

Consultation and Engagement



Bristol's Budget

transport
adult social care
air quality
street cleaning
housing
waste
electoral services
children's services
libraries
climate change
museums

2021-22

Budget 2021/22 Consultation

Consultation Report v1

18 January 2021

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Executive Summary

ES1 Bristol City Council Budget 2021/22

The council's budget proposals will be considered by Cabinet on 26 January 2021 for recommendation to Full Council to consider and agree on 23 February 2021.

The budget sets out how much money the council will be able to spend on each service area. As part of the budget, Full Council will decide on the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept¹ for 2021/22.

Bristol City Council currently spends around £1 billion each year providing services to the people of Bristol. In 2020/21, over a third of the revenue budget was raised locally through Council Tax (£226 million; 22%) and Business Rates (£137 million; 13%). The remaining 65% (£663 million) funding came in grants from the government (such as schools funding) and other income such as fees and charges we make for some of the services we provide.

As part of the council's budget planning, the council agreed in February 2018 that Council Tax increases would be reviewed annually and only changed where necessary and justifiable.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in additional spending, loss of income from income-generating services like museums, loss of commercial rent and parking income as well as locally raised taxes, Council Tax and Businesses Rates.

Up to the end of November 2020 the council had received from the government four tranches of emergency funding support, additional specific grants and estimated funding in the recovery of income losses totalling £94.8m in 2020/21. These are used to mitigate the in-year financial pressures, taking into account other potential forecast funding yet to be confirmed, it is currently forecasted that no in-year mitigation from local resource would be required.

The decision on the council's budget will be made in the context of additional pressures due to rising costs and demand for services, potential changes to grants and Business Rates, ongoing impact of COVID-19 on public finances and much uncertainty as to what will happen in the future .

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

ES2 The Budget 2021/22 consultation

The Budget 2021/22 consultation took place between 16 November and 28 December 2020. The consultation sought views from the public (including businesses and organisations which represent non-domestic rate payers²) about options for the level of Council Tax increase and Social Care Precept in 2021/22, in order to inform decisions to be made by Full Council in February 2021.

The Budget 2021/22 consultation focused on Council Tax and Social Care Precept options and did not include new savings proposals. Should assumptions change or new plans be identified that require consultation, we will consult on specific service proposals before making a decision about changes to services.

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 2021/22 limits for Council Tax (up to 2%) and Social Care Precept (3%) in the Spending Review 2020 on 25 November, after the start of the Budget 2021/22 consultation. The limits set by government necessitated changes to the consultation options part way through the consultation, as described below. The options were changed on 29 November.

The Budget 2021/22 consultation sought feedback on:

- The level of core Council Tax in 2021/22 to support the delivery of services, with options of no increase, a 1% increase or a 2% increase³. (An option of a 3% increase was included until the government spending review announced the limit for core Council Tax would be set at 2%);
- A Social Care Precept ring-fenced to support the delivery of adult social care, with options of no precept, a 1% precept, a 2% precept or a 3% precept. (The 3% option was added after the spending review announced the limit for 2021/22 would be 3%)⁴;
- Respondents' reasons for the Council Tax and Social Care Precept options they selected.

² 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.

³ 2% is the maximum amount the council can raise Council Tax in 2021/22 without holding a local referendum. This limit is set by government. The 2% limit was announced in the Spending Review 2020 on 25 November. - after the consultation go live date of 16 November. Respondents were able to choose a Council Tax increase of up to 3% before the spending review and up to 2% after the spending review.

⁴ The council is allowed to add a Social Care Precept of up to 3% to Council Tax in 2021/22. This is in addition to the permitted increase of up to 2% for core Council Tax.. Respondents were able to choose a Social Care Precept of up to 2% before the spending review and up to 3% after the spending review.

The Budget 2021/22 consultation comprised information about the council's financial position and an [online survey](#). Downloadable print and [Easy Read](#) formats were also available online on the Consultation and Engagement Hub. Paper copies of the survey and alternative accessible formats, including language translations, were available on request.

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

ES3 Scope and use of this report

This report describes the methodology and presents the outcome of the Budget 2021/22 consultation. It includes quantitative data and analysis of free text comments from the consultation survey responses.

This consultation report does not contain the council's recommendations for the level of Council Tax increase or Social Care Precept (if any) in 2021/22, 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, for 2021/22. The final proposals are included in a separate report which, together with this consultation report, will be considered by Cabinet on 26 January 2021. Full Council will also consider this consultation report in making its decisions about the 2021/22 budget at the Full Council meeting on 23 February 2021.

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

ES4 Budget 2021/22 consultation - Key findings

ES4.1 Response rate

The Budget 2021/22 consultation survey received 2,006 responses, all of which were completed online. Of these, 757 (38%) respondents completed the consultation between 16 November and 29 November (before the changes to the options necessitated by the spending review) and 1,249 (62%) respondents completed the consultation between 29 November and 28 December.

1,683 responses (84%) were received from postcodes within the Bristol City Council area, 19 (1%) responses were from South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, and Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES). A further eight (0.4%) were from unspecified locations within the four West of England authorities and one response was from further afield.

282 (15%) did not provide a postcode.

Analysis of respondents’ postcodes shows that there was an under-representation of responses from the most deprived 20% of the city, and response rates from the least deprived 30% of the city were over-represented.

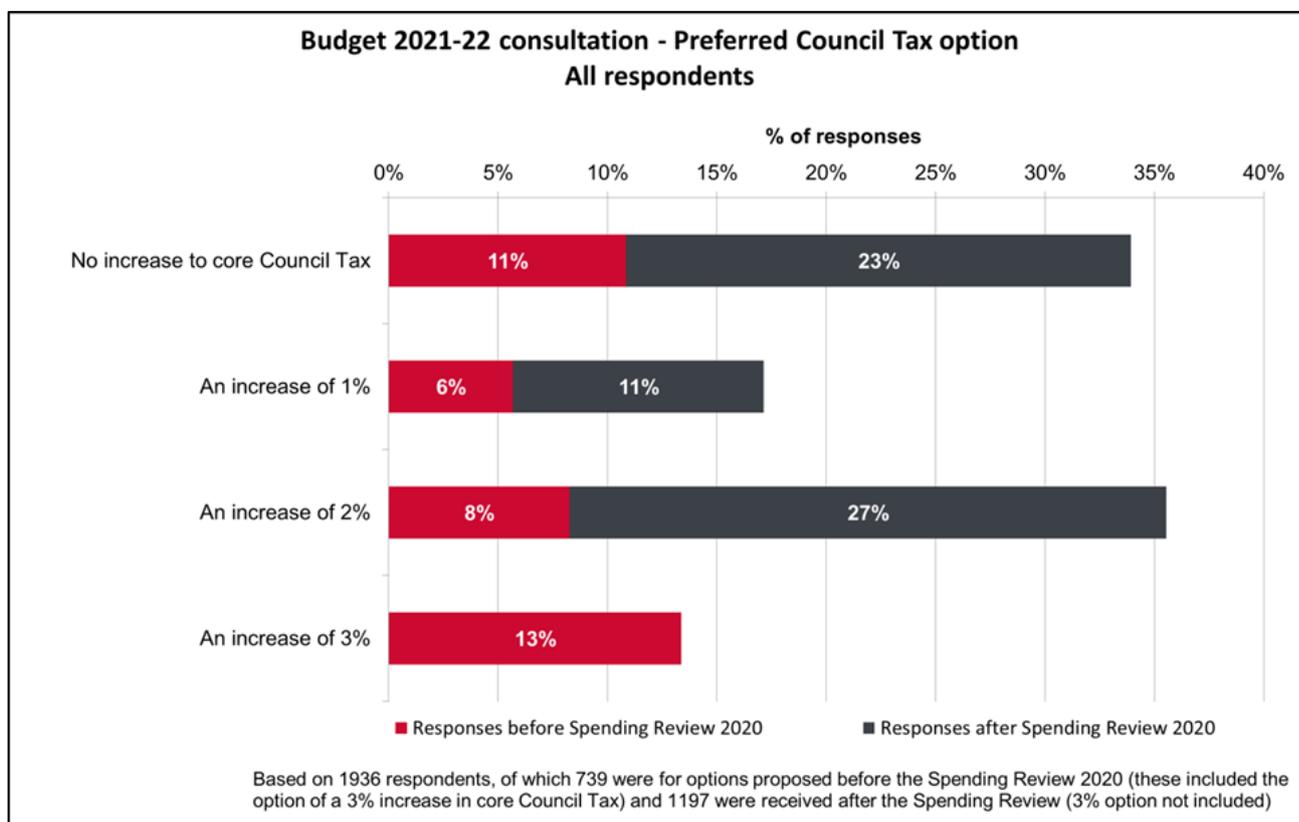
Response rates from young people (aged 24 and younger), black, Asian & minority ethnic (BAME) citizens, and people of faith were under-represented compared to these groups’ proportions of Bristol’s population. A map of response rate by ward for the Bristol respondents is presented in Chapter 3 along with the details of age profile, sex and other respondent characteristics.

ES4.2 Council Tax 2021/22

1,936 (97%) of the 2,006 people who responded to the consultation, stated the level of core Council Tax increase they would prefer in 2021/22, from the options provided. Figure ES1 shows the proportions who prefer each option. 70 people did not answer this question.

Of the 1,936 respondents who stated their preferred level of Council Tax, 739 (38%) responded between 16 and 29 November choosing from no increase, 1%, 2% or 3%. 1,197 (62%) responded between 29 November and 28 December (following the spending review), choosing from no increase, 1% or 2%.

Figure ES1: Preferred level of core Council Tax increase in 2021/22



A majority of respondents (66%) favour an increase in core Council Tax. Of these:

- 332 (17% of all 1,936 respondents) would prefer a 1% increase in core Council Tax;
- 688 (36%) favour a 2% increase⁵;
- 259 (13%) respondents would prefer a 3% increase in Core Council Tax⁶.

657 (34%) respondents would prefer ‘no increase to Council Tax’ in 2021/22.

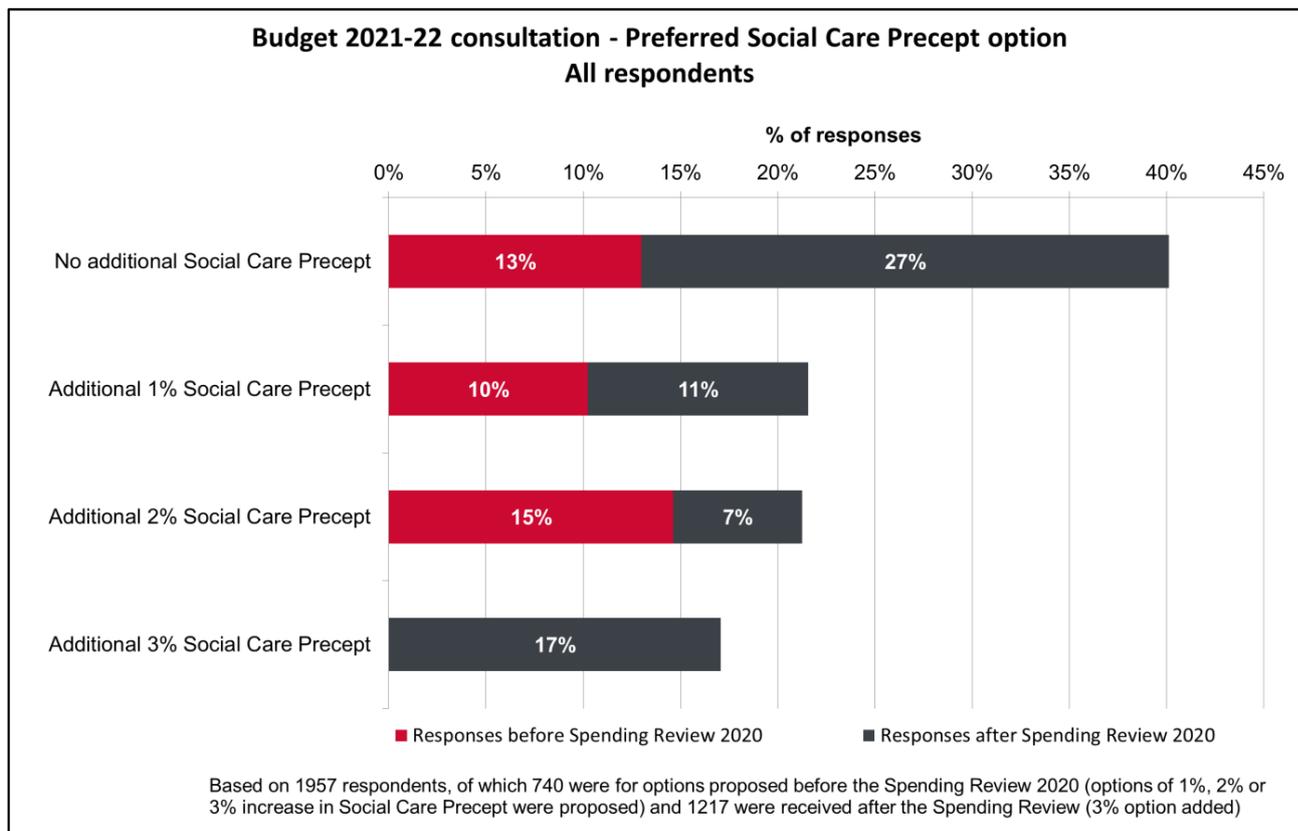
Comparison of the red bars in Figure ES1 shows that a 3% increase in Council Tax would be the single option with highest support, if it were permitted. The grey bars show that when the 3% option was withdrawn, support for the 2% option increases substantially.

ES4.3 Social Care Precept 2021/22

Of the 2,006 people who responded to the budget consultation, 1,957 (98%) expressed a preference for the level of Social Care Precept in 2021/22. Figure ES2 shows the proportions who prefer each option. 49 people did not answer this question.

Of the 1,957 respondents who stated their preferred level of Social Care Precept, 740 (38%) responded between 16 and 29 November choosing from no increase, 1% or 2%. 1,217 (62%) responded between 29 November and 28 December (following the spending review), choosing from no increase, 1%, 2% or 3%.

Figure ES2: Preferred level of Social Care Precept in 2021/22



⁵ A 2% increase in core Council Tax is the maximum increase permitted without requiring a local referendum.

⁶ The 3% option was only available between 16 and 29 November.

A majority of respondents (60%) favour an additional Social Care Precept (on top of core Council Tax) to support the delivery of adult social care. Of these:

- 422 (22%⁷ of all 1,957 respondents) would prefer a 1% Social Care Precept;
- 416 (21%) favour a 2% Social Care Precept; and
- 334 (17%) would prefer a 3% Social Care Precept⁸.

785 (40%) respondents would prefer no increase to Social Care Precept in 2021/22.

