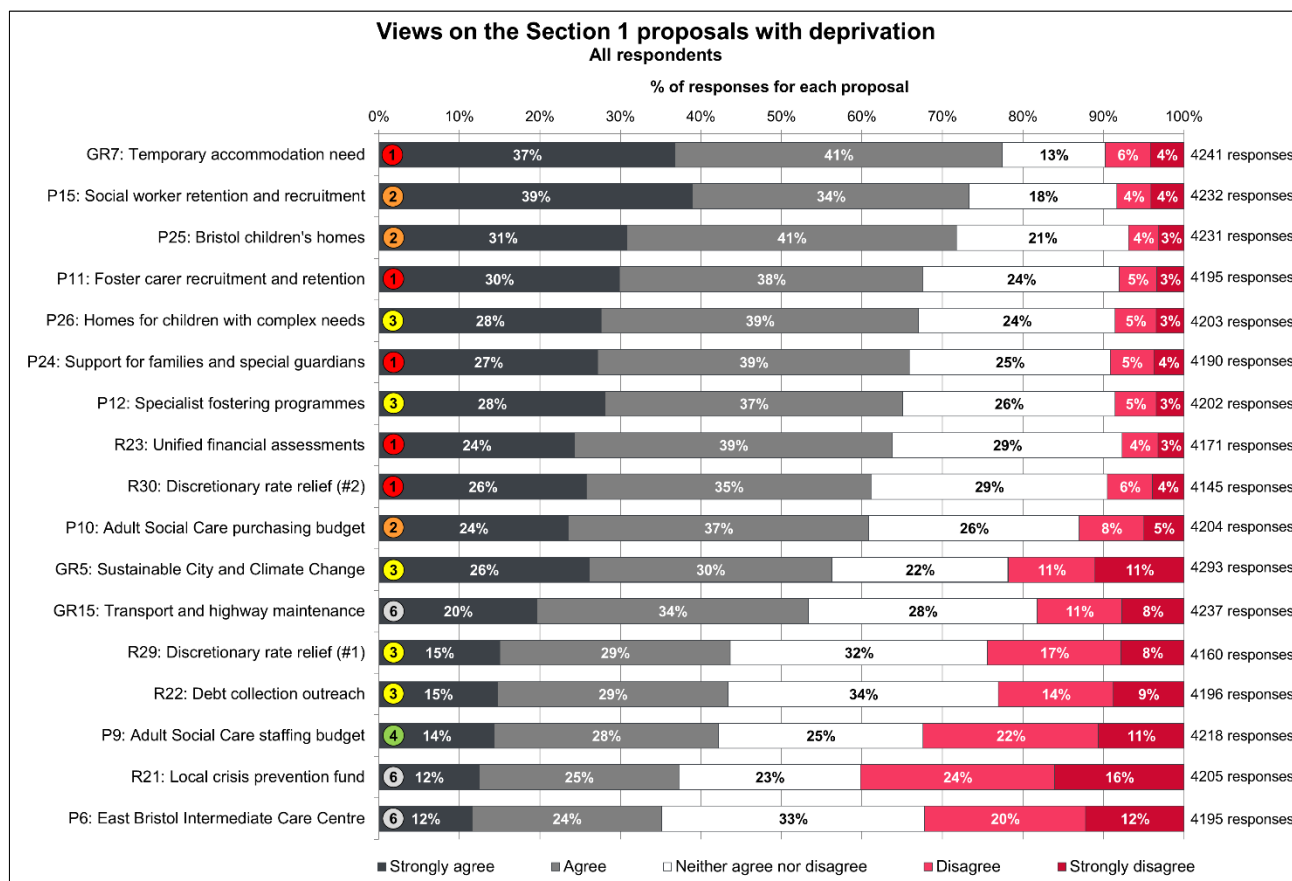
Figures A1 to A30 in Appendix A show the views of respondents in each deprivation decile, as well as the views of people who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode, and the aggregate views of all respondents.

#### **Section 1 proposals**

13 of the 17 Section 1 proposals show some trend of increasing support (the percentage of people who agree or strongly agree with the proposal) as deprivation decreases. One proposal shows the reverse trend of decreasing support as deprivation decreases. The trends are described below in six categories. Figure 22 summarises which proposals exhibit which trend.

- Five Section 1 proposals show a **clear trend of increasing support** with reducing deprivation. These proposals are shown with a red circle and a '1' in Figure 22:
  - GR7: Temporary accommodation need (Figure A1 in Appendix A)
  - P11: Foster carer recruitment and retention (Figure A4)
  - P24: Support for families and special guardians (Figure A6)
  - R23: Unified financial assessments (Figure A8)
  - R30: Discretionary rate relief (#2) (Figure A9)
- Three Section 1 proposals show a **moderately clear trend of increasing support** with reducing deprivation. These proposals are shown with an orange red circle and a '2' in Figure 22:
  - P15: Social worker retention and recruitment (Figure A2)
  - P25: Bristol children's homes (Figure A3)
  - P10: Adult Social Care purchasing budget (Figure A10)
- Five Section 1 proposals show a **weak trend of increasing support** with reducing deprivation. These proposals are shown with a yellow circle and a '3' in Figure 22:
  - P26: Homes for children with complex needs (Figure A5)
  - P12: Specialist fostering programmes (Figure A7)
  - GR5: Sustainable City and Climate Change (Figure A11)
  - R29: Discretionary rate relief (#1) (Figure A13)
  - R22: Debt collection outreach (Figure A14)
- One proposal shows a **moderately clear trend of reducing support** with reducing deprivation. This proposal is shown with a green circle and a '4' in Figure 22:
  - P9: Adult Social Care staffing budget (Figure A15)
- There are no Section 1 proposals that show no **clear trend of reducing support** with reducing deprivation.
- Three proposals show **no clear trend** in level of support with deprivation. These proposals are shown with a grey circle and a '6' in Figure 22:
  - GR15: Transport and highway maintenance (Figure A12)
  - R21: Local crisis prevention fund (Figure A16)
  - P6: East Bristol Intermediate Care Centre (Figure A17)

**Figure 22: trends in support for Section 1 proposal with deprivation**



**Key to Figure 22**

- Clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation
- Moderately clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation
- Weak trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation
- Moderately clear trend of reducing support with reducing deprivation
- Clear trend of reducing support with reducing deprivation
- No clear trend in support with deprivation

The proposals in Figure 22 are shown with those with highest support at the top

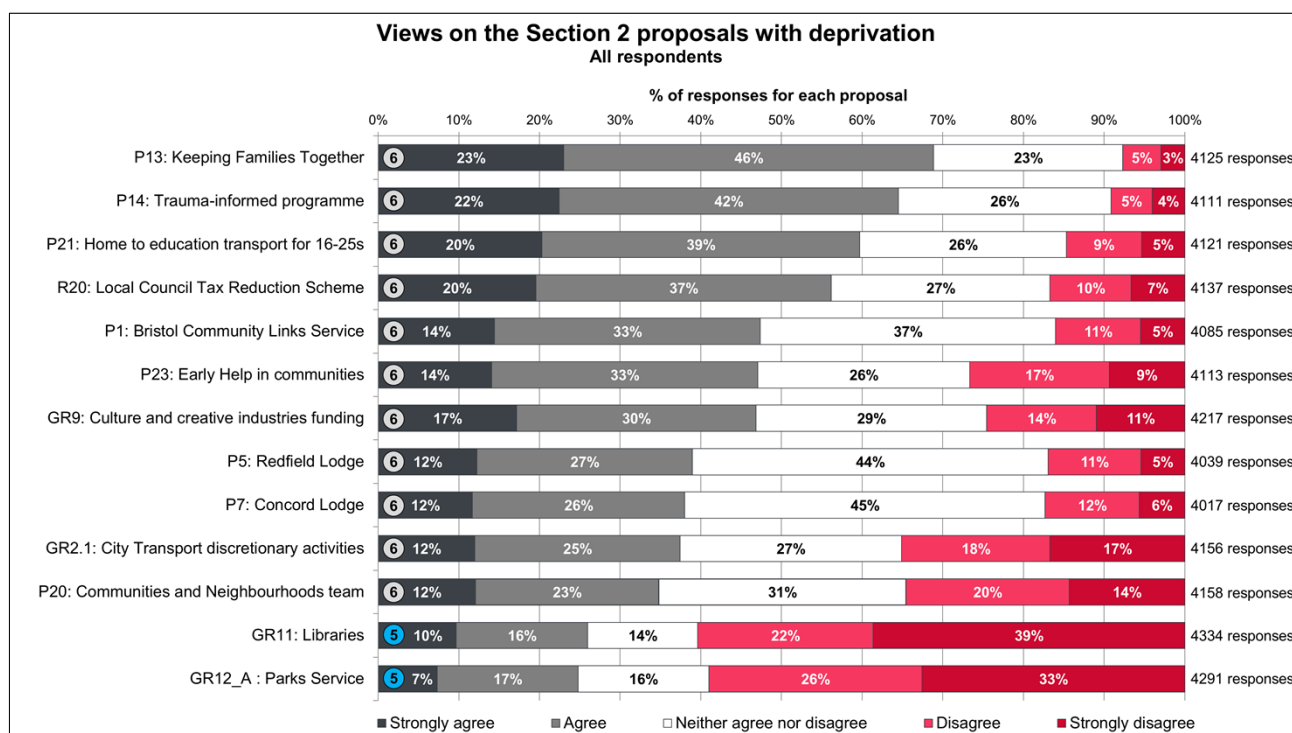
**Section 2 proposals**

Two of the 13 Section 2 proposals show a trend of decreasing support as deprivation decreases. No trends are observed for the other 11 proposals. Figure 23 and the description below summarises which proposals exhibit which trend.

- Two Section 2 proposals show a **clear trend of reducing support** with reducing deprivation. These proposals are shown with a blue circle and a '5' in Figure 23:
  - GR11: Libraries (Figure A29)
  - GR12\_A : Parks Service (Figure A30)

- 11 proposals show **no clear trend** in level of support with deprivation. These proposals are shown with a grey circle and a ‘6’ in Figure 25:
  - P13: Keeping Families Together (Figure A18)
  - P14: Trauma-informed programme (Figure A119)
  - P21: Home to education transport for 16-25s (Figure A20)
  - R20: Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Figure A21)
  - P1: Bristol Community Links Service (Figure A22)
  - P23: Early Help in communities (Figure A23)
  - GR9: Culture and creative industries funding (Figure A24)
  - P5: Redfield Lodge (Figure A25)
  - P7: Concord Lodge (Figure A26)
  - GR2.1: City Transport discretionary activities (Figure A27)
  - P20: Communities and Neighbourhoods team (Figure A28)

**Figure 23: trends in support for Section 2 proposal with deprivation**



**Key to Figure 23**

- Clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation
- Moderately clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation
- Weak trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation
- Moderately clear trend of reducing support with reducing deprivation
- Clear trend of reducing support with reducing deprivation
- No clear trend in support with deprivation

The proposals in Figure 23 are shown with those with highest support at the top

## 5.4 Free text comments on the savings/income generating proposals

### 5.4.1 Overview

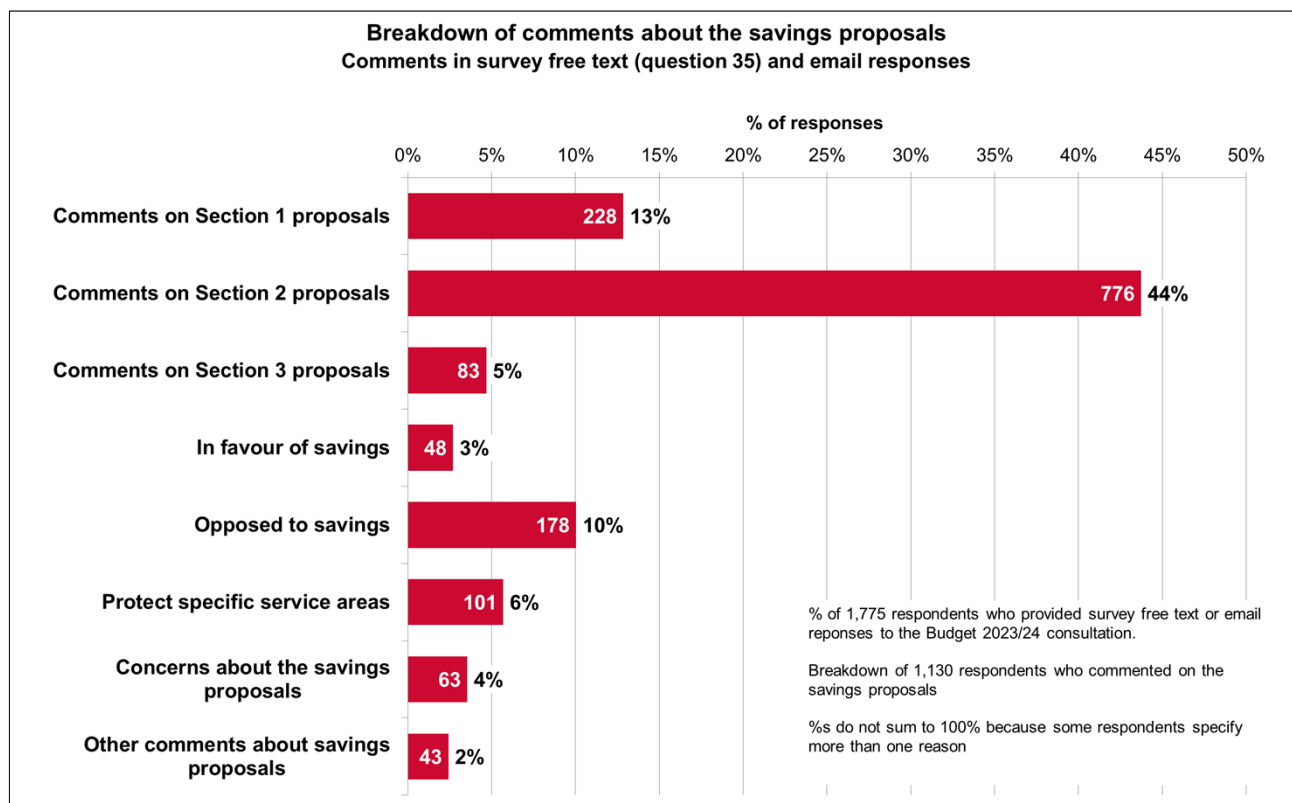
Of the 1,775 free text survey and email responses, 1,130 (64%) provided comments relating to the savings and income generation proposals in the consultation (Figure 24).

- 228 (13%) commented on the Section 1 proposals
- 776 (44%) commented on the Section 2 proposals
- 83 (5%) commented on the Section 3 proposals
- 48 (3%) made comments in favour of making savings
- 178 (10%) stated their opposition to making savings
- 101 (6%) identified service areas they want protected from savings
- 63 (4%) expressed concerns about the savings approach
- 43 (2%) made other comments about the savings proposals

A further breakdown of the comments on the savings proposals is included in sections 5.4.2 to 5.4.8.

Feedback about the information provided in the consultation, including the description of the proposals, is described in Section 5.8.

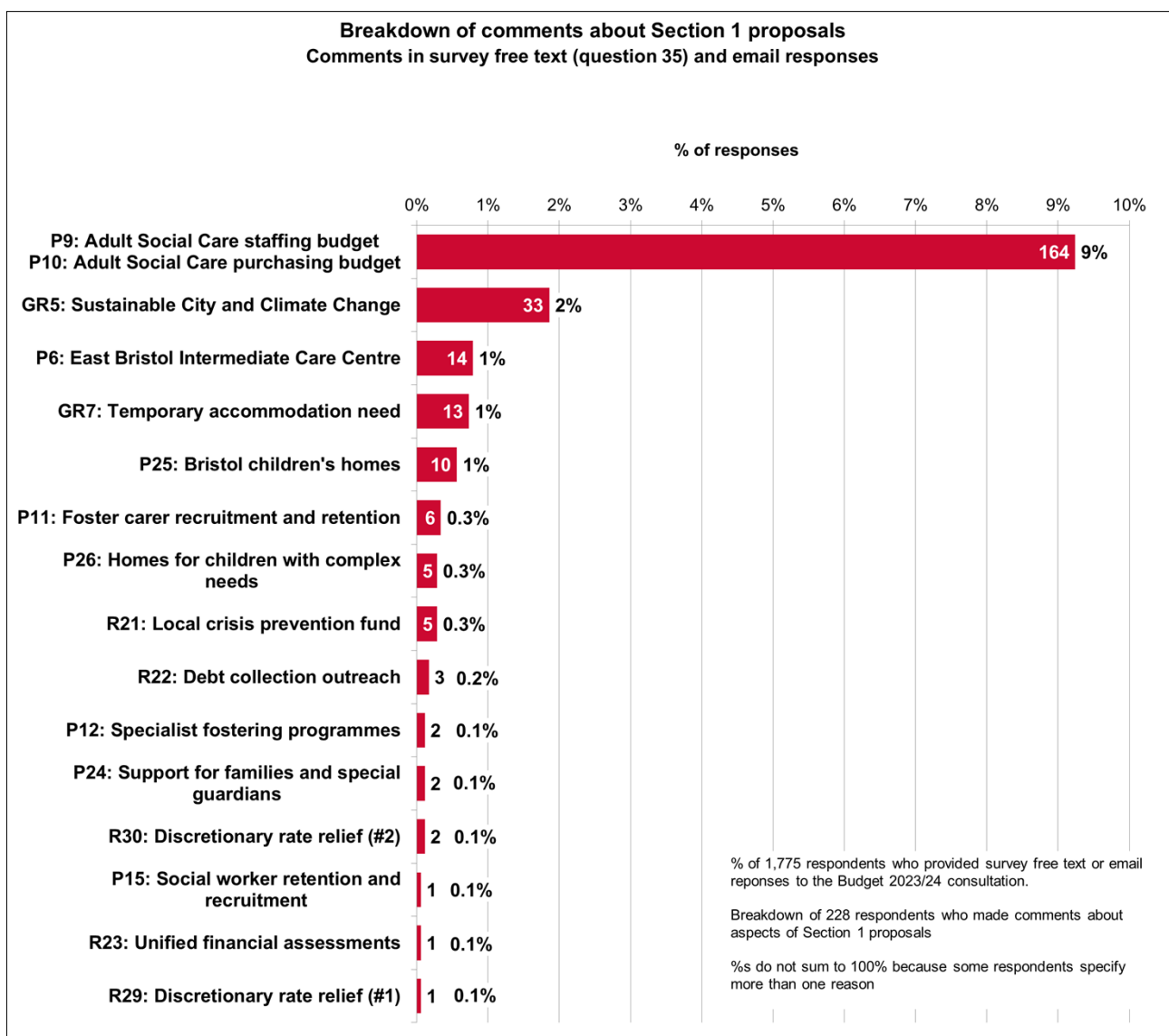
**Figure 24: Free text comments and suggestions on the savings proposals**



### 5.4.2 Comments on Section 1 proposals

Figure 25 shows a breakdown of the comments by 228 respondents (13%) who commented on 15 of the Section 1 proposals that were mentioned in the survey free text and emails.

**Figure 25: Breakdown of comments on Section 1 proposals**



#### **P9: Adult Social Care staffing budget and P10: Adult Social Care purchasing budget**

164 (9%) respondents commented on the adult social care proposals P9 and P10. Of these:

- 112 (6%) were opposed to cutting budgets for social care and vulnerable people
- 17 (1%) supported cutting the budget for social care
- 8 (0.5%) stated the council needs more in-house, council run care homes to be able to set affordable care fees
- 6 (0.3%) said more homes are needed for supported living
- 4 (0.2%) recommended more in-house staff to run social care services
- 3 (0.2%) identified the need to manage social care contracts so prices and service levels cannot be dictated

- 3 (0.2%) stated that well-resourced social care is essential to free up beds in the NHS
- 3 (0.2%) identified waste in existing social care services
- 2 (0.1%) explicitly supported the proposals for social care
- 1 (0.1%) was concerned that proposal P10 will drive down wages and make it harder to recruit quality workers
- 11 (1%) made other comments about social care.

### **GR5: Sustainable City and Climate Change**

Of the 33 (2%) respondents who commented on proposal GR5: Sustainable City and Climate Change:

- 18 (1%) were opposed to funding cuts for climate change and environment
- 8 (0.5%) stated that tackling climate change is vital
- 5 (0.3%) supported funding cuts for climate change and environment and 3 (0.2%) wanted to 'stop wasting money on tackling climate change', which they see as inevitable.

### **P6: East Bristol Intermediate Care Centre**

All of the 14 (1%) respondents who commented on proposal P6: East Bristol Intermediate Care Centre were opposed to the proposal.

1 (0.1%) said that If EBICC is closed, the land or profit from sale should be returned to the council's Parks department.

### **GR7: Temporary accommodation need**

13 (1%) respondents commented on proposal GR7: Temporary accommodation need, of whom:

- 9 (0.5%) supported the proposal
- 1 (0.1%) favoured reducing the Housing Support budget significantly
- 1 (0.1%) was opposed to cuts to the temporary housing budget proposal
- 7 (0.4%) made other comments about the proposal including who should have priority for housing (ex-forces personnel) and who should not, the need to reduce the use of expensive private rented property, and surprise that this proposal isn't already happening.

### **P25: Bristol children's homes**

10 (1%) respondents commented on proposal P25: Bristol children's homes:

- 5 (0.3%) said that standards in council-run children's homes are better than private care outsourced homes, have better outcomes and are cheaper
- 4 (0.2%) supported the proposal to increase children's home capacity
- 2 (0.1%) wanted to protect investment in services for cared for young people
- 1 (0.1%) questioned whether children's homes are the best option for children.



### **P11: Foster carer recruitment and retention**

6 (0.3%) respondents commented on proposal P11: Foster carer recruitment and retention, of whom:

- 2 (0.1%) supported the proposal
- 2 (0.1%) asked why recruitment has not happened sooner?
- 1 (0.1%) supported pay parity between Local Authority foster carers and private ones

### **P26: Homes for children with complex needs**

5 (0.3%) respondents commented on proposal P26: Homes for children with complex needs, of whom:

- 3 (0.2%) stated that council-run services are cheaper than outsourcing, and of higher quality
- 2 (0.1%) were sceptical about ability of a strategic partner to provide a good and lower cost service
- 1 (0.1%) suggested working with charities to reduce cost of special children's homes.

