

APPENDIX 1

London Borough of Bromley

Council Tax Support – Consultation Report

26th October 2015

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Consultation

A public consultation exercise was undertaken for the 16/17 Council Tax Support Scheme during a period from 17th August 2015 until 18th October 2015.

The survey was available through a variety of channels:

- A link was available on the Bromley website
- An e-mail alert was issued to 5,000 Portal users advising them of the survey
- A paper copy was issued to 4,000 households comprising of a mix of CTS recipients and non CTS recipients (2,000 households not in receipt of CTS, 1,000 recipients of working age and 1,000 recipients of pensionable age)
- A paper flyer enclosed with 5,681 Council Tax Bills issued during this period advising of the link on the website.

In total there were 735 responses received with the majority, 625, being by post and 110 via the website.

Supplementary questions were asked, for monitoring purposes, to determine whether respondents were currently in receipt of Council Tax Support or were completing the consultation on behalf of a representative body.

Of those who chose to respond to these questions, 60% stated that they were not currently in receipt of CTS.

Responses were also received from 6 representative bodies, these were:

- Cotmandene Community Resource Centre
- Hearing Voices Group
- Zacchaeus 2000 Trust
- Bromley's Experts by Experience DPULO
- Bromley MIND
- Church and Foodbank

The consultation exercise was based on 6 simple questions to residents of the Borough, 3 of which required specific responses with the remaining 3 being less direct and allowing a degree of free text response.

Of those that were specific, they sought responses in respect of:

Q1: The level of support and whether this should be limited to 81% or 75% or 70%

Q2: If LBB were required to supplement the government funding how should this be managed.

Q3: Whether there should be a hardship fund available and whether the sum of £100,000 was reasonable.

Standard Equality and Diversity questions were also asked but it was made clear that providing this information was voluntary

Outcomes.

Details of the full consultation question and analysis responses, both overall and broken down, are detailed below.

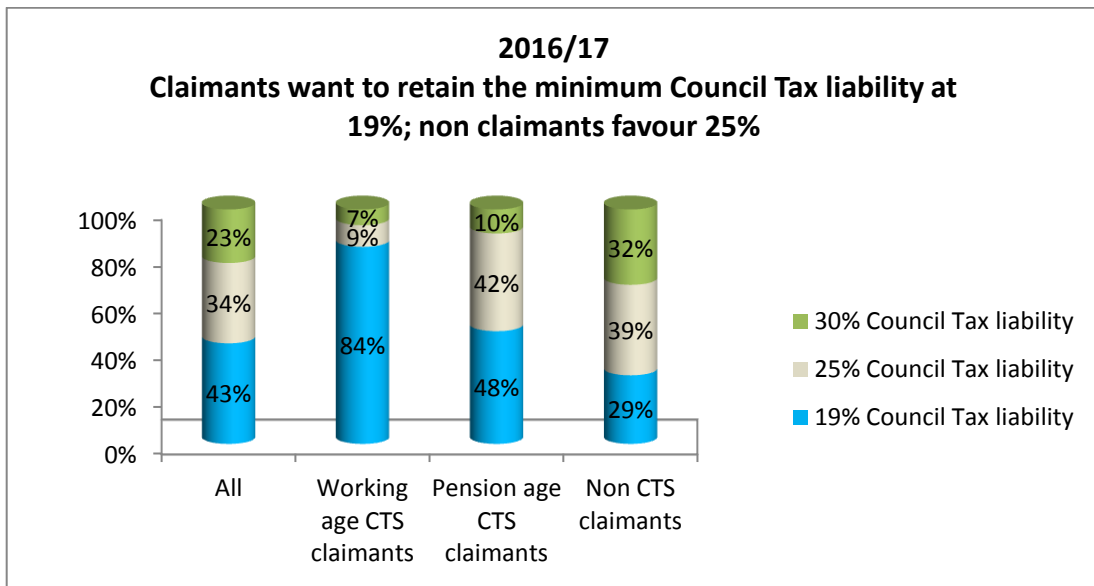
Question 1.

Q1 The options being considered by the Council are that the maximum level of support provided to working age claimants be restricted to 81%, 75% or 70%. For example, a restriction set at 75% would require working age claimants to pay a minimum of 25% of their liability. How much do you believe that working age claimants should pay towards their Council Tax?

	19%	25%	30%
Please choose only one of the following for each of the years:			
a. Year 2016/17	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Year 2017/18	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

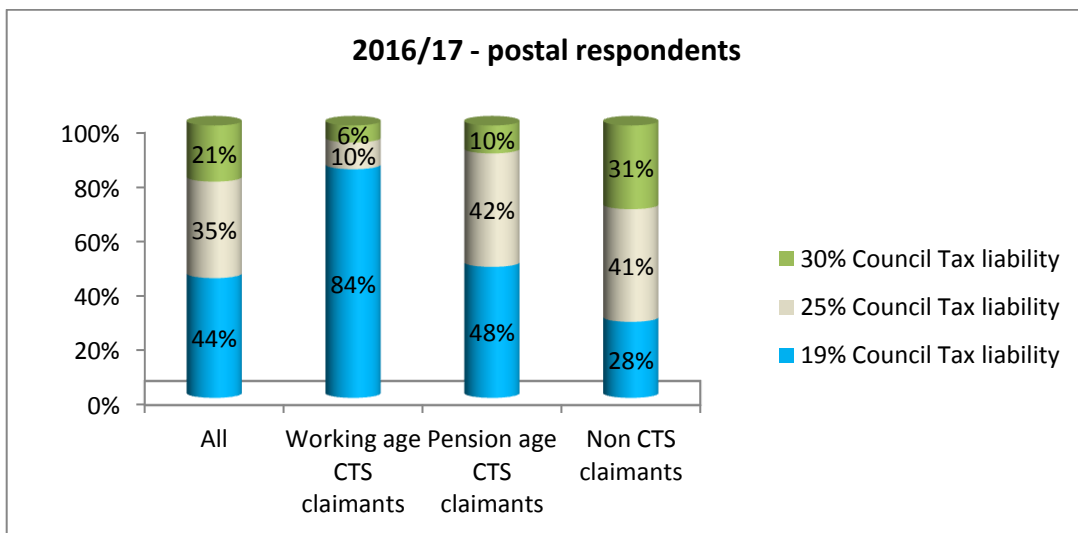
2016/17 Overall response.