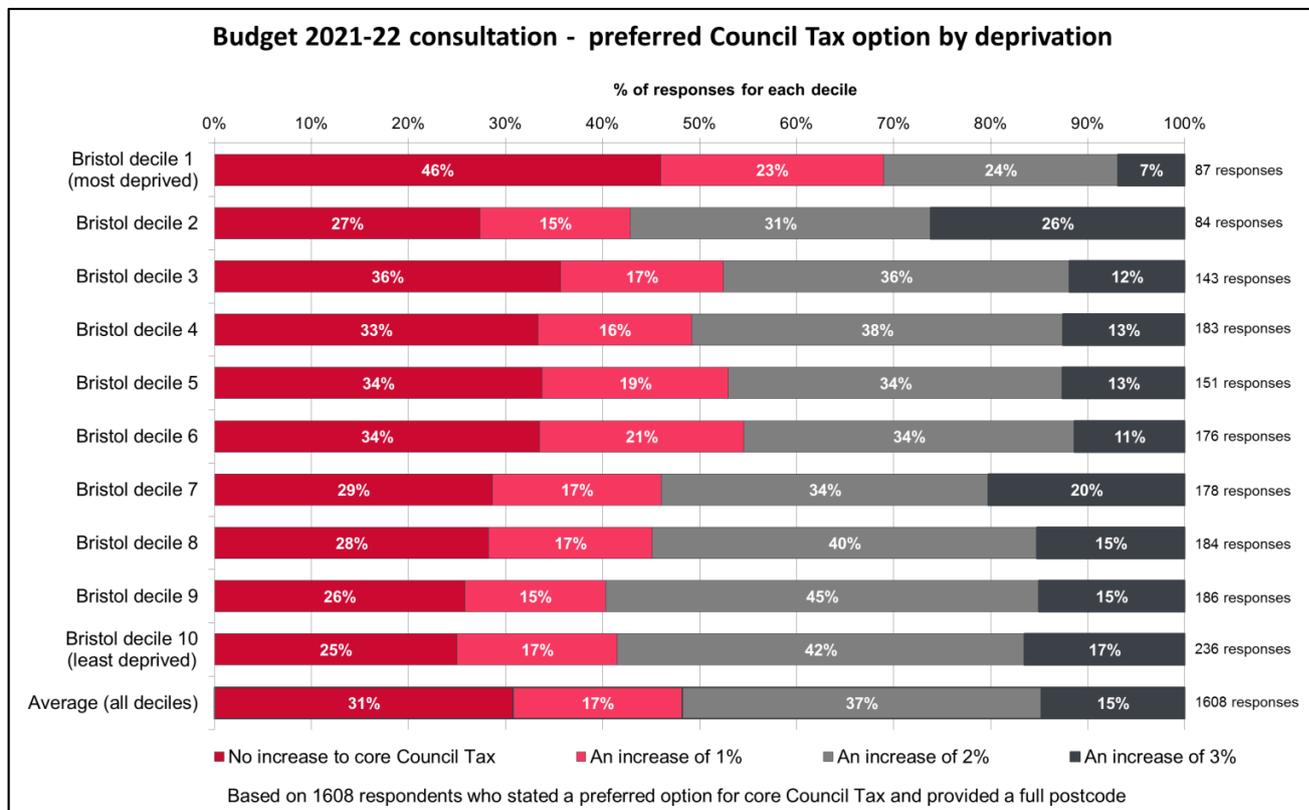
The red bars in Figure ES2 show that a 2% increase in Council Tax would be the single option with highest support, when 2% is the highest increase available. When a 3% option was included (grey bars), support for the 2% option appears to switch to the new 3% option.

Comparison of Figures ES1 and ES2 indicates more support for increasing core Council Tax than Social Care Precept. A higher proportion of respondents want no increase to Social Care Precept (40%) than want no increase to core Council Tax (34%). More people want a 2% or 3% increase to core Council Tax (49%) than want a 2% or 3% increase in Social Care Precept (38%).

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

Views on the preferred level of core Council Tax were compared for respondents from areas with different levels of deprivation (Figure ES3).

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



⁷ Percentages on the chart may differ slightly from those in the text due to rounding.

⁸ 3% Adult Social Care Precept is the maximum increase permitted by government in 2021/22. The 3% option was only available between 29 November and 28 December.

Preference for higher levels of core Council Tax tends to increase with reducing deprivation. Support for **no increase** in core Council Tax is highest among respondents from the more deprived areas of Bristol. This is markedly so for the most deprived 10% of Bristol (decile 1). Support for a **2% or 3% increase** is higher in the less deprived areas and exceeds 50% in deciles 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

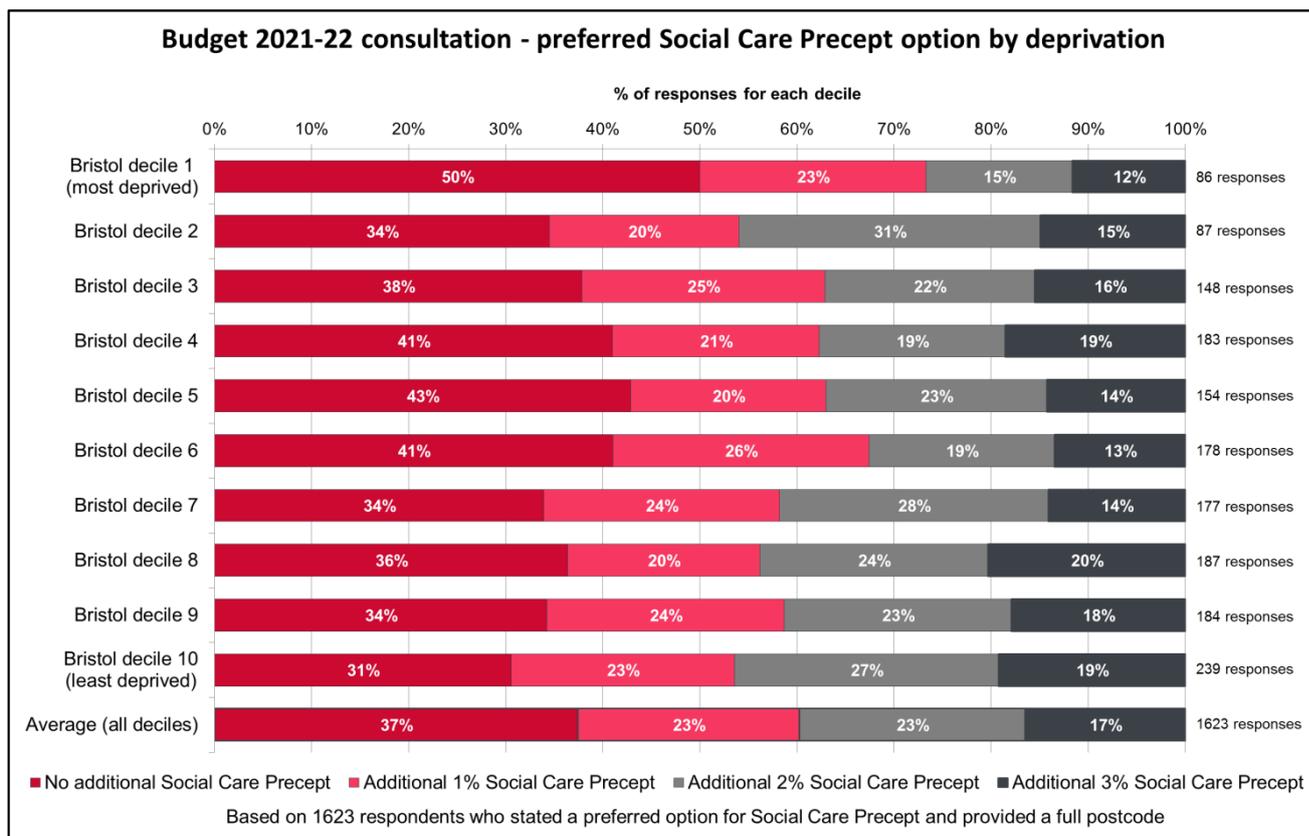
ES4.5 Views on the level of Social Care Precept in areas of high and low deprivation

As with core Council Tax, support for a Social Care Precept follows an inverse trend with deprivation (Figure ES4).

Support for a 3% Social Care Precept is higher in the less deprived areas and is lower in the more deprived areas. There is higher support for no Social Care Precept in the more deprived areas than in less deprived areas, particularly for the most deprived 10% of Bristol (decile 1) in which 50% prefer no increase and 23% want a 1% increase.

There are no clear trends in support for the 1% and 2% options for Social Care Precept. However, there is notably low support for a 2% option among respondents in decile 1.

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



1 Introduction

1.1 Context

On 23 February 2021, Full Council will set the council's budget for the 2021/22 financial year. The budget sets out how much money the council will be able to spend on each service area. As part of the budget, Full Council will decide on the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept⁹ for 2021/22.

The council is currently able to increase Council Tax by up to 2%¹⁰ to help fund general services, without a local referendum. A Social Care Precept of up to 3% can be added to support the delivery of adult social care (this is in addition to the permitted increase of up to 2% in core Council Tax for general services). These limits are set by government¹¹. There was not enough time to hold a local referendum on increases above these limits before Full Council decides on its 2021/22 budget in February 2021.

The Budget 2021/22 consultation took place between 16 November and 28 December 2020 and sought views from the public (including businesses and organisations which represent non-domestic rate payers¹²) about options for the level of Council Tax increase and Social Care Precept in 2021/22.

This consultation report describes the consultation methodology and the feedback received, which will be considered by Cabinet and Full Council before decisions on the 2021/22 budget are made by Full Council in February 2021.

⁹ Adult Social Care Precept is a levy on top of core Council Tax, which is dedicated to help pay for adult social care.

¹⁰ Where we refer to a 2% increase in Council Tax, we are using 2% as shorthand for an increase of 1.99%.

¹¹ The limits of a 2% increase in Council Tax and 3% for Social Care Precept were announced in the government's Spending Review 2020 on 25 November. This was after the start of the Budget Consultation on 16 November and necessitated changes to the consultation options part way through the consultation. The options were changed on 29 November:

- From 16 to 29 November, respondents were able to choose Council Tax options of no increase, or increases of 1%, 2% or 3%. From 29 November to 28 December, the 3% option for Council Tax was removed.
- From 16 to 29 November, respondents were able to choose Social care Precept options of no additional precept, 1% or 2% additional precept. From 29 November to 28 December, an option of 3% precept was included.

¹² 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

1.2 Funding pressures and uncertainty

Bristol City Council spends around £1 billion each year providing a range of services to the people of Bristol. The money the council has to spend on delivering day-to-day services to citizens is called the revenue budget. A third of this budget is raised locally through Council Tax (£226 million; 22%) and Business Rates (£137 million; 13%). The remaining 65% (£663 million) funding comes from grants from the government (e.g. schools funding) and other income such as fees and charges we make for some of the services we provide.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in additional spending, loss of income from income-generating services like museums, loss of commercial rent and parking income as well as locally raised taxes, Council Tax and Businesses Rates.

Up to the end of November 2020 the council had received from the government four tranches of emergency funding support, additional specific grants and estimated funding in the recovery of income losses totalling £94.8m in 2020/21. These are used to mitigate the in-year financial pressures, taking into account other potential forecast funding yet to be confirmed, it is currently forecasted that no in-year mitigation from local resource would be required.

There is much uncertainty as to what will happen in the future and the associated long term impact of COVID-19 on public finances. The decision on the council's budget will be made in the context of additional pressures due to:

- the potential ending of one-off grants e.g. the social care grant;
- potential changes to the level of Business Rates that the council can retain locally (i.e. rates that are not collected by the government);
- the price of our contracts; including payments to social care providers for the costs of paying the increases in the National Living Wage;
- population growth and a rise in demand for many of our services; particularly social care;
- additional spending in our response to the pandemic and the loss of income which will continue into next year and beyond.

This could mean that any costs that cannot be covered by grants or additional government funding in response to COVID-19 might have to be paid for through Council Tax.

1.3 Budget 2021/22 consultation

The Budget 2021/22 consultation sought citizens' views on the level of Council Tax with options of no increase, a 1% increase or a 2% increase, each of which would have different

implications for the amount of money the council could spend on general council services. For the first two weeks of the consultation, the options included a 3% increase in core Council Tax. The 3% option was withdrawn on 29 November when the government set a limit of a 2% increase in Council Tax, without a local referendum .

The consultation also asked citizens what level of Social Care Precept they would prefer next year to support the delivery of adult social care, in addition to the increase in Council Tax for general services. Options for the level of Social Care Precept were no increase, a 1% increase, 2% increase or 3% increase. The 3% option was included on 29 November in line with the limit set by government in the Spending Review 2020

We have previously consulted in 2016 and 2017 on the amount of the savings which are already included in the council's financial plans and work continues across the council to further develop and deliver the agreed savings. The Budget 2021/22 consultation therefore did not include new savings proposals. Should assumptions change or new plans be identified that require consultation, we will consult on specific service proposals before making a decision about changes to services.

The consultation information and questions are summarised in section 2.1.1 and the full [consultation survey](#) can be viewed online.

1.4 Structure of this report

Chapter 2 of this report describes the Budget 2021/22 consultation methodology.

Chapters 3 to 6 present the Budget 2021/22 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' reasons for their preferences and other comments provided as free text.
- Chapter 6 describes feedback received in other correspondence (emails and letters).

Chapter 7 describes how this report will be used and how to keep updated on the decision-making process.

2 Methodology

2.1 Survey

2.1.1 Online survey

The [Budget 2021/22 consultation survey](#) was available on the council's Consultation and Engagement Hub (bristol.gov.uk/consultationhub) between 16 November and 28 December 2020. Downloadable print and [Easy Read](#) formats were also available on the Consultation and Engagement Hub.

Survey information

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

- Details of the council's revenue budget (the money available to spend on delivering day-to-day services). This included an overview of where the money comes from, a breakdown of how Council Tax revenue is spent (based on 2020/21 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 in 2020/21 due to the amount we have spent in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and due to loss of council income (e.g. through library and museum closures, reductions in commercial renting and parking income);
- An outline of the council's capital investment programme to 2023;
- A link to the council's [Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 – 2025/26](#), which estimates a funding gap* of £28.3 million next year (2021/22);
- An outline of the additional funding we have received, and are expecting to receive, from the government in response to COVID-19 (figures current in October 2020);
- Details of the assistance the council is providing to households in meeting their Council Tax bills and details of assistance the council is providing to households experiencing hardship as a result of COVID-19;
- An explanation of council reserves;
- The context of increasing costs and future funding uncertainties, including COVID-19, which could mean that any costs that cannot be covered by grants, or additional funding from the government, might have to be paid for through Council Tax;

- Forecasts of how much additional revenue would be raised in 2021/22 by each of the proposed core Council Tax options (increases of 0%, 1% or 2%) and each of the options for the level of Social Care Precept (0%, 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 plus Social Care Precept option (0%, 1%, and 2% for Council Tax plus 0%, 1%, 2% and 3% Social Care Precept).

Survey questions

The survey questions sought respondents' views on the following:

- The level of core Council Tax to support the delivery of general council services in 2021/22, with options of no increase, a 1% increase or a 2% increase¹³;
- The level of Social Care Precept in addition to the increase in core Council Tax, with options of no precept, a 1% precept, a 2% precept or a 3% precept¹⁴;
- Respondents' reasons for their views on the preferred level of Council Tax and the level of Social Care Precept

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

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

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

¹³ An option of a 3% increase for core Council Tax also included between 16 and 29 November, prior to the government spending review which set the limit at a 2% increase.

¹⁴ .The 3% option for Social Care Precept was included between 29 November and 28 December, in line with the limit set in the spending review.

2.1.2 Alternative formats

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

2.1.3 Other correspondence

Nine emails were received in response to the consultation. These are reported separately to the survey responses in Chapter 6.

2.2 Publicity and briefings

2.2.1 Objective

The following programme of activity was carried out to publicise and explain the Budget 2021/22 consultation. The primary objective was to involve residents, stakeholders, businesses and representatives of non-domestic ratepayers across the city in decisions on the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept by ensuring that information was shared across a wide range of channels, reaching as broad a range of audiences as possible in order to maximise response rates. Areas of the city which tend to respond to surveys in low numbers were specifically targeted.

2.2.2 Bristol City Council channels

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

- BCC weekly business e-newsletter – 1,400 recipients;
- Ask Bristol e-bulletin – 4,923 recipients;
- COVID citizen e-newsletter - 50,673 recipients
- All Members / Councillors;
- Invitation emails sent to 3,924 users of the online Council Tax account system. Emails were sent on 4 December, with follow-up emails sent to those who had not yet responded to the survey on 17 December;
- Invitation emails sent to 120 businesses
- Email to 1,300 members of the Citizen's Panel;
- Staff notified of the consultation through the council's internal newsletter.
- Communications pushed out through the One City Economy Board

2.2.3 Members

A digital engagement pack including assets for social media and digital advertisement of the consultation was sent directly to members.

