

London Borough of Bromley
Council Tax Reduction – Consultation Report

16th October 2019

1) Consultation

A public consultation exercise was undertaken for the 20/21 Council Tax Reduction Scheme during a period from 19th August 2019 until 6th October 2019.

The survey was available through a variety of channels:

- A link was available on the Bromley website
- A paper copy was issued to 2,000 households comprising of a mix of CTR recipients and non CTR recipients (1,000 households not in receipt of CTR, 500 recipients of working age and 500 recipients of pensionable age)
- A paper flyer enclosed with all Council Tax Bills issued during this period advising of the link on the website.

In total there were 268 responses received, 36 being via the website and the majority 232 received by post.

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

Of those who chose to respond to these questions, 55% stated that they were not currently in receipt of CTR.

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: Whether it was agreeable to maintain the level of assistance at 75%

Q2: If LBB were to increase the level of support, how should this be funded?

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.

2) Outcomes.

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

Question 1

Q1 The current maximum level of support for working-age claimants is 75% of the household's Council Tax liability after any discounts or exemptions have been applied. This would require working age claimants to pay a minimum of 25% of their liability.

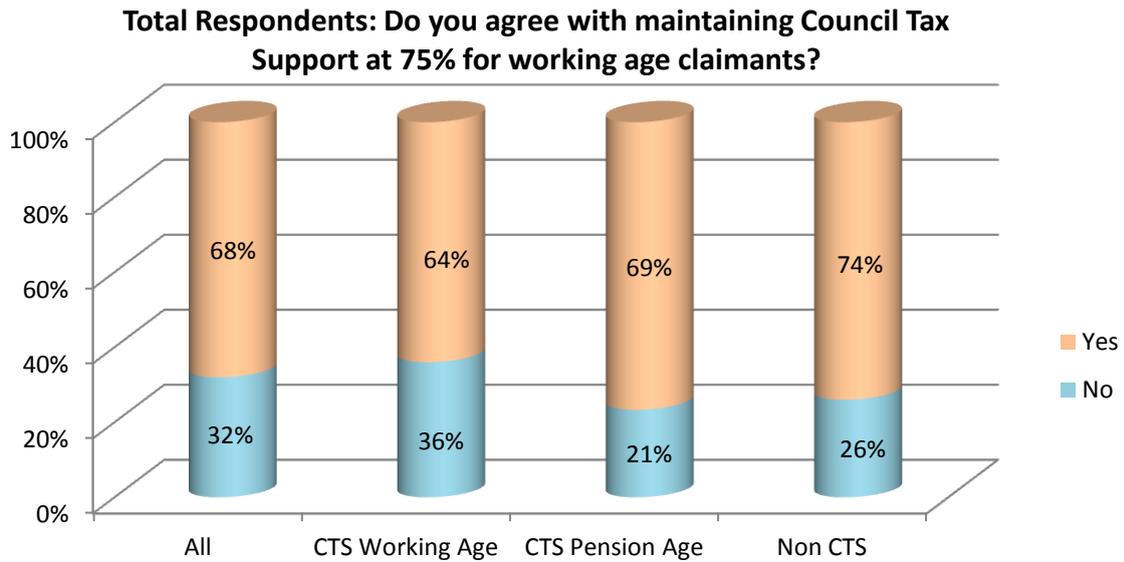
	Yes	No
Please confirm whether you:		
a. Agree with maintaining the assistance at 75%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. If <i>NO</i> do you think Council Tax Support claimants should;		
<i>Pay more Council Tax e.g. receive less support</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Pay less Council Tax e.g. receive more support to</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you disagree with maintaining assistance for working-age claimants at 75%, please state why:

.....

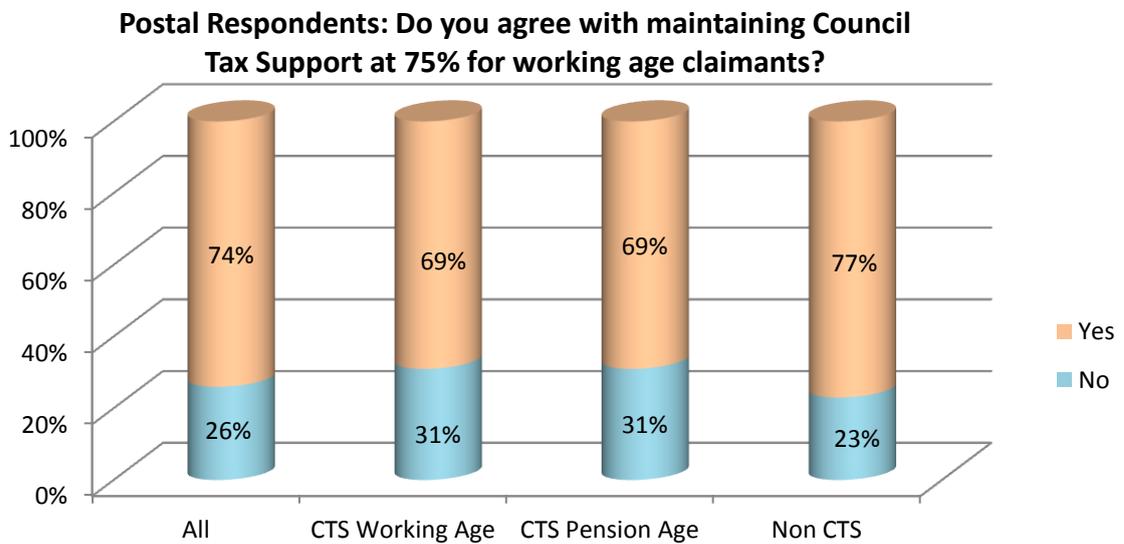
Overall response.

Of those who responded the *overall* outcome was that they wished to keep the scheme the same with 68% confirming this to be their preference. This was a higher percentage when this question was asked last year as in 2019/20 it was 67%. The responses were weighted in favour of keeping support at this level irrespective of whether the respondent was in receipt of Council Tax Reduction or not.

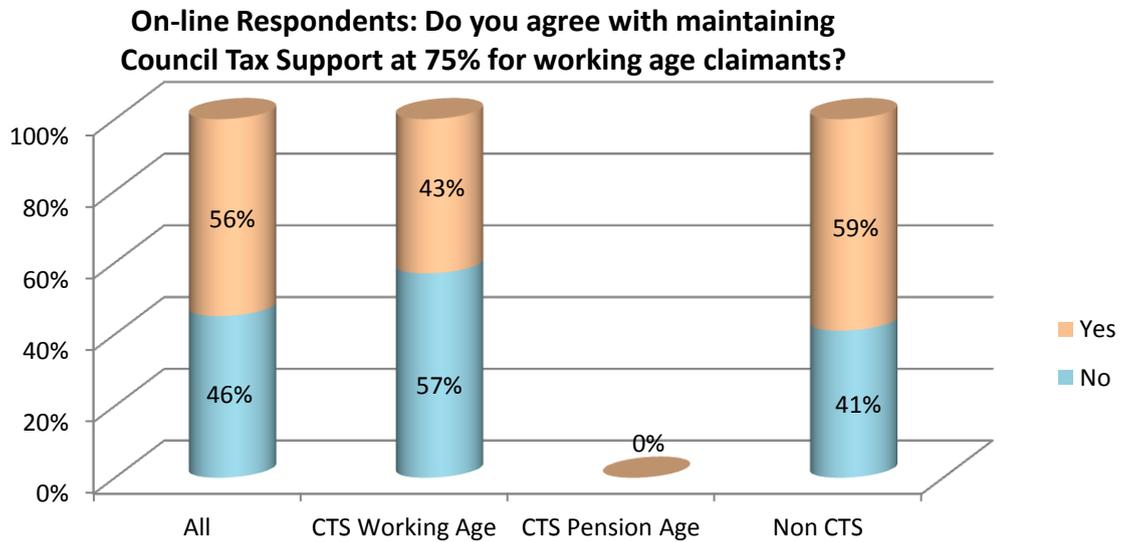


Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

Of the postal responses received, overall 74% were in favour of retaining the level of support at a maximum of 75%. Again the result was irrespective of whether they were in receipt of Council Tax Reduction or not.