Of those who responded, the *overall* outcome was that they wished to keep the scheme the same with 43% confirming this to be their preference although there is a marked difference between those who are in receipt of Council Tax Support compared to those who are not.

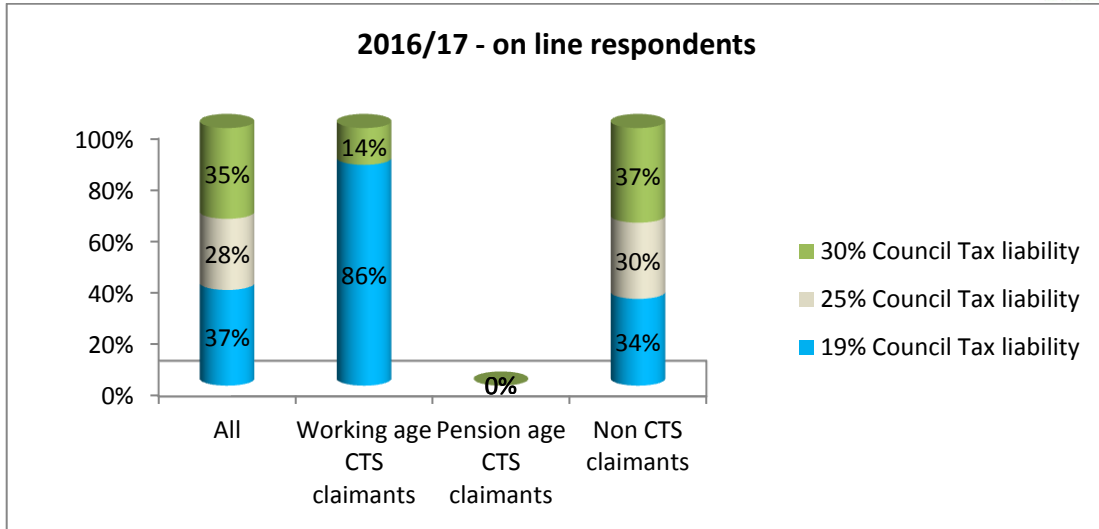


Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type

Of the postal responses received, overall 44% were in favour of retaining the level of support at a maximum of 81% although again there was a marked difference between those in receipt or not in receipt of CTS.

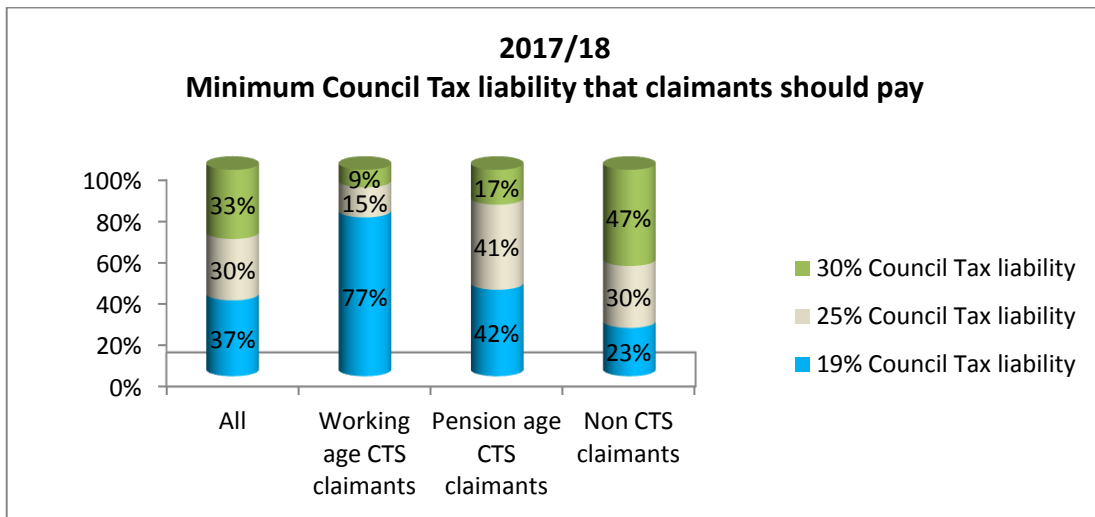


A similar situation was recorded with those who completed the survey on-line although it should be noted that the on-line survey was not completed by any pensionable age CTS recipients.