### **R21: Local crisis prevention fund**

5 (0.3%) respondents commented on proposal R21: Local crisis prevention fund. Of these, 4 (0.2%) were opposed and 1 (0.1%) was in favour of the proposal.

### **R22: Debt collection outreach**

3 (0.2%) respondents commented on proposal R22: Debt collection outreach, of whom 2 (0.1%) were opposed and 1 (0.1%) was in favour of the proposal

### **P12: Specialist fostering programmes**

2 (0.1%) respondents commented on proposal P12: Specialist fostering programmes, of whom 1 (0.1%) supported the proposal and 1 (0.1%) expressed concerns about the effect of inadequate transport.

### **P24: Support for families and special guardians**

2 (0.1%) respondents commented on proposal P24: Support for families and special guardians. Of these, 1 (0.1%) supported helping parents to look after their children in their own home and 1 (0.1%) thought that council payments to Special Guardians might duplicate central government payments.

### **R30: Discretionary rate relief (#2)**

2 (0.1%) respondents commented on proposal R30: Discretionary rate relief (#2). Of these, 1 (0.1%) supported the proposal. 1 (0.1%) inferred that the council is currently administering funds to organisations that aren't eligible, and asked whether the criteria for eligibility are not fit for purpose and need to be amended.

### P15: Social worker retention and recruitment

The one respondent who commented on proposal P15: Social worker retention and recruitment supported the proposal.

### R23: Unified financial assessments

The one respondent who commented on proposal R23: Unified financial assessments was supportive.

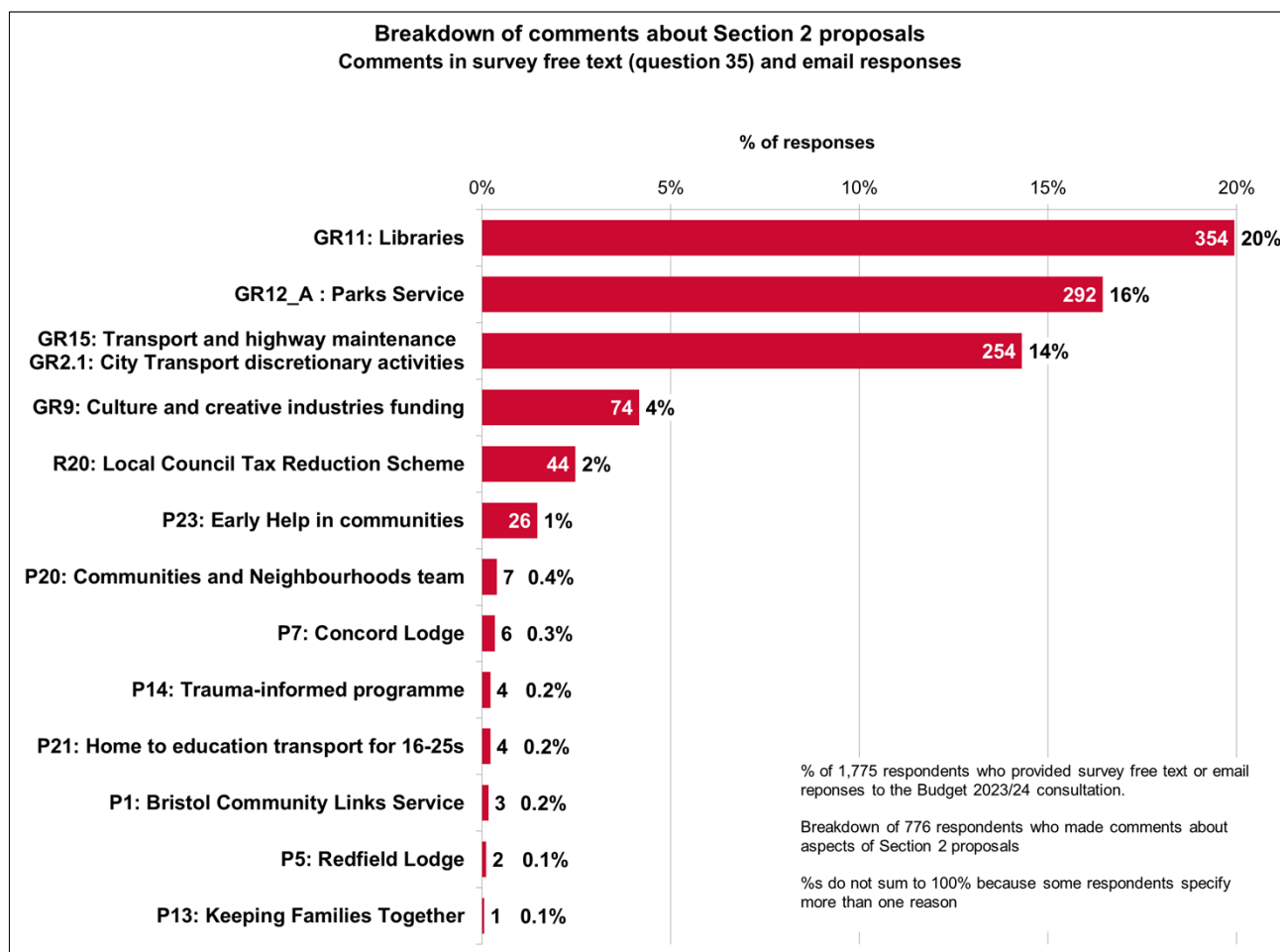
### R29: Discretionary rate relief (#1)

1 (0.1%) respondent commented on proposal R29: Discretionary rate relief (#1) and supported the proposal.

## 5.4.3 Comments on Section 2 proposals

Figure 26 shows a breakdown of the comments by 776 respondents (44%) who commented on 13 of the Section 2 proposals that were mentioned in the survey free text and emails.

**Figure 26: Breakdown of comments on Section 2 proposals**



Feedback for the 13 proposals with comments follows.

## **GR11: Libraries**

Of the 354 (20%) respondents who commented on proposals for libraries:

- 216 (12%) were opposed to funding cuts for libraries
- 164 (9%) highlighted their opposition to moving or closing Central Library
- 19 (1%) supported the proposal GR11 for libraries and 5 (0.3%) stated their support for moving Central Library
- 15 (1%) proposed ways to update the library service model to modern requirements
- 13 (1%) suggested ways to generate income from Central Library
- 12 (1%) suggested ways to generate income from the wider Library Service
- 7 (0.4%) thought there is scope to use libraries as shared hubs with other services
- 6 (0.3%) supported libraries being run by volunteers, community groups or charities
- 1 (0.1%) pointed to experience elsewhere that volunteer run libraries are not sustainable.
- 2 (0.1%) noted that computers in libraries have recently been upgraded.

## **GR12\_A : Parks Service**

Of the 292 (16%) respondents who commented on proposals for parks:

- 246 (14%) were opposed to funding cuts for parks, citing their importance for exercise and wellbeing of citizens, their contribution to climate and biodiversity goals, and the negative effects of under-management or permanent divestment
- 23 (1%) said that parks should be run by the council. Respondents offered positive feedback about the work of the Parks team, and how they collaborate with volunteers, but stated there is no scope to cut staff further without detriment to Bristol's parks
- 14 (1%) respondents, the majority of whom are existing volunteers, stated that volunteers cannot run parks effectively on their own because they lack essential skills
- 13 (1%) were opposed to volunteers or community groups running parks, 5 (0.3%) would support volunteers managing parks, and 9 (1%) favoured volunteers taking a greater role but not leading the management of parks. 4 (0.2%) said that there is no funding stream to enable volunteers to take over the running of parks
- 16 (1%) suggested other ways to increase income from parks, including franchising cafes, licensing events, ring-fencing revenue from car parking in parks, creating garden centres, and seeking external funding. 6 (0.3%) proposed similar initiatives to raise revenue from the Downs
- 9 (1%) said that parks make a critical contribution to tackling climate and ecological emergencies and that loss of expert parks management would result in loss of biodiversity
- 9 (1%) said that maintenance needs to be kept up to an acceptable standard or antisocial behaviour would increase. 6 (0.3%) said that costs could be reduced by mowing and hedge cutting less and leaving some meadows to grow

- 8 (0.5%) stated their support for the proposal GR12\_A for parks. 2 (0.1%) were in favour of handing over some green spaces to third parties, and 1 (0.1%) proposed transferring management of allotments to the community farm and garden movement
- 4 (0.3%) suggested expanding allotments or community gardening into parks
- 4 (0.2%) stated their opposition to selling off parks
- 3 (0.2%) would like more children's playgrounds.

### **GR15: Transport and highway maintenance / GR2.1: City Transport discretionary activities**

Of the 254 (14%) respondents who commented on proposals for transport, the main categories of comments opposed to budget reductions were:

- 111 (6%) opposed to cuts and stated the need to invest in and promote public transport
- 45 (3%) were opposed to funding cuts for transport in general
- 37 (2%) were opposed to cuts and stated the need to invest in and promote cycling, walking and other active travel
- 11 (1%) were opposed to cuts to road maintenance
- 5 (0.3%) supported the development of an underground network
- 3 (0.2%) wanted to see investment in a tram network
- 3 (0.2%) said that Bristol should retain its transport functions and not relinquish them to WECA
- 3 (0.2%) were concerned about a loss of transport income from stopping activities
- 2 (0.1%) wanted to increase spending on roads / highways
- 1 (0.1%) was concerned about the effect of transport budget cuts on disabled people.

Comments in favour of budget reductions were:

- 32 (2%) advocated reducing spending on and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of roadworks / repairs
- 12 (1%) wanted to stop spending money on cycling, walking and active travel
- 9 (0.5%) favoured stopping spending money on buses and bus lanes
- 5 (0.3%) wanted to reduce spending on road schemes 4 (0.2%) favoured cuts to transport funding in general
- 5 (0.3%) wanted to reduce spending on road schemes.

### Comments about alternative sources of funding for transport

- 7 (0.4%) anticipated significant income from the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) and questioned why that was not mentioned to help bridge the budget gap
- 3 (0.2%) were opposed to raising income from CAZ
- 2 (0.1%) suggested that measures to promote active travel could be financed by the private sector or Active Travel England
- 1 (0.1%) was concerned that 'one-off' sources of external income means selling off assets.

### **GR9: Culture and creative industries funding**

74 (4%) respondents commented on proposals for culture and creative industries funding:

- 56 (3%) were opposed to cuts in funding for culture, citing the value to Bristol's economy in terms of tourism, reputation and quality of life
- 16 (1%) were in favour of proposal GR9, on the basis that cultural investment is a lower priority than other services
- 1 (0.1%) suggested seeking private investment or sponsorship for culture.

### **R20: Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

44 (2%) respondents commented on proposal R20: Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme:

- 24 (1%) wanted to keep the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTR) in place for people in financial need. Of these, 5 (0.3%) wanted to keep the LCTR scheme in place with 100% reduction and to address the budget by charging wealthy people more tax
- 18 (1%) favoured reducing the LCTR or removing it altogether stating that every household should pay towards Council Tax
- 2 (1%) would like there to be more support for eligible people who do not claim LCTR to do so.

### **P23: Early Help in communities, including children's centres and family hubs**

26 (1%) respondents commented on proposal P23: Early Help in communities:

- 18 (1%) stated their opposition to funding cuts for children's centres
- 4 (0.2%) were opposed to moving support for vulnerable users of children's centres online, on the basis of digital exclusion and the value of face-to-face services for users
- 4 (0.2%) said that Early Help in communities needs to be local to its users. It was suggested that Early Help centres could be multi-purpose community hubs shared with other services
- 1 (0.1%) supported Early Help in Communities proposal
- 1 (0.1%) recommended closing children's centres altogether.

### **P20: Communities and Neighbourhoods team**

7 (0.4%) respondents commented on proposal P20: Communities and Neighbourhoods team, of whom:

- 5 (0.3%) were opposed to cuts to Community Development Team/roles
- 2 (0.2%) supported the proposed reduction in Community Development Team/roles.

### **P7: Concord Lodge**

6 (0.3%) respondents commented on proposal P7: Concord Lodge, of whom:

- 5 (0.3%) were opposed to reduced funding for Concord Lodge
- 1 (0.1%) supported the proposal for Concord Lodge
- 1 (0.1%) was sceptical that proposed efficiencies can be made for Concord Lodge without negative impacts on the service.

### **P14: Trauma-informed programme**

4 (0.2%) respondents commented on proposal P14: Trauma-informed programme of whom 3 (0.2%) supported the proposal and 1 (0.2%) was opposed.

### **P21: Home to education transport for 16-25s**

4 (0.2%) people commented on proposal P21: Home to education transport for 16-25s. Of these, 2 (0.1%) supported the proposal, 1 (0.1%) was opposed and 1 (0.1%) recommended means testing transport requirements.

### **P1: Bristol Community Links Service**

3 (0.2%) respondents commented on proposal P1: Bristol Community Links Service, of whom 2 (0.2%) were opposed and 1 (0.1%) was in favour.

### **P5: Redfield Lodge**

2 (0.1%) respondents commented on proposal P5: Redfield Lodge, of whom 2 (0.2%) were opposed and 1 (0.1%) was sceptical that proposed efficiencies can be made for Redfield Lodge without impacting on the service.

### **P13: Keeping Families Together**

The 1 (0.1%) respondent who commented on proposal P13: Keeping Families Together was opposed to the proposal.

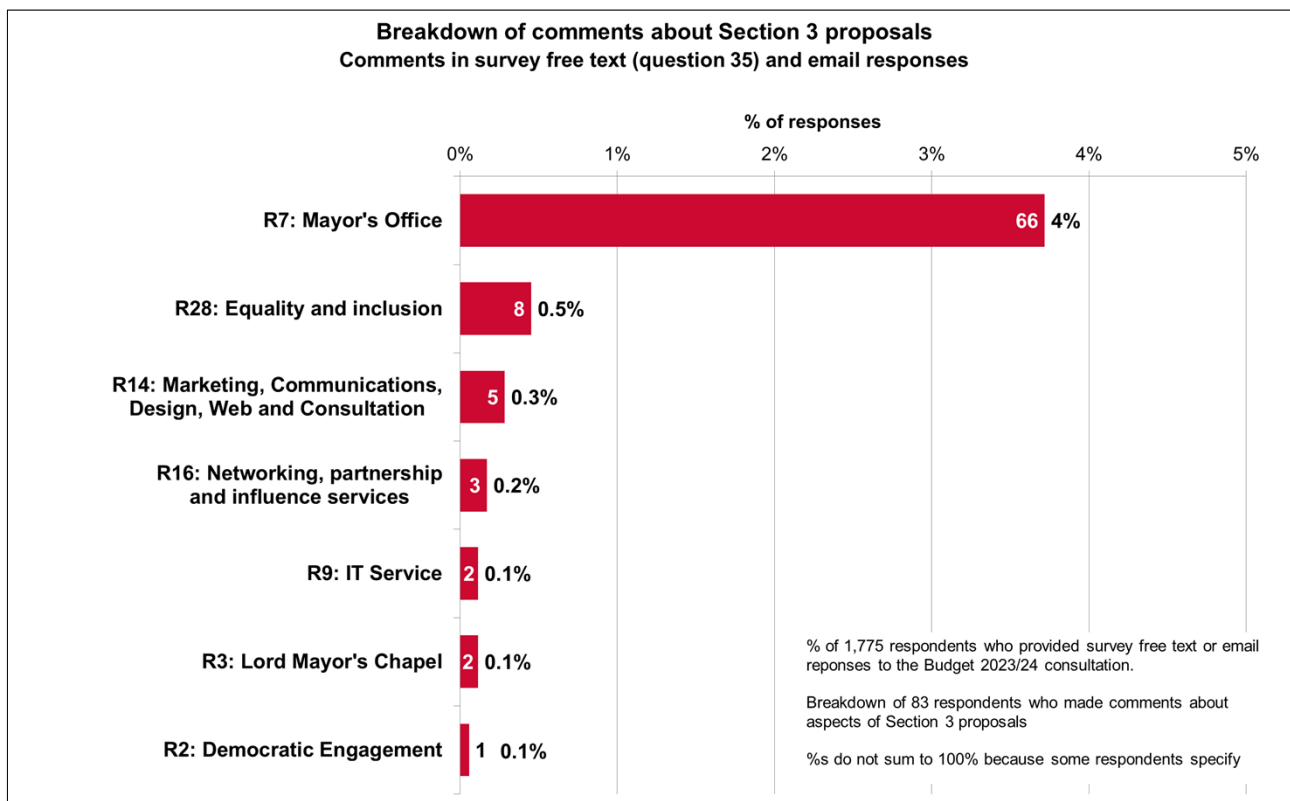
### 5.4.4 Comments on Section 3 proposals

Figure 27 shows a breakdown of the comments by 83 respondents (5%) who commented on seven of the Section 3 proposals that were mentioned in the survey free text and emails.

The Section 3 proposals were included in the consultation information to give a full picture of our savings options. There were no survey questions directly seeking feedback about the Section 3 proposals.

The comments received supported cuts to the budgets for the services shown.

**Figure 27: Breakdown of comments on Section 3 proposals**



### 5.4.5 Comments in favour of the savings approach

48 (3%) respondents made comments in favour of savings approach in the consultation.

- 20 (1%) supported the savings proposals without qualification
- 11 (1%) stated that the principle of a 'smaller council doing less' is the right approach
- 7 (0.4%) supported saving proposals, except for specified services
- 5 (0.3%) said that spending reductions are the only viable option in view of the budget challenge
- 3 (0.2%) supported cutting spending on older, wealthy people
- 2 (0.1%) recommended making small cuts across all services.

#### 5.4.6 Comments opposed to the savings approach

178 (10%) respondents made comments opposed to the budget savings approach.

- 51 (3%) said that central government is to blame for the budget problems and the council should campaign for more government funds, instead of cutting services
- 50 (3%) opposed cuts which they fear will impact hardest on the most deprived and vulnerable in society.
- 24 (1%) stated their opposition to funding cuts to public services in principle
- 19 (1%) said that privatisation and cutting services is a false economy, with short-term gain, but long-term loss
- 17 (1%) were opposed to cuts because of the negative social cost of cutting services
- 9 (1%) opposed funding cuts to frontline services
- 9 (1%) were opposed to staffing cuts because services will get worse
- 7 (0.4%) were concerned that the proposals are a means of handing over services to private, profit-making companies and another 2 (0.1%) said that council-run services are cheaper than outsourcing, and are higher quality
- 5 (0.3%) said that short-term investment would bring longer-term higher quality output and reduced costs
- 5 (0.3%) opposed cuts which impact on services in communities
- 4 (0.2%) said that cuts in some service areas will negatively impact on other services
- 3 (0.2%) observed that services have already been impacted by previous cuts
- 2 (0.1%) recommended investing in the public sector to encourage more growth
- 2 (0.1%) would prefer to use reserves and 2 (0.1%) other respondents wanted to bridge the deficit in the short term in anticipation of a general election and a potential change in funding approach.

#### 5.4.7 Services respondents want to protect

101 (6%) mentioned services or specific groups they want to be protected from the cuts:

- 37 (2%) wanted to avoid cuts to services for children and young people
- 28 (2%) wanted to avoid the impact of cuts on disabled people, many of them saying that the impacts would disproportionately affect disabled people
- 14 (1%) mentioned the need to avoid funding cuts to health and mental health services
- 12 (1%) wanted investment in education
- 9 (1%) said that more support is needed for older people
- 8 (0.5%) wanted to focus resources on local people
- 3 (0.2%) wanted to protect investment in infrastructure projects
- 3 (0.2%) did not want to lose funding for addiction services
- 2 (0.1%) wanted to protect services for homeless people
- 2 (0.1%) wanted to keep funding to support families



- 1 (0.1%) wanted to invest in sports
- 1 (0.1%) opposed funding cuts for Clean Streets and 1 (0.1%) wants to safeguard bin collection.

#### **5.4.8 Concerns about the savings**

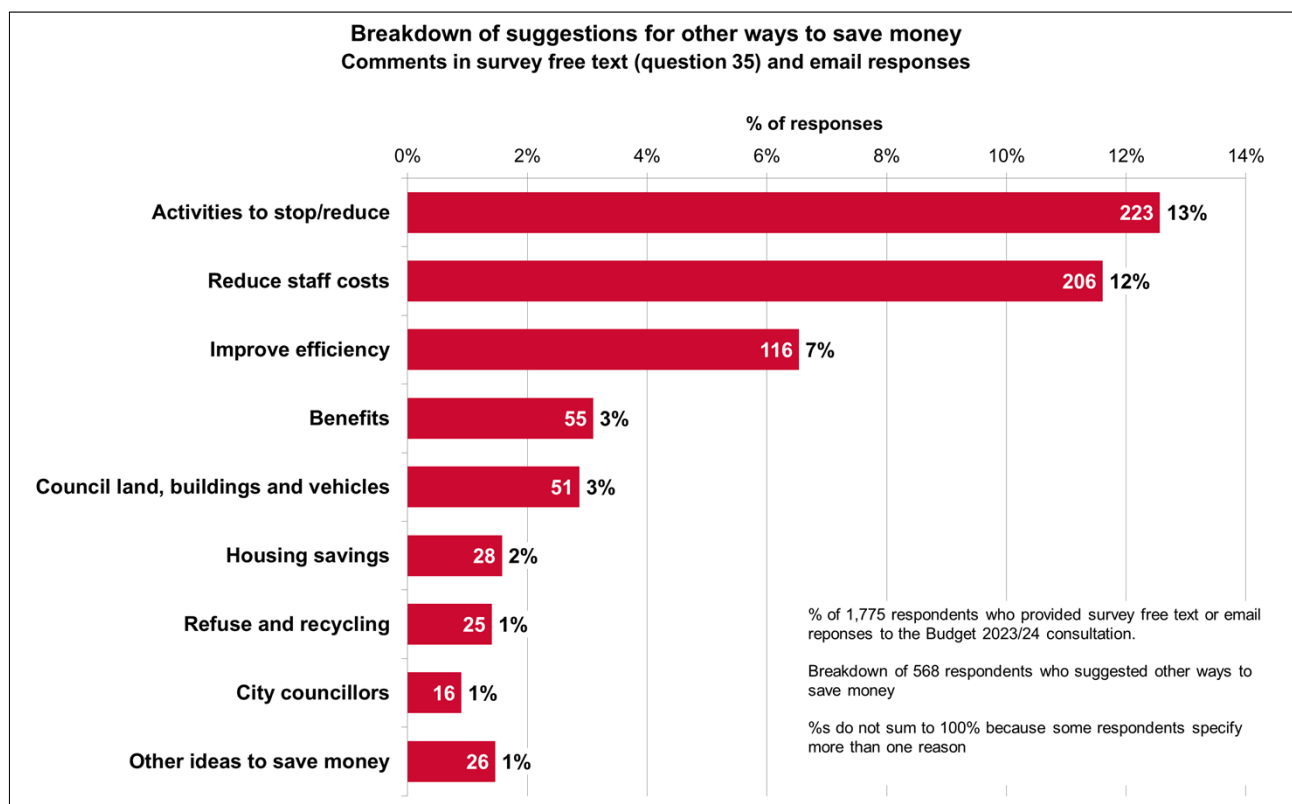
63 (4%) stated their concerns about the savings.

