

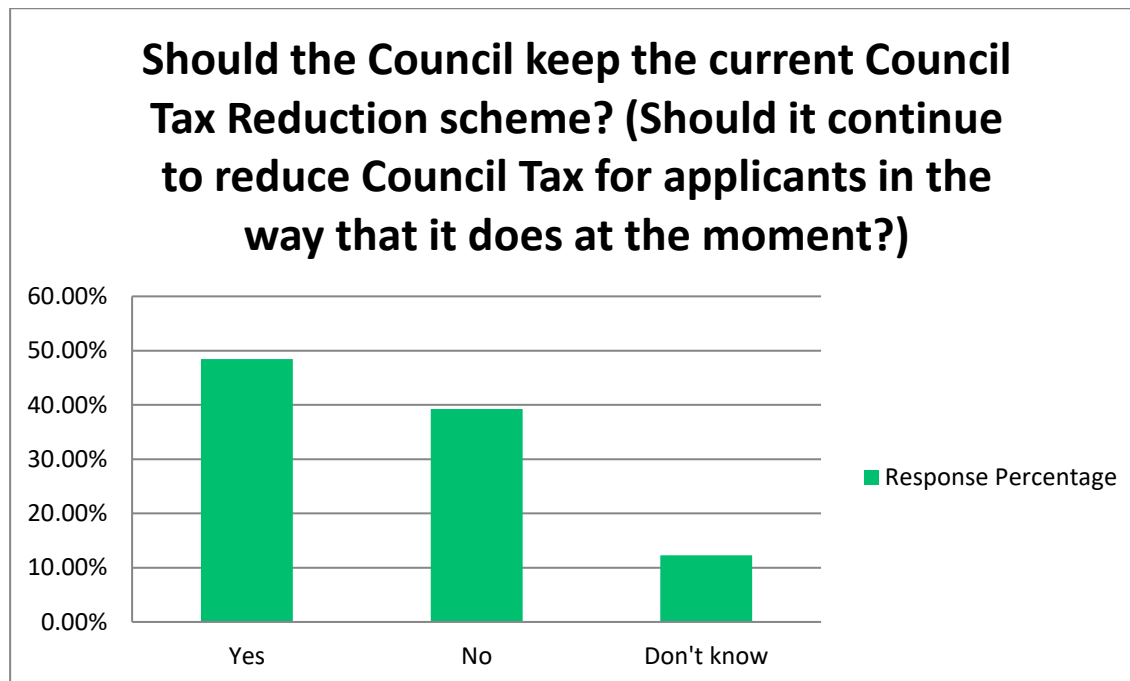
Council Tax Support Scheme Options

A consultation was carried out for 4 weeks ending on 18 November 2019, 134 people responded to the consultation with many commenting on the proposals. Responders were asked to comment on six options to change the scheme. They were also asked whether the Council should use alternative means such as increasing Council Tax or reducing services to cover the cost of the scheme.

This paper gives an overview of the responses.

Option	% agreeing with the option
Should the Council keep the current Council Tax Support scheme? (Should it continue to reduce Council Tax for applicants in the way and to the extent that it does at the moment?)	48%
Option 1 – Should we increase the maximum level of support for working age applicants to 80%	50%
Option 2 - Should we reduce the standard level of non dependant deduction from £15 to £10 for all claimants who have a non dependant living with them who works more than 16 hours per week?	32%
Option 3 – Should we disregard Child Maintenance paid to a claimant or partner in the calculation of Council Tax Support?	43%
Option 4 – Should we disregard Child Benefit paid to a claimant or partner in the calculation of Council Tax Support?	53%
Option 5 –Should we apply a fixed income period to Universal Credit claims for Council Tax Support to avoid multiple changes?	46%
Option 6 – Should we apply a tolerance to Universal Credit claims for Council Tax Support to avoid multiple changes?	61%
Do you think we should choose any of the following options rather than the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme? Please select one answer for each source of funding.	
Increase the level of Council Tax	19%
Find savings from cutting other Council Services	28%
Use the Council's reserves	56%
If the Council were to choose these other options to make savings, what would be your order of preference?	
Increase the level of Council Tax – Most Preferred	18%
Least Preferred	70%
Reduce funding available for other Council Services – Most Preferred	26%
Least Preferred	47%
Use the Council's reserves – Most Preferred	51%
Least Preferred	18%

Should the Council keep the current Council Tax Support scheme? (Should it continue to reduce Council Tax for applicants in the way and to the extent that it does at the moment?)