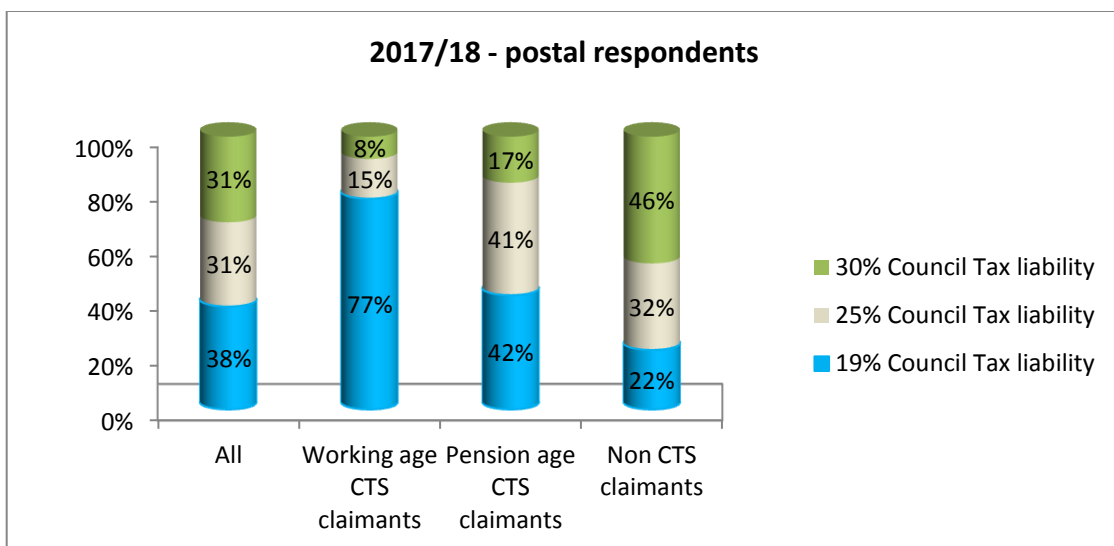
2017/18 - Overall response.

While it is clear that the Council must make a decision each year on its CTS scheme, LB Bromley took the opportunity to include a question regarding the potential scheme for 2017/18. Again the, the *overall* outcome was that they wished to keep the scheme albeit with a somewhat smaller overall figure (37%) confirming this to be their preference again with a marked difference between those who would be affected i.e. working age recipients, compared to those who are not.

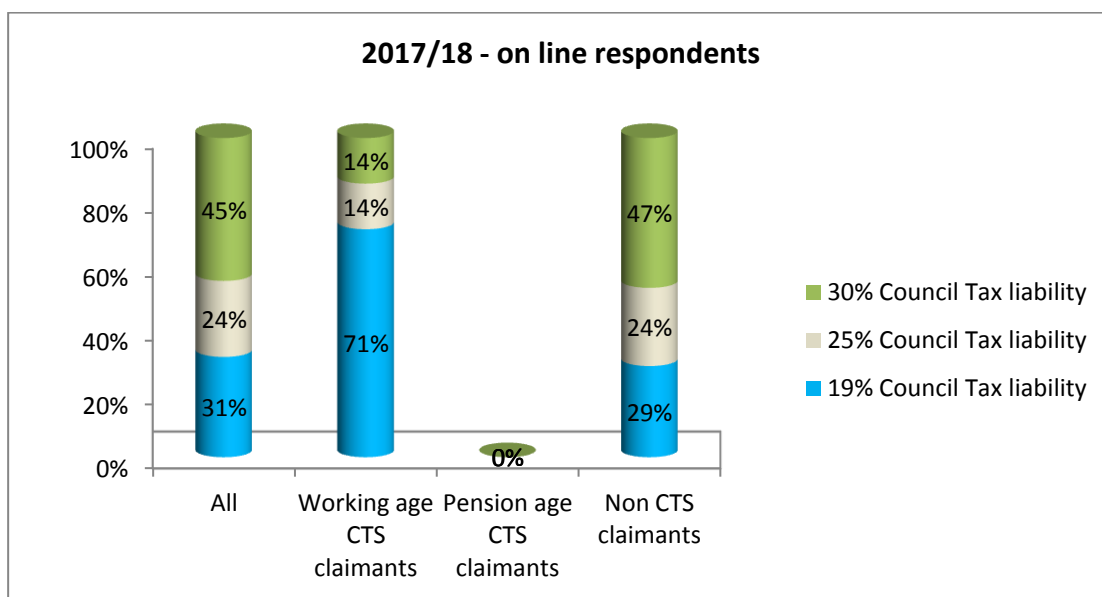


Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

Of the postal responses received, overall 38% were in favour of retaining the level of support at a maximum of 81% although again there was a marked difference between those in receipt or not in receipt of CTS.



A similar situation was recorded with those who completed the survey on-line although it should be noted that the on-line survey was not completed by any pensionable age CTS recipients.



Question 2.

Q2 If you think that the Council should make an additional contribution from its own finances, how do you think this should be funded? In particular, should the Council increase Council Tax or cut other Council services or use the Council reserves, or all three?