- 16 (1%) thought that the savings proposals are unrealistic and not achievable or would not save money
- 16 (1%) wondered why, if the savings are beneficial and without downsides, the council isn't already doing this?
- 16 (1%) were sceptical that the consultation will influence decisions on cuts
- 7 (0.4%) thought the proposals are timid, trivial and small scale, and do not cover significant budget areas
- 4 (0.2%) warned against handing over responsibilities to local communities without adequate support
- 3 (0.2%) were concerned that the total savings would not fully bridge the budget gap
- 2 (0.1%) feared that the council is losing its best and experienced staff due to cuts
- 2 (0.1%) supported bringing in external funding but was concerned what would happen to services if funding is not found
- 1 (0.1%) stressed the need for the council to avoid a long-term deficit
- 1 (0.1%) was concerned that budgets would be reduced before the consultation on how the savings will be achieved
- 1 (0.1%) thought that the proposals breach the council's Public Sector Equality Duty
- 1 (0.1%) thought there is a risk that transferring leisure or community facilities to communities will only be taken up by affluent areas.

## 5.5 Other suggestions for ways to save money

Of the 1,775 free text survey and email responses, 568 (32%) provided suggestions for other ways the council might save money (Figure 28).

**Figure 28: Suggestions for other ways to save money**



### Activities to stop or reduce

223 (13%) responses identified activities which respondents thought should be stopped or reduced to save money.

- 114 (6%) identified stopping spending on high-profile, high-cost infrastructure projects which they described as ‘vanity projects’. These included the underground (63; 4%), the Arena, Metrobus, Bristol Energy, Bristol Beacon
- 99 (6%) advocated stopping or delaying spending on discretionary or non-essential projects.
- 9 (1%) wanted to reduce spending on projects that do not benefit whole community
- 6 (0.3%) suggested turning off streetlights
- 3 (0.2%) would stop or reduce spending on supporting charities and community organisations
- 1 (0.1%) suggested reducing face-to-face contacts with citizens.

## Reduce staff costs

206 (12%) suggested ways to reduce staffing costs.

- 68 (4%) wanted to reduce outsourcing to consultants, agency workers and third-party contractors and 11 (1%) recommended investing in cost-efficient, in-house staff
- 62 (3%) recommended reducing staff numbers. Of these:
  - 27 (2%) wanted to reduce the cost of the council's senior leadership
  - 19 (1%) would remove staff who are ineffective or underperforming
  - 11 (1%) would reduce all staff numbers
  - 9 (1%) mentioned specific roles or teams they would reduce
  - 4 (0.2%) would target unspecified non-essential roles
  - 2 (0.1%) would reduce middle management roles
  - 2 (0.1%) recommended more automation of tasks to reduce staff costs
  - 1 (0.1%) would offer a voluntary redundancy scheme to reduce staff numbers
- 43 (2%) proposed reducing staff salaries, benefits and bonuses, 1 (0.1%) suggested a review of salaries to achieve parity, and 1 (0.1%) recommended publishing a schedule of salaries, expenses, post titles and job descriptions
- 19 (1%) would support encouraging volunteer groups to undertake tasks currently performed by the council and 2 (0.1%) recommended working more with charities
- 18 (1%) suggested costs could be reduced by sharing central services with other public sector organisations
- 10 (1%) thought the council needs better management by senior staff and to let go inexperienced senior managers and 3 (0.2%) recommended performance managing staff to improve results
- 7 (0.4%) recommended more scrutiny of the costs and profit margins of third-party contractors
- 2 (0.1%) thought that council subsidiaries (Goram Homes and Bristol Waste) should contribute to the savings
- 1 (0.1%) suggested redeploying staff into roles that are more beneficial for the city and 1 (0.1%) proposed increasing staff in service areas where levels of complaints are high
- 1 (0.1%) recommended benchmarking costs and service provision against other councils.

The 66 (4%) who wanted to reduce the cost of the Mayor's Office is not included in this section because it relates to savings proposal G7: Mayor's Office which is included under Section 3 proposals in section 5.4.4.

## **Improve efficiency**

116 (7%) thought there is scope to save money by running the council more efficiently:

- 80 (5%) wanted the council to focus on operating efficiently and to stop wasting money, rather than cutting services or increasing Council Tax
- 9 (1%) thought there is scope to improve management of projects and services
- 6 (0.3%) thought there is scope to reduce duplication of working systems
- 6 (0.3%) recommended use of more technology to automate processes
- 6 (0.3%) thought there are further savings possible by greater use of digital communication and 4 (0.2%) recommended improving other digital services.
- 6 (0.3%) questioned how much money is spent on delivering services compared to the administrative costs
- 2 (0.1%) recommended using procurement to incentivise service quality from contractors
- 2 (0.1%) advocated stopping all avoidable communications
- Other suggestions, each with one comment, included improving IT systems, updating other systems and equipment, stopping duplication of working systems, and employing an in-house recruitment team.

## **Benefits**

55 (3%) had ideas for how the council could spend less on benefits:

- 36 (2%) wanted the council to stop people abusing the benefits system and council support when they could work or volunteer
- 8 (0.5%) thought the council should stop supporting asylum seekers & refugees
- 6 (0.3%) wanted the council to support people to find jobs (including through childcare provision) to reduce the costs of paying benefits
- 3 (0.2%) would withhold extra benefits to people who have children and can't afford them
- 3 (0.2%) suggested ways to reduce the cost of older persons' bus passes, including increasing the age of eligibility, means testing and charging and administration fee
- 2 (0.1%) thought the council shouldn't give benefits to people who come to Bristol from other council areas.

## **Council land, buildings and vehicles**

51 (3%) suggested the following ways to save money through changes to use of council land, buildings and vehicles:

- 27 (2%) recommended consolidating the council estate into as few buildings as possible
- 15 (1%) suggested improving energy efficiency and energy generation at council buildings
- 7 (0.4%) proposed the council could offer work from home contracts to reduce demand for office space
- 2 (0.1%) suggested stopping providing food or drink for staff and visitors
- 2 (0.1%) suggested we improve returns on commercial property and dispose of non-profitable small units
- 3 (0.2%) recommended selling council land and 1 (0.1%) would prefer that the council leases land for housing to maintain an income stream
- Other proposals, each suggested by one respondent, were replacing the council's vehicle fleet with electric vehicles and stopping use of private vehicles for work.

## **Housing**

28 (2%) suggested ways to save money associated with housing

- 4 (0.2%) advocated a more stringent review of applicants
- 3 (0.2%) said there is a need to improve efficiency of Housing Options (especially with spot-purchased Temporary Accommodation)
- 3 (0.2%) were opposed to money spent on Waking Watch fire marshals.
- 3 (0.2%) said the council should stop funding redevelopment
- 2 (0.2%) recommended a review of council brownfield land and independent scrutiny of development opportunities and subsidy, and 1 (0.1%) wanted the council to give more protection to green spaces when developing land
- 2 (0.2%) said the council should focus on bringing abandoned properties back into use
- 2 (0.2%) favoured relaxing planning restrictions and approving more planning applications
- 2 (0.1%) wanted the council to cap rents that private landlords charge the council for unemployed/homeless people
- 1 (0.1%) thought the council should implement stricter oversight of procurement and commissioning of housing-related programmes
- Other proposals, each suggested by one respondent were to encourage council tenants to undertake minor repairs themselves, to relocate tenant families whose children have left home, and to stop evicting people living in vans.

## **Refuse and recycling**

25 (1%) suggested ways to save money by changes to refuse and recycling activity:

- 7 (0.4%) proposed reducing the frequency of waste (black bin) collection
- 5 (0.3%) favoured stopping or reducing domestic doorstep recycling
- 3 (0.2%) would like the council to charge businesses to clear their frontage of waste and recycling or require the businesses to do it
- 3 (0.2%) proposed introducing communal bins for multiple households
- 2 (0.1%) suggested combining all types of recycling into one bin
- 2 (0.1%) recommended reducing opening times or limiting what people can throw away at household recycling centres and 1 (0.1%) suggested encouraging repair cafes to reduce demand for council recycling centres
- 2 (0.1%) thought graffiti and vandalism should be dealt with by the Police
- 1 (0.1%) suggested collecting refuse during the night to make process more efficient.

## **Councillors**

16 (1%) proposed ways councillors could reduce costs. Of these:

- 11 (1%) recommended reducing councillors' salaries and / or benefits
- 5 (0.3%) would reduce the number of councillors.

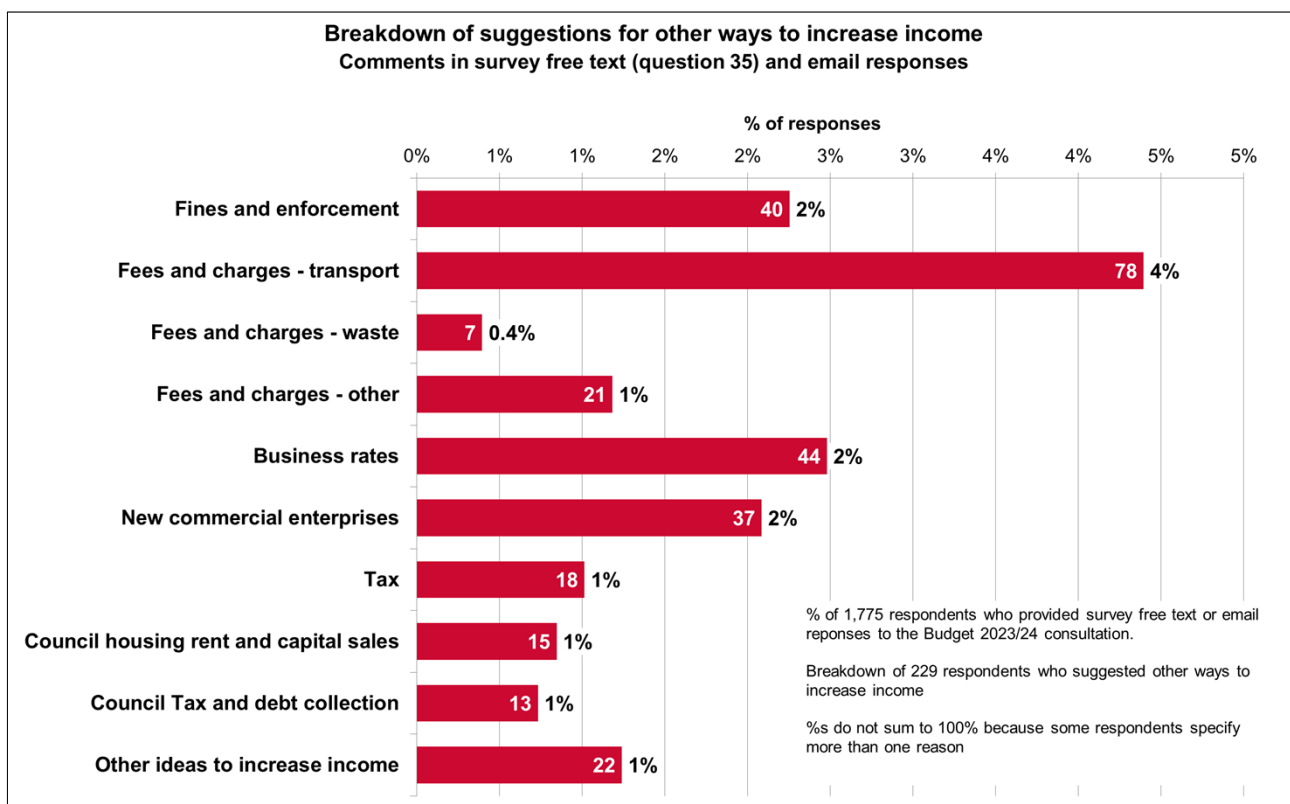
## **Other ideas for saving money**

26 (1%) respondents suggested other ideas for saving money, including means testing access to services, seeking investment and partnerships with private organisations, transferring the cost of support for food banks to food retailers, finding savings and creating jobs by investing in the circular economy, and combining adult and children's social care.

## 5.6 Suggestions for other ways to increase income

Of the 1,775 free text survey and email responses, 229 (13%) provided suggestions for other ways the council might raise income (Figure 29).

**Figure 29: Other suggestions for ways to increase income**



### Fines and enforcement

40 (2%) recommended using fines and enforcement to increase the council's income:

- 21 (1%) suggested increasing income through parking fines
- 6 (0.3%) proposed increasing income through speeding fines and 7 (0.4%) recommended using other transport fines incomes
- 5 (0.3%) wanted to increase fines for littering and fly tipping and 1 (0.1%) wanted to fine people who do not sort and dispose of domestic waste correctly
- 4 (0.2%) suggested using fines for other environmental offences
- 3 (0.2%) wanted fines for landlords who do not maintain properties to standard
- 1 (0.1%) suggested increasing enforcement of fines for dog fouling.

## **Fees and charges – transport**

78 (4%) suggested increasing transport related fees and charges:

- 28 (2%) thought there is scope to generate more income from Clean Air Zone charges
- 19 (1%) proposed increasing revenue from residents' parking schemes
- 17 (1%) would like the council or WECA to operate council-owned bus services to improve quality of service and generate revenues. 5 (0.3%) other respondents thought there is scope to take a share of revenue from other bus services and park and ride.
- 14 (1%) suggested increasing other parking charges
- 7 (0.4%) advocated introducing a congestion charging zone
- 5 (0.3%) recommended the council introduces a business parking levy
- 2 (0.1%) suggested installing and charging for roadside electric vehicle charging points
- 1 (0.1%) proposed charging more for dropped kerbs to access off-street parking
- 1 (0.1%) suggested toll roads.

## **Fees and charges – waste**

7 (0.4%) suggested increasing charges income from waste:

- 3 (0.2%) suggested charging for waste disposal at household recycling centres
- 2 (0.1%) thought the council should increase the cost of garden waste collection
- 2 (0.1%) wanted a change to waste charges to incentivise recycling.

## **Other fees and charges**

21 (1%) suggested other fees and charges to increase income:

- 4 (0.2%) proposed charging for museum entry, 1 (0.1) suggested hiring out museum collections for tour in other cities, and 1 (0.1%) proposed a 'I love Bristol' membership card for museums and cultural offerings, similar to Tate membership
- 4 (0.3%) suggested charging more widely for discretionary services
- 4 (0.2%) suggested increasing planning charges
- 3 (0.2%) wanted to charge developers a levy to support local services
- 3 (0.2%) would increase HMO licence fees and ensure all houses in multiple occupation have licences
- 2 (0.1%) proposed moving van dwellers off the highway and charging them to stay on council owned land

Other proposals, each suggested by one respondent, were increasing harbour fees, raising cremation fees, charging for use of public toilets, charging for some library services, and charging businesses for non-transport uses of the highway, such as seating areas.



## **Business rates**

44 (2%) suggested using changes to Business Rates to increase revenue:

- 22 (1%) recommended increasing business rates. 11 others (1%) wanted Business Rates reduced
- 6 (0.3%) wanted large corporations, chains and businesses which have higher net profits to pay higher business tax rates to support small businesses
- 2 (0.1%) recommended charging Business Rates to Airbnb owners
- 1 (0.1%) suggested charging Business Rates to providers of student accommodation
- 1 (0.1%) proposed an 'environmental impact' surcharge on Business Rates for businesses that are detrimental to environmental objectives
- 1 (0.1%) proposed a 'crime-management' surcharge on Business Rates for businesses that sell alcohol
- 1 (0.1%) proposed a 'social impact' surcharge on betting shops
- 1 (0.1%) wanted to remove carbon neutral initiatives to encourage businesses into the city centre, who would then pay business rates.

## **New commercial enterprises**

37 (2%) suggested the council could raise revenue through more commercial enterprises:

- 21 (1%) recommended more commercial use of council buildings and 1 (0.1%) recommended redeveloping unused council buildings and retaining ownership to create ongoing revenue
- 5 (0.3%) proposed selling high value council buildings and land
- 3 (0.2%) suggested new or enhanced traded services
- 3 (0.2%) wanted the arena to be built in Bristol
- 2 (0.1%) suggested greater use of parks and other council venues for music events
- Other suggestions included selling untaxed, unclaimed, impounded cars (2, 0.1%), recovering losses from Bristol Energy (1, 0.1%), and installing hydro power generation along the New Cut (1, 0.1%).

## **Tax**

18 (1%) suggested increasing income through a diverse range of tax changes, including a tourist overnight stay levy, a local sales tax, a tax on wealthy students, a 'Bristol net zero tax', a local income tax, and road tax for cyclists and e-scooters.

### **Council housing rent and capital sales**

15 (1%) suggested the council can increase income through changes to council housing rent and capital sales.

- 8 (0.5%) proposed the council converts its buildings and builds on council land to create affordable social and emergency housing
- 4 (0.2%) recommended increasing council housing rents
- 2 (0.1%) stated the council should let empty council properties more quickly
- 1 (0.1%) suggested transferring council housing stock to housing associations.

### **Council Tax and other debt collection**

13 (1%) recommended the council improves debt collection for Council Tax and other charges.

### **Other ideas for raising income**

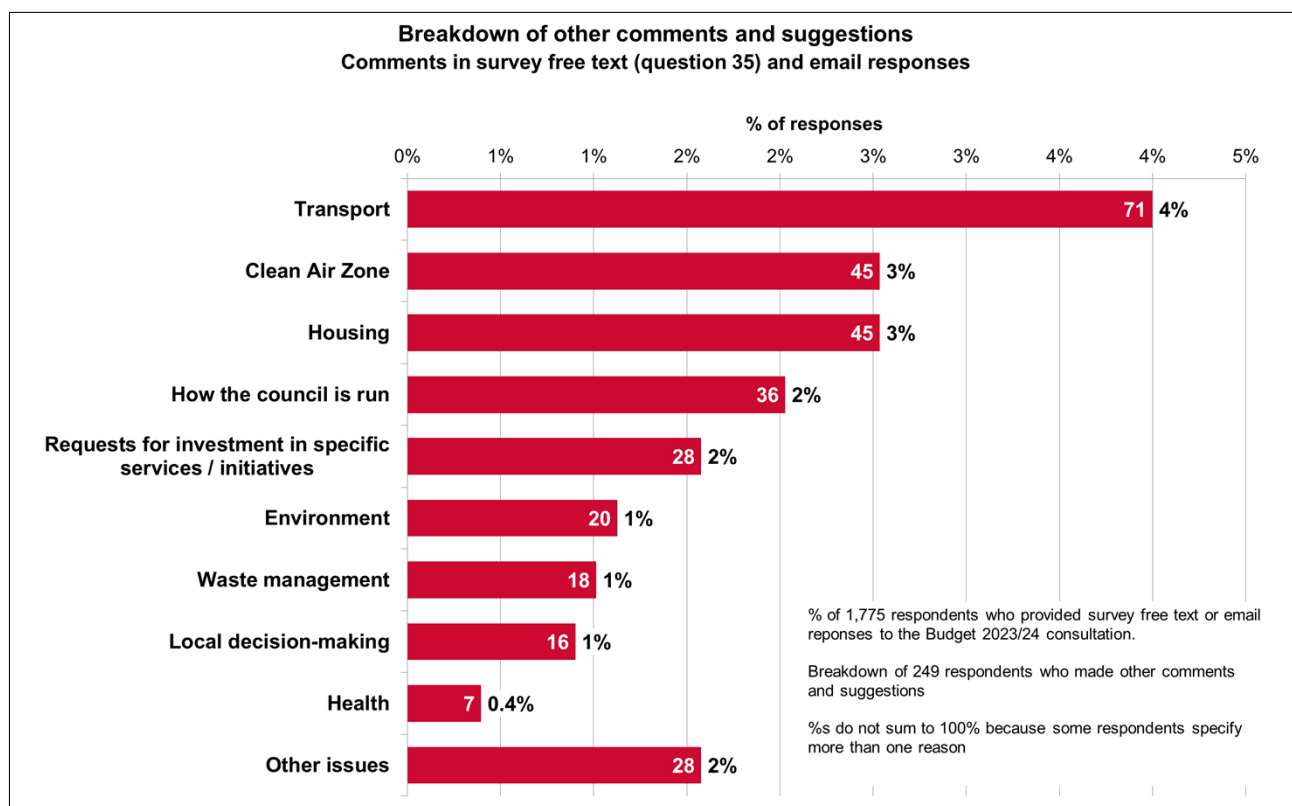
22 (1%) respondents suggested other ways to raise income. These included:

- seeking sponsorship and fundraising partnerships with large corporations and encouraging donations to the council from citizens
- diversifying the council's investments
- establishing a specialist team to submit funding applications
- generating investment income and creating jobs through technology and renewables.