2.2.4 Bristol City Council Partners, Businesses and Voluntary Sector Organisations

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

Details of the consultation were shared with 346 businesses and representatives of business organisations (including Business West, local Business Improvement Districts and the Federation of Small Businesses), voluntary sector organisations, equalities groups and faith groups with a request for information to be circulated through their networks. The response rates for the above groups and organisations are available in section 3.4.

2.2.5 Media engagement

Press releases were distributed to media contacts and local community newsletters on 17 November detailing the options for the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept from April 2021. This resulted in media coverage in Bristol Post and local community newsletters such as the Voice magazines, the Pigeon and Up Our Street.

2.2.6 Social Media – posts, outreach and advertising

Regular posts on Bristol City Council's social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, Next Door and Instagram) were made for the duration of the consultation, with increased posts at launch, 'two weeks left' and in the final days. These organic posts reached over 10,000 people resulting in 596 survey link clicks.

Paid for Facebook advertising was employed to engage targeted areas of the city and encourage responses to the budget consultation. The target areas were selected by analysing the responses received after four weeks and prioritising wards with low response rates. In addition posts through Nextdoor were specifically targeted to 10 areas showing a lower response rate. Social media accounted for the following number of responses¹⁵:

- Facebook 15% (294 respondents)
- Twitter 2.3% (46 respondents)
- Next Door 5.4% (108 respondents)
- Instagram 0.3% (7 respondents).

¹⁵ Based on responses to the survey question 'How did you hear about this consultation?'

2.2.7 Radio

Ujima Radio did live reads of the consultation advert 4 weeks into the consultation.

In addition, a digital 'radio' advert was published a week before the deadline with 105,000 guaranteed impressions targeted at the 10 lowest responding wards.

3 Survey response rate and respondent characteristics

3.1 Response rate to the survey

The Budget 2021/22 consultation survey received 2,006 responses, all of which were completed online. Of these, 757 (38%) respondents completed the consultation between 16 November and 29 November (before the changes to the options necessitated by the spending review) and 1,249 (62%) respondents completed the consultation between 29 November and 28 December.

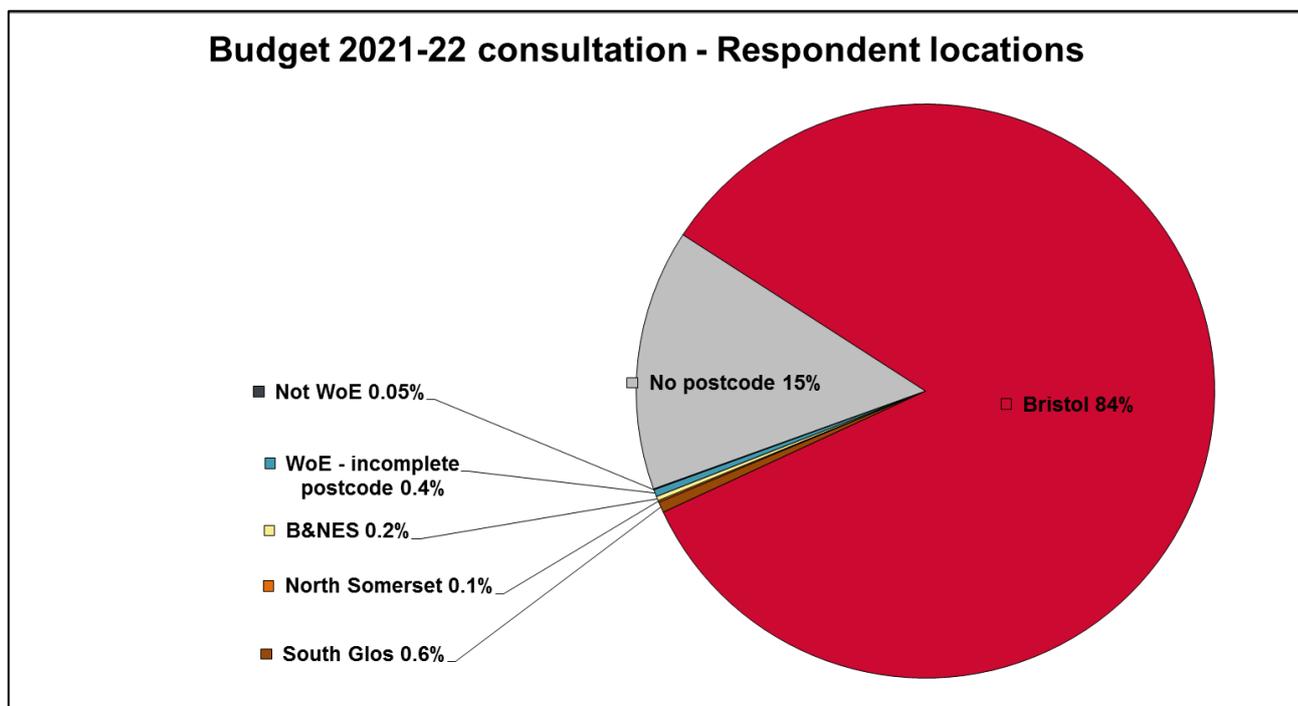
3.2 Geographic distribution of responses

1,683 responses (84%) were received from postcodes within the Bristol City Council area, 12 (0.6%) responses were from South Gloucestershire, two (0.1%) were from North Somerset, and five (0.2%) were from Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES). A further eight (0.4%) were from unspecified locations within the four West of England authorities¹⁶ and one response was from further afield (Figure 1).

282 (15%) did not provide a postcode.

Of the 1,683 responses from within the Bristol City Council area, 1,652 provided full or partial postcodes from which the ward of origin could be identified¹⁷ (Figure 2).

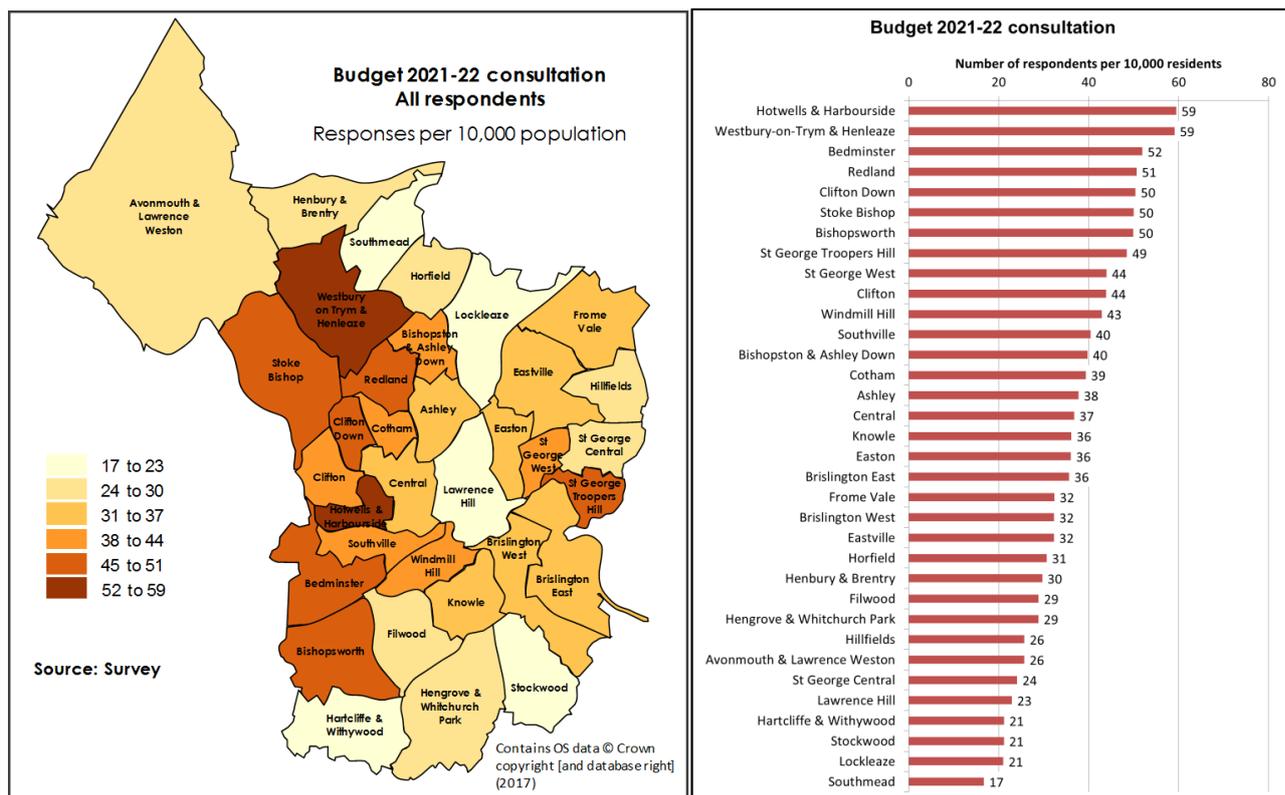
Figure 1: geographic distribution of responses



¹⁶ Incomplete postcodes identified the home location as within the WOE authorities area (Bristol, B&NES, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire), but not which authority.

¹⁷ The other 31 responses included incomplete postcodes which are within Bristol but do not include enough information to identify a specific ward.

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 city¹⁸ 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.

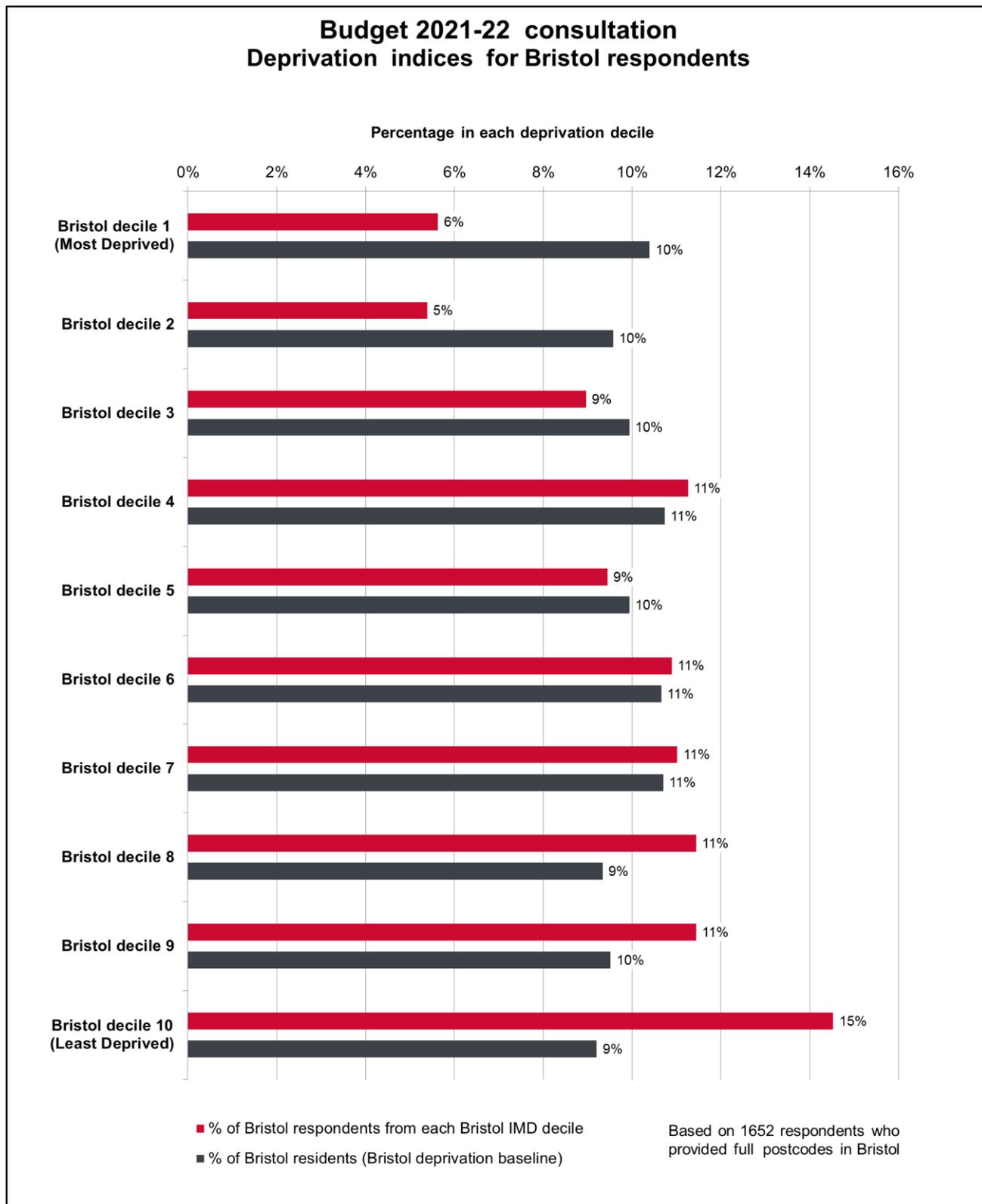
The comparison looked at levels of deprivation in 10 bands (known as ‘deciles’) from decile 1 (most deprived) to decile 10 (least deprived). Figure 3 compares the percentage of Bristol respondents¹⁹ living in each of the deprivation deciles (red bars) to the percentage of all Bristol citizens who live in each decile (grey bars).

¹⁸ The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes information about deprivation for 32,844 small areas - known as ‘Lower Super Output Areas’ (LSOAs) - throughout England. For each of these areas, a measure of deprivation is published called ‘Indices of Multiple Deprivation’ (IMD), which takes into account 37 aspects of each area that cover income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment. The postcodes provided by respondents to the consultation enabled each respondent to be matched to one of the 263 Lower Super Output Areas that cover the Bristol City Council area and thus to one of the deprivation deciles. Note that postcodes provide approximate locations; they are not used to identify individuals or specific addresses.

¹⁹ Based on 1,652 respondents who provided full postcodes in the Bristol administrative area from which deprivation decile can be identified.

Figure 3 shows that there was under-representation of responses from the most deprived 20% of the city (deciles 1 and 2), and response rates from the least deprived 30% of the city (deciles 8, 9 and 10) were over-represented. Response rates from deciles 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 closely match the proportion of Bristol citizens living in these deciles.

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



(Percentages in Figure 3 are given to the nearest integer. The length of bars in the chart reflects the unrounded percentage; hence bars shown as 10% may be slightly different in length.)

3.4 Characteristics of respondents

1,907 (95%) people answered one or more of the equalities monitoring questions.