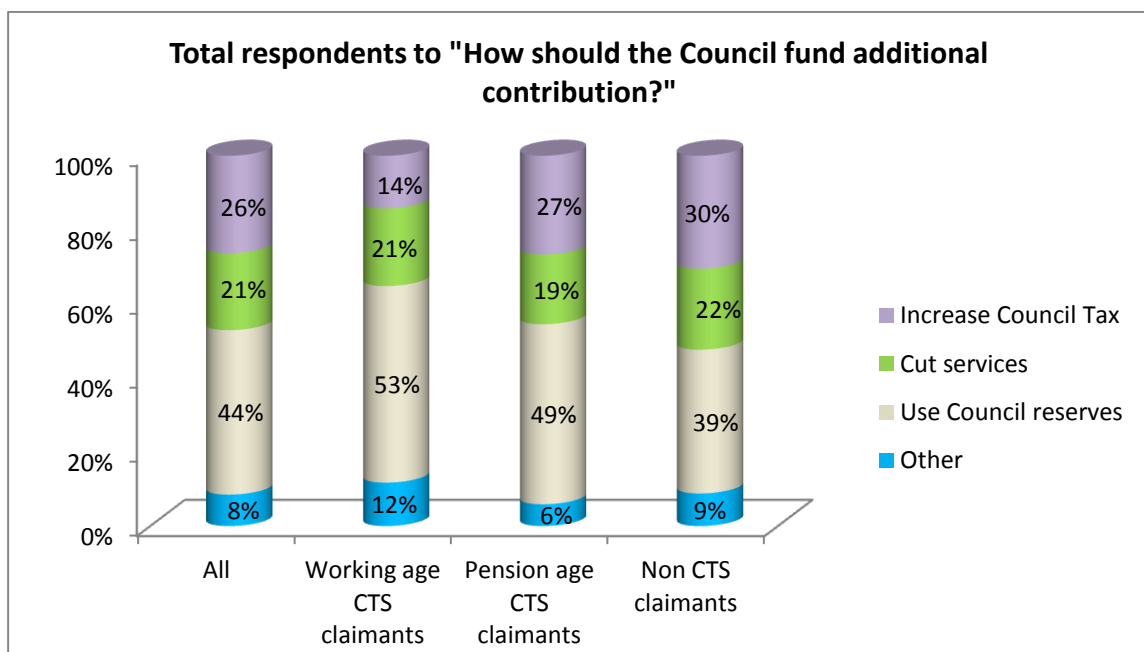
Please choose any of these that apply:

- a. Increase Council Tax
- b. Cut services
- c. Use Council reserves
- d. All three above
- e. Other

If you think services should be cut or have another suggestion, please write your answer here:

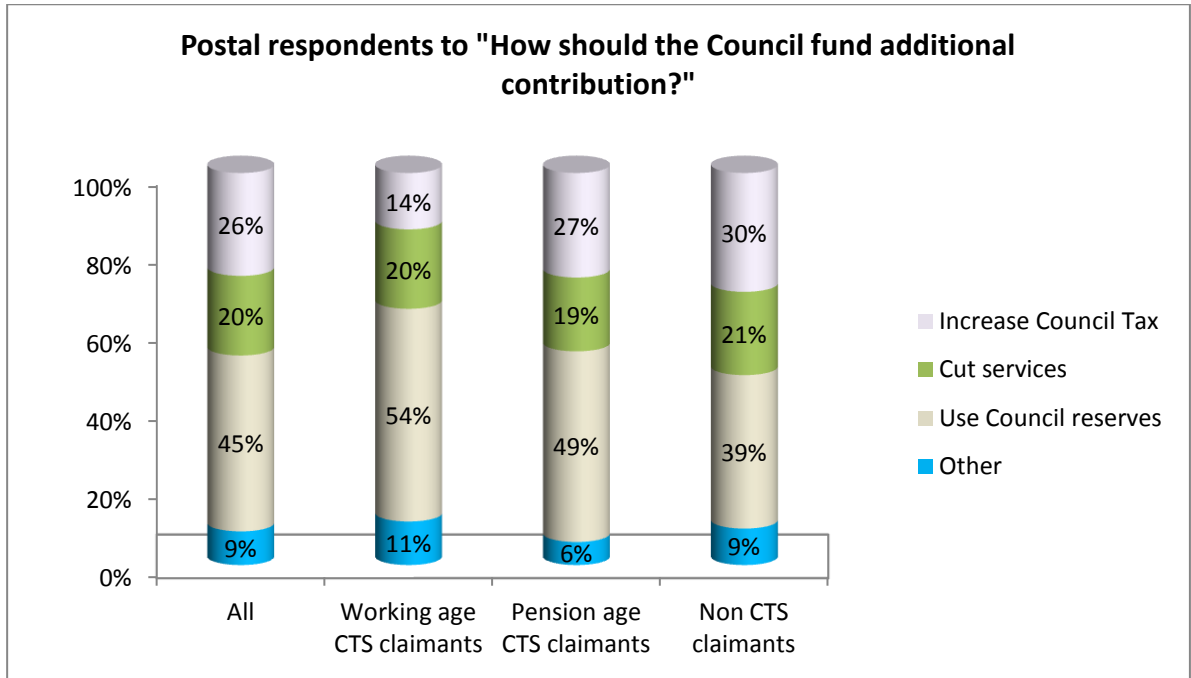
Overall response.

The overall response to this question was that the Council should use its reserves to fund any additional contribution to the Council Tax Support scheme with 44% stating this to be their preference.



Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

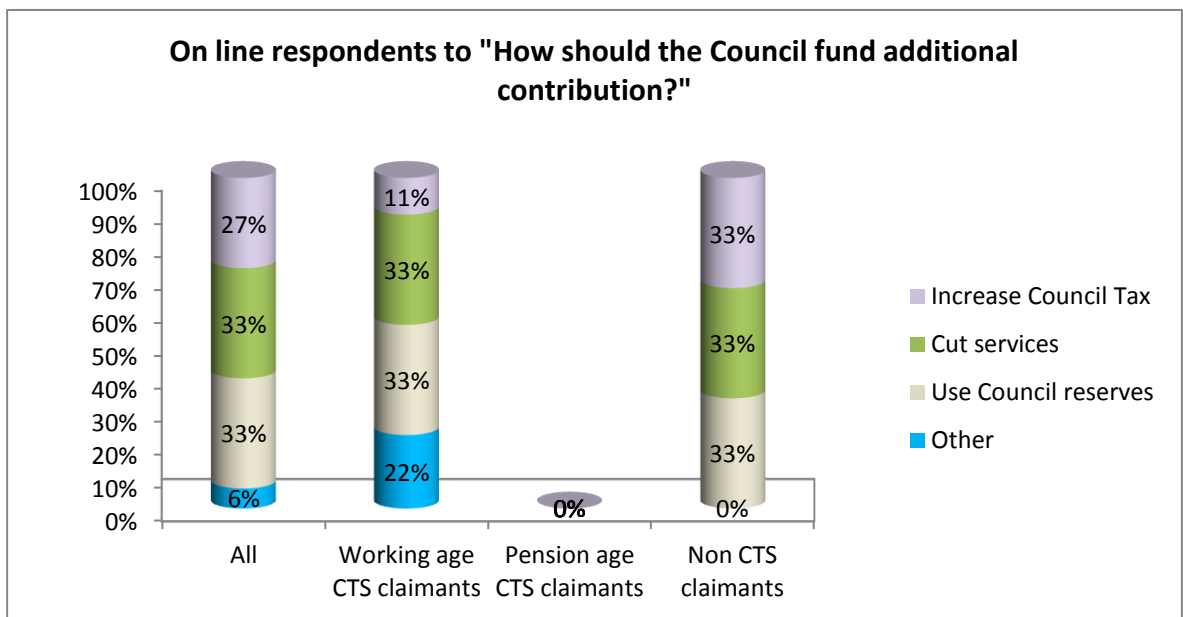
Of those who completed the postal survey, 45% confirmed this to be their preferred option.



Of those who completed the on line survey 33% confirmed this to be their preferred option which was the same irrespective of whether they were in receipt of CTS of not.

Again, it should be noted that no-one of pensionable age, in receipt of CTS, completed the on-line survey.

It should also be noted that 33% were also in favour of cutting council services in order to fund any additional contribution.



Question 3.

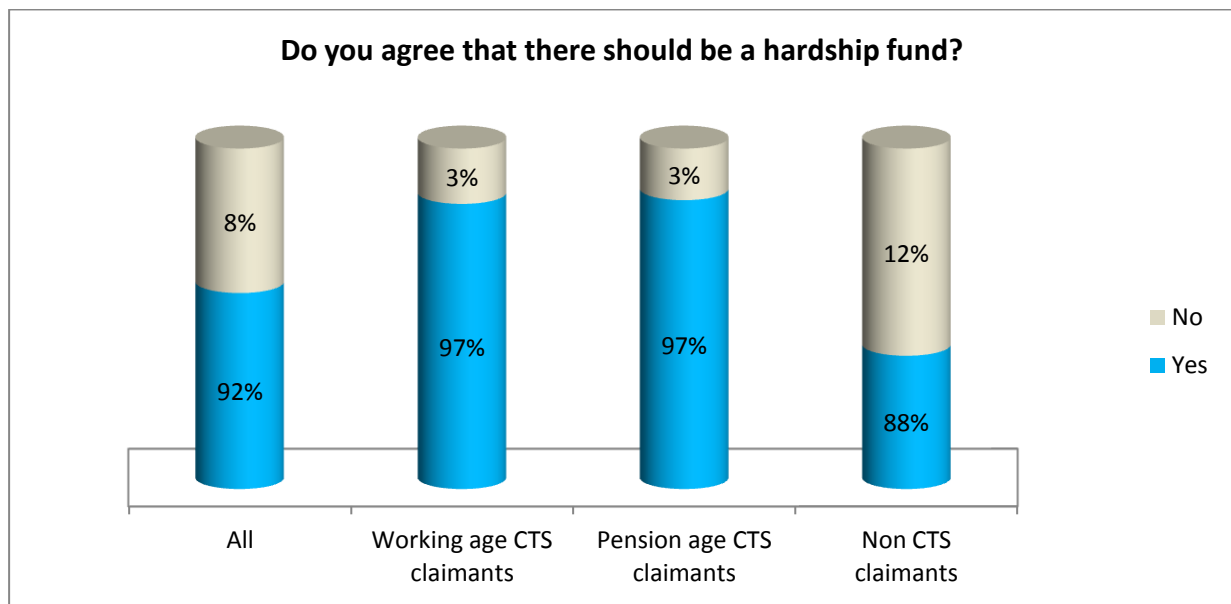
Q3 The Council has a hardship fund of £100,000 to protect the most vulnerable. This is to provide extra help to residents who are experiencing exceptional financial hardship and are unable to pay their Council Tax.