Gender	Yes	No	Don't know
Male	21	17	6
Female	34	31	10

Age	Yes	No	Don't know
18-24	1	2	0
25-34	10	9	2
35-44	15	15	4
45-54	8	11	2
55-64	14	5	3
65-74	9	3	2
75-84	1	1	2
85+	0	0	1

Disability	Yes	No	Don't know
Disabled	19	13	6
Not Disabled	32	31	8

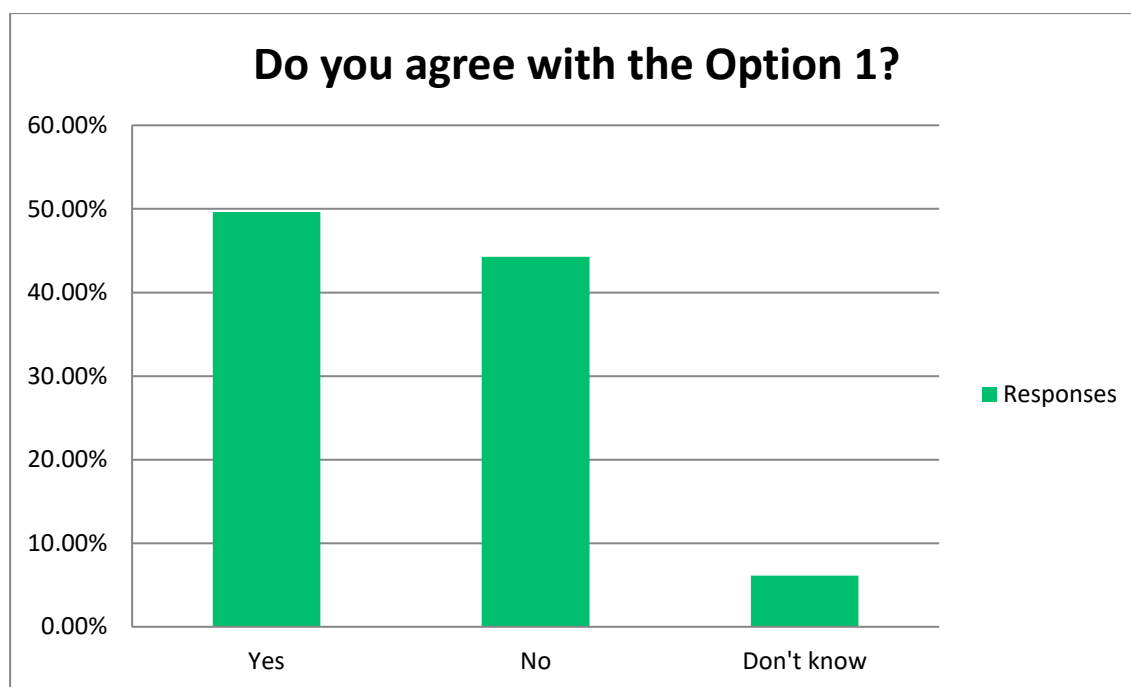
Ethnicity	Yes	No	Don't know
White British	52	41	15
Asian	2	1	0
Black	0	0	0
Mixed	0	0	0
Other	0	1	0

CTS	Yes	No	Don't know
In receipt of CTS	34	14	6
Not in receipt of CTS	25	35	9

48 % of responders felt the scheme should continue to reduce Council Tax for applicants in the way that it does at the moment. We asked those who answered yes did they agree we should increase the maximum level of support further from 75% to 80%. 50% were in favour of increasing the maximum level of support. Of those responders who agreed that support should be increased further, 88% agreed it should be increased to 80%.