Respondent characteristics are summarised below. The charts compare:

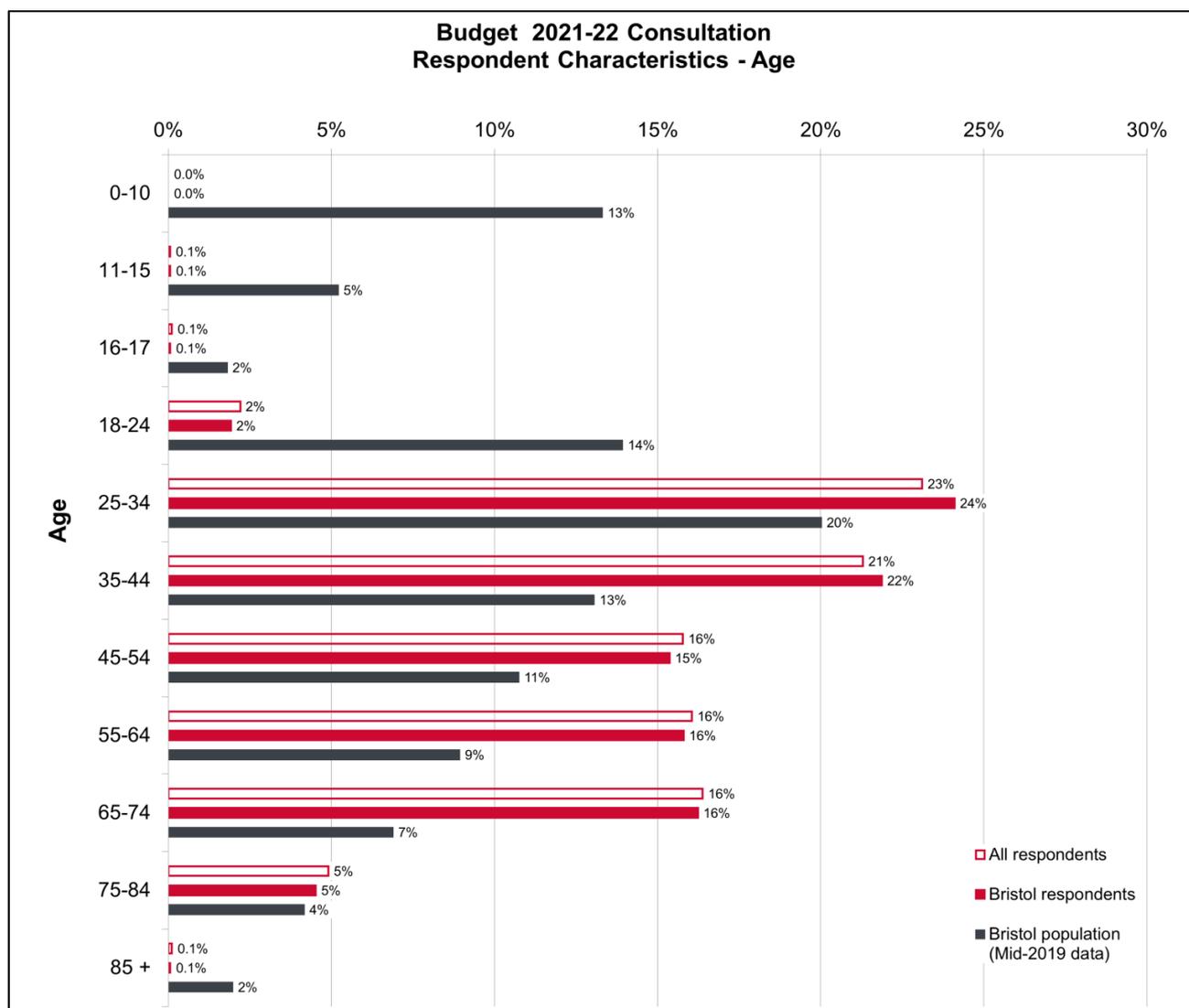
- Characteristics for all respondents who answered the equalities questions;
- Characteristics of respondents who provided a Bristol postcode;
- Characteristics of all Bristol citizens. This is available for five protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, ethnicity and religion/faith) for which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

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

Age

The highest number of responses were from respondents aged 25-34 years (23%), followed by 35-44 (21%).

Figure 4: Age of respondents

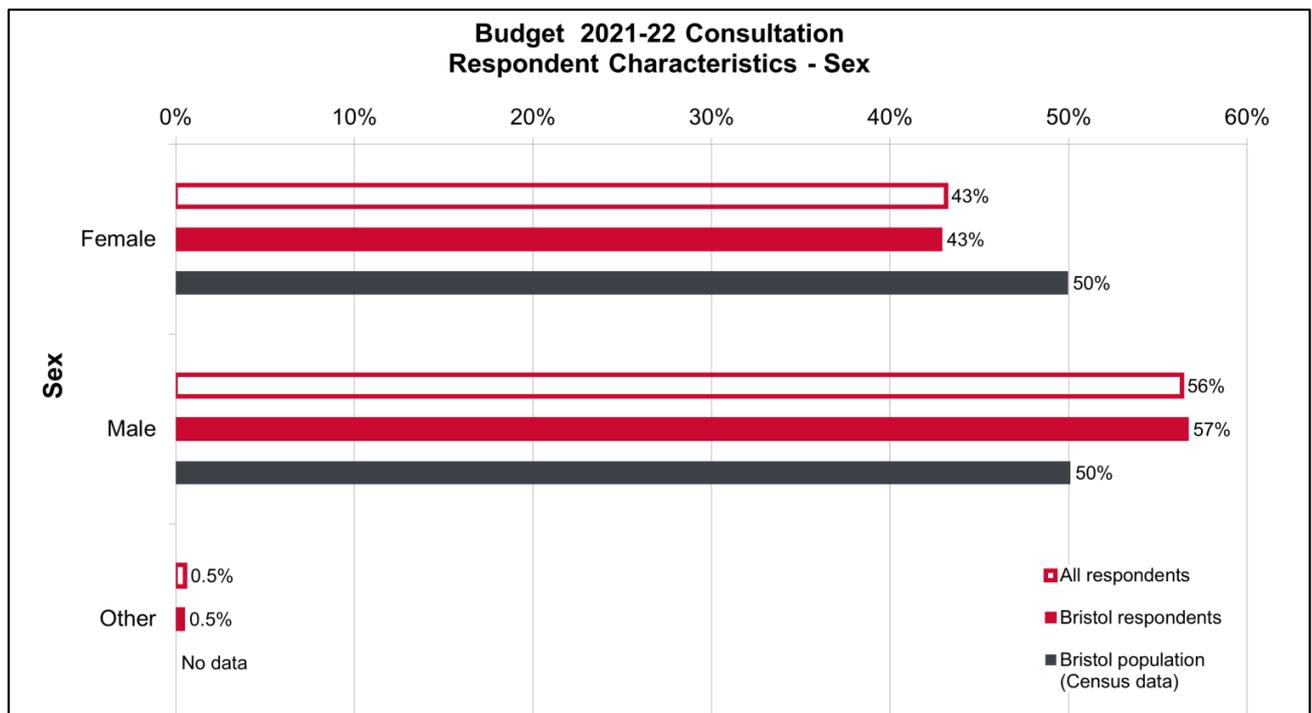


The proportion of responses in the age categories 25-34 years, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74 and 75-84 was higher than these age groups’ proportion of the population in Bristol. Survey responses from children (under 18), young people aged 18-24 and people aged 85 and older were under-represented. In each age category, the proportions of ‘all respondents’ and ‘Bristol respondents’ were very similar.

Sex

43% of all responses were from women and 56% were from men. 0.5% were from people who identified as ‘other’. These percentages exclude the 10% of respondents (9.2% of Bristol respondents) who answered ‘prefer not to say’)

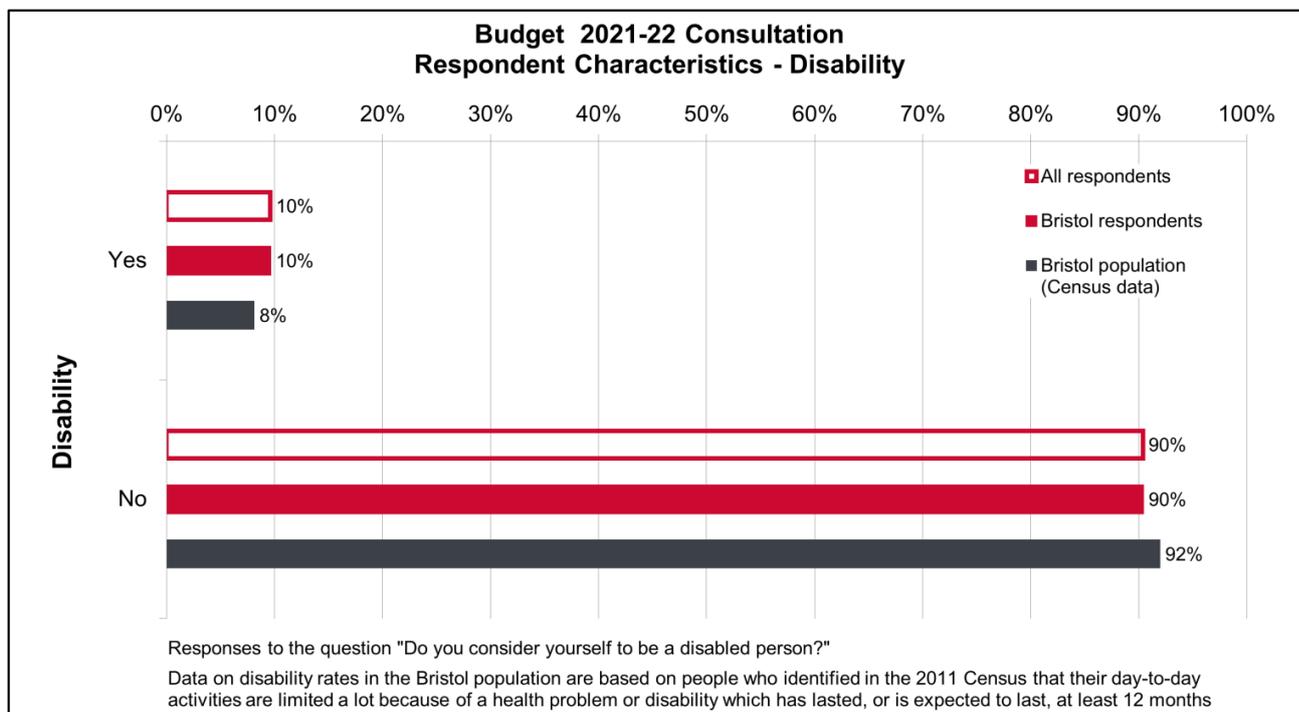
Figure 5: Sex of respondents



Disability

The proportion of disabled respondents (10%) is higher than the proportion of disabled people living in Bristol. These percentages exclude the 5.5% of respondents (0.5% of Bristol respondents) who answered ‘prefer not to say’)

Figure 6: Disability



Ethnicity

The response rate from White British respondents (80%), White Irish respondents (2%) Other White respondents (12%) is higher than the proportion of these citizens in the Bristol population.

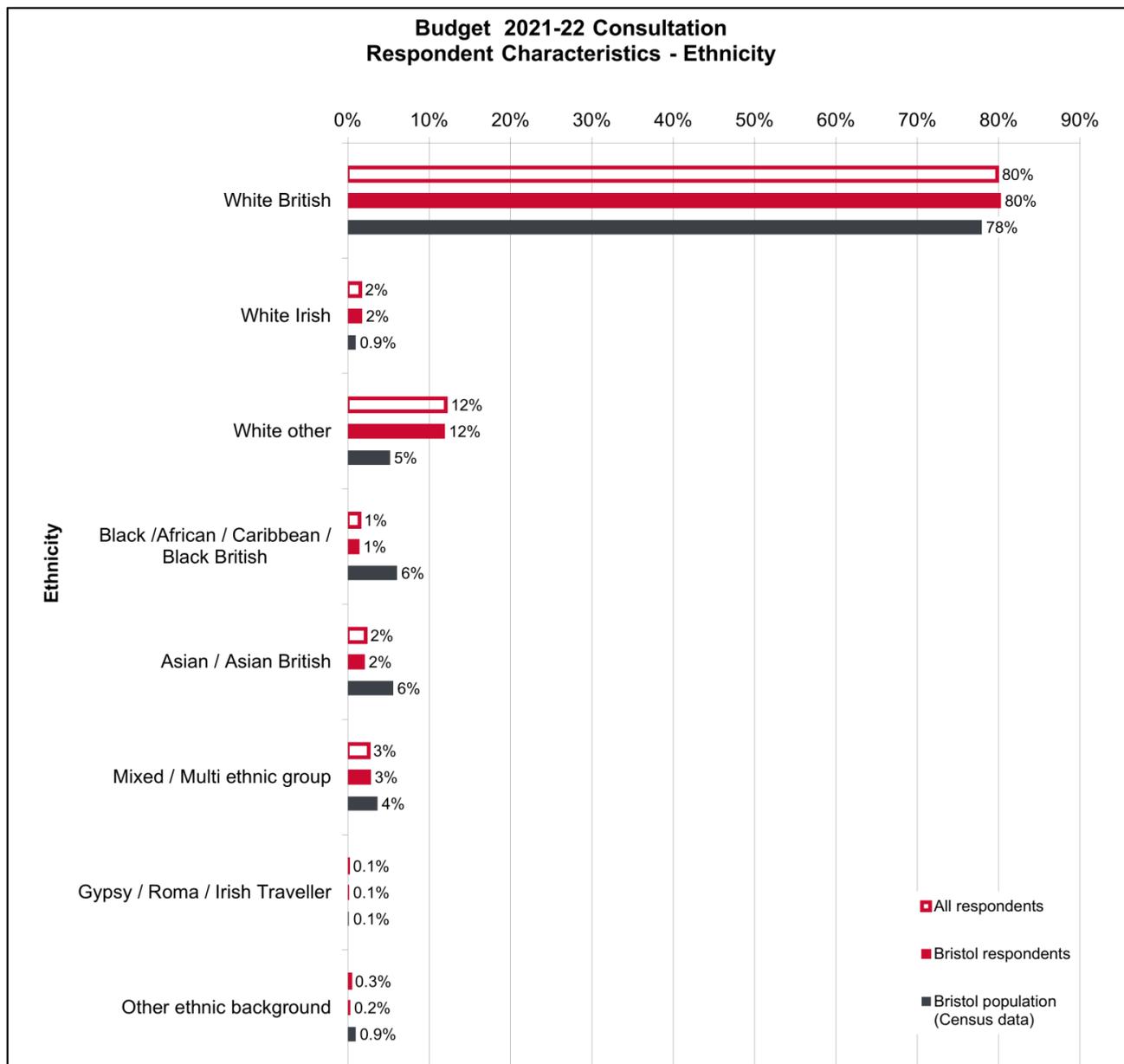
The proportion of Gypsy / Roma / Traveller people (0.1%) matches the proportion of these citizens in the Bristol population.

All other black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) and mixed/multi-ethnic respondents were under-represented in the response rates compared to the proportion of BAME citizens and mixed/multi-ethnic citizens living in Bristol, despite targeted efforts to increase participation in areas with high BAME populations.

These percentages exclude the 11% of respondents (10% of Bristol respondents) who answered ‘prefer not to say’)

The proportion of each ethnicity for all respondents closely matches Bristol respondents.

Figure 7: Ethnicity of respondents



Religion/Faith

People with no religion (63% of respondents) responded in higher proportions than people of no religion in Bristol’s population (41%). Buddhists (1%), and Jewish respondents (0.5%) also responded in greater numbers than the proportions of these faiths in Bristol.