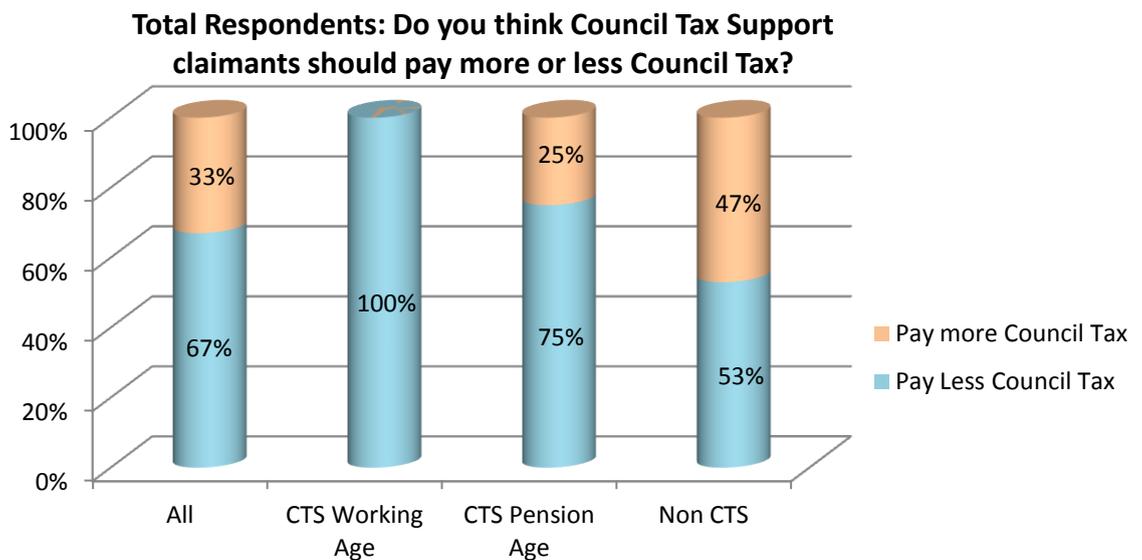
For on-line responses received, overall 56% were in favour of retaining the level of support at a maximum of 75%. However for Council Tax Support working age there were 57% against retaining the level of support however this accounted for only 7 replies. But, 59% for non-Council Tax Support claimants were in favour of retaining the same level of support. Finally there wasn't any pension age responses received on-line.



Question 1b.

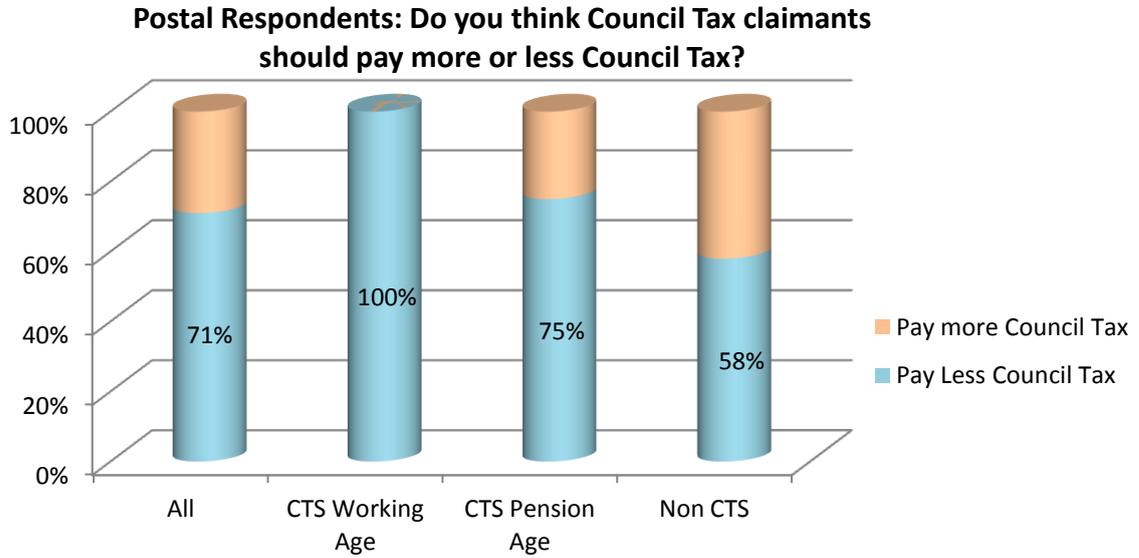
Overall response.

Of those who responded to state that they believe assistance should not be maintained at 75%, the *overall* outcome was that they wished to increase the level of support thereby decreasing the levels of Council Tax which recipients would need to pay.

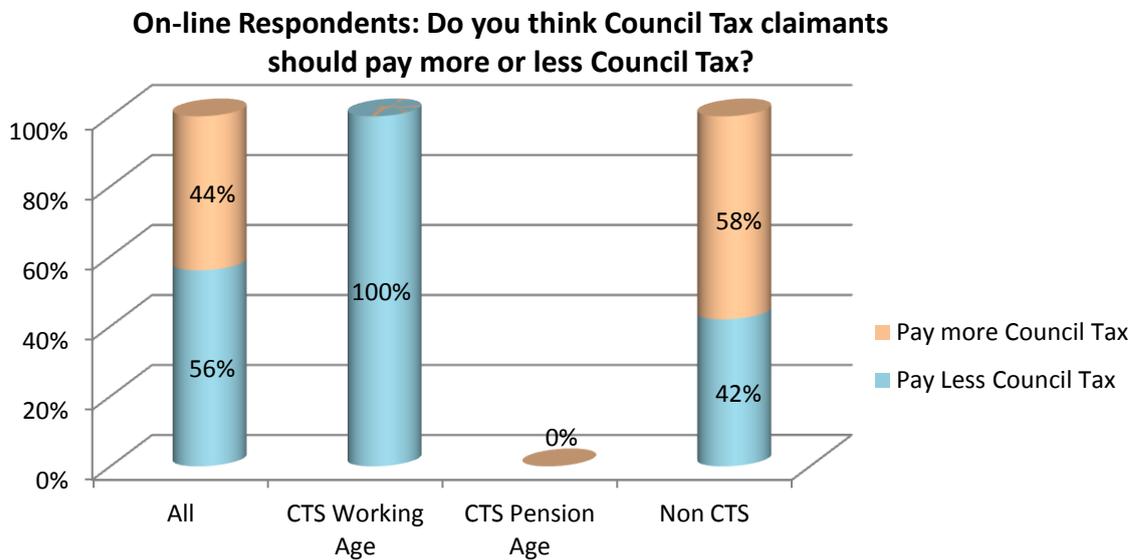


Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

Of the postal responses received, overall 71% were in favour of Council Tax Reduction claimants receiving more support and paying less Council Tax, and this was supported by the majority of respondents not currently in receipt of support.



Of the on-line responses received, overall 56% were in favour of Council Tax Reduction claimants receiving more support and paying less Council Tax. However this was not supported by the majority of respondents not currently in receipt of support.



Question 2.

Q2 If you think that Council should increase the level of assistance for working-age people from 75%, 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:

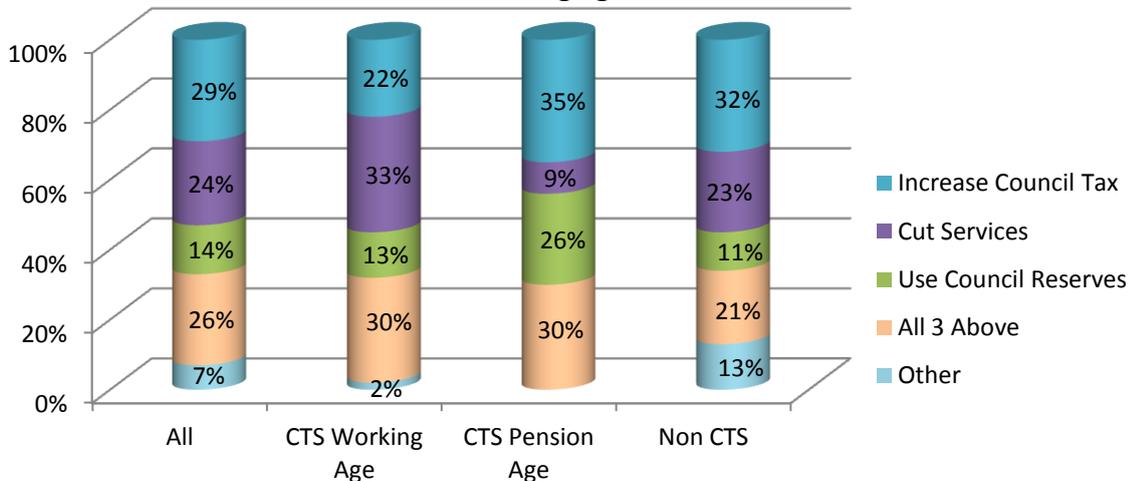
- a. Increase Council Tax
- b. Cut services
- c. Use Council reserves
- d. All three above
- e. Other