## 5.7 Other comments and suggestions

Of the 1,775 free text survey and email responses, 249 (14%) included other comments and suggestions. Figure 30 summarises the main themes addressed in these comments.

**Figure 30: Other comments and suggestions**



### Transport

71 (4%) raised other transport issues:

- 49 (3%) were negative comments about bus services in Bristol
- 5 (0.3%) said that the transport system in general is not fit for purpose in Bristol
- 5 (0.3%) wanted action to reduce car use to improve air quality and 1 (0.1%) advocated reducing car ownership
- 5 (0.3%) objected to recent schemes to close roads in the city centre and 1 (0.1%) wanted more roads to be closed to cars
- 3 (0.2%) wanted parking charges to be reduced
- 3 (0.2%) were opposed to the Voi scooter scheme and 1 (0.1%) expressed support for Voi scooters
- 1 (0.1%) said more electric charging points are needed
- 1 (0.1%) stated their opposition to 20mph limits.

### Clean Air Zone

45 (3%) mentioned the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) of which 38 (2%) comments were negative, 4 (0.2%) were positive, and 3 (0.2%) advocated extending the CAZ.

## **Housing**

45 (3%) raised issues relating to housing, including:

- the need to build more council housing and for developers to provide affordable housing (21 responses, 1%)
- concerns about soaring housing rents (6, 0.3%)
- concerns about housing demand from high student numbers in Bristol (4, 0.2%).
- eligibility for council homes (3, 0.2%)
- requests to build more eco homes (3, 0.2%)
- requests to limit AirBnB rental to free up rental housing for families (2, 0.1%).

## **How the council is run**

36 (2%) commented on aspects of how the council is run.

- 18 (1%) were negative comments
- 8 (0.5%) were positive comments
- 7 (0.4%) perceived there is corruption which needs to be stopped
- 1 (0.1%) said there needs to be an independent review of council spending
- 1 (0.1%) expressed concerns about the planning system
- 1 (0.1%) was concerned that budget decisions should look at the social value of services, not just whether a service is discretionary or statutory.

## **Requests for investment in specific services or activities**

28 (2%) requested investment in specific services or activities, including:

- reducing anti-social behaviour and crime (7, 0.4%)
- tackling addiction and homelessness (4, 0.2%),
- support for community initiatives and places (6, 0.3%)
- Improving public toilet provision (3, 0.2%)
- improving the area around Cabot Circus (2, 0.1%)
- Incentivising independent businesses to rent empty shops/sites in Bristol (2, 0.1%)
- Providing more recycling centres (1, 0.1%)
- Other requests, each suggested by one person were the need for free school meals in term time and holidays, removing vans and caravans camped on roads on the Downs, improving lighting on the Downs, and increasing policing.

## **Environment**

20 (1%) respondents identified their environmental priorities

- Investing in green technology and policies (5, 0.3%)
- Modernising Bristol's housing stock to improve energy efficiency (5, 0.3%)
- Changing Conservation department opposition to sustainable building adaptations in conservation areas (3, 0.2%)
- investing more money in renewable energy (3, 0.2%)
- Introduce a 'no roofs unused' policy to increase installation of solar panels (3, 0.2%)
- Stop the use of glyphosate weedkiller (2, 0.1%)
- Investment in local heat networks (1, 0.1%).

## **Waste management**

18 (1%) wanted improvements to waste management, including more communal waste and recycling bins (5, 0.3%), improvements to street cleaning (4, 0.2%) and graffiti removal (4, 0.2%), and ensuring bins are collected (3, 0.2%).

## **Local decision-making**

16 (1%) commented on local decision-making.

- 8 (0.5%) wanted more involvement of communities
- 4 (0.2%) wanted more multi-party working
- 3 (0.2) wanted more citizens' panels to inform decision-making
- 1 (0.1%) expressed negative views about a committee system of administration.

## **Health**

7 (0.4%) commented on aspects of health, including requests to increase the public health budget and comments about NHS services.

## **Other issues**

28 (2%) mentioned other issues, including problems caused by Brexit, a desire to stop more tall buildings in Bristol, opposition to LED advertising billboards, and problems with energy costs.

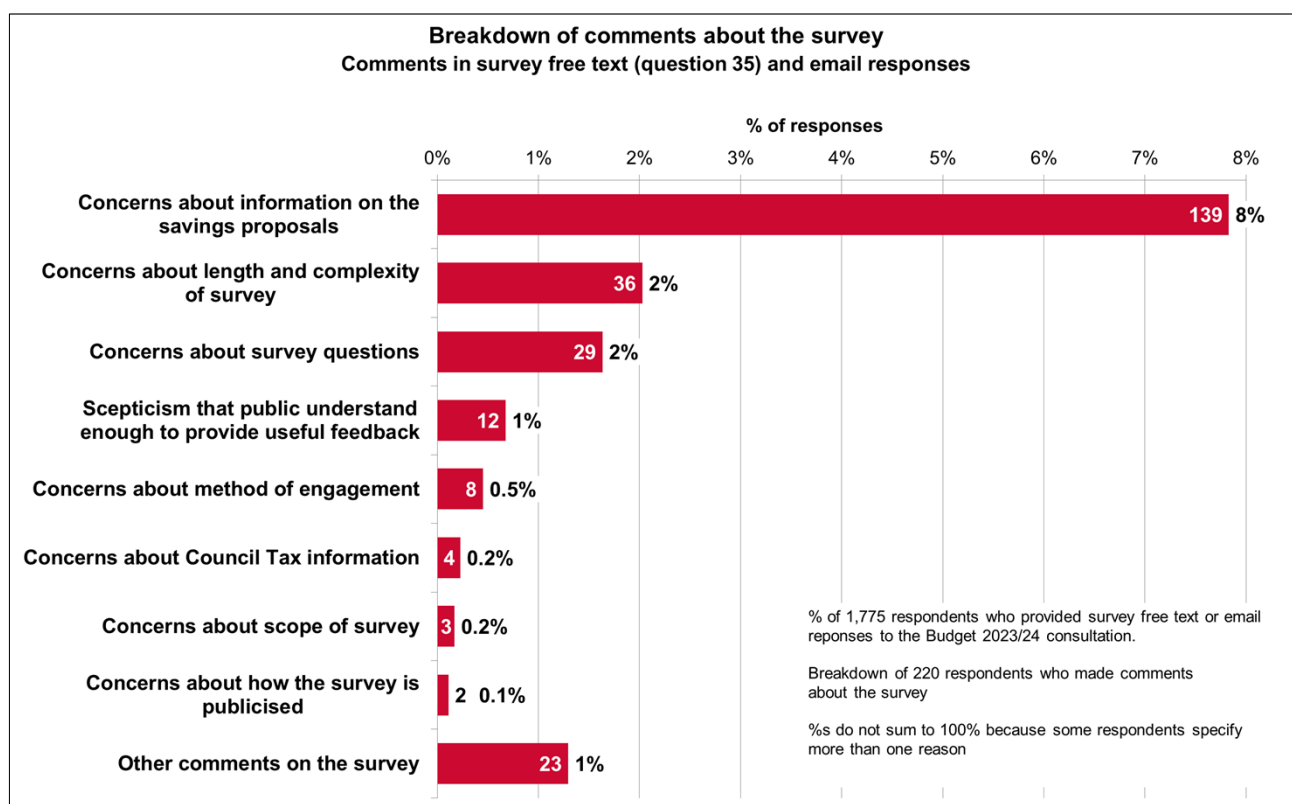
## 5.8 Comments about the consultation survey

### 5.8.1 Overview

220 (12%) respondents commented on the survey (Figure 31). Of these:

- 139 (8%) said they found the information on the savings proposals was unclear or not sufficient to understand the proposals or impact fully. Details are in Section 5.8.2
- 36 (2%) found the survey was too long, with too much information in the introduction
- 29 (2%) raised concerns about the format of the questions and the absence of a free text comments field for each proposal
- 12 (1%) expressed scepticism that most members of the public would have enough knowledge of the proposed services to usefully shape the proposals
- 8 (0.5%) prefer to be engaged face-to-face or in the community, rather than via a survey
- 4 (0.2%) said the Council Tax table contained the wrong financial figures<sup>29</sup>
- 3 (0.2%) said they thought the scope of the survey should have included other aspects of the council’s and partner authorities’ budgets; the capital budget, the Dedicated Schools’ Grant and the Police budget
- 2 (0.1%) stated the consultation could have been better publicised
- 23 (1%) made other comments about the consultation, including the effort required to engage with the material, delay in obtaining a paper copy, and distrust of the council’s intentions in consulting.

**Figure 31: Comments about the survey**



<sup>29</sup> The Council Tax table in the consultation excludes the precepts within the total Council Tax Bill which fund the Police and Fire services, and which are set by those authorities

## 5.8.2 Comments about the descriptions of the proposals

139 respondents (8%) stated in free text survey and email responses that they found the descriptions of the proposals unclear or said that they do not give enough detail to understand the proposals or their impact or to give informed opinions.

The majority of these (119 respondents, 7%) did not specify which proposals they found unclear and did not distinguish between the Section 1 and Section 2 proposals. Of these<sup>30</sup>:

- 103 (6%) said the descriptions of proposals were unclear but did not specify which proposals
- 20 (1%) said they wanted more information on the impacts of the proposals and could not tell if the proposals were desirable efficiency savings or harmful cuts to services
- 2 (0.1%) said they wanted future consultations to include more details of proposals and impacts

15 (1%) said the descriptions of specific Section 1 proposals were unclear. These were<sup>31</sup>:

- 6 (0.3%) for GR15: Transport and highway maintenance
- 3 (0.2%) for GR5: Sustainable City and Climate Change
- 2 (0.1%) for P9: Adult Social Care staffing budget and P10: Adult Social Care purchasing budget
- 2 (0.1%) for P26: Homes for children with complex needs
- 2 (0.1%) for P11: Foster carer recruitment and retention
- 1 (0.1%) for P12: Specialist fostering programmes
- 1 (0.1%) for P15: Social worker retention and recruitment
- 1 (0.1%) for R23: Unified financial assessments
- 1 (0.1%) for P6: East Bristol Intermediate Care Centre
- 1 (0.1%) for R29: Discretionary rate relief (#1).

20 (1%) mentioned the following descriptions of specific Section 2 proposals were unclear<sup>32</sup>:

- 8 (0.5%) for P5: Redfield Lodge
- 7 (0.4%) for P7: Concord Lodge
- 6 (0.3%) for GR9: Culture and creative industries funding
- 3 (0.2%) for GR12\_A: Parks Service
- 3 (0.2%) for GR11: Libraries
- 3 (0.2%) for P13: Keeping Families Together

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<sup>30</sup> The number in the bulleted list exceeds 119 because some respondents identified more than one proposal

<sup>31</sup> The number in the bulleted list exceeds 15 because some respondents identified more than one proposal

<sup>32</sup> The number in the bulleted list exceeds 20 because some respondents identified more than one proposal

- 3 (0.2%) for P1: Bristol Community Links Service
- 2 (0.1%) for P21: Home to education transport for 16-25 year olds
- 2 (0.1%) for GR2.1: City Transport discretionary activities
- 2 (0.1%) for R20: Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- 1 (0.1%) for P20: Communities and Neighbourhoods team
- 1 (0.1%) for P23: Early Help in communities, including children’s centres and family hubs
- 1 (0.1%) for P14: Trauma-informed programme
- 1 (0.1%) for Health, Care and Wellbeing proposals. From the context, these are inferred to be the Section 2 Health, Care and Wellbeing proposals proposals.

1 (0.1%) mentioned they found the description of the Section 3 proposal R3: Lord Mayor's Chapel was unclear

When prompted in the later question 48 to provide feedback on the survey, 31% of respondents (1,216 of 4,076 who answered the question) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement ‘There is enough information for me to answer the questions’.



## 6 How will this report be used?

The consultation feedback in this report is taken into account by officers in developing final proposals for the 2023/24 budget, including the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept and proposals to save money and generate income. The final proposals are included in a separate report which, together with an earlier draft of this consultation report, was considered by Cabinet on 24 January 2023.

Full Council will take into consideration this consultation report and responses in making its decisions about the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept and how much money the council will be able to spend on each service area, as part of the 2023/24 budget. These decisions will be taken at the Full Council meeting on 21 February 2023.

### How can I keep track?

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

Decisions related to the proposals in this consultation will be made publicly at the Full Council meeting on 24 February 2023.

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

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

## Appendix A Charts comparing views on savings proposals by deprivation

### A.1 Views on Section 1 proposals by deprivation

The Figures A1 to A17 in this section, show how views on each of the section 1 proposals vary in areas of high and low deprivation. Also shown are the views of people who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode, and the aggregate views of all respondents.

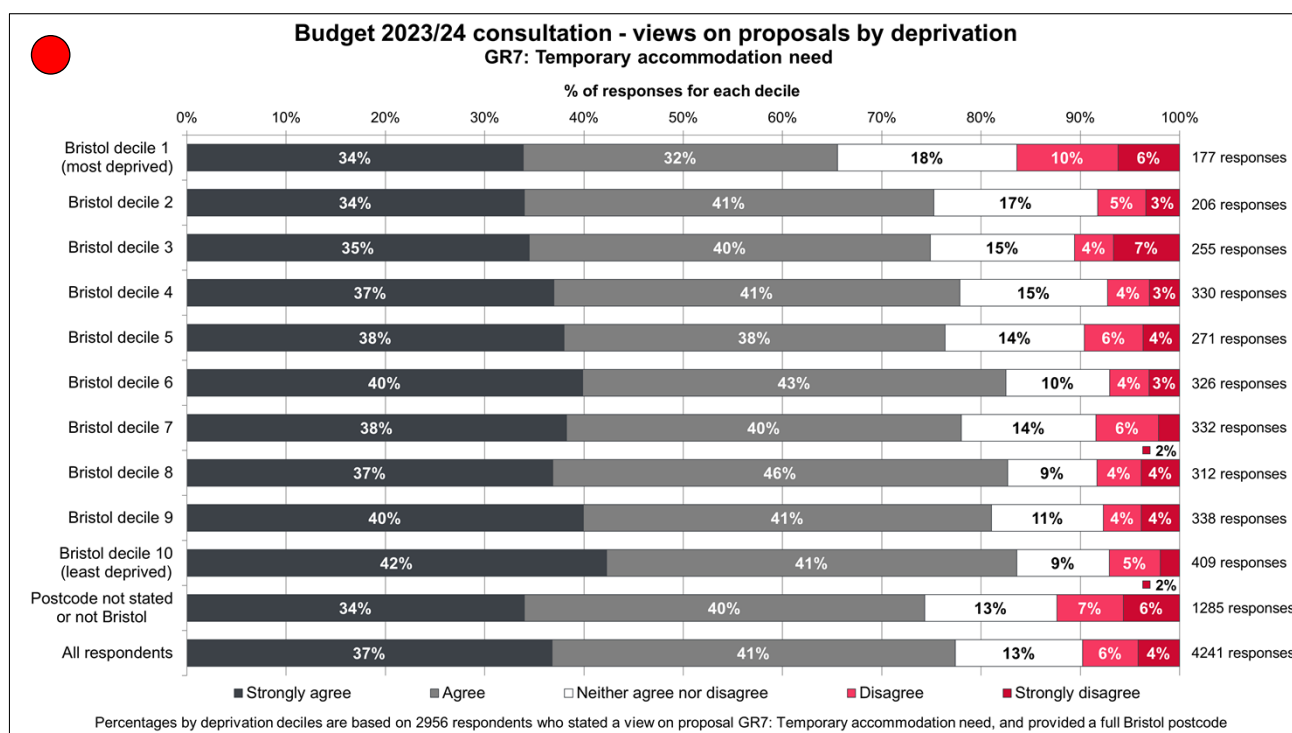
The charts below are presented in the order shown in Figure 22, starting with the proposal which has most support. (Figure A1 shows the proposal with which the highest percentage of respondents agree or strongly agree; Figure A17 shows the proposal with lowest support.)

Each figure includes a coloured circle with a number from 1 to 6 in the top left corner, as used in Figure 22 to denote how support for the proposal varies with deprivation. The categories are:

- Clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation
- Moderately clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation
- Weak trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation
- Moderately clear trend of reducing support with reducing deprivation
- Clear trend of decreasing support with reducing deprivation
- No clear trend in support with deprivation

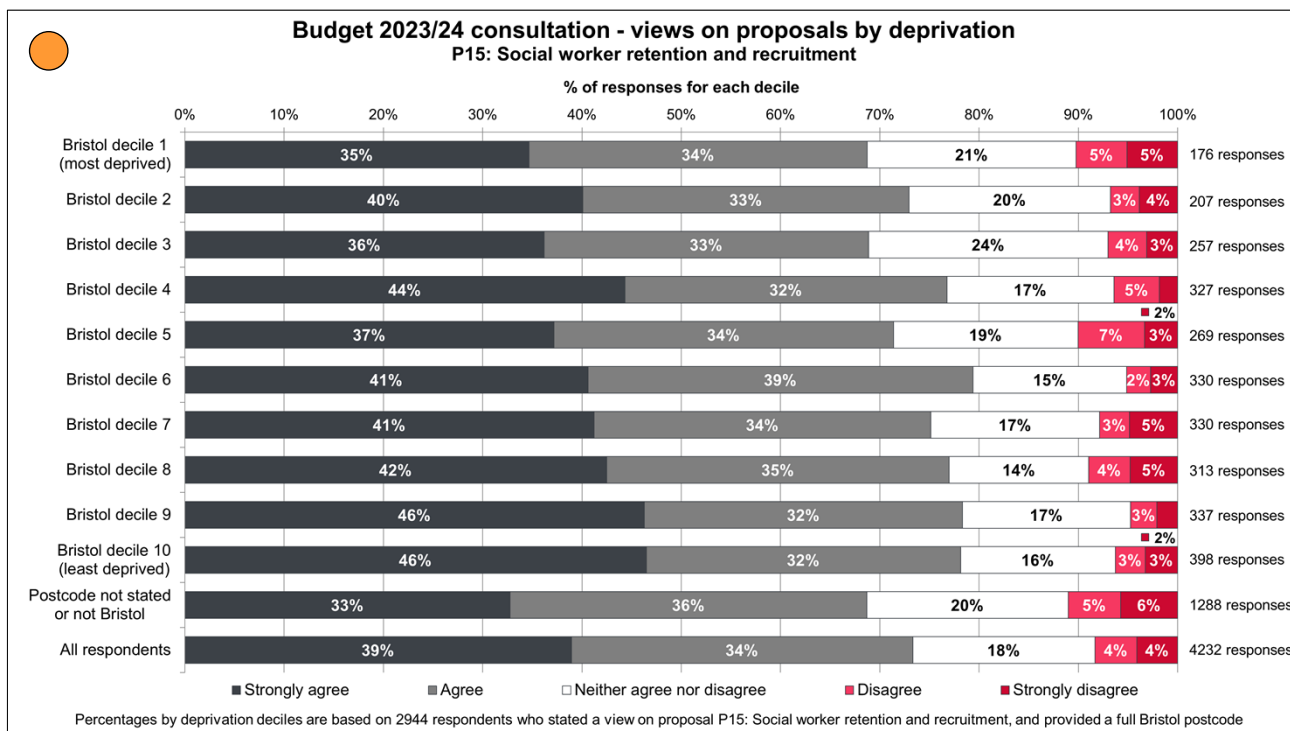
A summary of the findings shown in these charts is included in section 5.3 of this report.