	Yes	No
a. Do you agree that there should be a hardship fund?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Do you agree the level of funding at £100,000 is correct?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you disagree please write your answer here:
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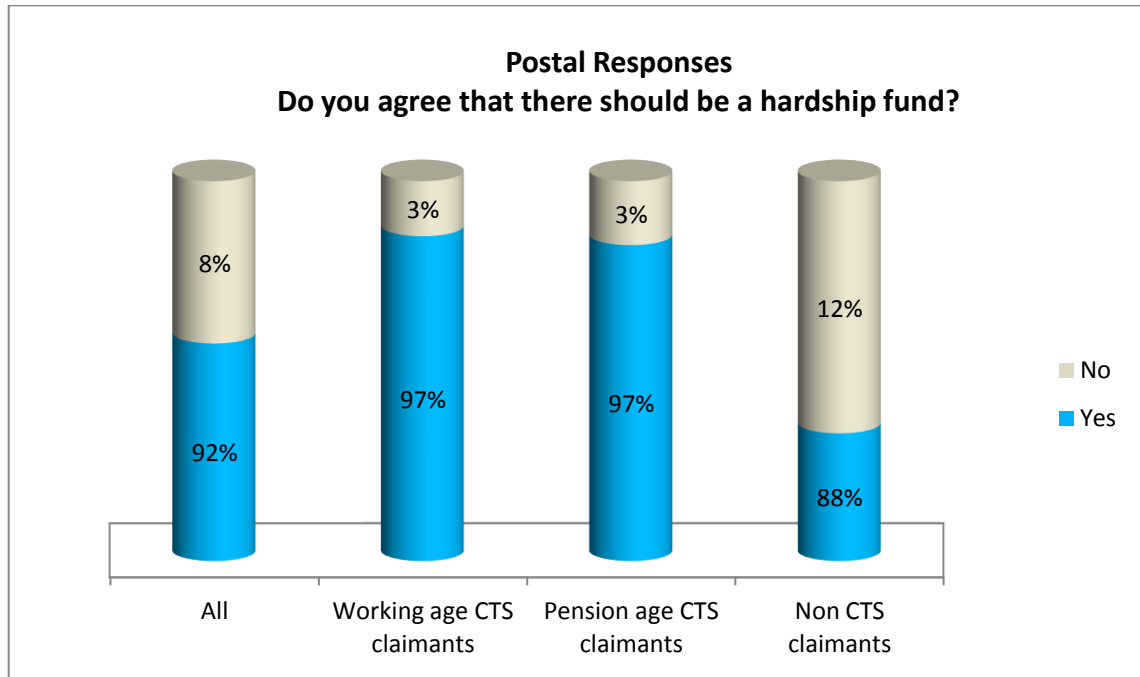
Overall response – part a.

The overall response to part (a) of this question was that, yes, the Council should have a hardship fund with 92% agreeing with this statement.

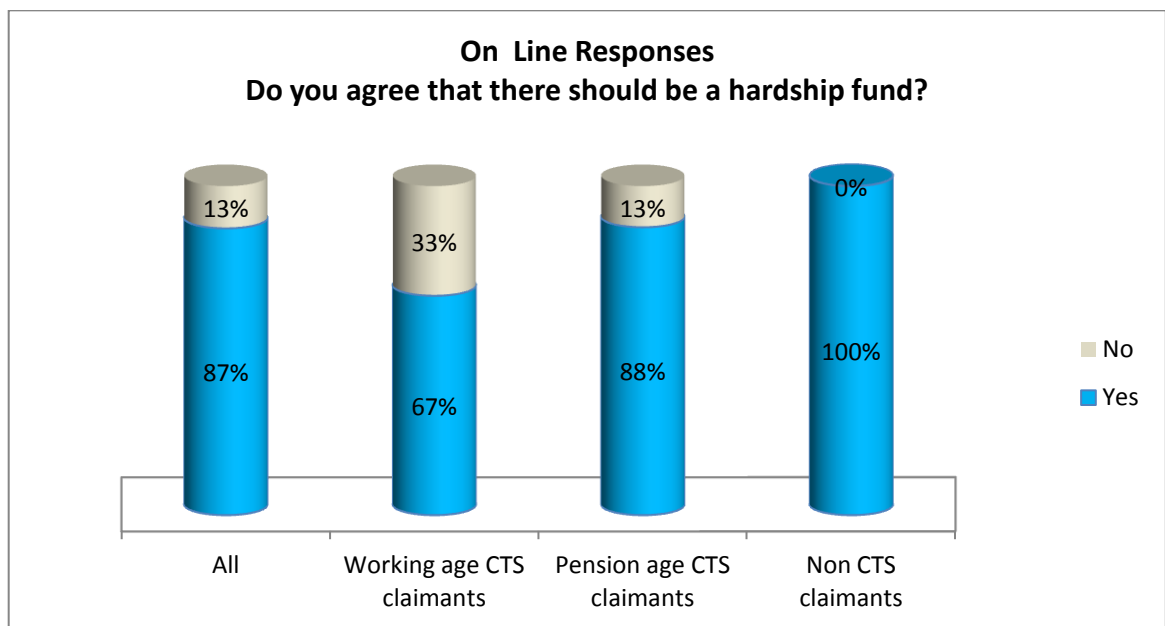


Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

Of those who completed the postal survey 92% confirmed that there should be a hardship fund with a slightly higher % of those in receipt of CTS agreeing with this statement, irrespective of their age.