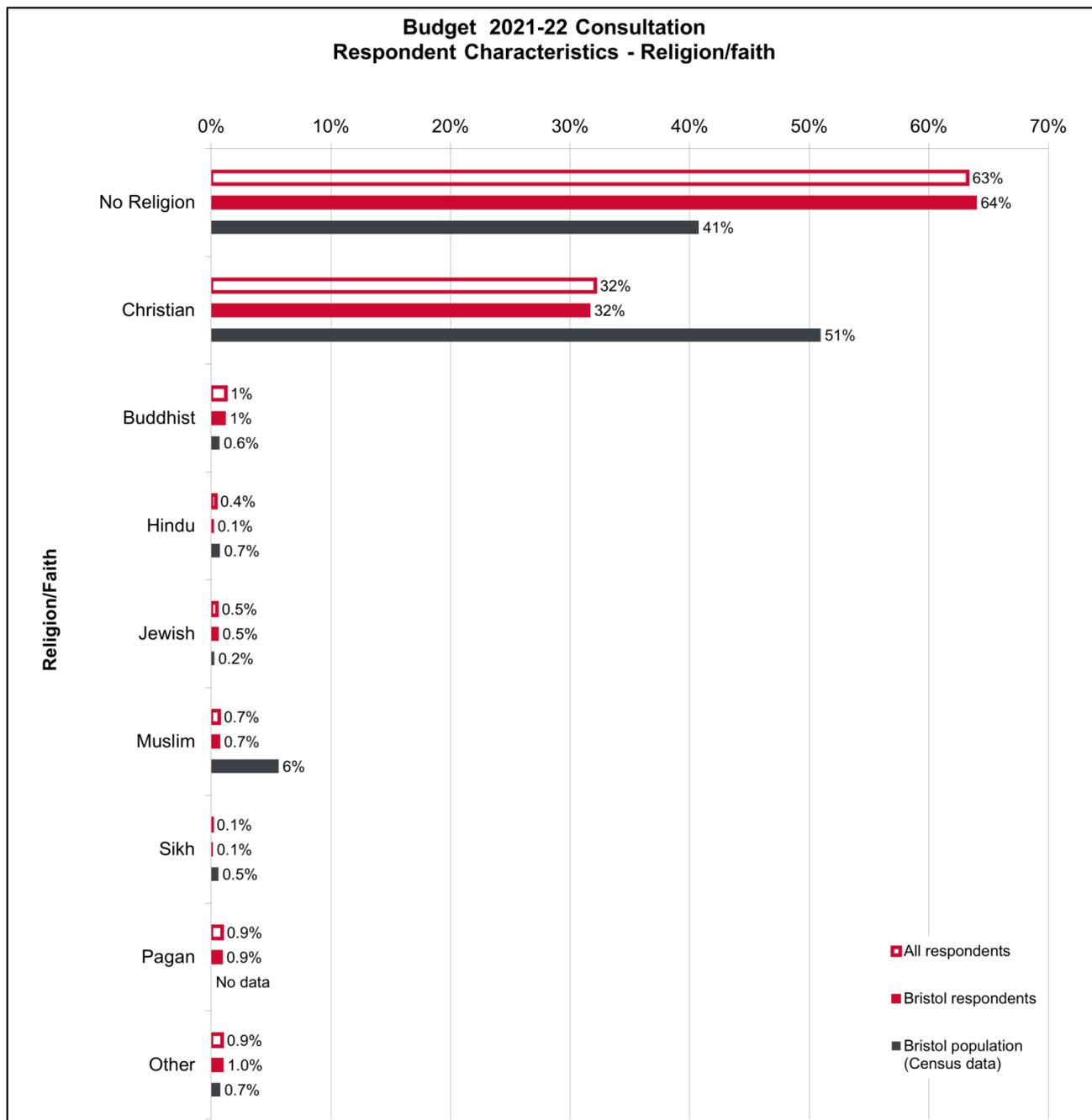
Christians (32%), Muslims (0.7%), Hindus (0.4%) and Sikhs (0.1%) were under-represented compared to the proportions of these faiths living in Bristol.

The proportion of respondents of other faith approximately matches the Bristol population.

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

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

Figure 8: Religion/faith of respondents



Other protected characteristics and refugee/asylum status

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

Census data are not available for the proportion of people with these characteristics living in Bristol. Figures 9, 10, 11 and 12 show the proportions of all respondents and Bristol respondents for each of these characteristics. The proportion of each characteristic for all respondents closely matches the proportion for Bristol respondents.

Figure 9: Sexual orientation

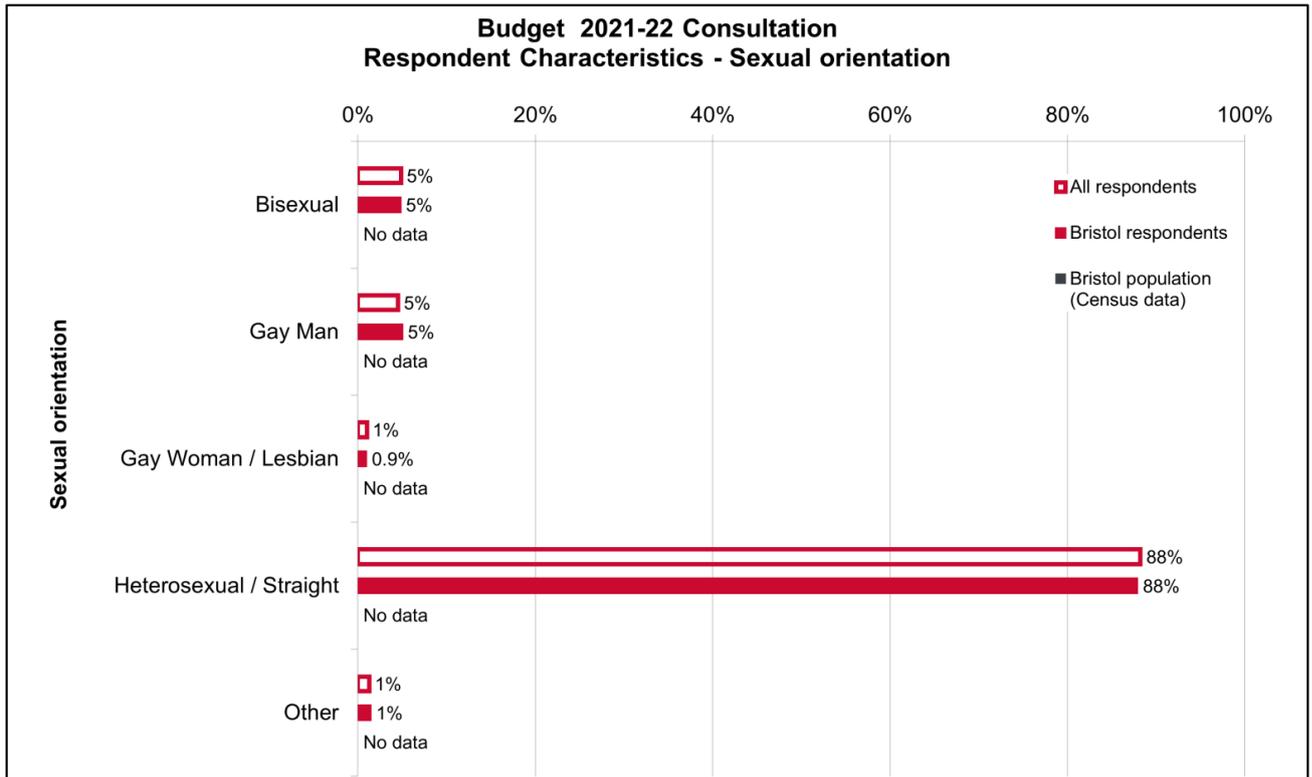


Figure 10: Gender reassignment

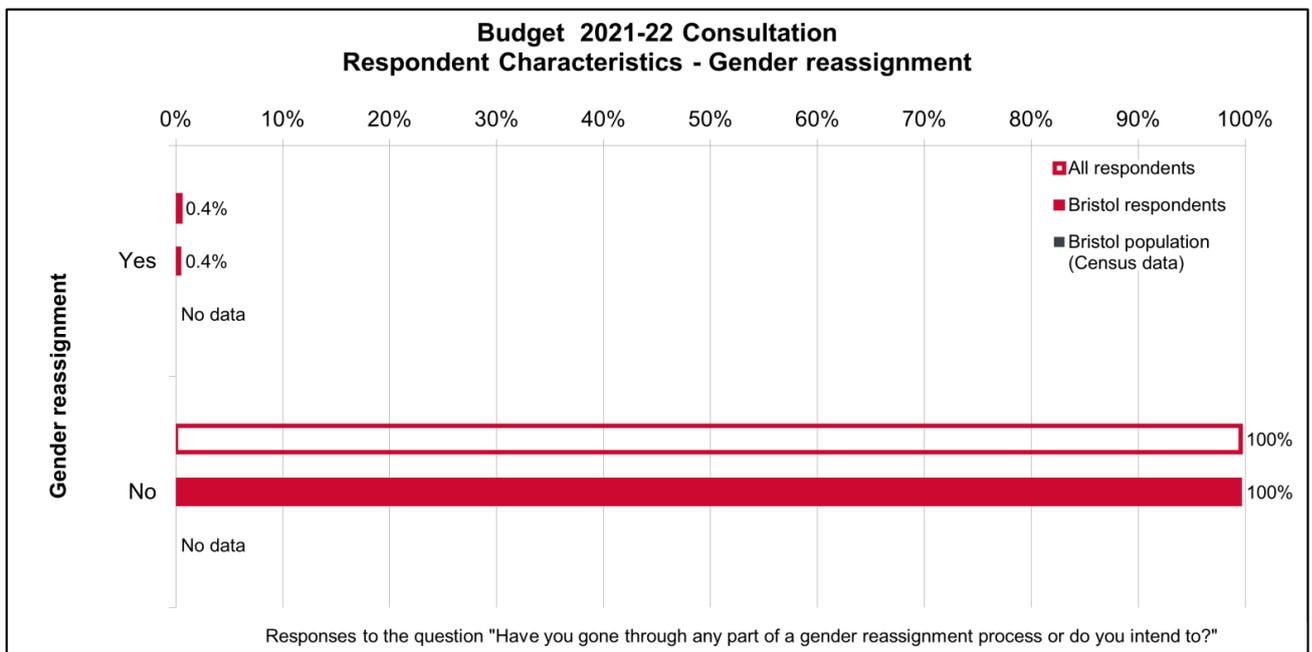


Figure 11: Pregnancy/Maternity

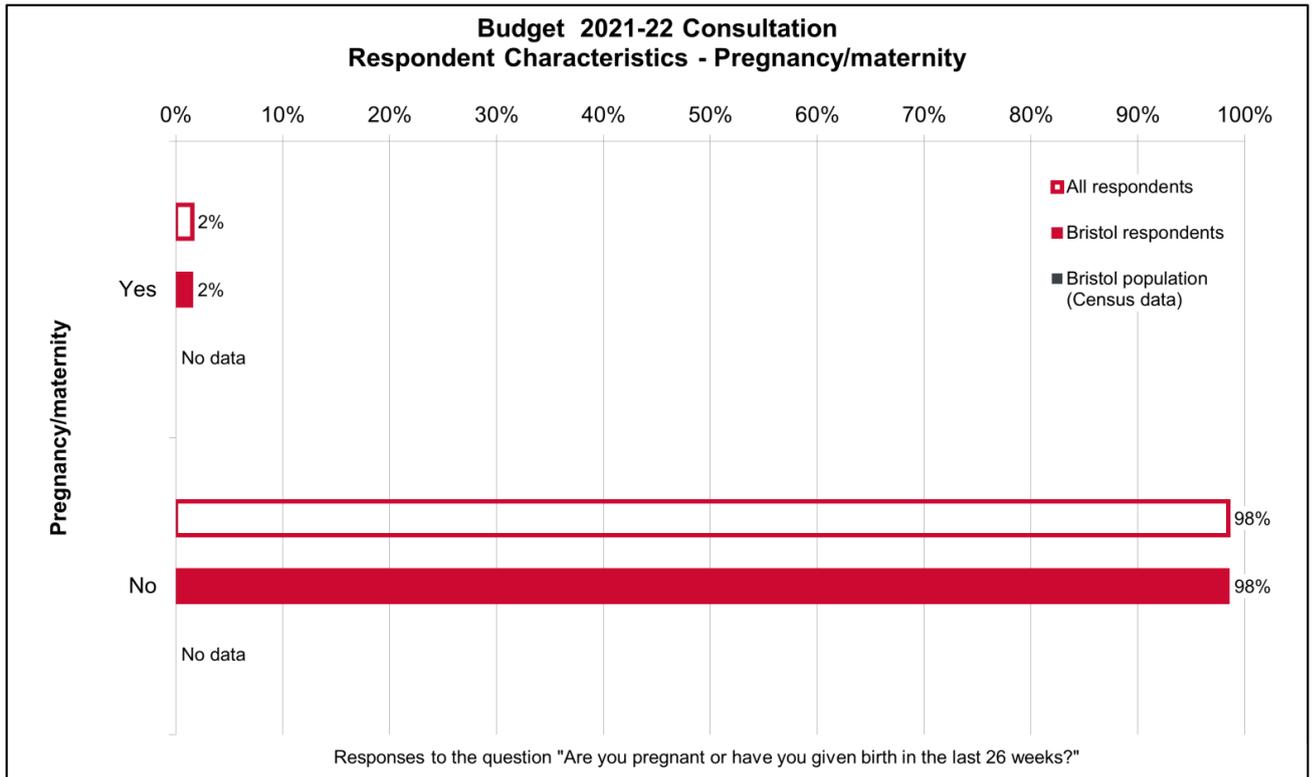
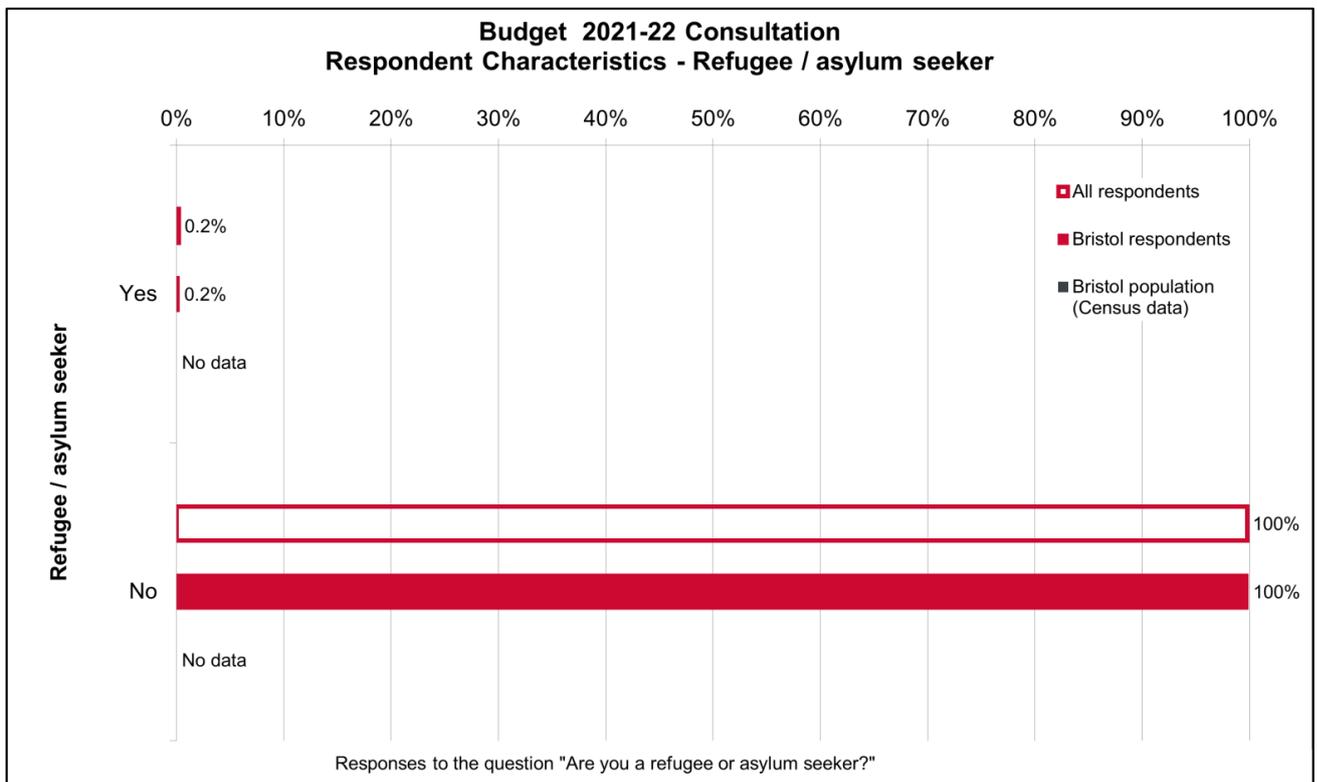


Figure 12: Refugee or asylum seeker



Other respondent characteristics

1,897 (95%) respondents provided other details of their personal situation, selecting from the following list of 11 options:

- 1,822 (96% of the 1,897 respondents who answered the question) are Bristol residents;
- 14 (0.7%) represent and/or own a local business;
- 9 (0.5%) work in Bristol but live elsewhere;
- 27 (1.4%) are Bristol City Council employees;
- 3 (0.2%) were responses on behalf of a Voluntary/Community/Social Enterprise;
- 2 (0.1%) were responses on behalf of a Public Transport provider;
- 1 (0.1%) response was on behalf of a Housing Association;
- 1 (0.1%) was a Councillor;
- 10 (1%) selected 'other'.