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

Overall response

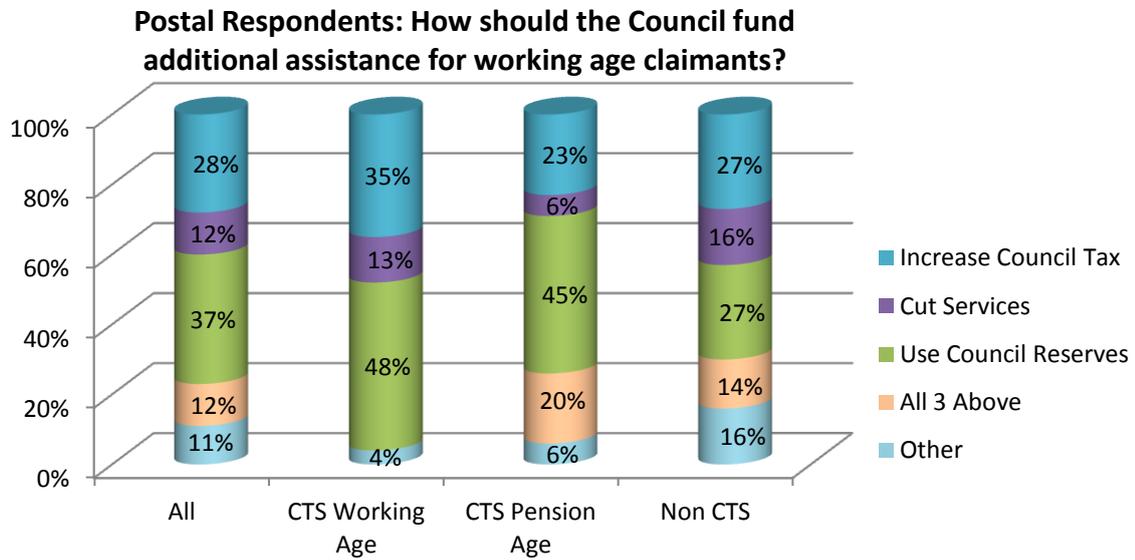
The overall response to this question was that the Council should increase council tax to fund any additional contribution to the Council Tax Reduction scheme with 29% stating this to be their preference. The next highest preference at 26% was to increase Council Tax, cut services and use Council Reserves to fund any additional contribution to the Council Tax Reduction scheme.

Total Respondents: How should the Council fund additional assistance for working age claimants?

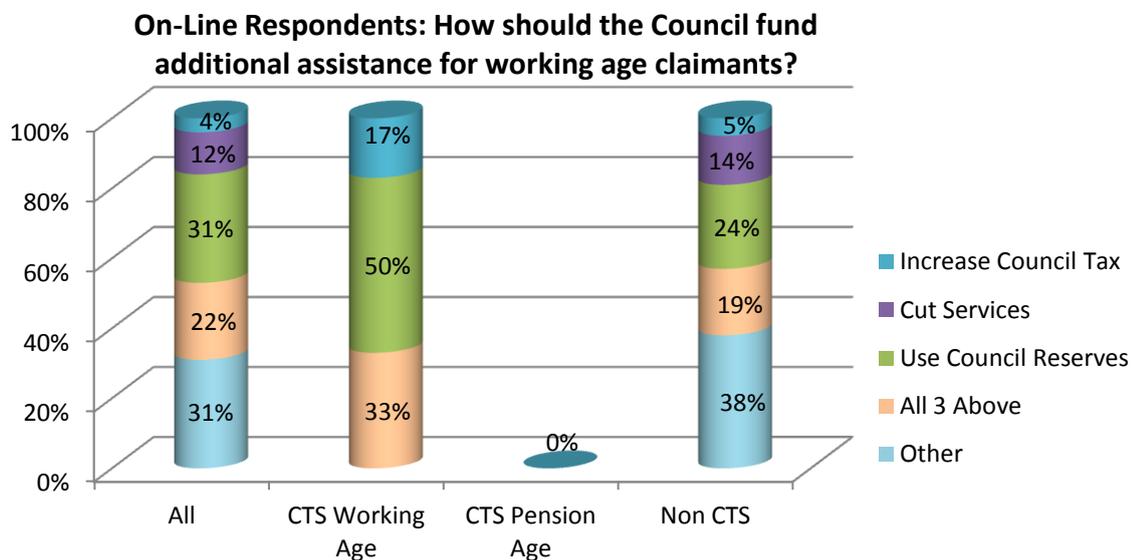


Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

Of those who completed the postal survey, 37% confirmed the use of Council reserves to be their preference to fund any additional contribution to the Council Tax Reduction scheme. The next highest preference at 28% was to increase council tax.



Of those who completed the on-line survey 31% confirmed to using Council reserves as well as other options to be their preferred choice with the highest percentage of respondents choosing to use Council reserves being those of working age who are currently in receipt of Council Tax Reduction.



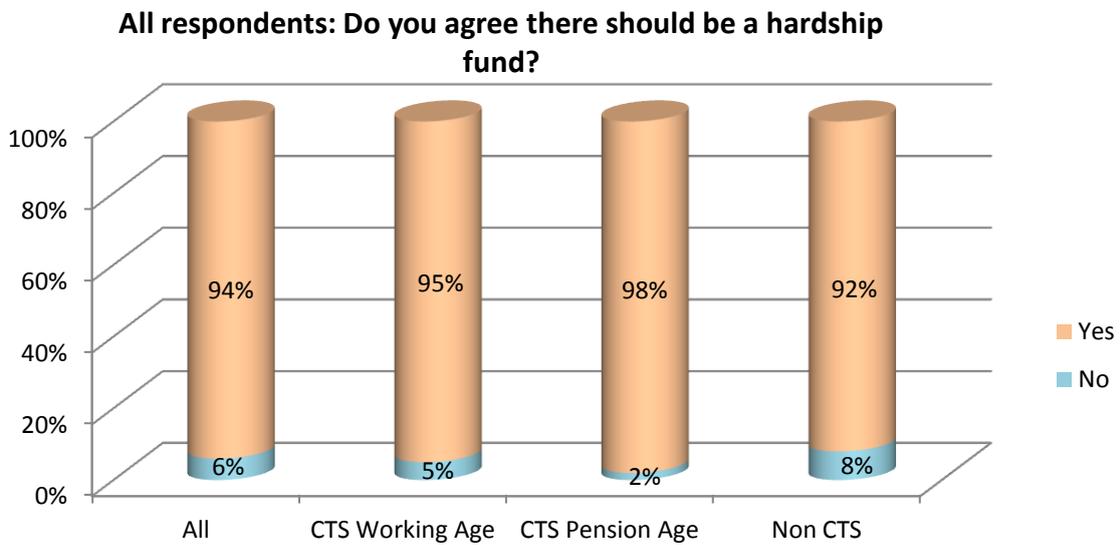
Question 3.