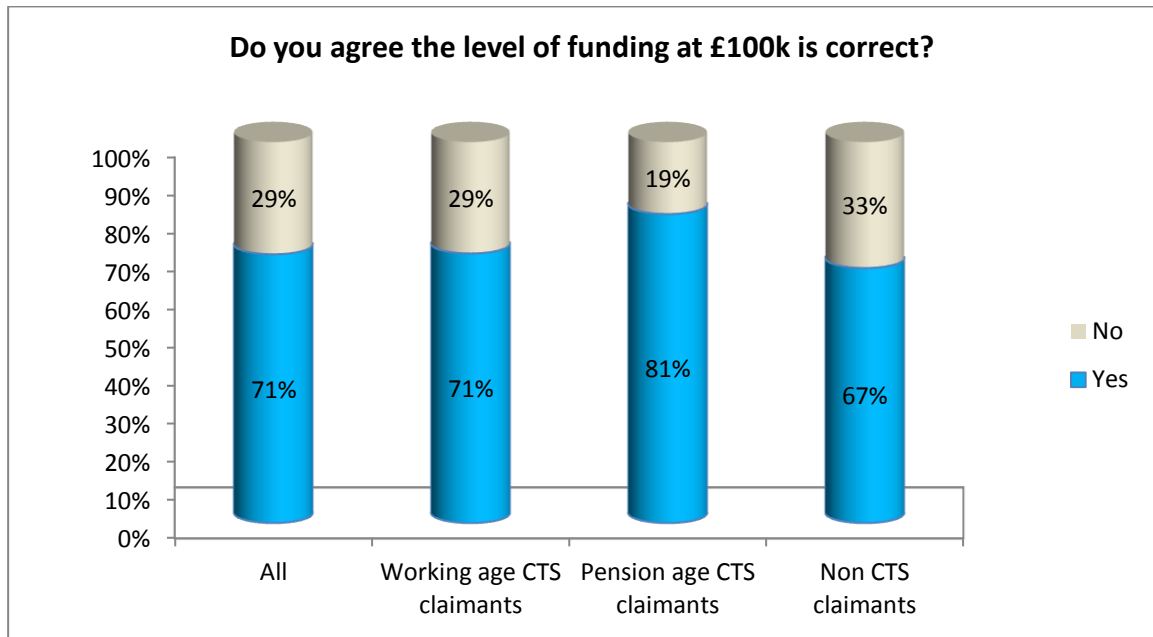
Of those who completed the on line survey 87% confirmed that there should be a hardship fund with 100% of those not in receipt of CTS agreeing with this statement. Interestingly, only 67% of those in receipt of CTS who were of working age and therefore most likely to benefit from a hardship fund agreed with the statement.



Overall response – part b.

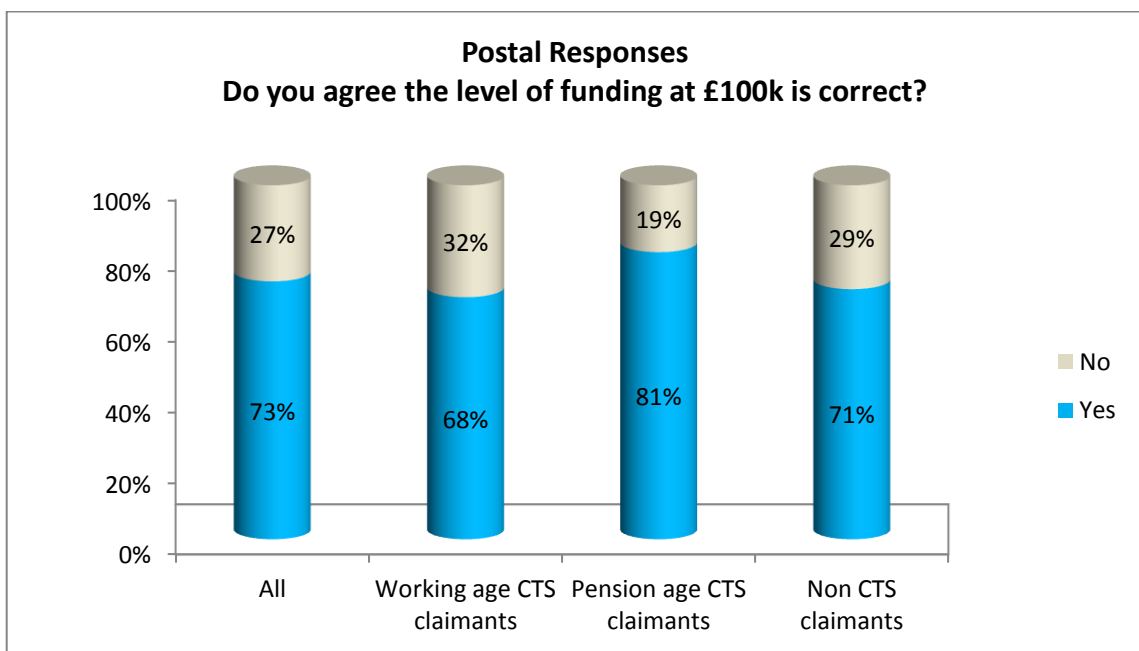
The overall response to part (b) of this question was that, yes, level of £100,000 for a hardship funding was correct with 71% agreeing with this statement.

Of those who provided further commentary 9% believed that the sum should be increased and 6% that it should be decreased. Many of the other respondents felt that they were unable to comment without any further facts and figures being provided regarding the potential spend, numbers affected etc.