The 10 respondents who selected 'other', provided the following details²⁰:

- 3 said they were from Bristol but did not state their current residency;
- 2 said they were part-time residents of Bristol;
- 4 said they were a landlord or property owner (of which 1 specified they own a property in Bristol);
- 1 said they live and work in Bristol;
- 1 said they live in Bristol and own/represent a business in Bristol;
- 1 said they were a frequent visitor to Bristol;
- 1 said they were a resident of South Gloucestershire;
- 1 said they were retired;
- 5 provided other details;
- 1 selected 'other' but did not specify details.

²⁰ The numbers of the comments exceed 10 because these respondents specified several aspects of their situation

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

4.1 Level of core Council Tax increase in 2021/22 – all respondents

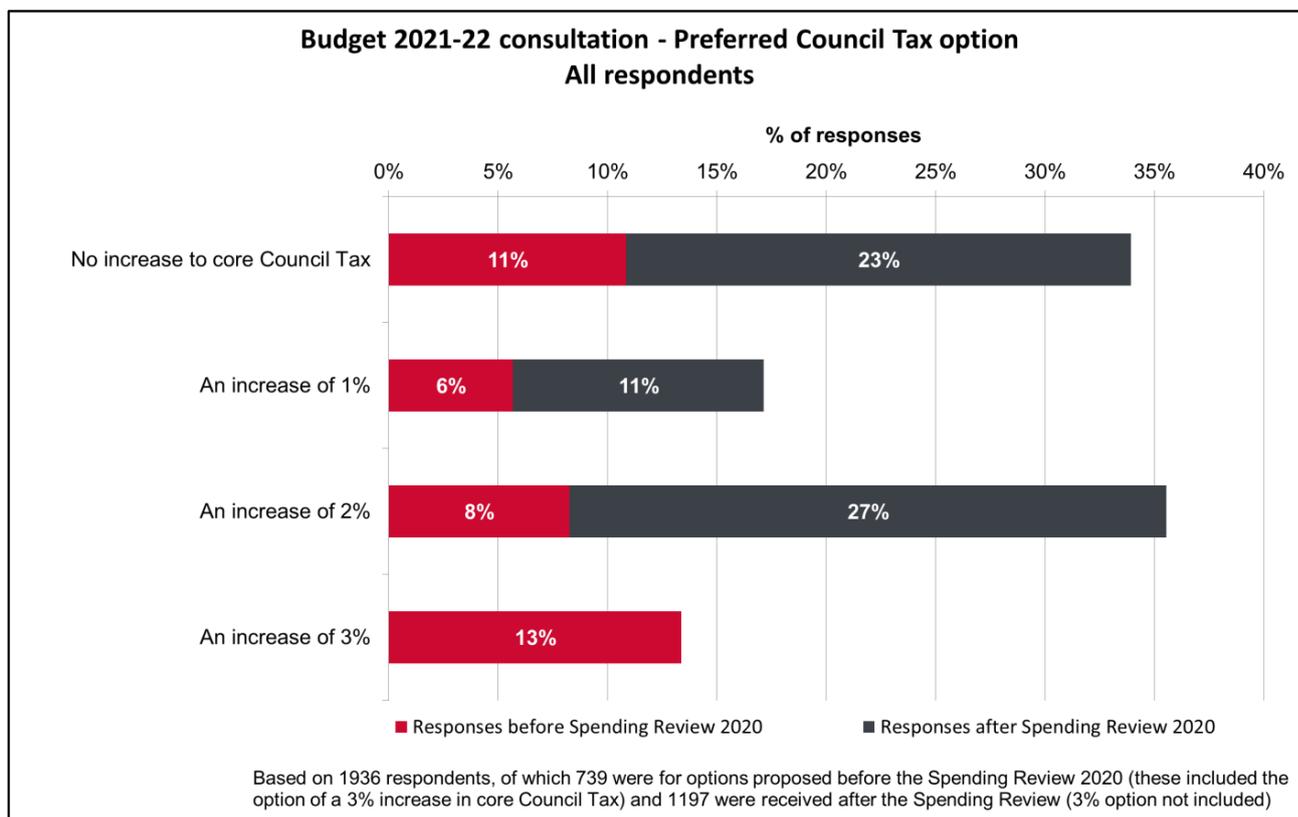
Between 16 November and 29 November, respondents were asked to state which level of Council Tax increase they would prefer in 2021/22, choosing from the following four options:

- No increase to Council Tax;
- An increase of 1% to Council Tax. This option would raise £2.3 million to support the delivery of services;
- An increase of 2% to Council Tax. This option would raise £4.5 million to support the delivery of services;
- An increase of 3% to Council Tax. This option would raise £6.8m to support the delivery of services.

On 25 November, the government published its Spending Review 2020, setting a 2% maximum limit for Council Tax increases, without a local referendum. On 29 November, the consultation was amended to withdraw the 3% option for core Council Tax.

Of the 2,006 people who responded to the consultation, 1,936 (97%) stated the level core Council Tax increase they would prefer in 2021/22, from the options provided. Figure 13 shows the proportions who prefer each option. 70 people did not answer this question.

Figure 13: Preferred level of core Council Tax increase in 2021/22



Of the 1,936 respondents who stated their preferred level of Council Tax, 739 (38%) responded between 16 and 29 November choosing from no increase, 1%, 2% or 3%. 1,197 (62%) responded between 29 November and 28 December (following the spending review), choosing from no increase, 1% or 2%.

A majority of respondents (66%) favour an increase in core Council Tax to support general services. Of these:

- 332 (17% of all 1,936 respondents) would prefer a 1% increase in core Council Tax;
- 688 (36%) favour a 2% increase²¹;
- 259 (13%) respondents would prefer a 3% increase in Core Council Tax²².

657 (34%) respondents would prefer 'no increase to Council Tax' in 2021/22.

Comparison of the red bars in Figure 13 shows that a 3% increase in Council Tax would be the single option with highest support, if it were permitted. The grey bars show that when the 3% option was withdrawn (from 29 November), support for the 2% option (the highest increase permitted) increases substantially.

4.2 Level of Social Care Precept in 2021/22 – all respondents

Between 16 November and 29 November, respondents were asked to state which level of Social Care Precept they would prefer in 2021/22, choosing from three options:

- No additional Social Care Precept;
- An additional 1% Social Care Precept. This would be an extra 1% increase to Council Tax bills in addition to the increase in core Council Tax. This option would raise £2.3 million to support the delivery of adult social care;
- An additional 2% Social Care Precept. This would be an extra 2% increase to Council Tax bills in addition to the increase in core Council Tax. This option would raise £4.5 million to support the delivery of adult social care.

On 25 November, the government published its Spending Review 2020, setting a 3% maximum limit for Social Care Precept. On 29 November, the consultation was amended to include the option of an additional 3% Social Care Precept. This would be an extra 3% increase to Council Tax and would raise £6.8 million to support the delivery of social care.

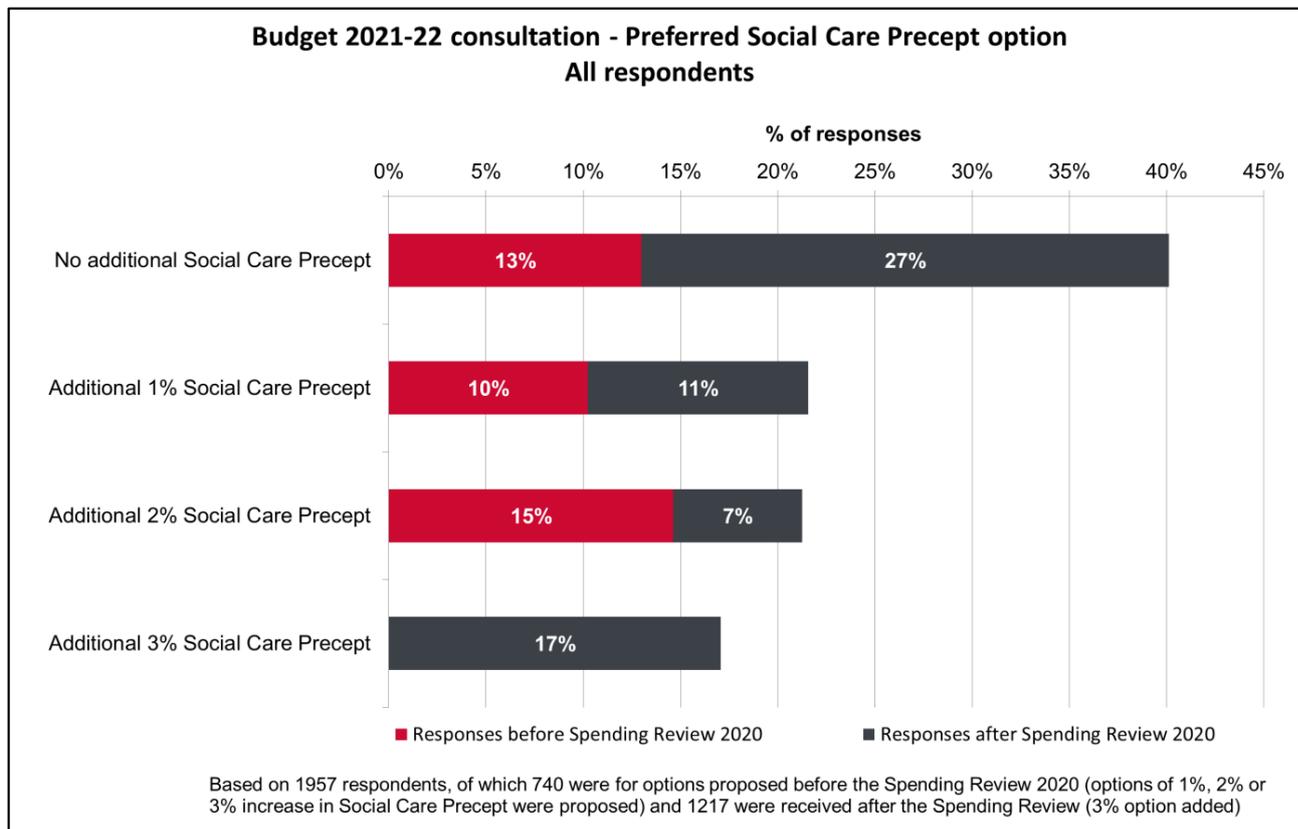
Of the 2,006 people who responded to the budget consultation, 1,957 (98%) expressed a preference for the level of Social Care Precept in 2021/22. Figure 14 shows the proportions who prefer each option. 49 people did not answer this question.

²¹ A 2% increase in core Council Tax is the maximum increase permitted without requiring a local referendum.

²² The 3% option was only available between 16 and 29 November.

Of the 1,957 respondents who stated their preferred level of Social Care Precept, 740 (38%) responded between 16 and 29 November choosing from no increase, 1% or 2%. 1,217 (62%) responded between 29 November and 28 December (following the spending review), choosing from no increase, 1%, 2% or 3%.

Figure 14: Preferred level of Social Care Precept in 2021/22



A majority of respondents (60%) favour an additional Social Care Precept (on top of core Council Tax) to support the delivery of adult social care. Of these:

- 422 (22%²³ of all 1,957 respondents) would prefer a 1% Social Care Precept;
- 416 (21%) favour a 2% Social Care Precept; and
- 334 (17%) would prefer a 3% Social Care Precept²⁴.

785 (40%) respondents would prefer no increase to Social Care Precept in 2021/22.

Comparison of the red bars in Figure 13 shows that a 2% increase in Council Tax would be the single option with highest support, when 2% is the highest increase available. The grey bars show that when a 3% option was included (from 29 November), a substantial amount of support for the 2% option appears to switch to the new 3% option.

²³ Percentages on the chart may differ slightly from those in the text due to rounding.

²⁴ 3% Adult Social Care Precept is the maximum increase permitted by government in 2021/22. The 3% option was only available between 29 November and 28 December.

Comparison of Figures 13 and 14 indicates more support for increasing core Council Tax than Social Care Precept. A higher proportion of respondents want no increase to Social Care Precept (40%) than want no increase to core Council Tax (34%). More people want a 2% or 3% increase to core Council Tax (49%) than want a 2% or 3% increase in Social Care Precept (38%)²⁵

4.3 Views on Council Tax in areas with different levels of deprivation

Views on the preferred level of core Council Tax were compared for respondents from areas with different levels of deprivation (Figure 15). 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 15 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who want a 0%, 1%, 2% or 3% increase in core Council Tax in 2021/22. This is based on the 1,608 Bristol respondents who stated a preferred option for core Council Tax and provided a full postcode²⁶.

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

Support for **no increase** in core Council Tax is highest among respondents from the more deprived areas of Bristol. This is markedly so for the most deprived 10% of Bristol (decile 1); in these areas, 46% of respondents favour no increase and 23% prefer a 1% increase.

Support for no increase in Council Tax reduces to 25% in decile 10 (least deprived 10%).

Support for a **2% or 3% increase** is higher in the less deprived areas and exceeds 50% in deciles 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

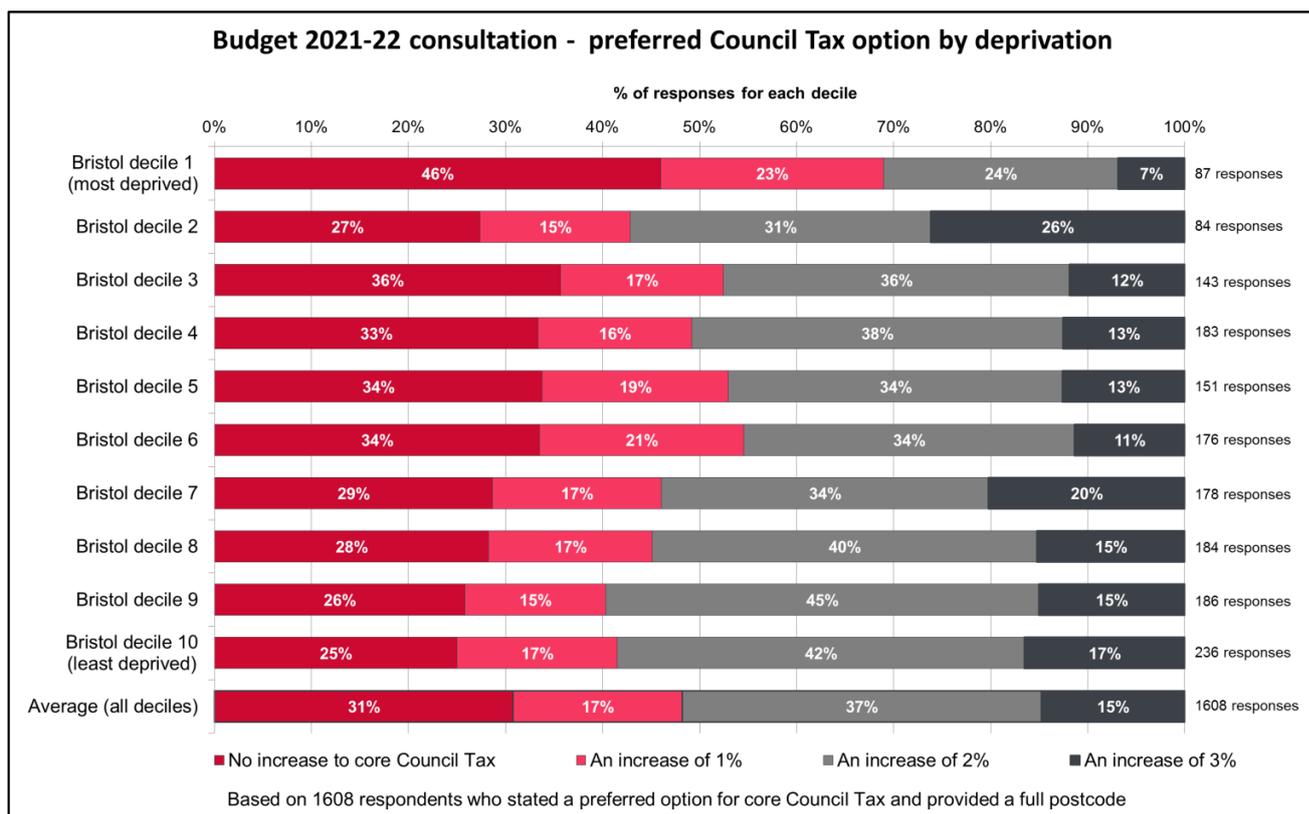
Decile 2 (second most deprived 10%) is the only decile which deviates from this trend.