**Figure A1: Proposal GR7: Temporary accommodation need – by deprivation**



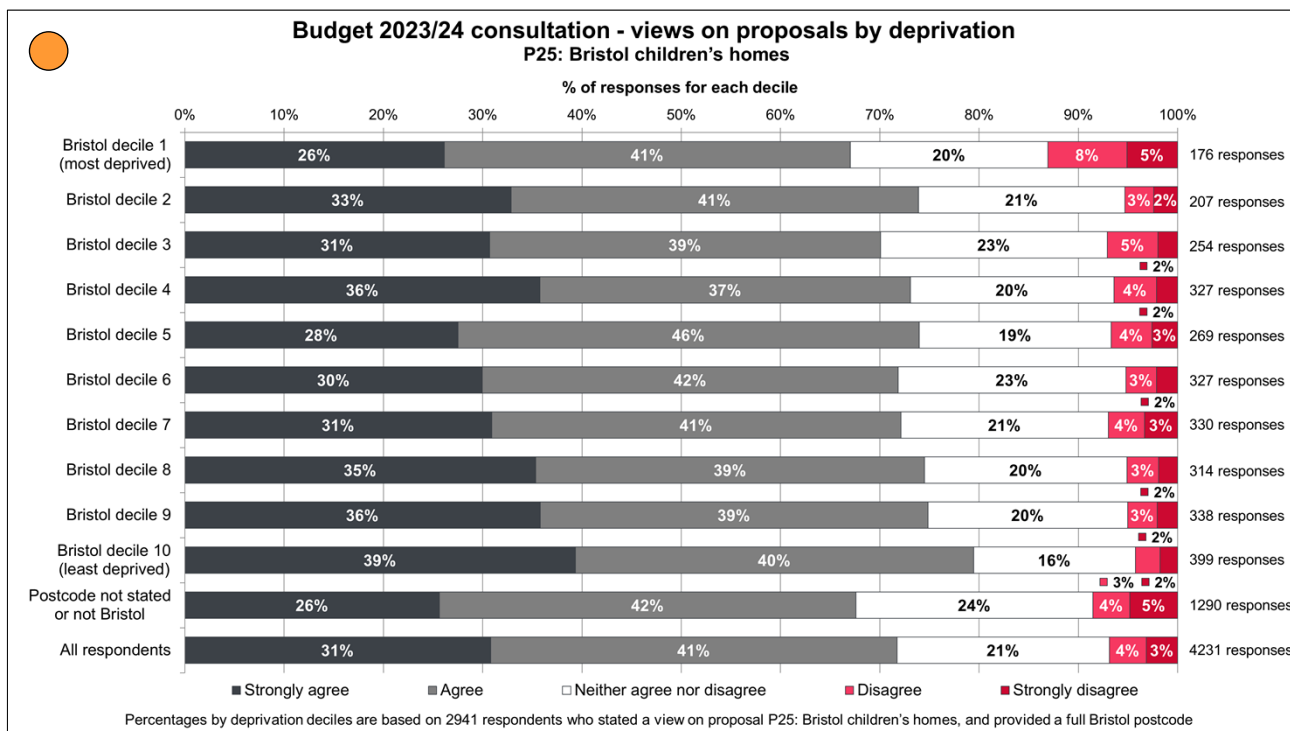
- Clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation

**Figure A2: Proposal P15: Social worker retention and recruitment – by deprivation**



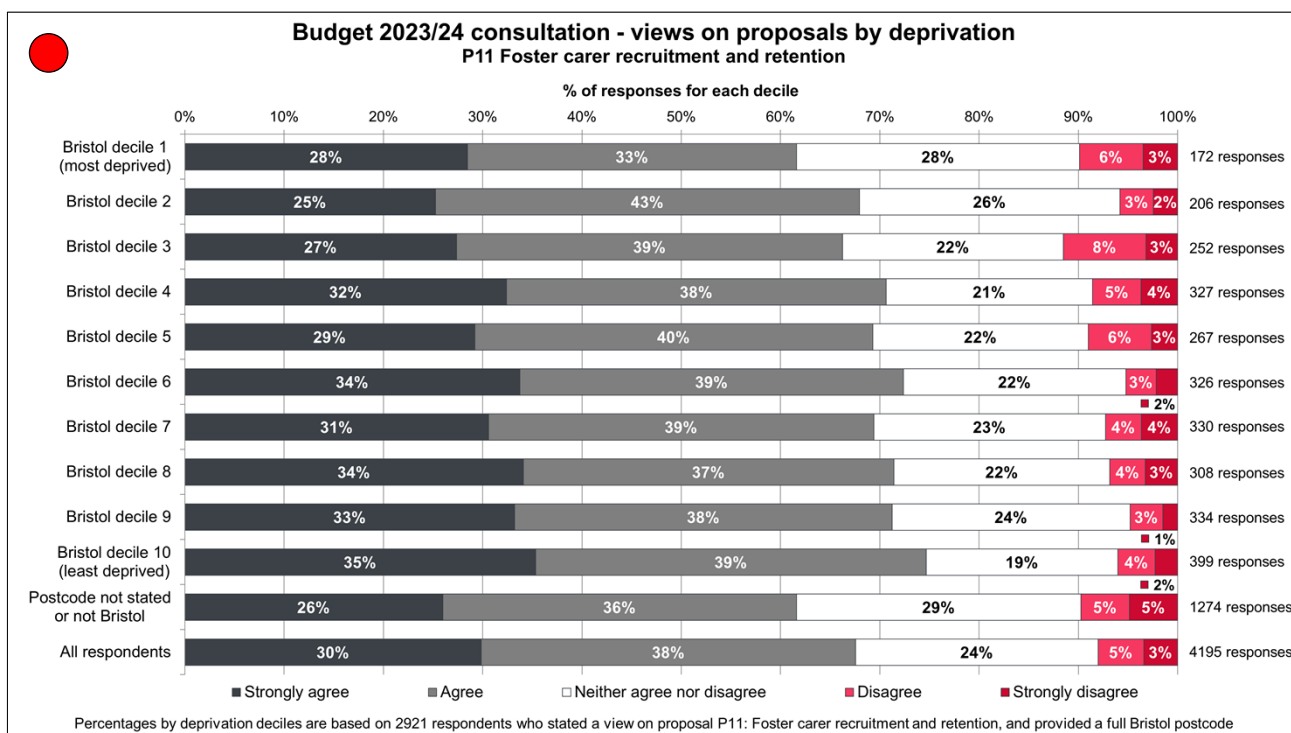
Moderately clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation

**Figure A3: Proposal P25: Bristol children's homes - by deprivation**



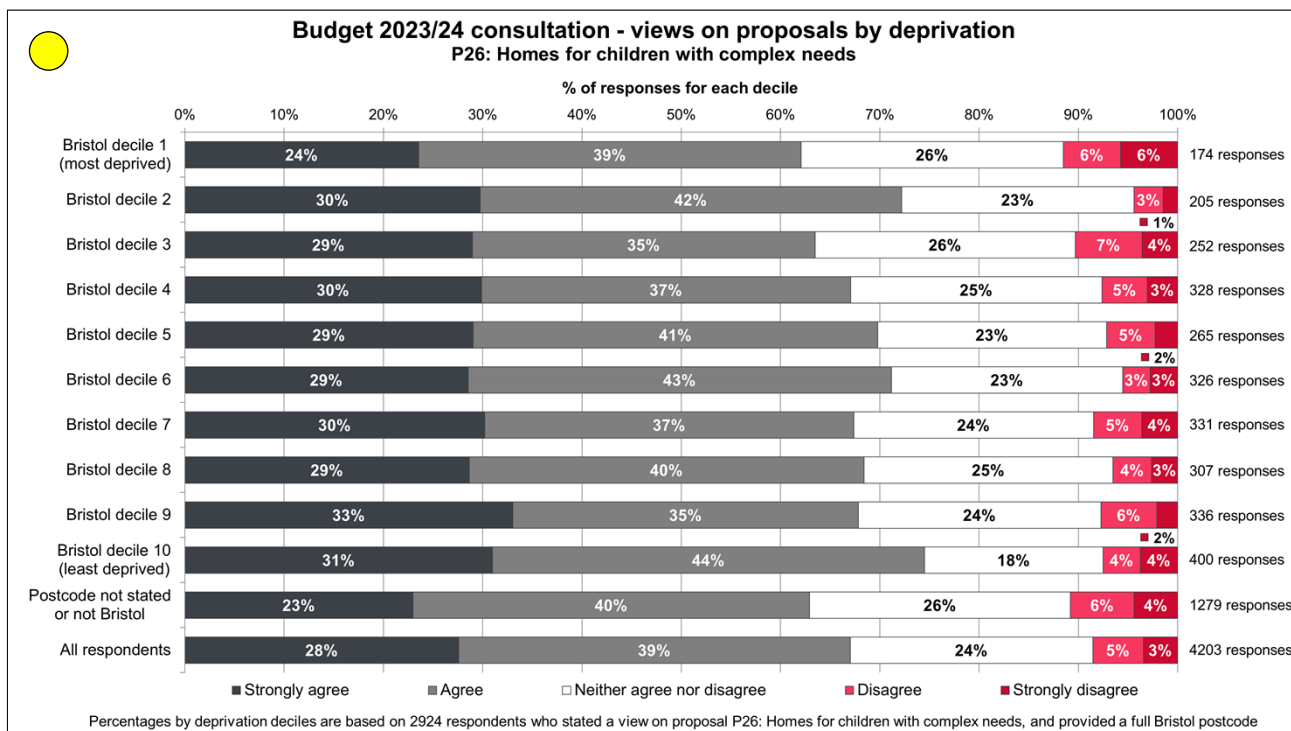
Moderately clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation

**Figure A4: Proposal P11: Foster carer recruitment and retention - by deprivation**



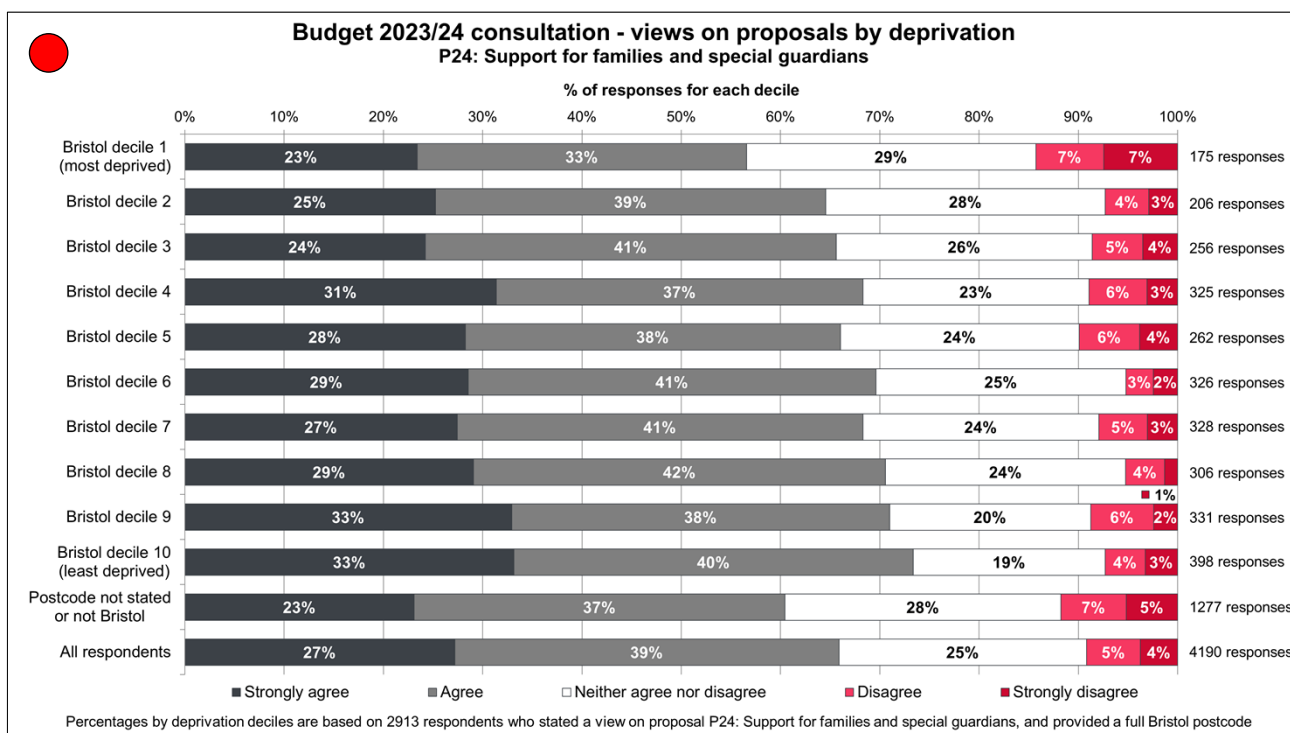
● Clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation

**Figure A5: Proposal P26: Homes for children with complex needs - by deprivation**



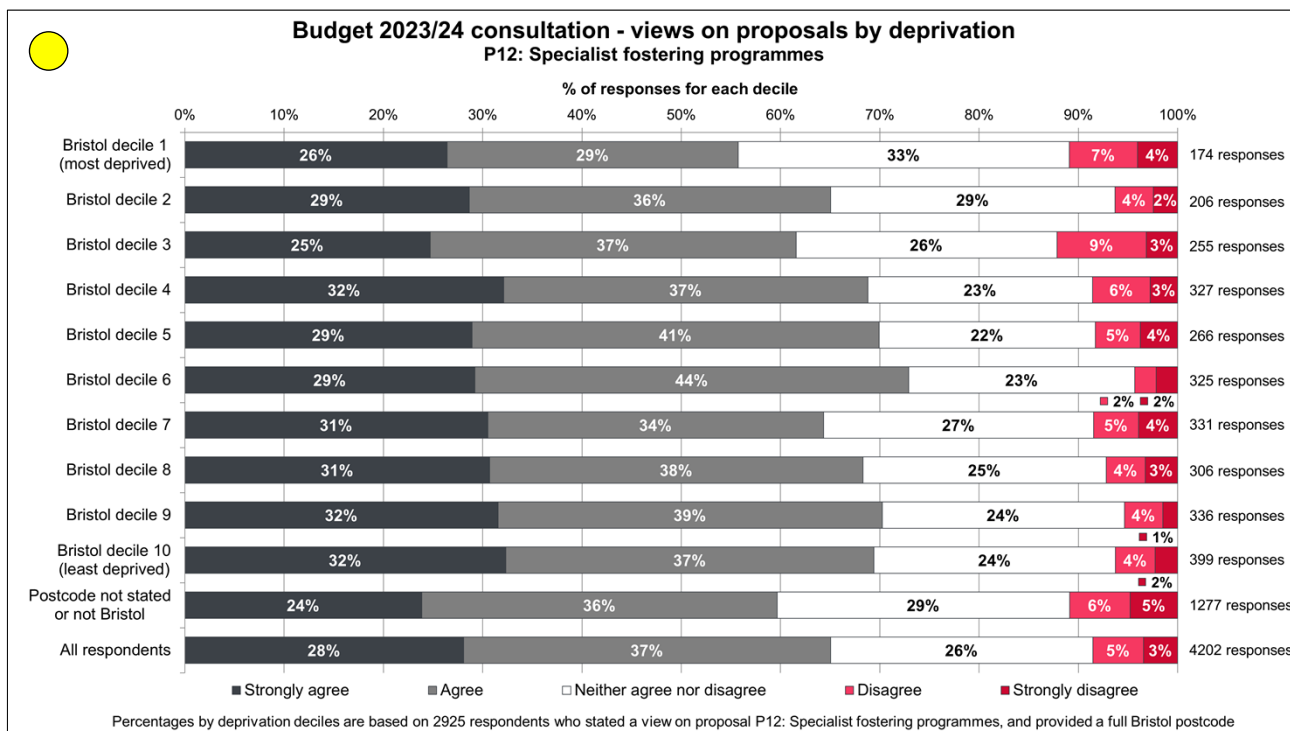
● Weak trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation

**Figure A6: Proposal P24: Support for families and special guardians - by deprivation**



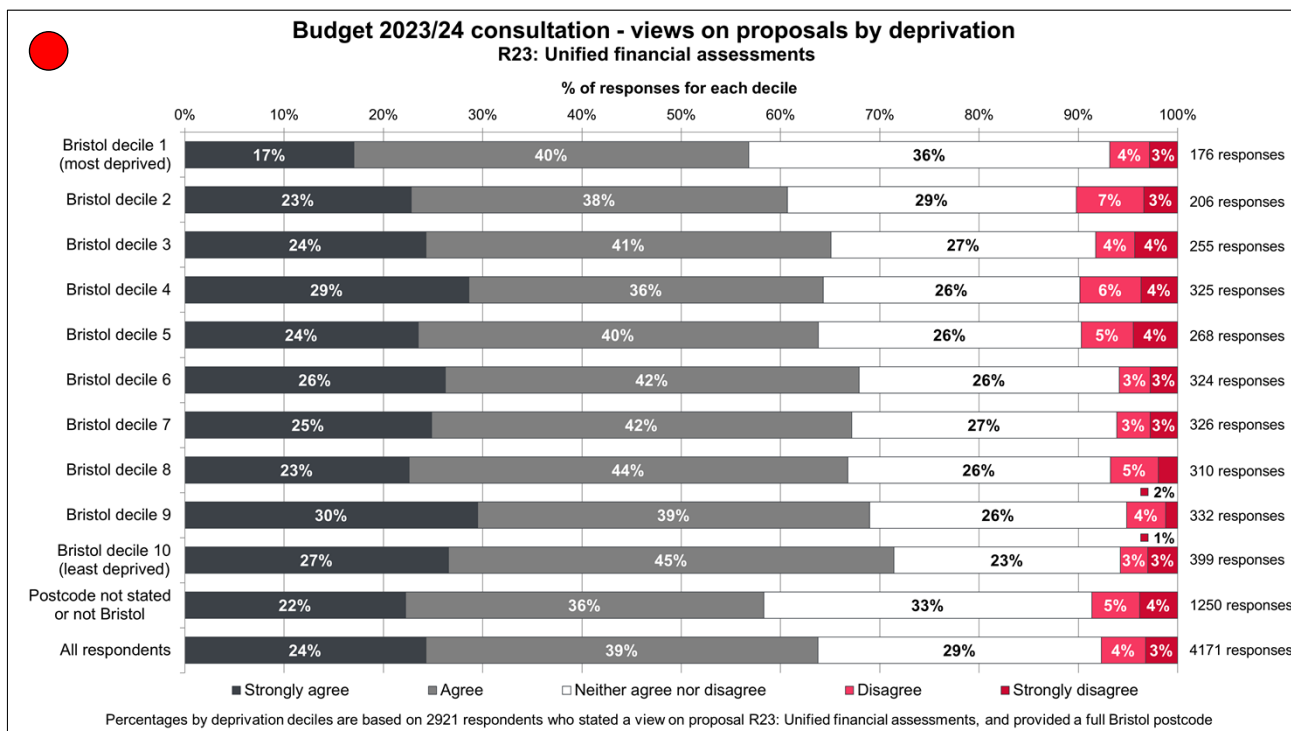
● Clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation

**Figure A7: Proposal P12: Specialist fostering programmes - by deprivation**



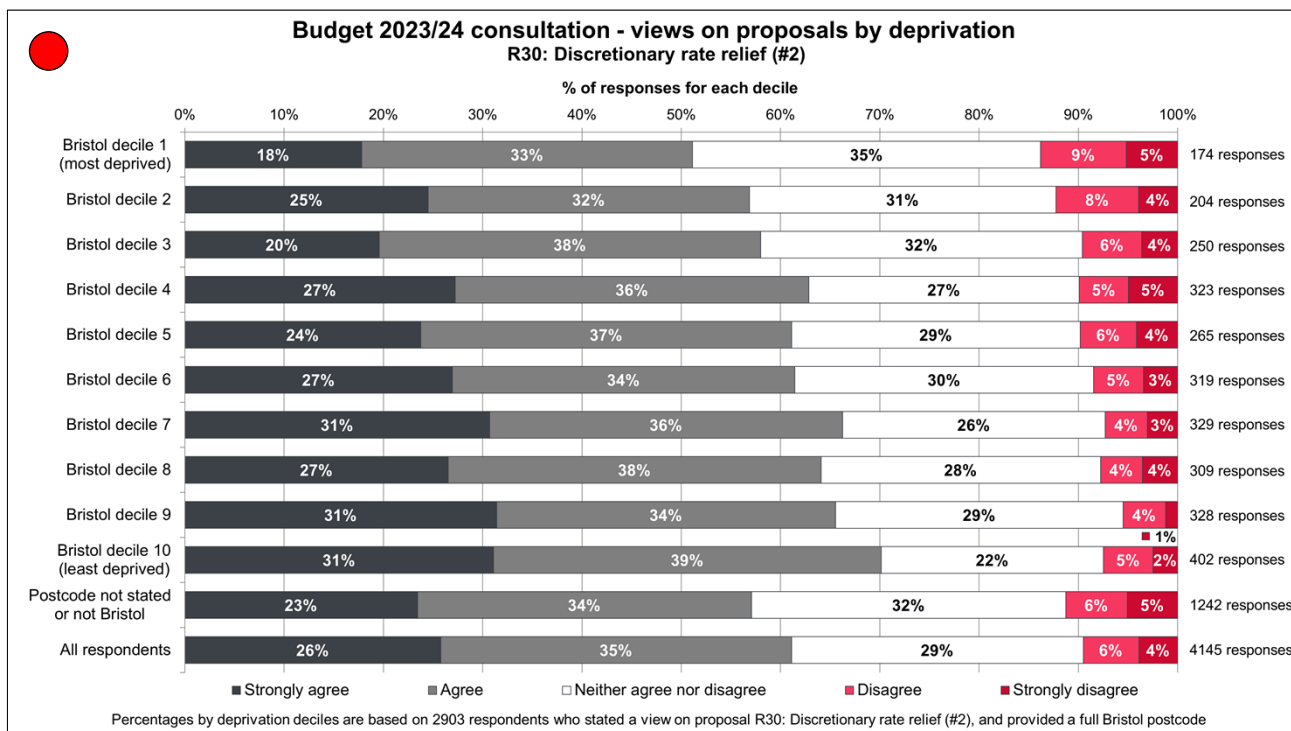
● Weak trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation

**Figure A8: Proposal R23: Unified financial assessments - by deprivation**



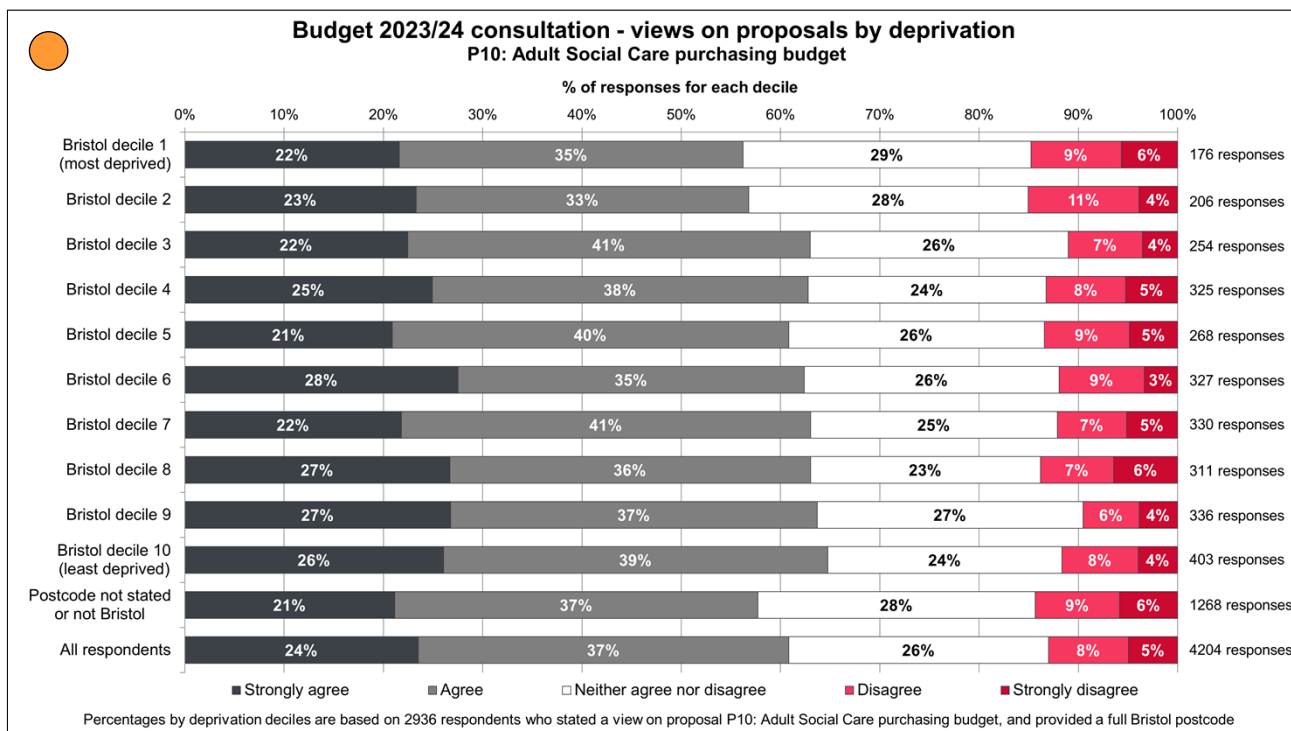
● Clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation

**Figure A9: Proposal R30: Discretionary rate relief (#2) - by deprivation**



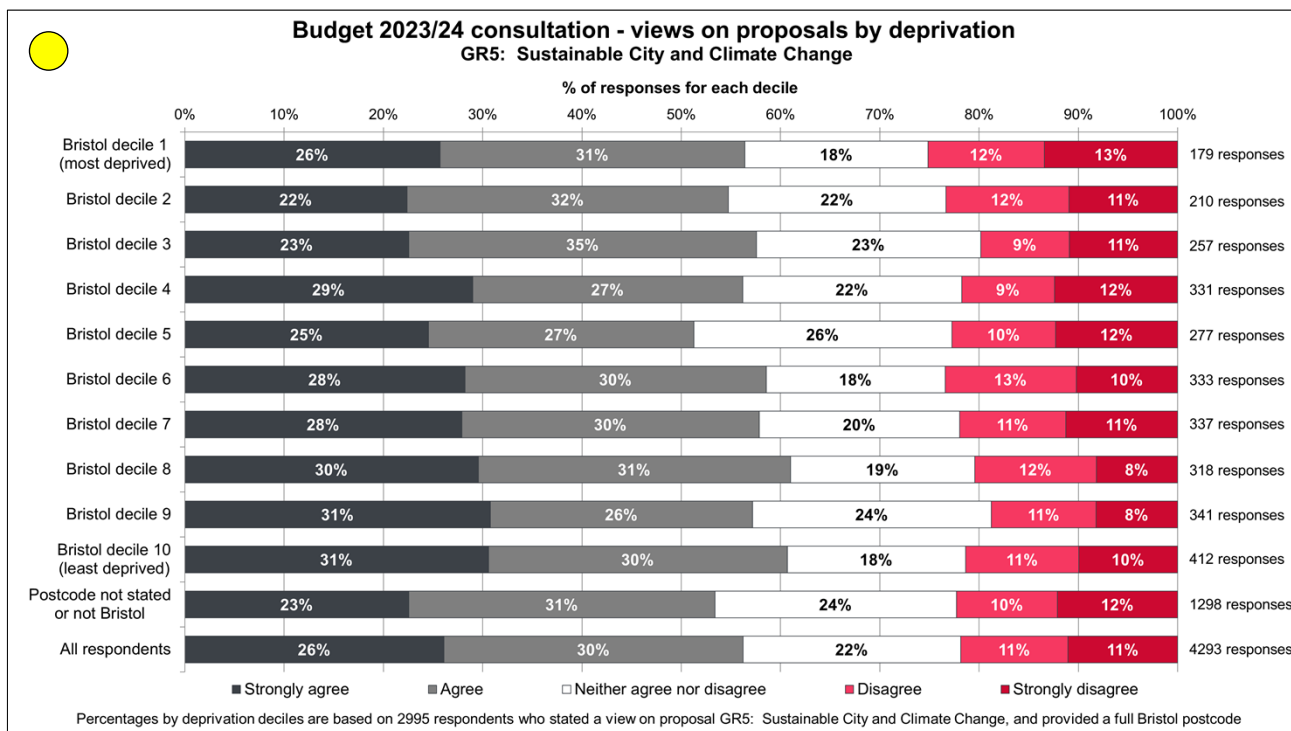
● Clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation

**Figure A10: Proposal P10: Adult Social Care purchasing budget - by deprivation**



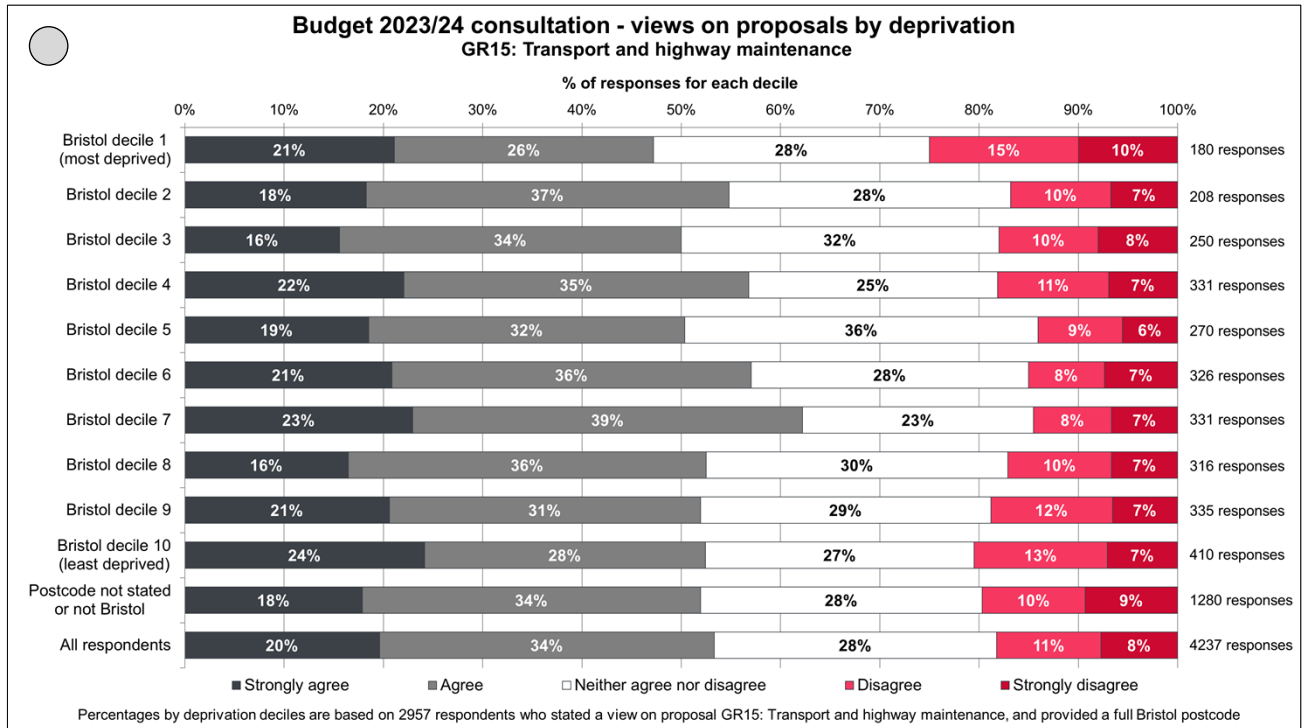
Moderately clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation

**Figure A11: Proposal GR5: Sustainable City and Climate Change - by deprivation**



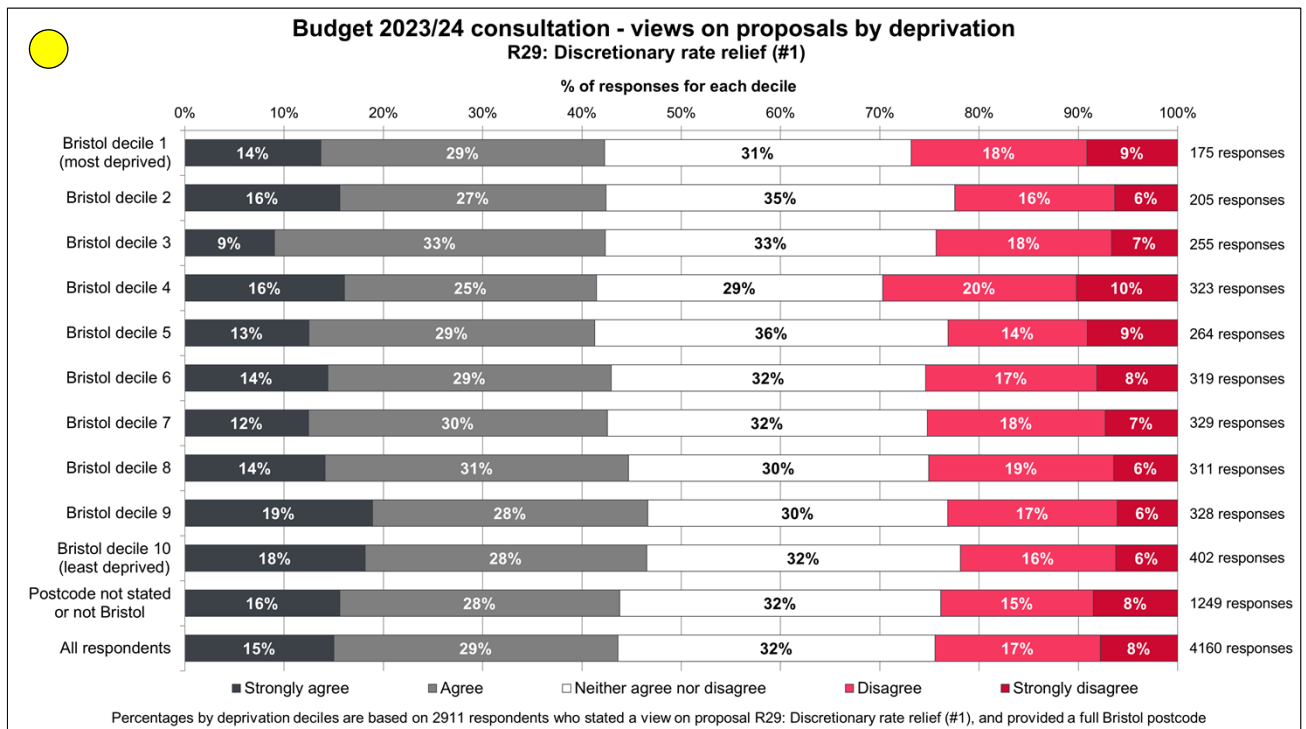
Weak trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation

**Figure A12: Proposal GR15: Transport and highway maintenance - by deprivation**



○ No clear trend in support with deprivation

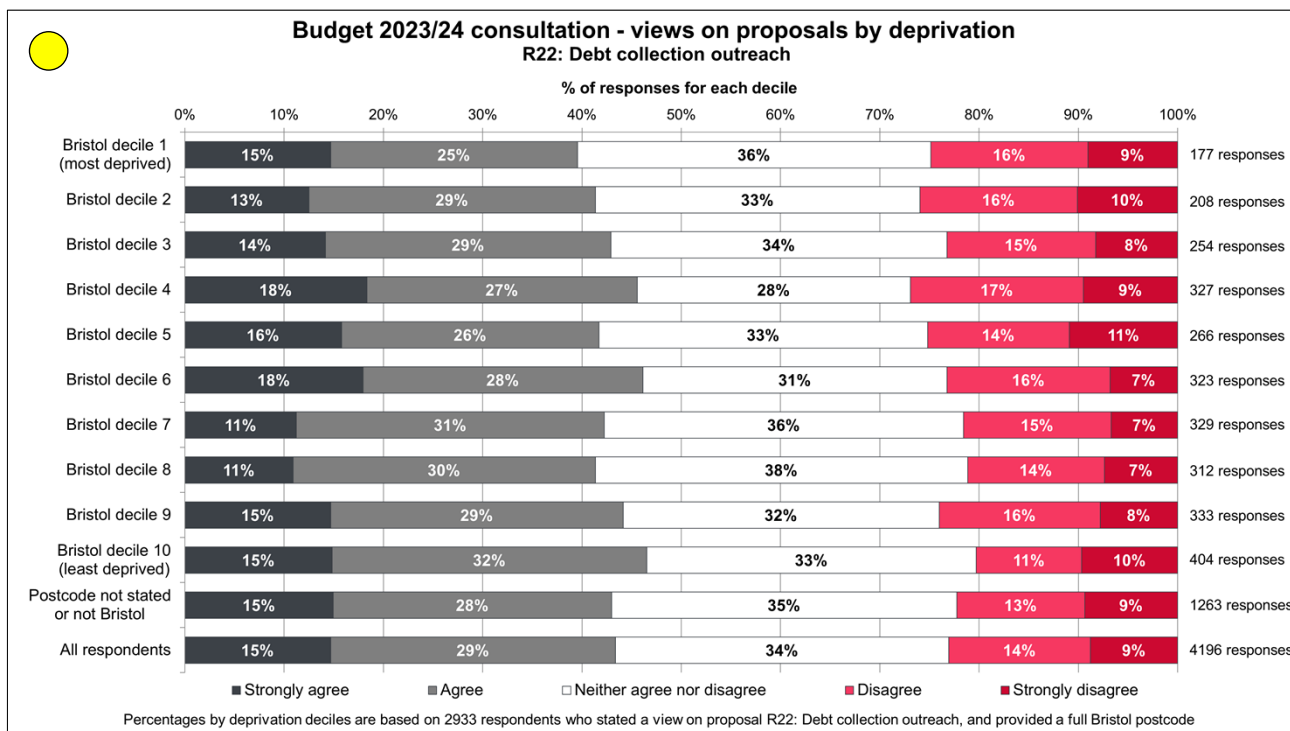
**Figure A13: Proposal R29: Discretionary rate relief (#1) - by deprivation**



● Weak trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation

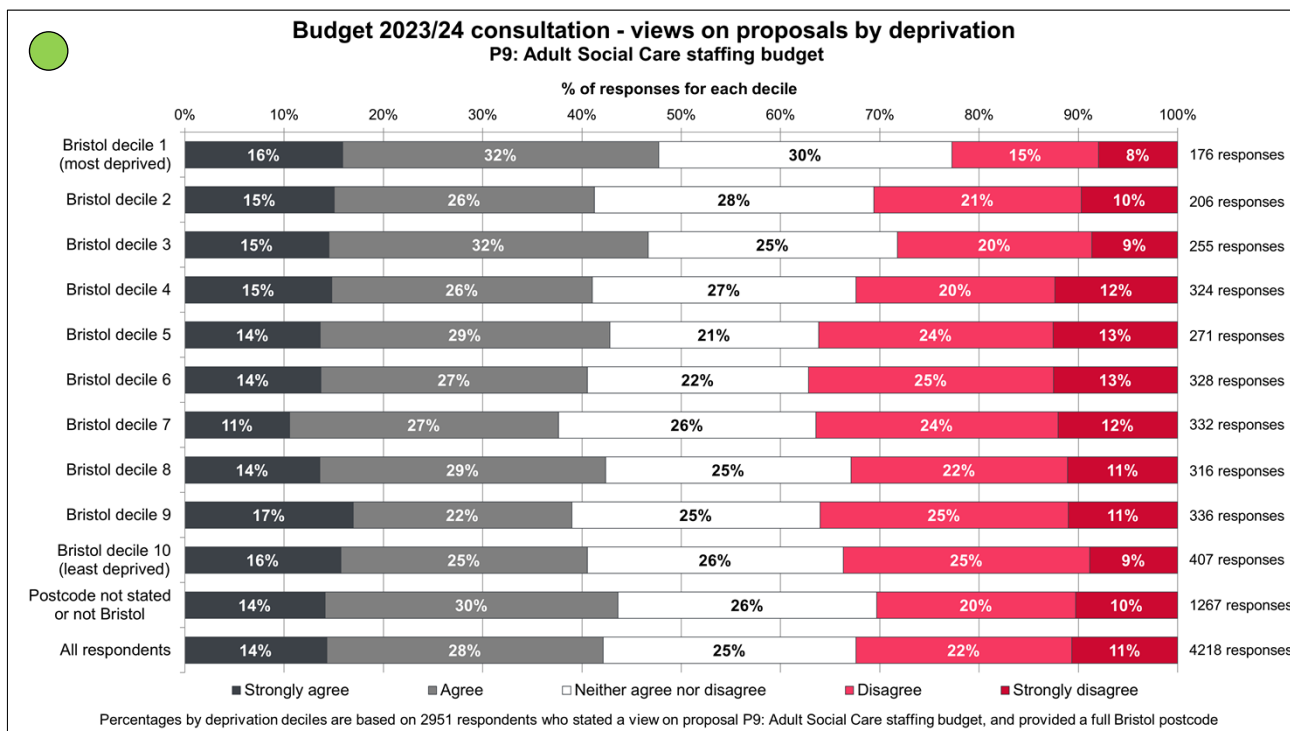


**Figure A14: Proposal R22: Debt collection outreach - by deprivation**



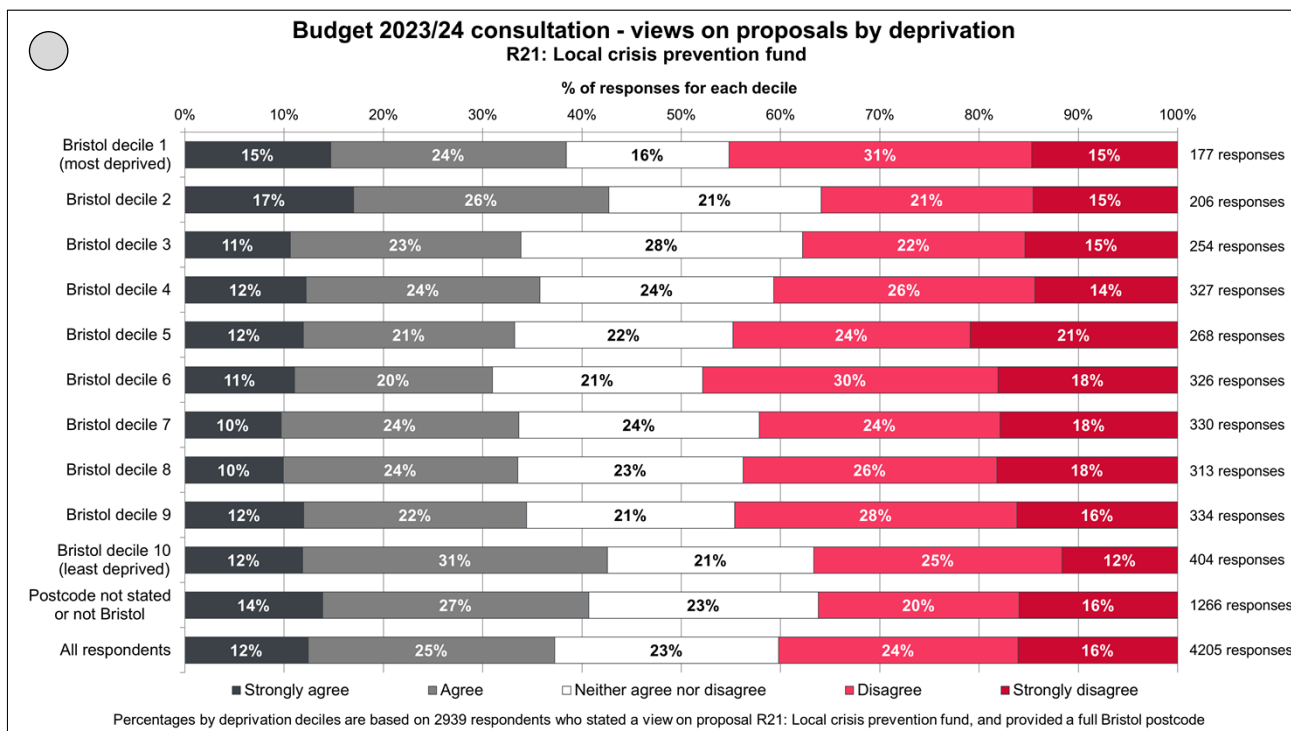
Weak trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation

**Figure A15: Proposal P9: Adult Social Care staffing budget - by deprivation**



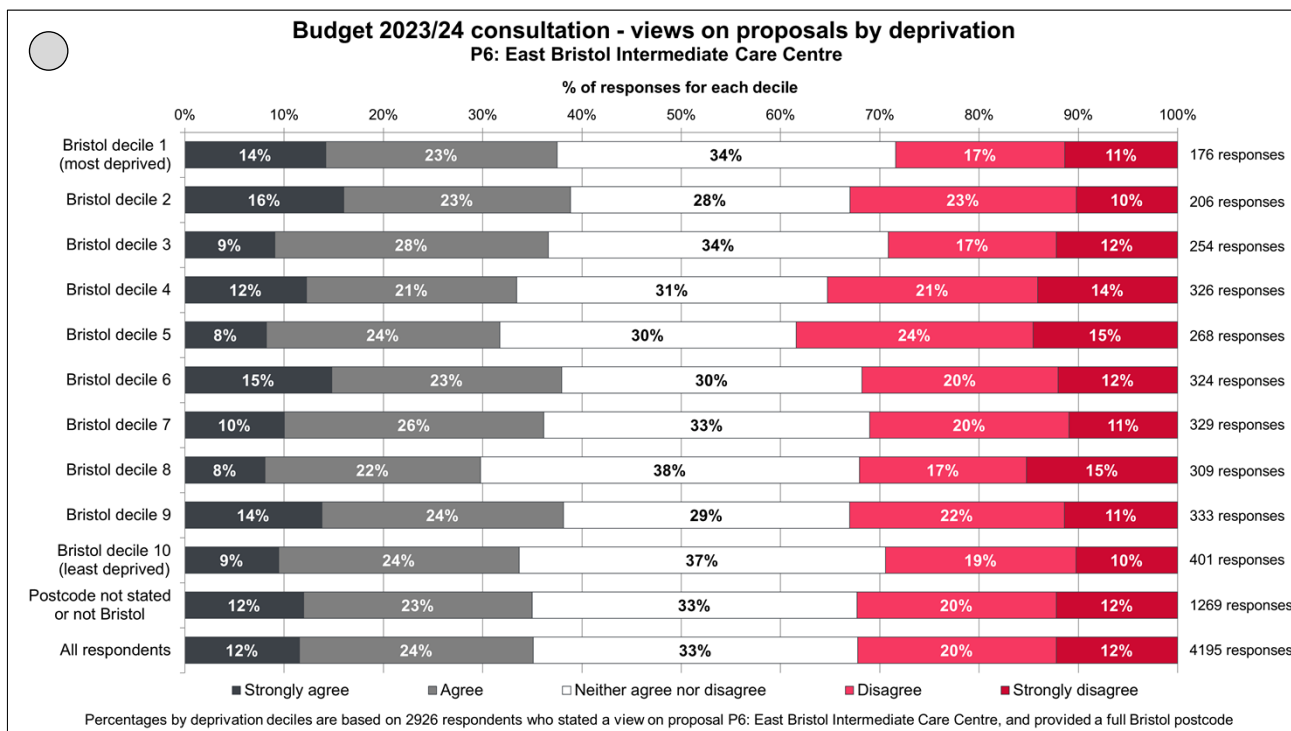
Moderately clear trend of reducing support with reducing deprivation

**Figure A16: Proposal R21: Local crisis prevention fund - by deprivation**



○ No clear trend in support with deprivation

**Figure A17: Proposal P6: East Bristol Intermediate Care Centre - by deprivation**



○ No clear trend in support with deprivation

## A.2 Views on Section 2 proposals by deprivation

The Figures A18 to A30 in this section, show how views on each of the section 2 proposals vary in areas of high and low deprivation. Also shown are the views of people who did not provide a postcode or gave a non-Bristol postcode, and the aggregate views of all respondents.