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:		

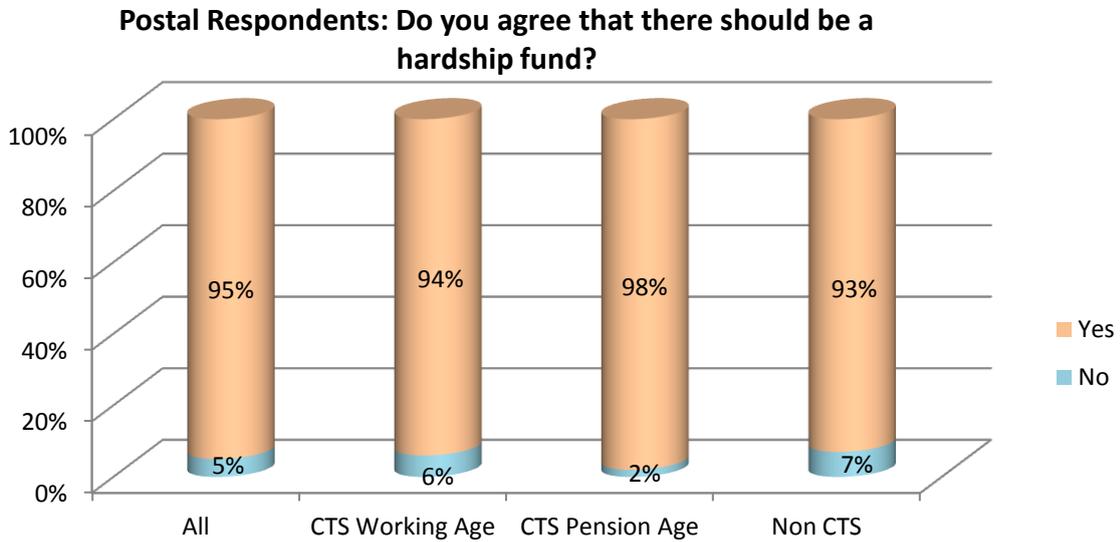
Overall response – part a.

The overall response to part (a) of this question was that, yes, the Council should have a hardship fund with 94% agreeing with this statement.

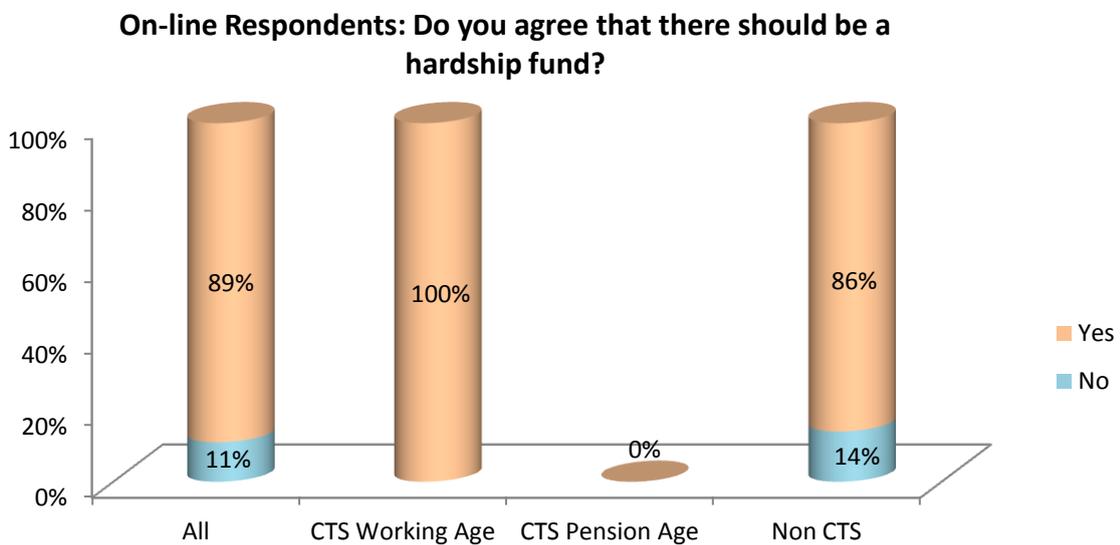


Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

Of those who completed the postal survey 95% confirmed that there should be a hardship fund with a 98% of those in receipt of CTS who were pension age agreeing with this statement.



Of those who completed the on-line survey 89% confirmed that there should be a hardship fund with a continued high support at 100% of those at Working Age in receipt of CTR agreeing with this statement.



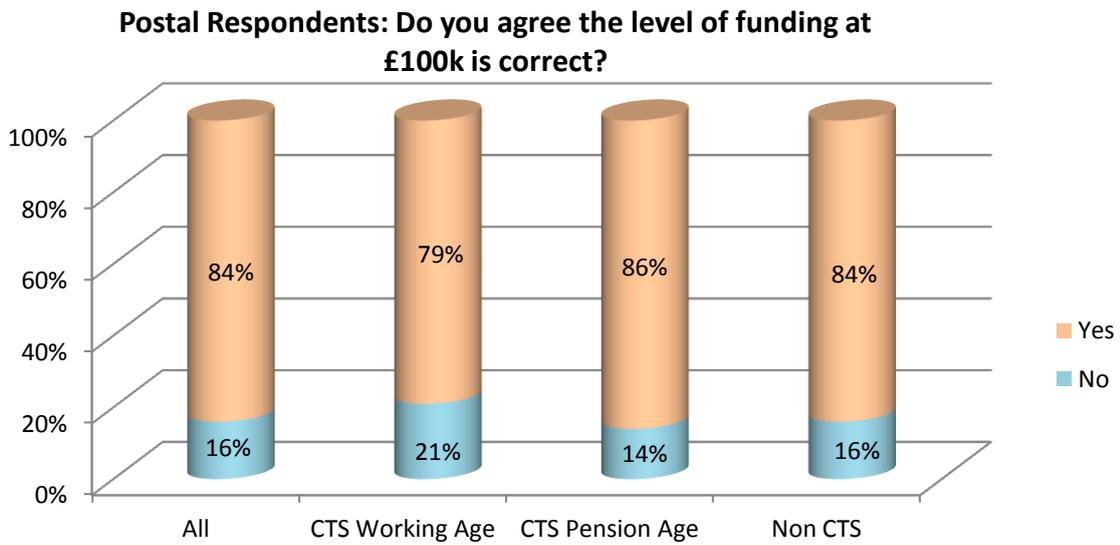
Overall response – part b.

The overall response to part (b) of this question was that, yes, the level of £100,000 for a hardship funding was correct with 79% agreeing with this statement.

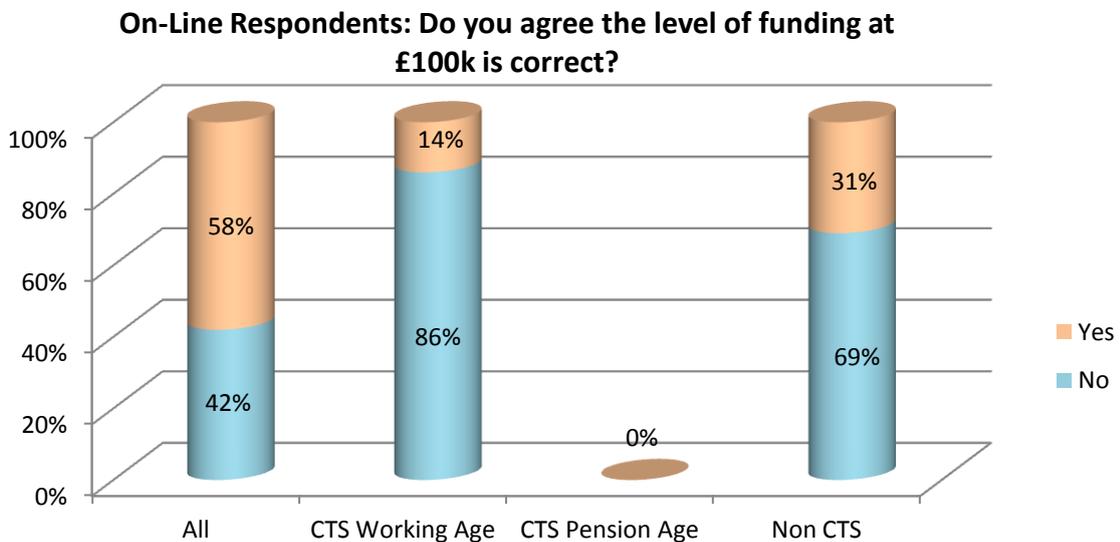
A number of respondents felt that they were unable to comment without any further facts and figures being provided regarding the potential spend, numbers affected and the criteria qualifying for this fund.

Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

Of those who completed the postal survey 84% confirmed that the sum of £100,000 was correct.



Of those who completed the on line survey only 58% confirmed that the sum of £100,000 in respect of a hardship fund was correct, however for working age and non CTS they did not agree that the level of funding is correct.



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

Q4 Are there any other changes you would like to see to the Council Tax Support scheme 2019/20 or any further comments you would like to make regarding the scheme?