Support for no increase (27%) and 1% increase (15%) in decile 2 are very similar to deciles 9 and 10 (least deprived 20%).

²⁵ Support for a 3% Council Tax cannot be compared directly with support for a 3% Social Care Precept because the 3% Council Tax option was available for 14 days (before the changes due to the spending review) and the 3% Social Care Precept option was included for 30 days (after the spending review).

²⁶ Incomplete postcodes cannot be matched to the deprivation data.

Figure 15: Preference in each deprivation decile for the core Council Tax options²⁷



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

Views on the preferred level of Social Care Precept were compared for respondents from areas in Bristol with different levels of deprivation.

Figure 16 shows the percentage of respondents from each deprivation decile who favour a 0%, 1%, 2% or 3% Social Care Precept in 2021/22. This is based on the 1,623 Bristol respondents who stated a preferred option for Social Care Precept and provided a full postcode.

As with core Council Tax, support for a Social Care Precept follows an inverse trend with deprivation (Figure 16).

Support for a 3% Social Care Precept is higher in the less deprived areas and is lower in the more deprived areas. For example, 19% support the 3% option in decile 10 (the least deprived 10% of Bristol) compared to 12% who support a 3% precept in decile 1 (the most deprived 10% of Bristol).

²⁷ The response rate in Figure 15 differs from the response rate in Figure 13. This is because Figure 13 shows the views of all 1,936 respondents who answered question 1 whereas Figure 15 shows the views of 1,608 Bristol residents who also provided a full postcode. (The full postcode is needed to match against deprivation data.)

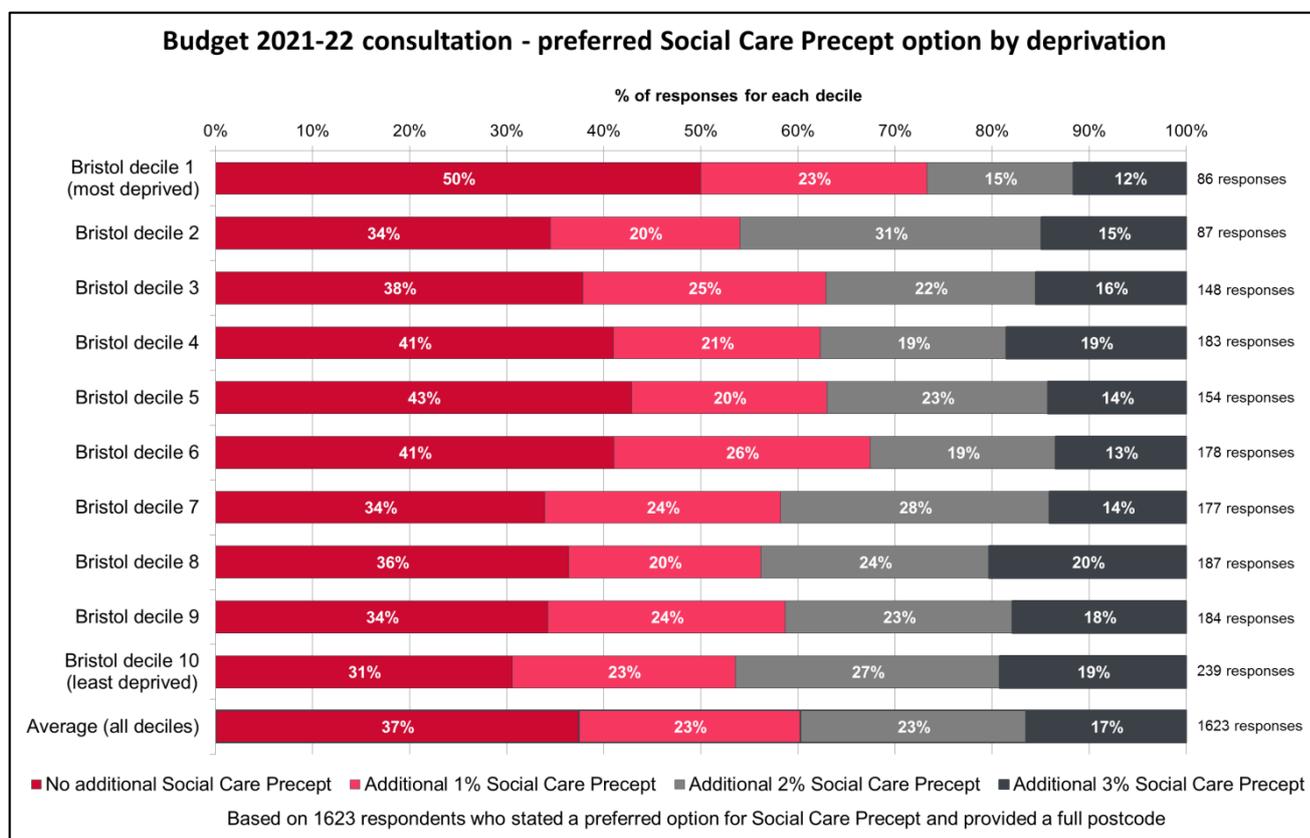
The average proportion of respondents who favour no increase (31%) is lower in Figure 15 than Figure 13 (34%). This indicates that respondents who provided postcodes were more willing to pay higher Council Tax.

There is higher support for no Social Care Precept in the more deprived areas than in less deprived areas, particularly for the most deprived 10% of Bristol (decile 1) in which 50% prefer no increase. This compares to 31% who support no additional in Social Care Precept in decile 10 (least deprived).

There are no clear trends in support for the 1% and 2% options for Social Care Precept. However, there is notably low support for a 2% option among respondents in decile 1.

The differences in support between high and low deprivation areas are slightly smaller for Social Care Precept (Figure 16) than for core Council Tax (Figure 15).

Figure 16: Preference in each deprivation decile for the Social Care Precept options²⁸



²⁸ The response rate in Figure 16 differs from the response rate in Figure 14. This is because Figure 14 shows the views of all 1,957 respondents who answered question 2 whereas Figure 16 shows the views of 1,623 Bristol residents who also provided a full postcode. (The full postcode is needed to match against deprivation data.)

The average proportion of respondents who favour no increase (37%) or a 1% increase (23%) is lower in Figure 16 than in Figure 14 (40% for no increase and 22% for a 1% increase). This indicates that respondents who provided postcodes were also more willing to pay a Social Care Precept.

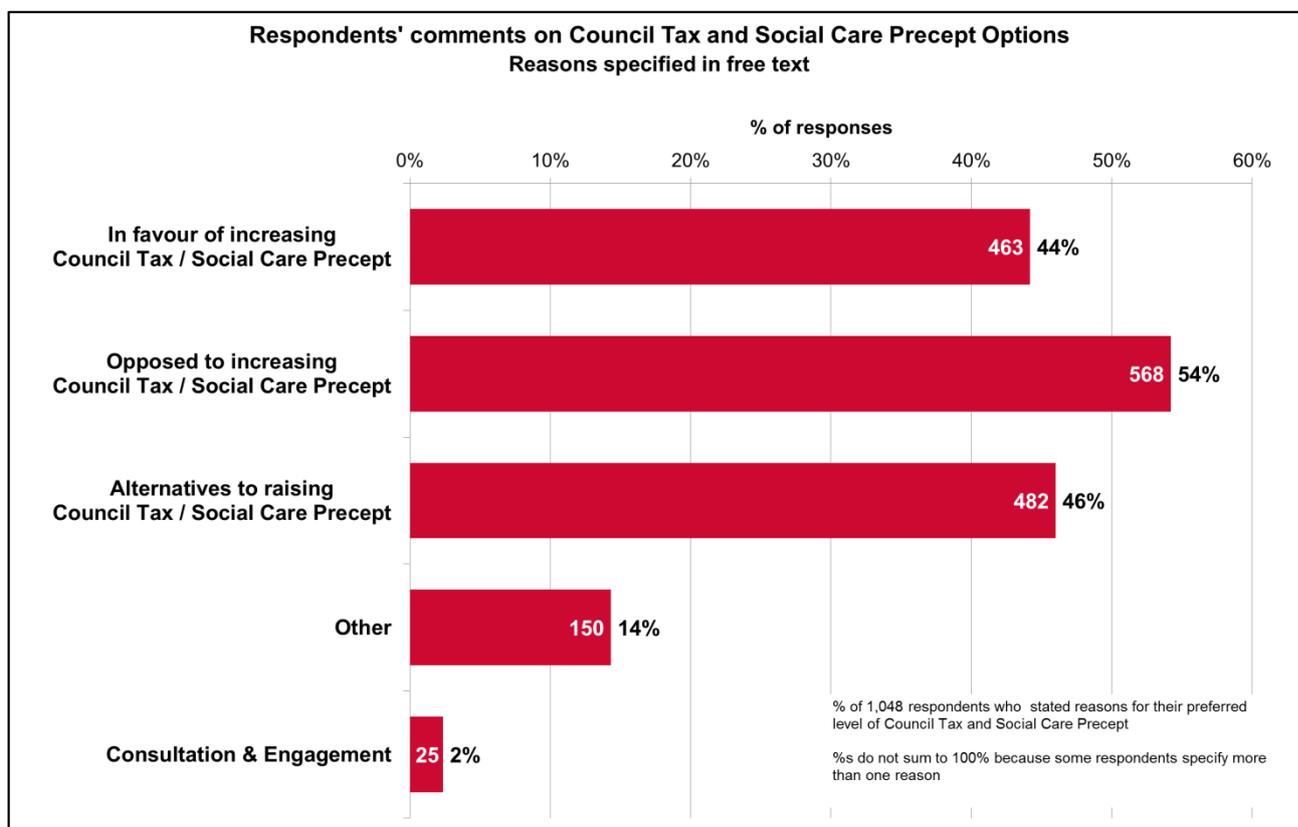
5 Reasons for Council Tax and Social Care Precept levels chosen

5.1 Overview

In question 3, respondents were invited to explain why they had chosen their preferred option for the level of Council Tax increase (question 1) and their preferred option for the level of Social Care Precept (question 2) .

1,048 (52%) of the respondents provided free text feedback to this question. All comments were categorised into themes which are summarised below and in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Overview of comments about Council Tax / ASCP



- 463 (44% of 1,048 respondents to question 3) stated why they support an increase in Council Tax and/or Social Care precept. A breakdown is provided in section 5.2.
- 568 (54%) stated why they oppose an increase in Council Tax and/or Social Care precept (section 5.3).
- 482 (46%) suggested alternatives to increasing Council Tax and/or Social Care precept (section 5.4).
- 150 (14%) provided other comments about increasing Council Tax and/or Social Care Precept (section 5.5).
- 25 (2%) provided comments about the consultation.

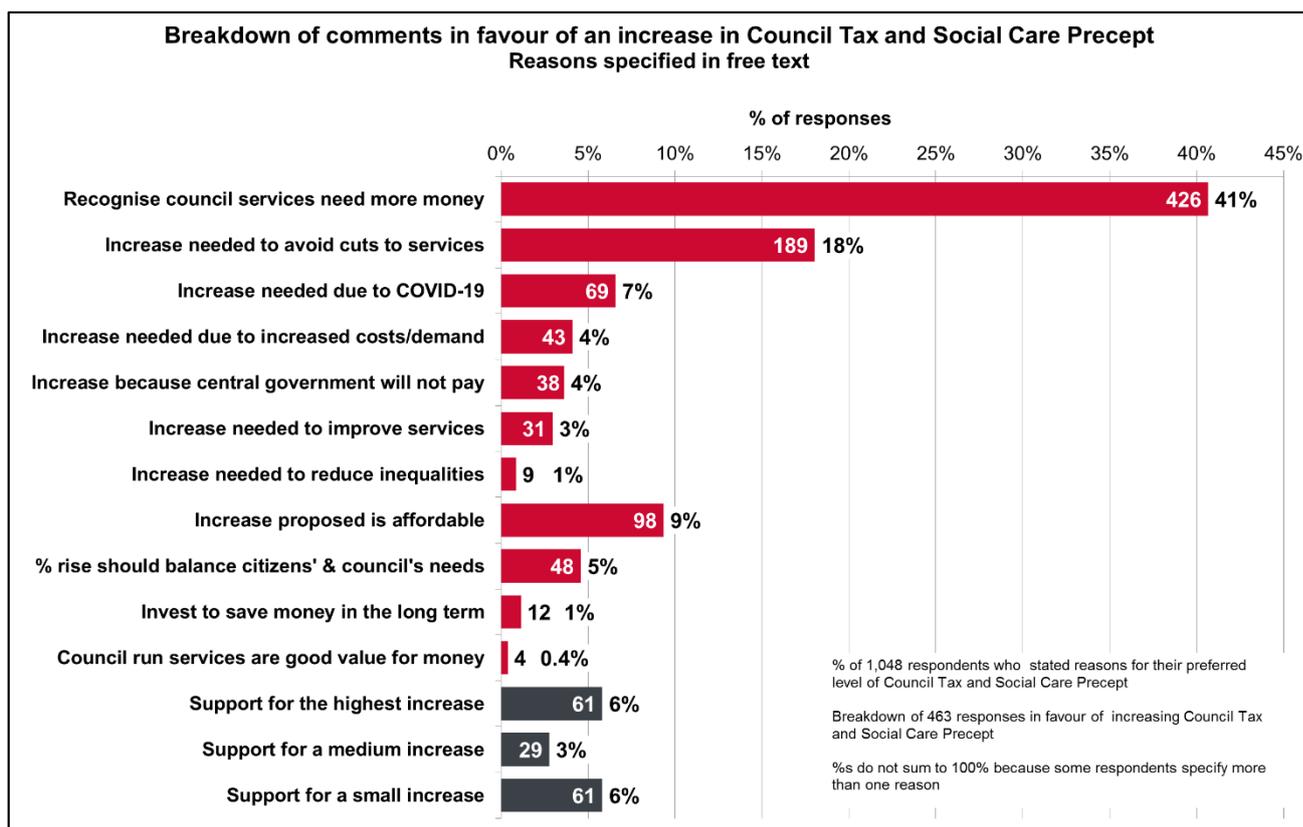
The total number of comments exceeds 1,048 because some respondents addressed several themes.

5.2 Comments in favour of increasing Council Tax

463 (44% of respondents to question 3) stated why they support an increase in Council Tax and/or Social Care precept (Figure 18). Of these:

- 426 (41%) said that they recognise council services need more money;
- 189 (18%) said that an increase is needed to avoid cuts to services;
- 69 (7%) said an increase is needed due to COVID-19;
- 43 (4%) said an increase is needed due to increased costs and/or demand for services;
- 38 (4%) said an increase is needed because central government will not pay;
- 31 (3%) said an increase is needed to improve services;
- 9 (1%) said an increase is needed to reduce inequalities;
- 98 (9%) said an increase is affordable;
- 48 (5%) said the level of Council Tax increase and Social Care Precept should balance the needs of both citizens and the council;
- 12 (1%) said the council should invest to save money in the long term;
- 4 (0.4%) said council run services are good value for money;
- 61 (6%) reiterated that they preferred the highest increase option for Council Tax;
- 29 (3%) reiterated that they would prefer a medium increase option for Council Tax;
- 61 (6%) reiterated that they preferred the lowest increase option for Council Tax.