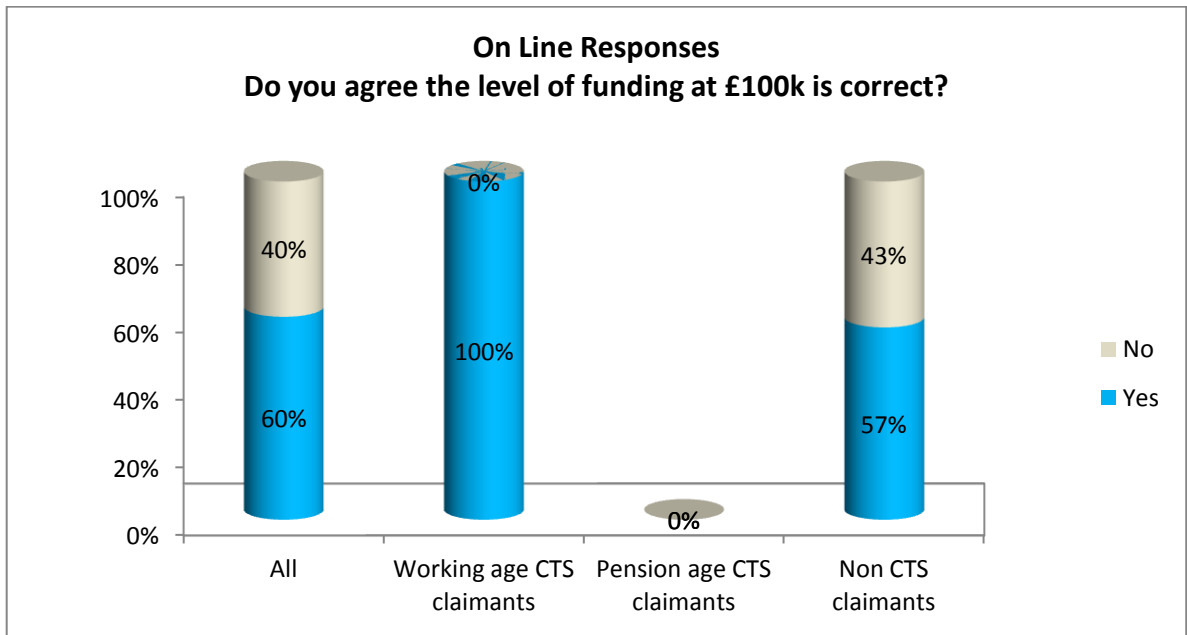


Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

Of those who completed the postal survey 73% confirmed that the sum of £100,000 was correct.



Of those who completed the on line survey 60% confirmed that the sum of £100,000 in respect of a hardship fund was correct. Notably, none of those currently in receipt of CTS who responded on line were of pensionable age but 100% of those of working age agreed with this proposal.



Question 4.

Question 4 provided the respondents with the opportunity to raise anything else which they believed should alter in respect of the CTS scheme.

Q4 Are there any other changes you would like to see to the Council Tax Support scheme for 2016/17 to 2017/18 or general comments regarding CTS?

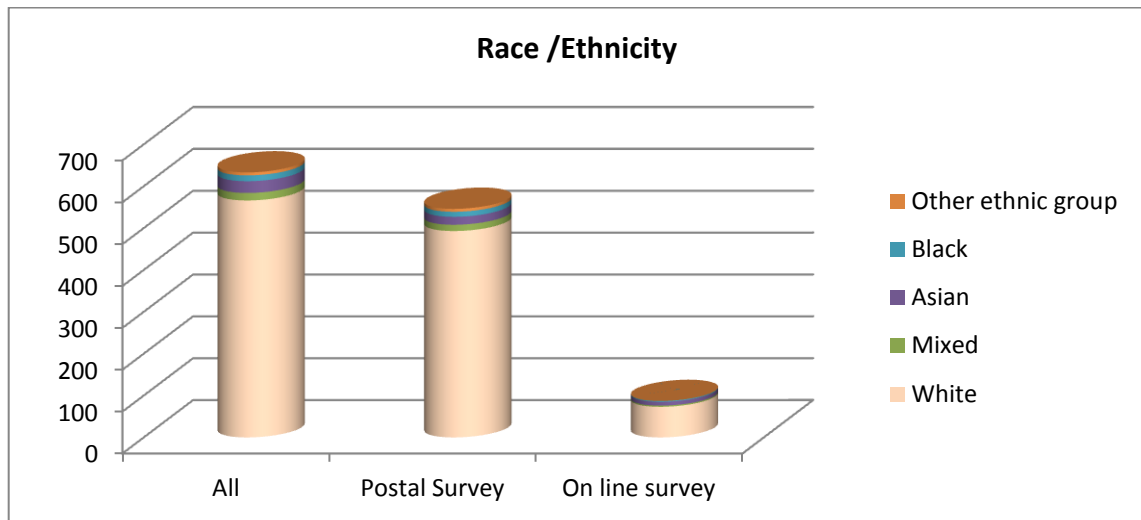
Please write your answer here:

Where respondents did suggest changes, responses here fell into a number of broad categories with many suggesting the following:

- Undertaking better checks into those receiving CTS
- Increased protection for certain categories of people such as the disabled or carers
- Employing a sliding scale of assistance
- Limiting the support further e.g. to those living in the lowest Council Tax band
- Helping citizens to help themselves through employment opportunities

Ethnic Background.

633 respondents confirmed their ethnic background with the majority of respondents, 89%, stating that they were from a white background.



Disability and Gender.

669 respondents were happy to confirm whether they were disabled or not and 684 to confirm their gender. The analysis is shown below.