Please write your answer here:

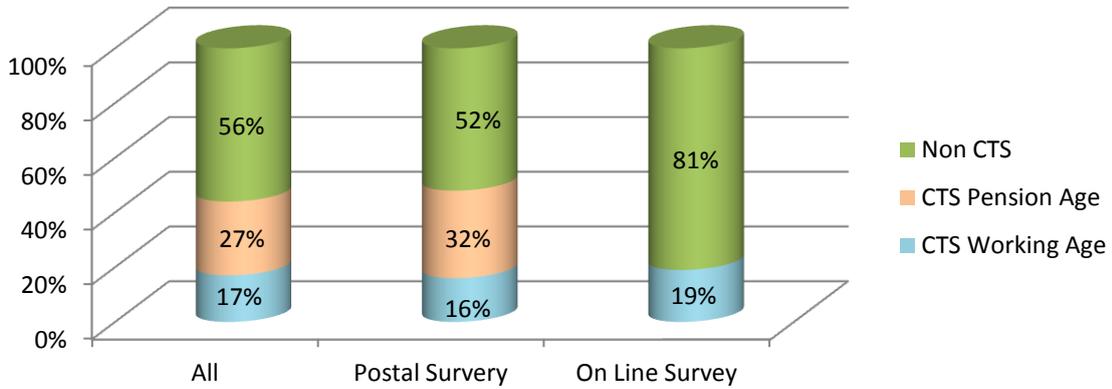
Where respondents did suggest changes, responses here fell into a number of broad categories with many suggesting the following:

- Increased protection for certain categories of people such as the disabled
- Difficult to agree or not as no basis for comparison
- Helping citizens to help themselves through employment opportunities
- More help for single working age claimants

Q5	Please choose any of these that apply:	Yes	No
	a. Are you currently in receipt of Council Tax Support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	If you answered yes to (5a) please tick one of the following:		
	bi. Are you a pensioner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	bii. Are you of working age?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall response

Of those who completed the survey, overall 56% were from respondents not in receipt of Council Tax assistance, and 44% confirmed they were either pension age or working age currently receiving Council Tax Support.



Details of all the narrative responses, to this question and others, have been included at Appendix 1.

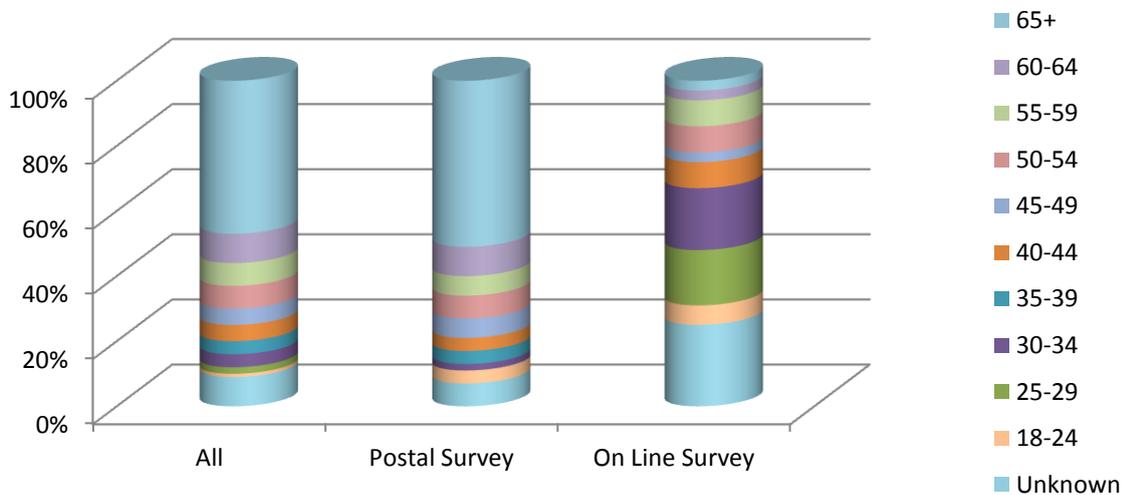
Equality and Diversity.

Standard questions relating to Equality and Diversity were included on the survey but it was made clear that answering these was not compulsory.

While 268 responses were received, not all respondents chose to complete the questions regarding their circumstances or ethnic background.

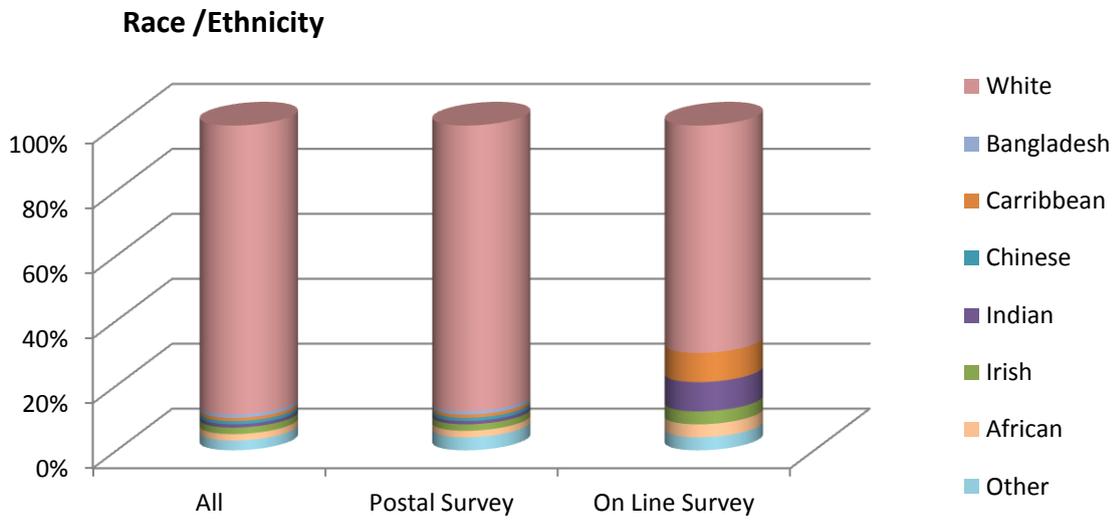
Overall, 243 people confirmed their age with the highest volumes of respondents being from those aged over 65 years of age.

Age Profile of Respondants



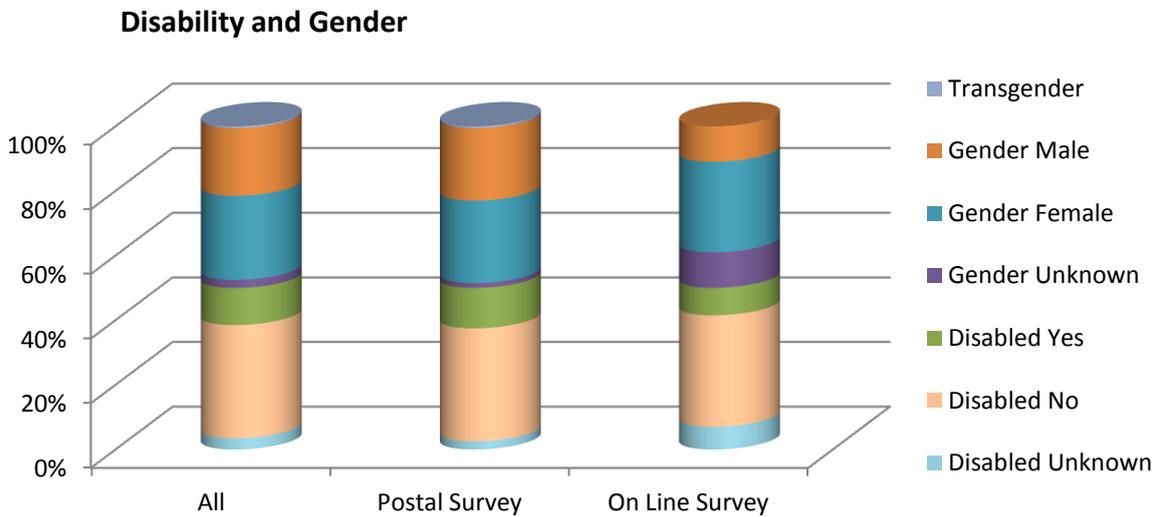
Ethnic Background.