Figure 18: Comments in favour of increasing Council Tax

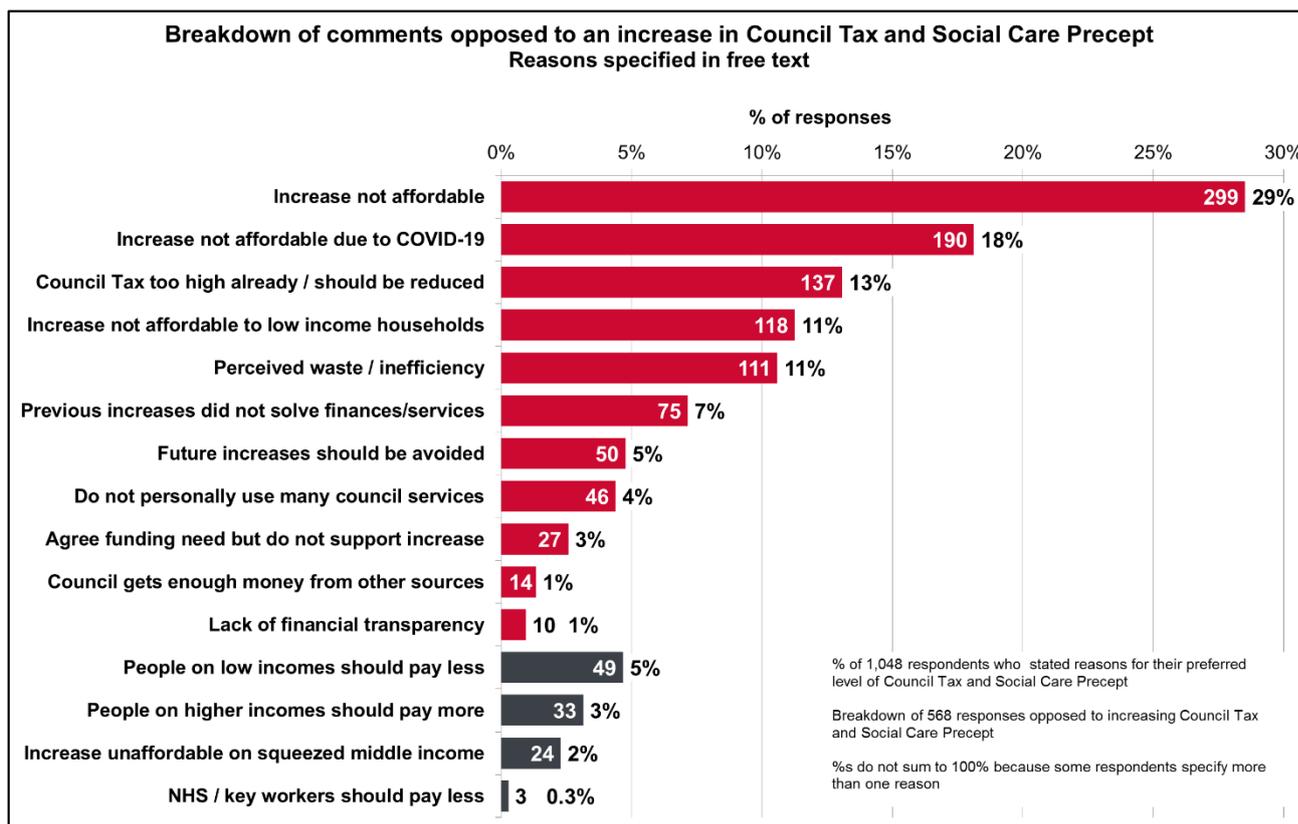


5.3 Comments opposed to increasing Council Tax

568 (54%) stated why they oppose an increase in Council Tax and/or Social Care precept (Figure 19). Of these:

- 299 (29%) said that an increase is not affordable;
- 190 (18%) said that an increase is not affordable due to COVID-19;
- 137 (13%) stated that Council Tax is too high already or should be reduced;
- 118 (11%) said an increase in Council Tax is not affordable to people on low incomes;
- 111 (11%) stated that they perceived waste or inefficiency at the council;
- 75 (7%) said that previous increases did not improve finances or services;
- 50 (5%) said that future increases should be avoided;
- 46 (4%) people said that they do not personally use many council services;
- 27 (3%) agree that there is a funding need but do not support an increase;
- 14 (1%) said that the council get enough money from other sources;
- 10 (1%) commented on a lack of financial transparency;
- 49 (5%) said that people on low incomes should pay less ;
- 33 (3%) said that people on higher incomes should pay more;
- 24 (2%) said an increase is unaffordable on squeezed middle income;
- 3 (0.3%) said that NHS / key workers should pay less.

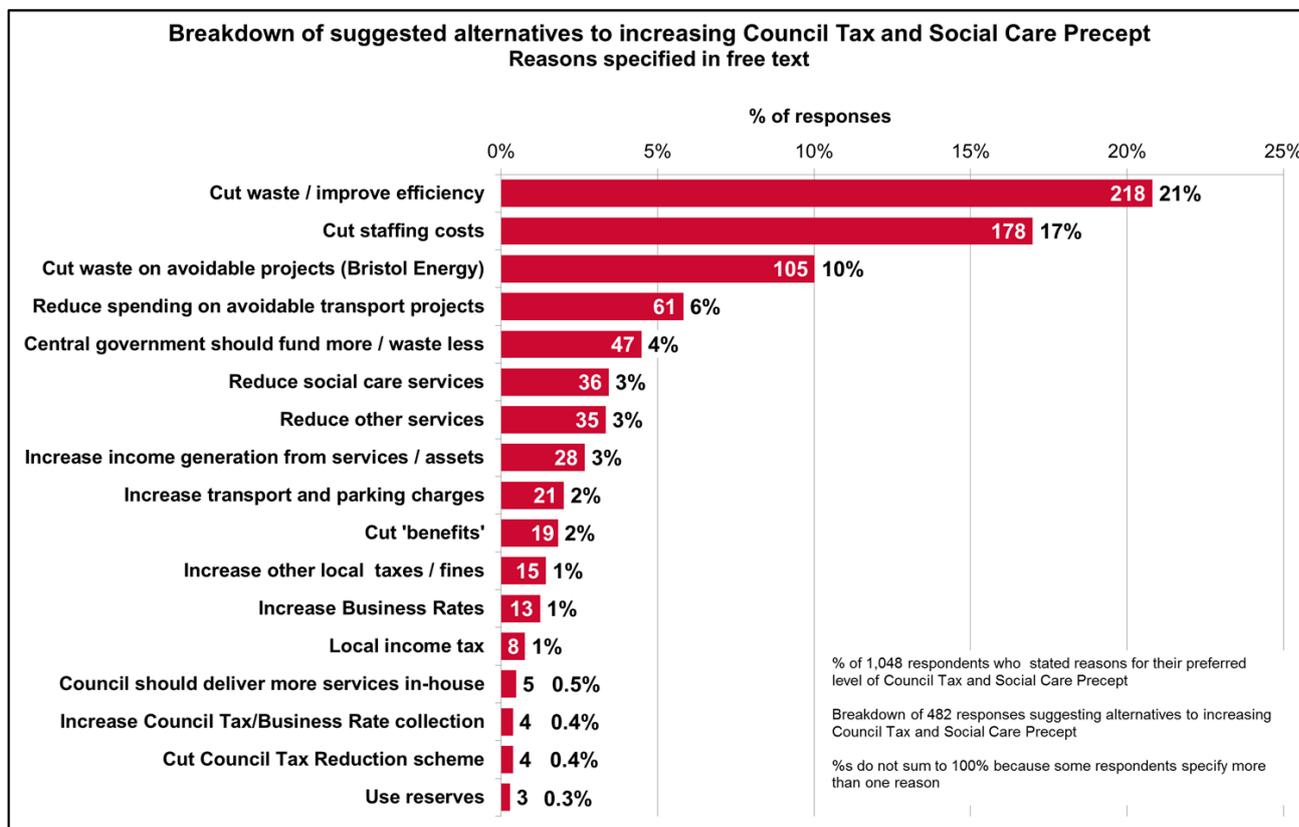
Figure 19: Comments opposed to increasing Council Tax



5.4 Alternatives to increasing Council Tax

482 (46%) suggested alternatives to increasing Council Tax and/or Social Care Precept (Figure 20). Of these:

Figure 20: Alternatives to increasing Council Tax and ASCP



- 218 (21%) suggested that the council should cut waste and increase its efficiency in order to save money;
- 178 (17%) suggested the council should cut staffing costs to save money;
- 105 (10%) said the council should cut waste on avoidable projects (e.g. Bristol Energy);
- 61 (6%) suggested the council should reduce spending on avoidable transport projects;
- 47 (4%) said central government should fund more and/or waste less;
- 36 (3%) said social care services should be reduced;
- 35 (3%) said other services should be reduced;
- 28 (3%) suggested the council increase income generation from services/ assets;
- 21 (2%) suggested increasing transport and parking charges;
- 19 (2%) suggested cutting benefits;
- 15 (1%) said increase other local taxes or fines;
- 13 (1%) said increase business rates;
- 8 (1%) said the council should make money through local income tax;

- 5 (0.5%) said the council should deliver more services in-house;
- 4 (0.4%) suggested increasing Council Tax or Business Rate collection;
- 4 (0.4%) suggested cutting the Council Tax Reduction scheme;
- 3 (0.3%) said the council should use its reserves.

5.5 Other comments

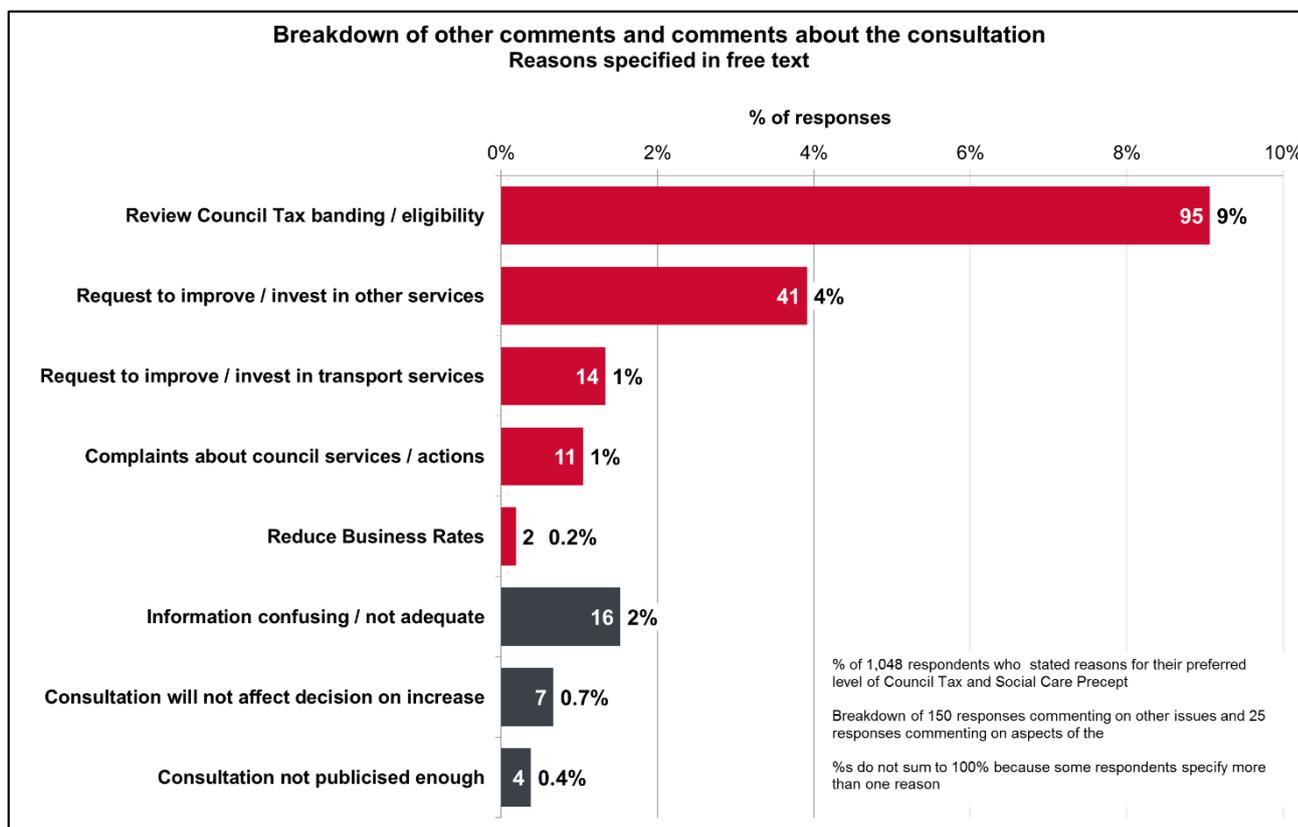
150 (14%) respondents provided other comments about increasing Council Tax and/or Social Care Precept (Figure 21). Of these:

- 95 (9%) said Council Tax banding and/or eligibility should be reviewed;
- 41 (4%) requested improvements to, or investment in, other services;
- 14 (1%) requested improvements to, or investment in, transport services;
- 11 (1%) put forward complaints about council services/ actions;
- 2 (0.2%) said to reduce business rates.

25 respondents commented on the consultation, of whom:

- 16 (2%) said that the information in the consultation was inadequate or confusing;
- 7 (0.7%) said that the consultation will not affect a decision on an increase;
- 4 (0.4%) said that the consultation was not publicised well enough.

Figure 21: Other comments



6 Other correspondence on the Budget 2021/22 consultation

Nine emails were received from members of the public in response to the Budget 2021/22 consultation. These were analysed separately from the survey responses and are summarised by theme below.

Comments in the nine emails included stated opposition to an increase in Council Tax, support for increasing Council Tax and suggested alternatives to increasing Council Tax.

Opposed to an increase in Council Tax

- Four people said they'd be unwilling to pay more due to council waste and inefficiency;
- One person said that they would not support an increase in Council Tax that was above the rate of inflation;
- One person said that a Council Tax increase is less affordable to citizens due to COVID-19;
- One person said an increase was unaffordable to people in low incomes;
- One person said Council Tax is already too high;
- One person said Council Tax should be reduced from the current level;
- One person said that Council Tax is higher in Bristol than in other cities;
- One person said that the council get enough money through other means.

In favour of an increase in Council Tax

- One person said that they would support the highest Social Care Precept increase;
- One person said that they would support a 3% increase in Council Tax.

Alternatives to increasing Council Tax

- Three people said the council should save money through efficiencies and creating value for money;
- Two people said the council should spend less money on avoidable transport projects;
- One person said the council should waste less money through mismanagement;
- One person said the council should spend less money on avoidable projects such as Bristol Energy;
- One person said the council should save money by removing the Mayor's Office/ Mayor;
- One person said the council should spend less money on consultants or contractors;
- One person said the council should cut services to save money.

Other comments

- Three people said that Council Tax banding / eligibility should be reviewed;
- Two people said the consultation will not affect a decision on increase Council Tax;
- One person said the information in the consultation was inadequate or confusing.

7 How will this report be used?

The consultation feedback in this report is taken into account by officers in developing final proposals for the 2021/22 budget, including the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept. The final proposals are included in a separate report which, together with this consultation report, will be considered by Cabinet on 26 January 2021.

Full Council will also consider this consultation report in making its decisions about the level of Council Tax and Social Care Precept as part of the 2021/22 budget at the Full Council meeting on 23 February 2021.

How can I keep track?

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

All decisions related to the proposals in this consultation will be made publicly at the Full Council meeting on 23 February 2021.

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

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