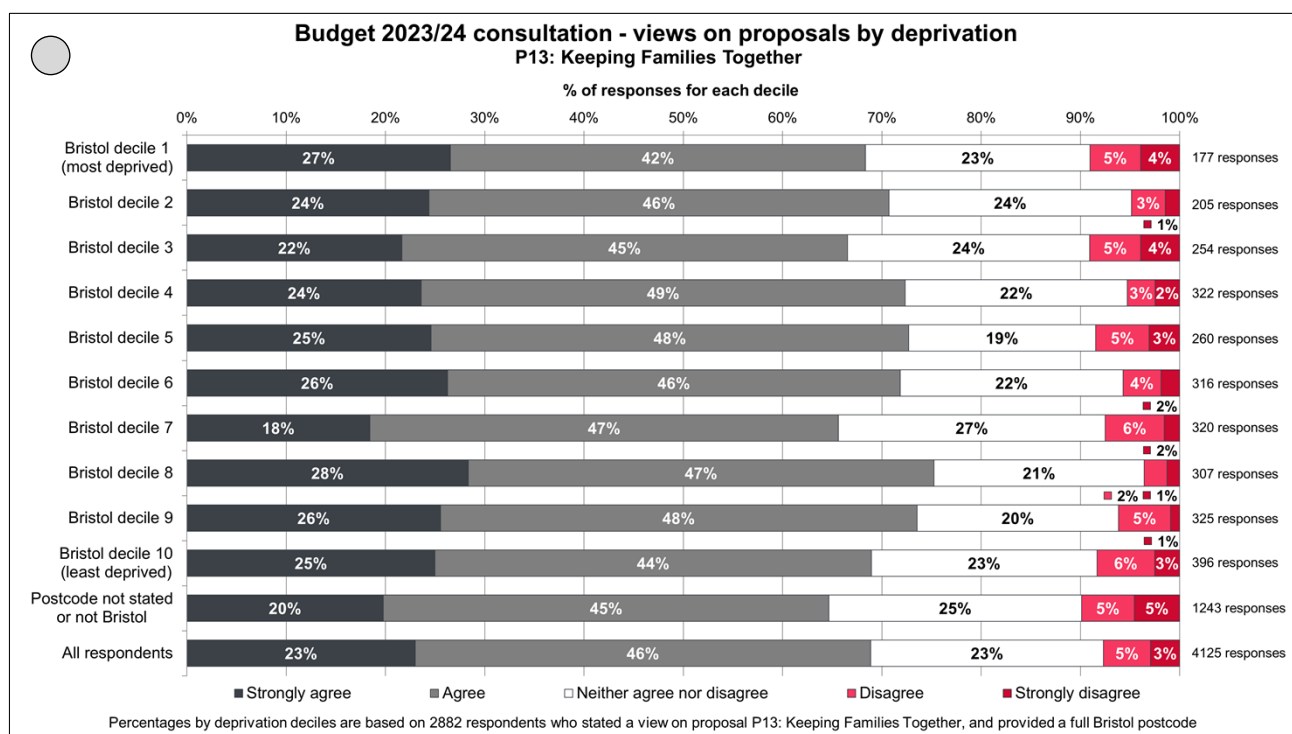
The charts below are presented in the order shown in Figure 23, starting with the proposal which has most support. (Figure A18 shows the proposal with which the highest percentage of respondents agree or strongly agree; Figure A30 shows the proposal with lowest support.)

Each figure includes a coloured circle with a number from 1 to 6 in the top left corner, as used in Figure 23 to denote how support for the proposal varies with deprivation. The categories are:

- Clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation
- Moderately clear trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation
- Weak trend of increasing support with reducing deprivation
- Moderately clear trend of reducing support with reducing deprivation
- Clear trend of decreasing support with reducing deprivation
- No clear trend in support with deprivation

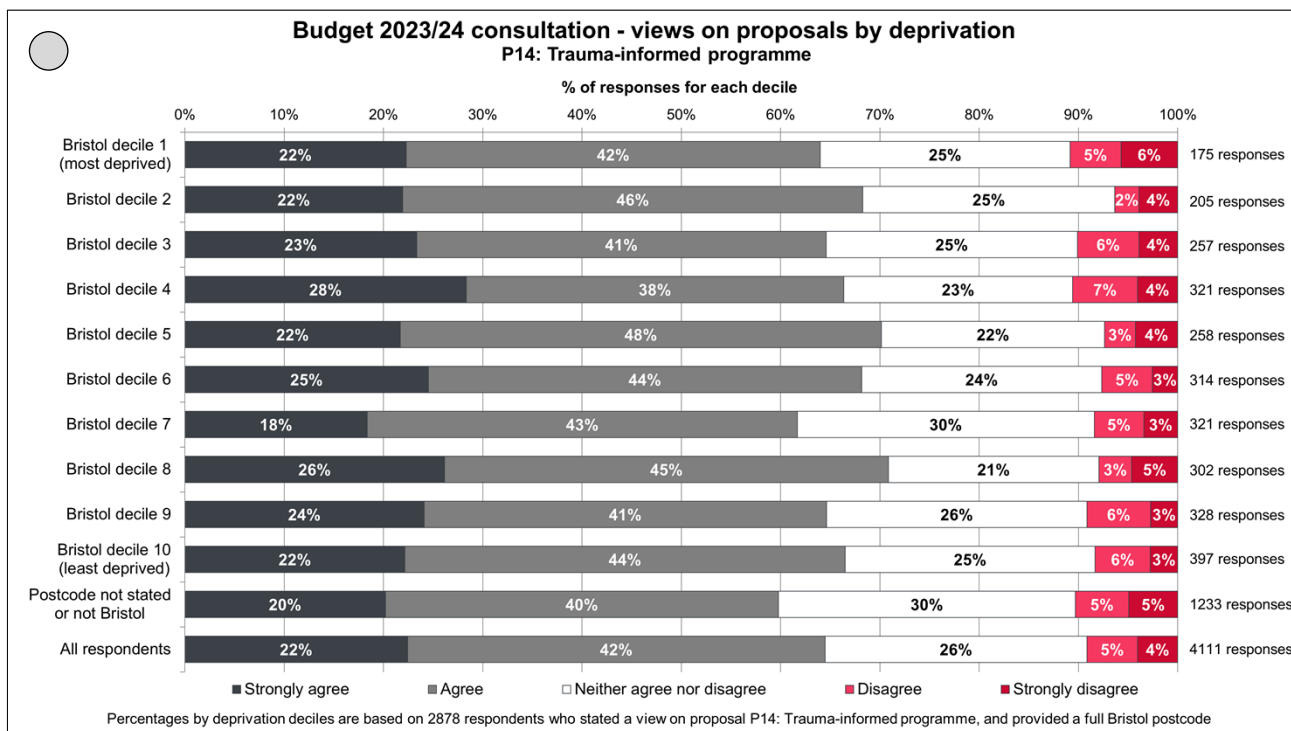
A summary of the findings shown in these charts is included in section 5.3 of this report.

**Figure A18: Proposal P13: Keeping Families Together - by deprivation**



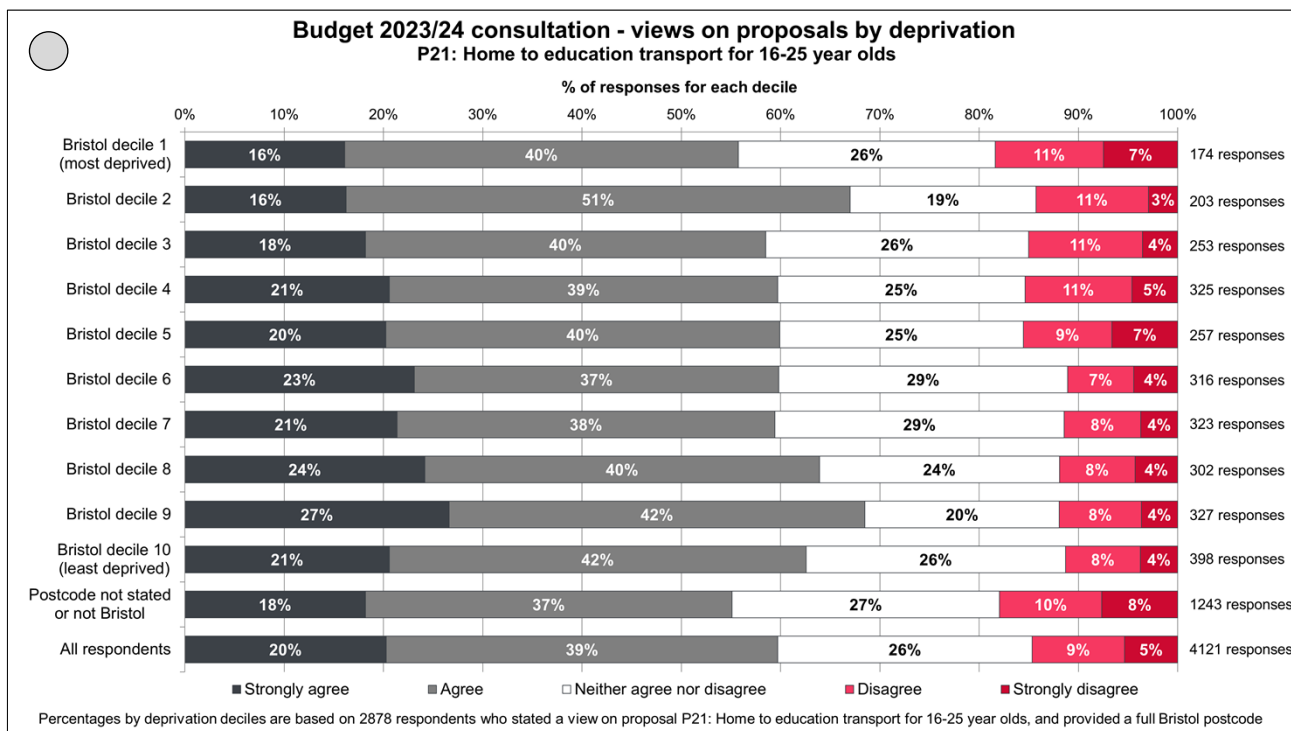
- No clear trend in support with deprivation

**Figure A19: Proposal P14: Trauma-informed programme - by deprivation**



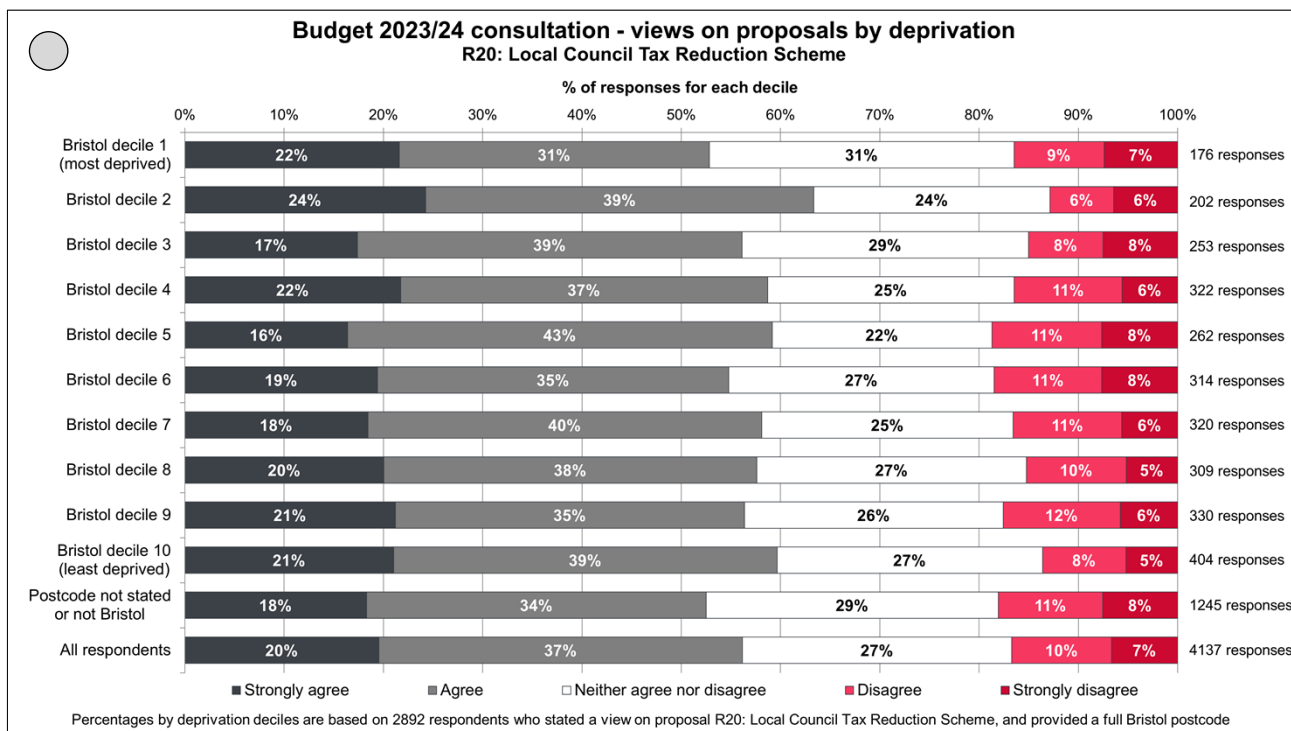
○ No clear trend in support with deprivation

**Figure A20: Proposal P21: Home to education transport for 16-25s - by deprivation**



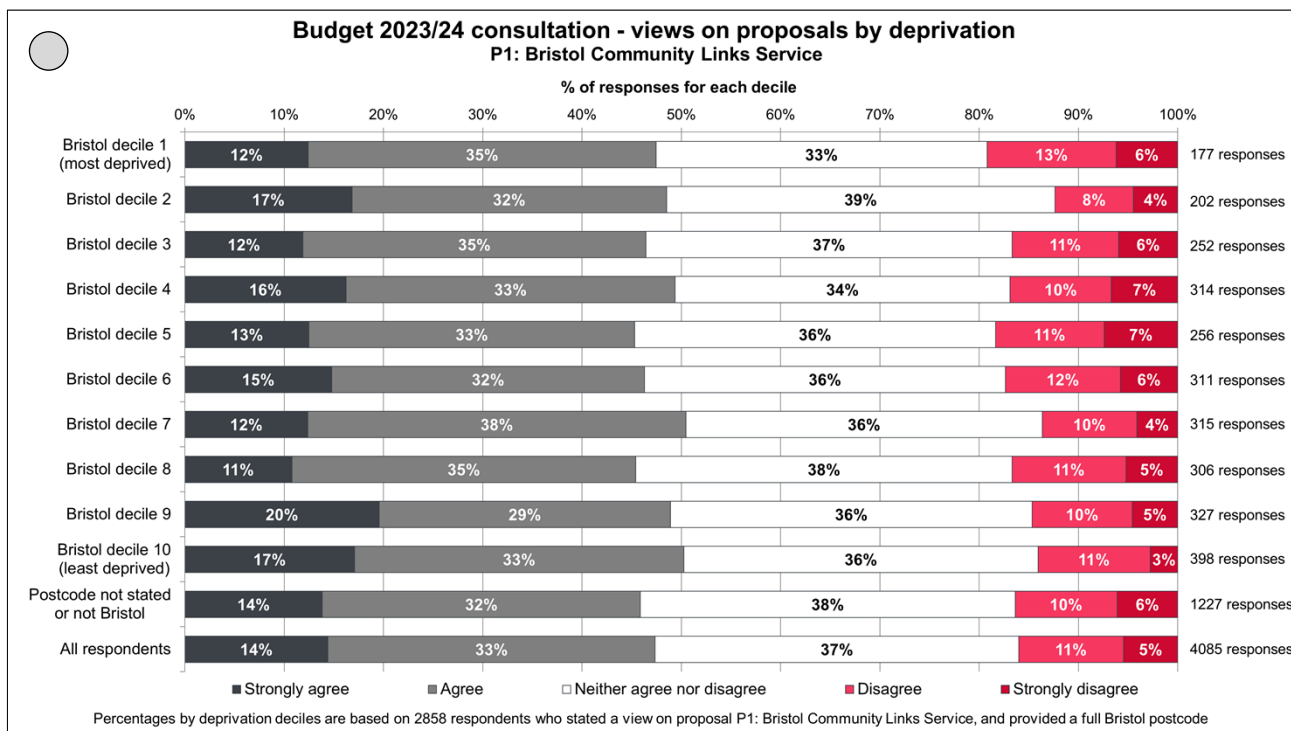
○ No clear trend in support with deprivation

**Figure A21: Proposal R20: Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme - by deprivation**



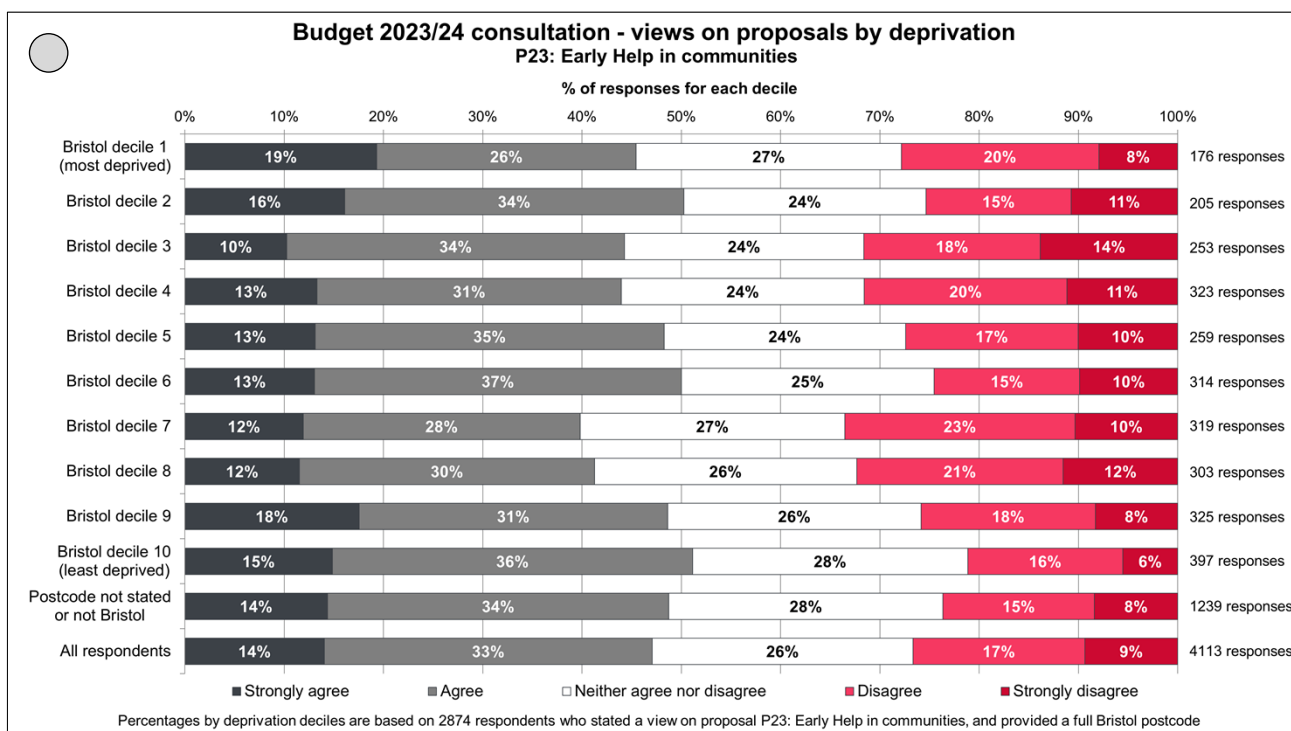
○ No clear trend in support with deprivation