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



Disability and Gender.

246 respondents were happy to confirm whether they were disabled or not. 241 confirmed their gender of which 55% were female and 45% were male respondents. The analysis is shown below.



4. Response from the Great London Authority (GLA)

LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY: COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2020-21

Thank you for your email of 13 August informing the GLA about the Council's consultation on the council tax support scheme for 2020-21 and in particular whether the minimum working-age contribution for 2020/21 should remain at 25 per cent of the council tax liability. The GLA responded in brief ahead of the launch of the consultation, published on 19 August. This letter sets out the GLA's formal response to the consultation.

Introduction

As in previous years, the GLA recognises that the determination of council tax support schemes, under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 2012, is a local matter for each London borough. Individual schemes need to be developed which have regard to specific local circumstances, both in respect of the potential impact of any scheme on working age claimants (particularly vulnerable groups) and, more generally, the financial impact on the council and local council tax payers – and therefore the final policies adopted may, for legitimate reasons, differ across the capital's 33 billing authorities.

This fact notwithstanding the GLA also shares in the risks and potential shortfalls arising from the impact of council tax benefit localisation in proportion to its share of the council tax in each London billing authority. It is therefore important that we are engaged in the scheme development process and have an understanding of both the factors which have been taken into account by boroughs in framing their proposals, as well as the data and underlying assumptions used to determine any forecast shortfalls which will inform the final scheme design.

Framing Proposals

As part of the introduction of council tax support in 2013-14, the Government set out its expectation that, in developing their scheme proposals, billing authorities should ensure that:

- Pensioners see no change in their current level of awards whether they are existing or new claimants;
- They consider extending support or protection to other vulnerable groups; and
- Local schemes should support work incentives and, in particular, avoid disincentives to move into work.

The GLA concurs with those general broad principles and would encourage all billing authorities in London to have regard to them in framing their schemes.

Proposed 2020-21 Scheme

Under Bromley's existing scheme, the maximum level of council tax support available to working age claimants is 75 per cent of their council tax liability, after any other discounts or exemptions. The Council is consulting on maintaining this level of support, whilst continuing to uprate benefit levels in line with changes to Housing Benefit, including the level of non-dependant deductions.

Minimum Contribution

The council's consultation seeks views on whether the minimum working-age contribution for 2020-21 should remain at 25 per cent of claimants' council tax liability. We note the council's preference to maintain the current minimum contribution level and the consultation does not propose an alternative.

The diversity of council tax support schemes developed in London since 2013-14 means there is now a wide range of minimum contribution rates, varying from no minimum contribution to 30 per cent. In addition to Bromley, six other London boroughs have contribution rates of 25 per cent and four London boroughs currently require a minimum contribution level of over 25 per cent. The GLA notes therefore that Bromley is within the third of boroughs that require a minimum contribution of at least 25 per cent.

The GLA recognises that local authorities have faced difficult choices on CTS schemes, as overall

funding from central government has reduced and funding for CTS is no longer identifiable within the settlement. The consultation states that if the minimum contribution rate was reduced, this would have to be funded by either one or a combination of the following options: a council tax increase, use of reserves, reducing council services. Therefore, notwithstanding the comments elsewhere in this response, the GLA is content for the council to maintain its minimum contribution rate at the current level.

Hardship Fund

The consultation also seeks views on the councils hardship fund, which provides assistance to residents who are experiencing exceptional financial hardship and are unable to pay their council tax. The GLA welcomes the assurance that the Council will continue to make a discretionary hardship fund available and notes its level appears appropriate. We would encourage the Council to take a proactive approach to informing those council tax support claimants facing difficulties paying council tax bills about the help available.

Technical Reforms to Council Tax

The GLA considers that in formulating its council tax support scheme each billing authority should consider the impact of the additional revenue it may be possible to raise through powers introduced in the Local Government Finance Act 2012 and the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018.

The council does not currently provide any discounts for properties undergoing major repairs or structural alterations, unoccupied or unfurnished homes or second homes. The GLA is responding separately to the council's consultation on proposals for the introduction of an empty homes premium from April 2020. However, we would urge the council to consider the impact on income levels of adopting the maximum levels of empty homes premium.

We would encourage the council to inform us as soon as possible of finalised changes to its empty homes premium policy, in order to assist us in assessing the potential impact on the Mayor's funding and tax base for 2020-21 and future years.

Council Tax Protocol

In recent years the issue of council tax collection practices has become more high profile. The GLA, of course, recognises the importance of ensuring council tax arrears are collected wherever possible. However, in some instances poor collection practices can worsen debt problems for vulnerable residents.

Citizens Advice, in partnership with the Local Government Association, has developed a council tax protocol¹, which outlines a number of practical steps for early intervention to support people struggling with payments. In London, eight boroughs have now signed up to the protocol and the GLA would encourage all boroughs to consider adopting the protocol.

Providing Information on Schemes

Whilst we recognise that the detailed rules on council tax support schemes are inevitably complex, the GLA would encourage all boroughs to make every effort to set out information on their schemes as clearly as possible. Information that may help potential claimants could include an online calculator, to identify whether potential claimants are likely to be entitled to support, as well as 'Frequently Asked Questions' and a summary document outlining concise details of the scheme. In addition, for existing claimants we would encourage boroughs to consider how the process for reporting changes in circumstances can be made as straightforward as possible.

Setting the Council Tax Base for 2020-21 and Assumptions in Relation to Collection Rates

The council will be required to set a council tax base for 2020-21 taking into account the potential impact of any changes to the council tax support scheme and changes linked to the empty homes premium. The GLA would encourage the council to provide it with an indicative council tax base forecast as soon as options are presented to members for approval, in order that it can assess the

¹<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/campaigns/Council%20Tax/Citizens%20Advice%20Council%20Tax%20Protocol%202017.pdf>

potential implications for the Mayor's budget for police, fire and other services for 2020-21. This should ideally be accompanied by supporting calculations disclosing any assumptions around collection rates and discounts granted having regard to the final council tax support scheme design.

Collection Fund and Precept Payments

By 23 January 2020, the council is required to notify the GLA of its forecast collection fund surplus or deficit for 2019-20, which will reflect the cumulative impact of the localisation of council tax support since it was introduced in 2013-14. The GLA would encourage the council to provide it with this information as soon as it is available.

I would like to thank you again for consulting the GLA on proposals for Bromley's council tax support scheme for 2020-21.

5. Timetable for Implementation

The new scheme will commence on 1st April 2020 for one year.

6. Appendix 1 – Narrative responses.

While narrative responses have been reproduced here for completeness, those respondents who simply stated "yes", "no" or "don't know" have been removed as these have been included in the analysis undertaken of the results above.

Q1 If you disagree with maintaining assistance for working-age claimants at 75%, please state why:

Keep as is.

75% is too much of a 'discount' to just give away

I am 55 year old working lady.I live on my own.My rent is too high and founding council taxes bill difficult to pay.I would like to ask for assistance or help.

I believe the council is spending too much on social welfare and not enough on basic services such as waste and recycling, highways and transport, parks, street cleaning, libraries etc.

Sickness benefits are not increasing cost of living is more expensive etc! At least help people on sickness benefits pay 100% of their council tax

Council tax support should be means tested. Maintaining a 25% contribution with 75% support for some can have a negative impact on their financial circumstances and the process of requesting a discretionary payment is lengthy. The level of assistance and how you provide this help should be reviewed and simplified. Thank you for taking my view into account.

It is a large burden for many to pay that 25% and should not be applied irrespective of their financial means; if they have to choose between paying that 25% and having the heating on in the winter, or food for everyone in the household at adequate levels it is in humane.

It will be difficult for myself to make any payment towards Council Tax due in current income.

Too much discount

Because 25% along with other bills might be difficult to cope with in some limited cases. It should be very strictly means assessed but should exist for very limited number of cases.

The amount of council tax support received has a direct impact on the lowest income families, disabled people and puts the children in our borough into further poverty. Many already reliant on the food bank in order to meet basic food requirements. This extra should come from higher earners, vacant properties and businesses operating in the area paying little or no tax!

"I believe that more support does -

NOT encourage claimants to get into a working status

NOT set an ideal example for the younger generation and it does

NOT generate or support new smaller businesses"

The council needs to make savings.