**Figure A22: Proposal P1: Bristol Community Links Service - by deprivation**



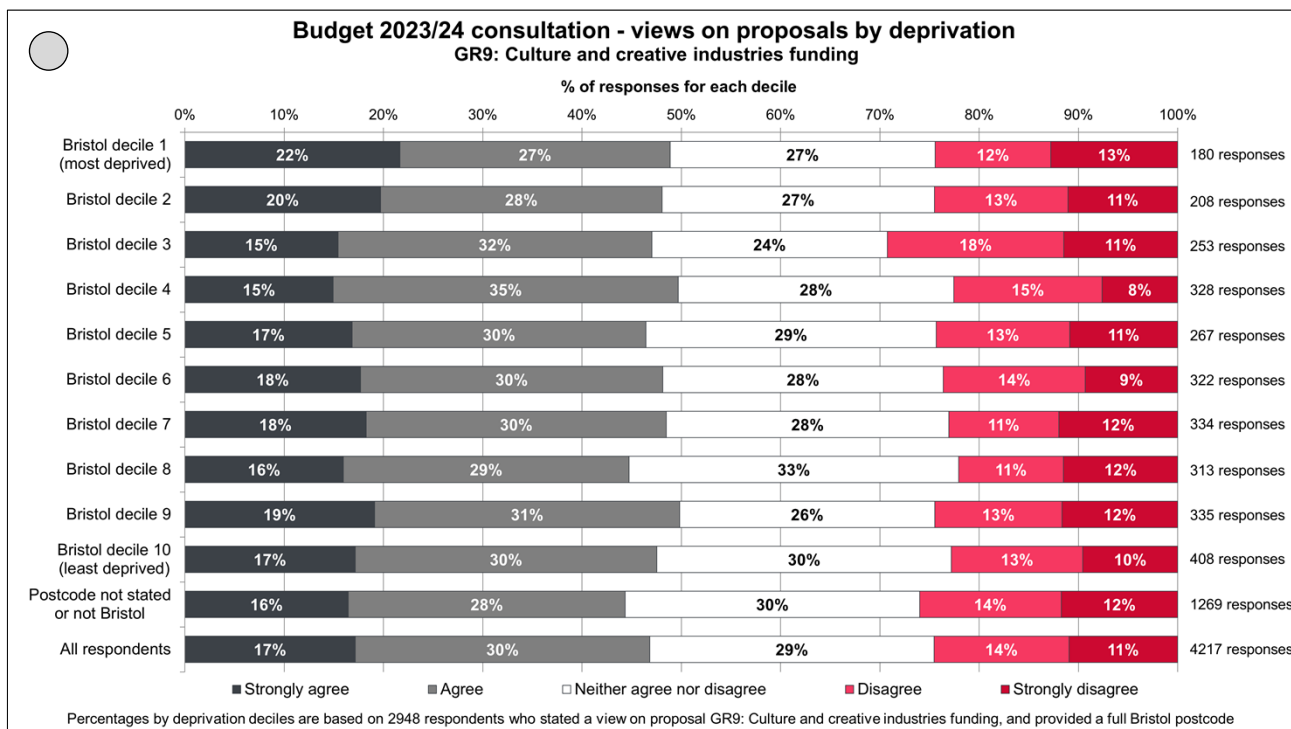
○ No clear trend in support with deprivation

**Figure A23: Proposal P23: Early Help in communities - by deprivation**



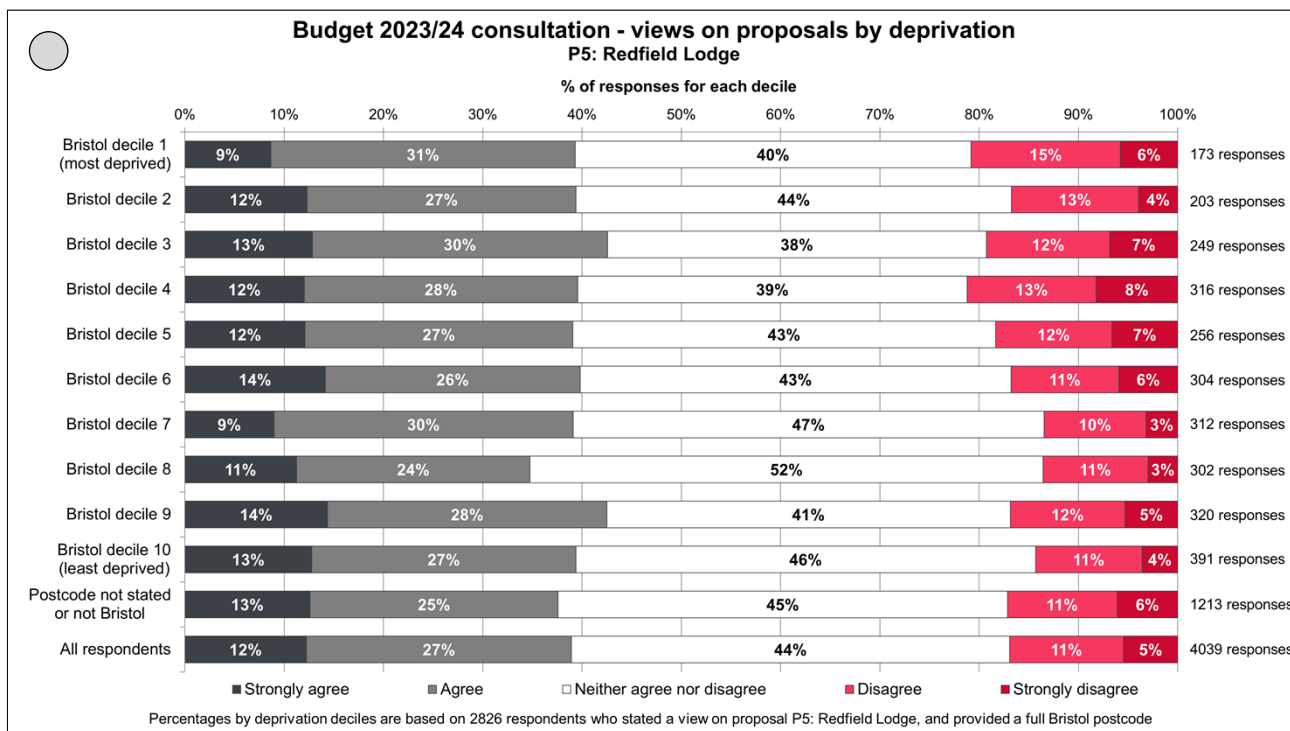
○ No clear trend in support with deprivation

**Figure A24: Proposal GR9: Culture and creative industries funding - by deprivation**



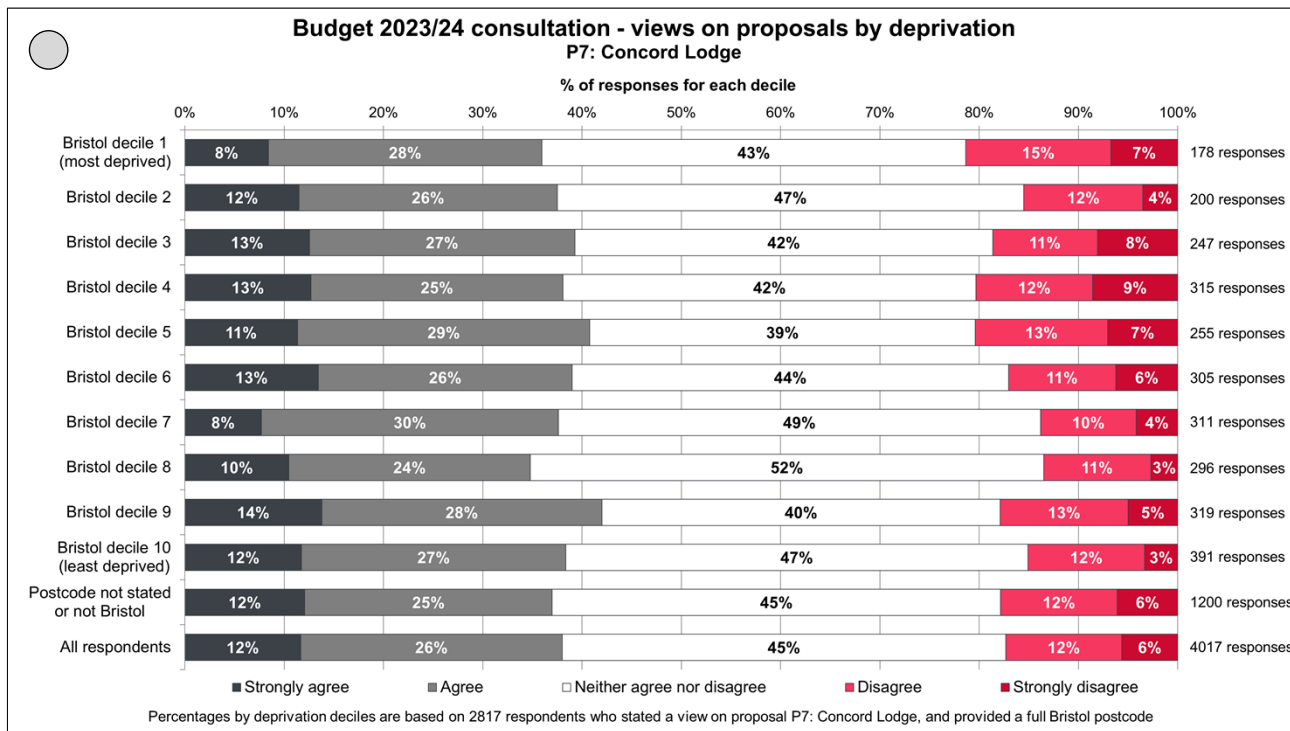
○ No clear trend in support with deprivation

**Figure A25: Proposal P5: Redfield Lodge - by deprivation**



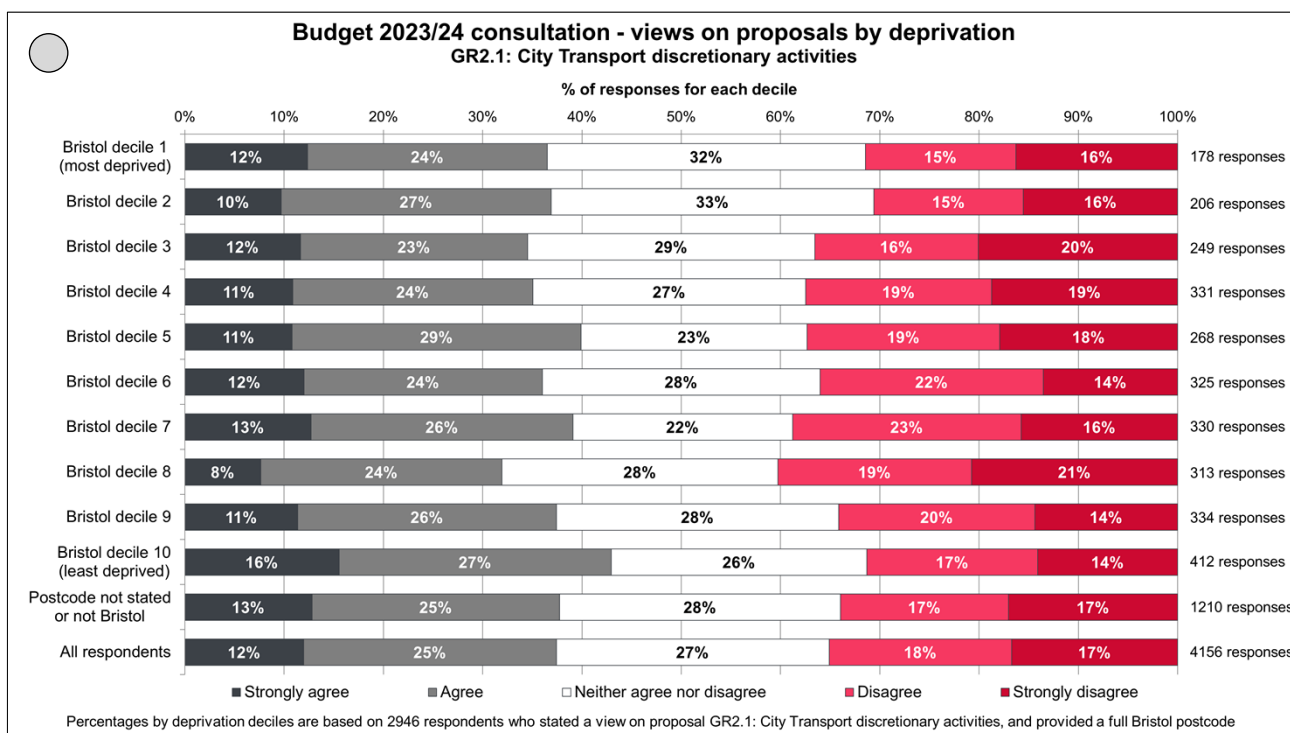
○ No clear trend in support with deprivation

**Figure A26: Proposal P7: Concord Lodge - by deprivation**



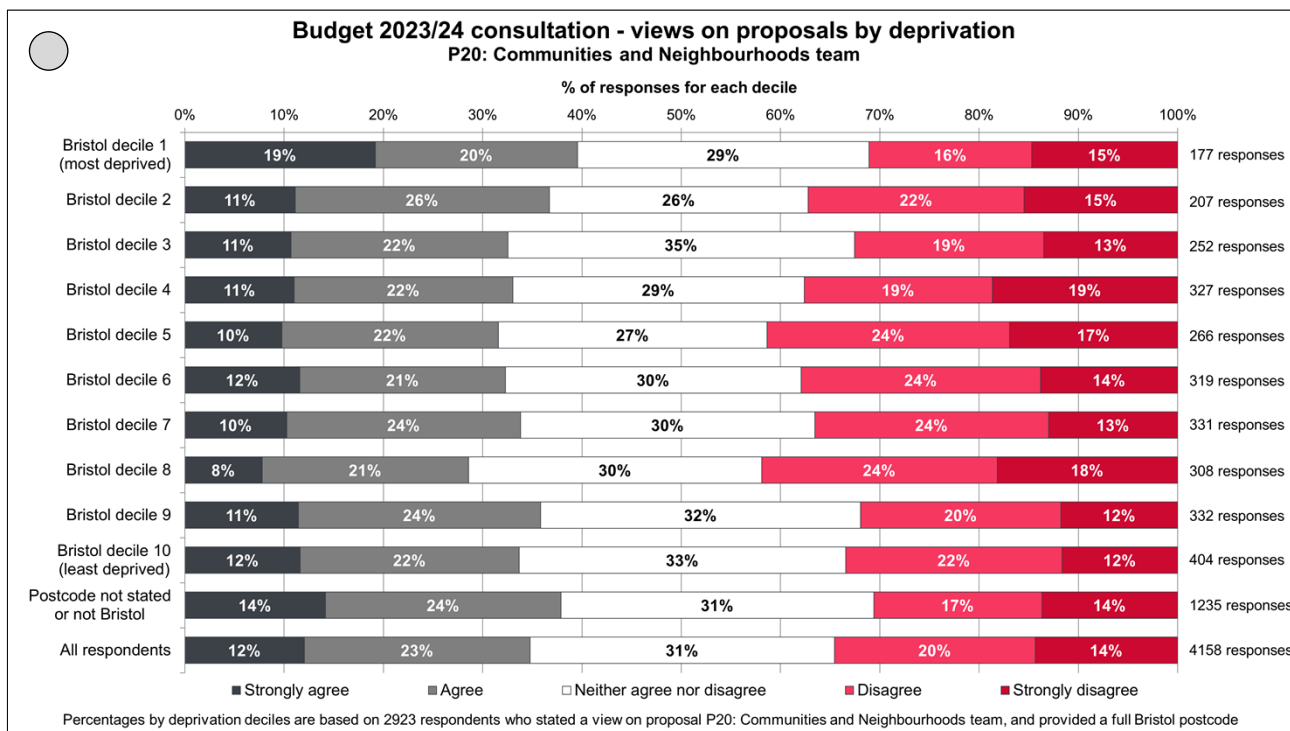
○ No clear trend in support with deprivation

**Figure A27: Proposal GR2.1: City Transport discretionary activities - by deprivation**



○ No clear trend in support with deprivation

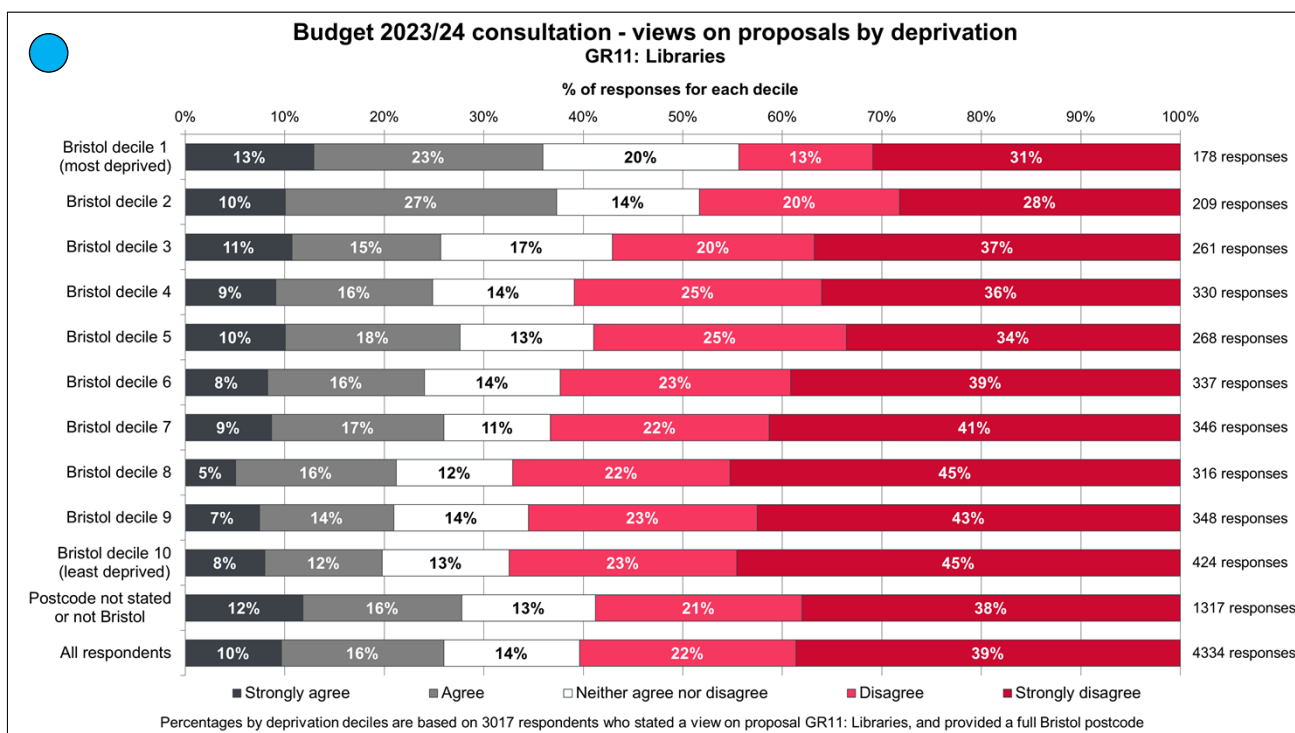
**Figure A28: Proposal P20: Communities and Neighbourhoods team - by deprivation**



○ No clear trend in support with deprivation

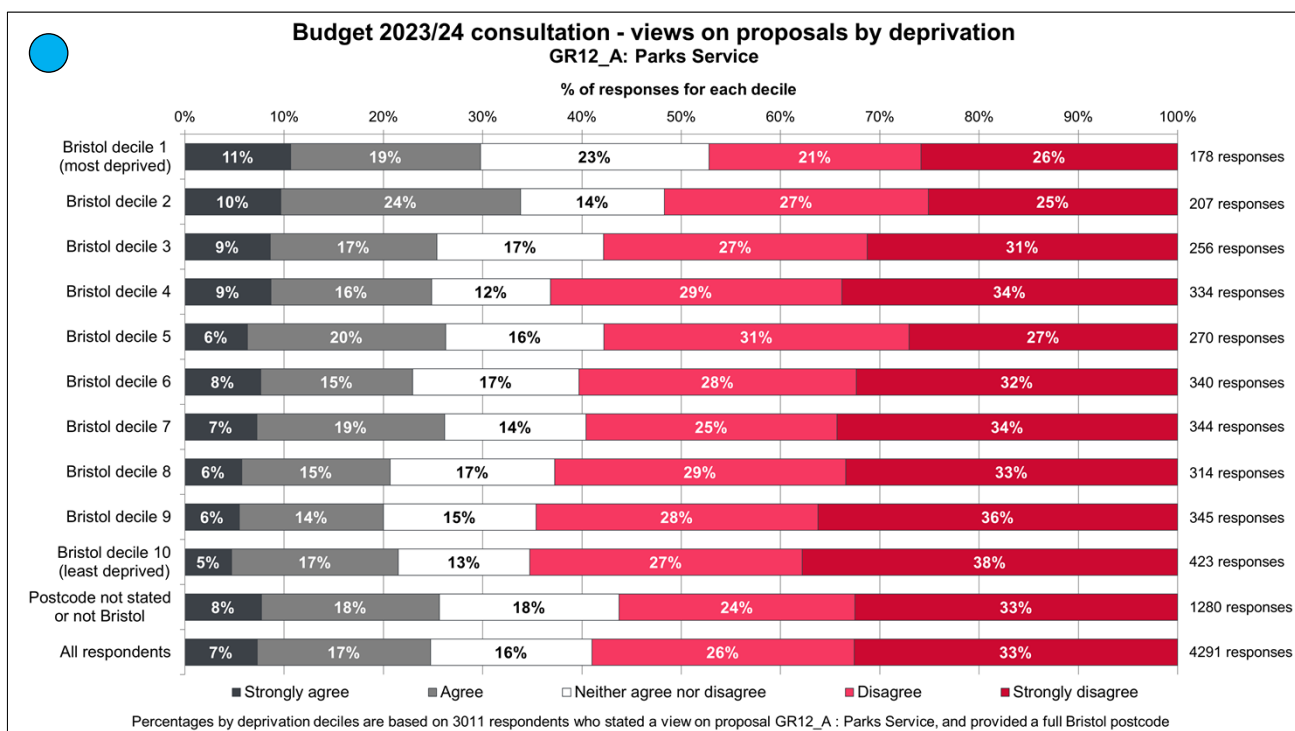


**Figure A29: Proposal GR11: Libraries - by deprivation**



Clear trend of decreasing support with reducing deprivation

**Figure A30: Proposal GR12\_A : Parks Service - by deprivation**



Clear trend of decreasing support with reducing deprivation