Your policy is punishing the poor and disabled. A truly nasty party (CONSERVATIVE PARTY) POLICY, You should be ashamed of yourselves.

I have three children under 16 years old the eldest has special needs. I am unemployed and my partner works under zero contract and has a low wage of £800 per month.

people of working age who are not working and are on benefits such as universal credit are already on an extremely low income requiring them to pay even 25% of council tax pushes them further below the poverty line

IF THEY ARE WORKING LET THEM PAY THEIR WAY

A reduction to the 2014/2015 level would be preferred

Before retirement I always paid council tax in full. It requires a plan to be responsible for their own bills and to budget accordingly. I'm sure if someone is in dire need there will be essential help for them but I don't believe in carte Blanche for people who are working

Max 50% support

The benefit system over the recent decade of austerity is harsh and challenging to live on for vulnerable people. I would like to ease some off that by easing the council tax burden

Because working age claimants are not always in employment and 75% is quite a high assistance

Councils are struggling to maintain services Everyone benefits from council services and should therefore support the council

Increase in council tax puts extra burden on so many families. Do not put that burden on hard working families. If possible provide any employment opportunities to other family members

Everyone no matter what their circumstances should pay all bills before being left with spending monies. To much help is given to people who do not help themselves.

I believe working people should not receive so much assistance

I think that working age claimants should receive 70% only. You have not shown anywhere the total of funds involved but a reduction of 50% would make all the difference to council funds.

Because myself and partner are on low income despite both in full time employment and manage to pay full council tax. Also those receiving assistance are more likely to use council services.

If people are struggling financially I don't think they should have to pay council tax.

Youre making it to easy.

Because everyone should be making a contribution to the services being provided in the local borough.

It is important that households make a contribution towards council tax so should contribute more.

For us paying 100% council tax it is expensive enough as it is. We hardly get by but don't qualify for any benefits.

I think you should consider the amount people have to pay (25%) as a proportion of benefits received and the amount people have to live on, particularly with disabled people who are unable to work.

Disabled people are disadvantaged in the work place eg. Autism will not earn the same as others. Bromley is a high cost area.

I am not sure Bromley council can afford to maintain the level of support. I feel council services particularly the state of roads/verges and pavements has got worse over the last few years. There is also a lot of rubbish in the streets.

Strict, control here please.

Anybody who has the ability to work should. There are plenty of jobs available. If we continue to support those who are to lazy or do not like any jobs on offer they will continue to behave the same way everyone should contribute to society

Already have enough assistance

Don't know

Cant afford it.

As I am aged 88 years old I do receive assistance with my council tax. I feel that most of the questions are no think to do with me.

Being in my 80th year I am not sure what an average working salary would be per annum so I am unable to give a proper answer to the above question.

Maintaining it at 75% should be the last resort as even now with 75% assistance the 25%

that I have to put in is too much for me. My council tax is £38.00 a month which is way too much for me.

Why should they receive so much support! I paid my way until I retired and had a much lower income. At times I worked 7 days a week to pay my bills!

With universal credit they do not receive enough to cover their utility bills so it would help them to pay less on council tax.

I just do not agree with council tax and never have. It's very unfair on all people we get no return in return except bin men who chuck rubbish all over the place and do not pick it up. Also we need black bags taken every week not every two weeks because then fly tipping becomes a problem it should be abolished.

I would rather have good services than giving more help to council tax services are for everybody so it is fair to put more support for them.

With the 75% we can still maintain other obligations instead of cutting it down

Q2 If you think that Council should increase the level of assistance for working-age people from 75%, 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?

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

I don't believe that the level of assistance should be increased. In fact I believe it should be decreased significantly.

Assistance should be there for those who truly need it. I would rather see more money spent on policing those who are taking advantage of the system

I don't think services should be cut, but I'm a single lady paying a huge amount for council tax bill and I do use all the services you provide.

The council already spends too much on social welfare such as housing benefit and council tax support.

Make people who refuse to work pay more to ease the burden on disabled and sick claimants. Manage your funds better. They are terribly mismanaged and you outsource many matters to low performing businesses.

Coming down harder on fly tippers and ensuring prosecution and fines are adhered to effectively.

Making businesses in the area paying little or no tax to be taxed more effectively.
Means testing relevant services.

Taxing higher earners and those with large land or non-developed brown belt land.
Ensuring all privately owned, vacant properties are taxed heavily, to encourage occupation.

STOP wasting money by sending out numerous letters in April when the benefit or pension change

get more funding from government

to help part time workers

Increase council tax for bigger/more expensive properties. The wealthy should be proportionately offered by the tax system and they aren't at the moment poorly laid out form should have had more room to complete my answer

Change the law so that the council does not have any legal requirement to support immigrants

Services should be cut and leave adults responsible to provide for themselves

Ensure everyone pays council tax and ensure that the council is operating cost efficiently

Personally I believe that everyone should pay the same but less. Each area is different and this is unfair. If all areas in Bromley borough were one and not hierarchy, people may find it easier to pay and not get behind abolish the banding system

Remove free pickup/drop services & let everyone pay less a bit for using council services. There shouldn't be nothing called free money

I do not agree with the increase why do others have to suffer. any of the above for a few. I do not agree to any of the above being used

Community service should be exchanged for assistance so that shortages in other areas are also made up for. I am sure claimants have something to offer.

Reduction of parking wardens as there are enough cameras any funding should help the working people first (low pay, single or low hour contracts) how can anyone that is not at work pay. Hardship fund sounds like out of work fund.

Stay as it is.

The first step: out of hours(working) permit holders only throughout the borough, not as unaffordable charge but a process which requires the vehicles to be registered to address therefore not affecting local business or the disabled. However it is essential to share the registered vehicles with the DWP. Then you will find the number of single claimants reduce saving enough for the genuine not to be deprived of essential money to feed their families. Far too many are abusing the current systems.

N/A

The days of cuts are over we need a caring council now.

There must be something non-essential that can be cut- such as the funds that paid for the Bromley north giant sign.

cut voyeur services gardens ETC

Anyone who wants additional benefits should off their time in social projects EG cleaning streets maintaining parks, gardens assisting the elderly people etc.

Get more money from the government

Keep at present level until available alternative is available other than increasing council tax

Don't know

Use the council reserves for now and then get more funding from central government by having a

petition signed by every single household to send to the government for more refunding.

Cut the support

See if services could be offered cheaper.

The council should budget & stop wasting money. There are also other opportunities they could look in to.

No this is fair

Abolish council tax

Keep at same level

Cut pay scales to chief executive and senior management this would help all councils in the U.K
TO AVOID CUTS IN COUNCIL SERVICES

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. Do you agree that there should be a hardship fund? Do you agree the level of funding at £100,000 is correct? If you disagree please write your answer here:

You are not helping people in the long run. Too reliant on outside support.

I agree with this, however as long as it is properly policed and governed, and those who receive the money truly need it.

As a single person on minimum wage, with no financial help towards council tax this is too low!!! I have appealed and been ignored by Bromley LB. I am considering not working because I get more help.

The council already spends too much on social welfare.

It feels slightly short knowing the cost of living and how many vulnerable people there are around which include children below the poverty line.

It is nowhere near enough. Also it is very difficult to access this via Bromley Council due to their bias against Benefit Claimants

I am not sure what the level of funding of £100,000 is relevant to and I am undecided on this question. I doubt this to be enough.

This level of funding is too low and doesn't adequately cover support to those residents who need it. Cannot comment without knowing how many experience this hardship.

Should get higher. Bromley is the biggest borough in London.

I do not actually know if it is sufficient or correct, but I trust that this has been based on previous years' spend and 'forecast'

Open to abuse. Some people have been in receipt of it for years.

Difficult to agree or not as no basis for comparison

This should be increased by government funding

people receiving benefits should receive 100% council tax support

If more was available it would help

Please help the disabled and the poor

This sounds like a very low figure for a borough with a population of over 300,000 people it is less than salary of just one of your grade 1 management staff

Level should not be fixed amount but should not exceed a certain figure

The fund of £100,000 is insufficient having regard to Bromley, as population and the yield of a £1 move in council tax on a band D house

Waste less instead of sending tons papers or yearly updates to the electoral register you should spend the money more wisely

should be much higher for the same reason I gave for my answer to question 1
Only for the most severely disabled unable to work

I think there should be more funds available exceptional needs not a limited figure otherwise if the limit of funding is reached what happens to those in crisis

Cant possibly know if £100,000 is too little or too much when you ask such questions you should provide much more details as to how much of the £100,000 has been used. A very unsatisfactory question?

Impossible to answer without any context (how many people need & qualify for help how much of hardship funds used annually ECT

We all hit hardship in our life time people should make provision for such things not expect others to pay for them

Not sure

(A) should be less. (B) fund available if you have worked and lived in borough for three years or more and have been in employment not just a scrounger

How can I know whether £100,000 is correct without knowing what has been paid out to claimants previously. Presently at time the council tax goes up there may be more claimants. There could be a case for the hardship fund to be increased proportionately.

I agree but without knowing previous numbers of claimants you cant say.

It depends on need but it should be sufficient to support all those who meet the criteria.
Depends on how you define "hardship"

Unable to comment as we are unaware of the number of people applying for the funding.
Not to sure regarding the £100,000 funding.

As previously stated residents should contribute to all services they use.

It is difficult to say if £100,000 is correct at this depends what constitutes exceptional financial hardship & it depends on the numbers experiencing this.

"However if the level of council tax support was increased this would be needed less

*I don't know if £100,000 is correct as I have no idea of how many people need this or at what level."

Not able to make a decision not sufficient information.

Insufficient information to answer Q3

For a very rich area this needs to be reflective of those who have below average pay.

Don't know

I have no way of knowing or not if £100,000 is a reasonable figure hence I cannot answer Q3
What is hardship & why? strict control needed here ?

I do believe at times people fall into hard times but this should not be a long term solution for each household.

That amount should be raised or doubled to £200,000 due to the escalating costs of living

Don't know

£100,000 is a drop in the ocean compared to the money wasted elsewhere on cosmetic town improvement schemes.

Mental health is my problem and Bromley community officer Sandra Torma has spent thousands of tax payers money on harassment and intimidating through the courts leading to suicide"

Don't know have no knowledge of the calls which may be made on the funds.

Unsure

As long as the hardship fund includes helping that 75% of working age people who need the support, then I think the £100,000 is way less and should be increased but if its sitting in an account waiting to be used then there's a waste of a £100,000.

I really think the fund should increase as life becomes more difficult -especially in the light of "Brexit" !
£100,000 Seems a little low if there are many people in hardship.

Living is so much more expensive.

I don't know the answer as council tax is disgusting

Being a large community and fairly wealthy borough a more realistic hardship fund ought to be at level £250,000 plus. This could be achieved by annual investment of £10,000 or £20,000 until substantial fund is raised and held in reserve.

It should be for everybody not only for people who don't pay their council tax (cant or wont).
Considering the recent increase of homelessness in the borough it is desirable that the hardship fund of £100,000 should be assessed on a yearly basis and increase accordingly to the borough circumstances if necessary

Surely more due to the number of Bromley residents in need, however I do understand that the hardship fund comes directly from Bromley council - if it doesn't then surely central government can give more.

Q4 Are there any other changes you would like to see to the Council Tax Support scheme 2019/20 or any further comments you would like to make regarding the scheme?

I think there should be more support for young adults private renting.

Scrap it entirely

i think it would help many people if the payments was lower.

I would like to pay less as a single person and not using any of the services

Pay less

Single people should have either 50% or 75% off their council tax, as to expensive, and no return from council

The single occupant 25% discount should be means tested.

I receive single person's discount which helps me greatly as a single working mother. My salary is categorised as over the threshold for any other assistance and I accept that but I know of couples with one salary and 3 children who find it extremely hard to keep up with their bills. I think discounts should be reviewed even if a couple is deemed to be earning over the threshold and together based on the number of children they have.

I would like to see improvement is customer service and helping people pay their council tax if liable and work towards a shared common goal as opposed to subjecting residents to fees and charges, court action which is unlikely to improve their finances and cause potential problems for future payments towards a bill.

Make it very transparent and fairer. Take more into account with finically assessing individuals. They have bills to pay.

It is imperative that the maximum council tax support level is raised to at least 80% so that it offers support to working age people, especially those with young children, who struggle to keep up with the cost of living and are on a low income.

Help when people get behind

Full waivers for less than minimum London wage residents.

More help is needed with universal credit claimants. The system is full of mistakes and it is impossible to pay what you want for council tax. I receive 290.00 a month universal credit after my rent isn't covered and council tax want 111.00 a month out of that. I also have children to support.

Help the vulnerable in our borough and train staff better to help those most in need.

Allowing people to set up payment plans at the very start of the council tax year, to manage their council tax better, BEFORE THE RED LETTER FINAL DEMAND as per your current policy!!!!"

Road safety, speed/driving pace reductions! alternatives to speed bumps, speed cameras, - anything can be provided to make the borough safer. (We live on a busy short cut road, which is extremely unsafe for children / elderly residents.

Despite numerous joyriders' incidents, fast driving, car vandalism and inconsiderate speeding without any care and -

nothing has been done."

council is doing extremely well in most aspects

update your staff when it comes to calculating council tax benefit increases / decreases

I think I pay a lot of council tax. as I have a lot of mental health condition which I,ve had

from the age off 22

More help for disabled people and mental health

A payment option to pay off the monthly amount would be a good idea for people like myself who find it hard being unemployed or to get the support fund to pay it all for people who cant afford it

For disabled people

I'd like to see more support for those like me. I'm noticing there are more people begging more people sleeping rough or using food banks

yes the council should pay the whole of the council tax for claimants

As above

I do wonder some myself included have fallen behind instead of support you get threatening letters. If you are struggling to pay the original sum how can you pay the whole balance?

Cutting branches that are to long I was on a bus and it smashed the glass so much &it goes on to the buses so much

Provide any employment opportunities to the other members don't encourage free money ,because it puts burden on hard working people .Increase the hourly national income/wage

If you are responsible for a bill payment without excuse. We would all like more money in our pockets but pay bills first and make provision to pay them when times are hard to many people rely on benefits

Why is my dad having to pay council tax when he is not working gets full housing benefits £64 a week its not enough to live on really he had to give up his job to look after me

I think they should make all wheelchair (no or little mobility) properties lower banding as I struggle to pay 25% on my E banding rented property

I am happy with the current level of council tax support

For local residents of three years or more who have been working

I do not wish to pay any more council tax than I already do so my earnings are shrinking due to rises else where that are not in line with my below inflation pay rises. I am sure job seekers and other benefit claimants could do voluntary community service that would benefit other services even for a couple of hours a week.

The removal of council tax on "Granny flat" when it is used by a family member & is part of the family not exteneded family.

Withdraw all council tax support.

Take a leaf out of Greenwich services. e.g everyone gets a wheelie bin for garden, recycle ect and a weekly collection. Not like Bromley services and this is just one example. Bromley must be sitting pretty financially.

Continue support for single working people. I live alone work all day and only use 1 black bag of rubbish a week. Mum is 75 working 2 days a week and can just about afford to pay .I'm sure if we wasn't working we would be in financial hardship.

Assistance should only be given to the elderly or disabled.

I work 16 hours with the new universal credit. I don't get no help with the council tax and pension credit age too don't understand how this is fair to people over 60.

Support for those starting work.

Funding for autism.

Council tax should be increased on home extensions

Anyone that receives these benefits should give back in other ways(non financial). It may mean that the council provides training for people to do work /provide services that the council are considering cutting

Spend money on supporting tax payers not harassing them in criminal courts to the extent that they no longer want to be live.

I would like the pensioners and disabled to not pay some of the council tax because they just cant afford it.

Please do understand that even at the current level of support I'm very happy and its helping a lot of people but I'm confident enough that we can do more.

More empathic advisors and workers would be good. I know they are probably overworked, stressed out, etc but there clients are even more stressed and officialdom can be so disheartening at a hard time.

We both feel that the council and every one concerned with the council have been helpful in everyway possible and long may it continue.

Take rubbish more often and take all rubbish including garden waste. The bin men wont take this wont take that then they get people to give them even more money to take stuff they normally don't take its disgusting.

I think the level of support you give to all is very generous.

I do not consider myself competent to comment on this .

Central government need to act now on the amount of salaries the council pay senior management

I am very grateful for the help I receive at a time of becoming redundant and being a parent/carer of a disabled child.