Comments were equally split between those who felt the Council should be helping those on a low income, especially as Council Tax can be a large proportion of their income. Others felt that people should be encouraged to work and providing too much help isn't fair for those who do work.

Option 1 – Should we increase the maximum level of support for working age applicants to 80%?



Gender	Yes	No	Don't know
Male	20	25	0
Female	42	26	8

Age	Yes	No	Don't know
18-24	1	1	1
25-34	11	9	1
35-44	14	17	3
45-54	9	12	0
55-64	15	7	2
65-74	10	5	0
75-84	2	1	1
85+	0	1	0

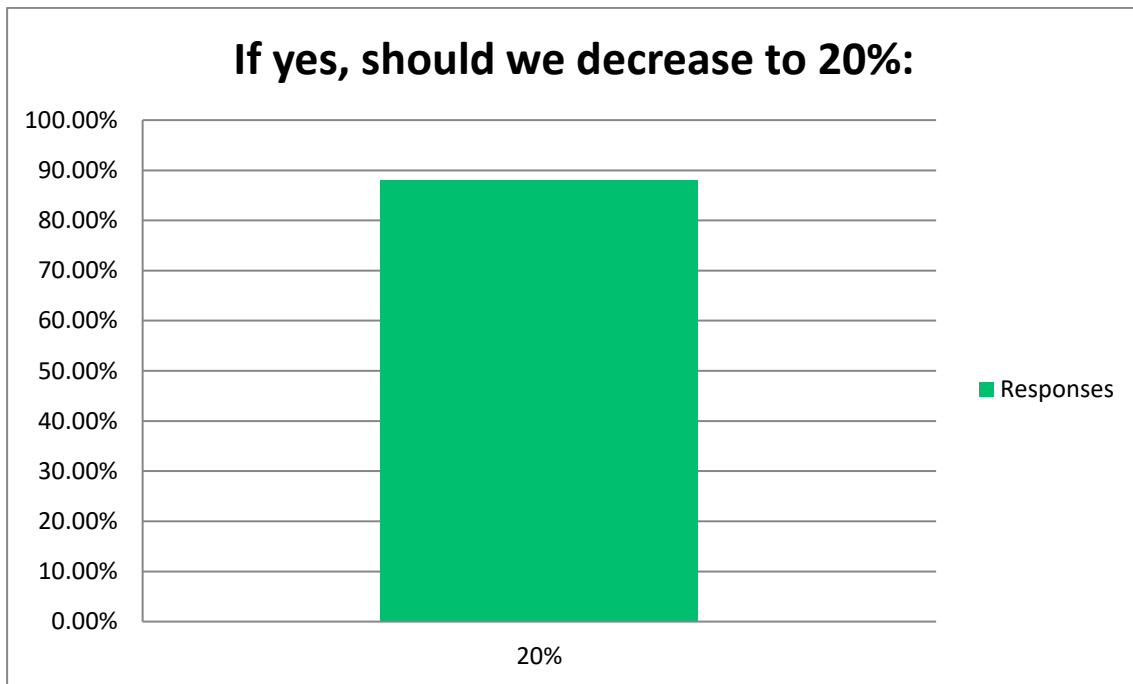
Disability	Yes	No	Don't know
Disabled	28	10	1
Not Disabled	29	39	4

Ethnicity	Yes	No	Don't know

White British	57	45	7
Asian	1	2	0
Black	0	0	0
Mixed	0	0	0
Other	0	1	0

CTS	Yes	No	Don't know
In receipt of CTS	38	9	6
Not in receipt of CTS	24	46	1

If you answered yes, should we decrease the percentage to 20%?



Gender	
Male	20
Female	36

Age	
18-24	1
25-34	10
35-44	13
45-54	9
55-64	12
65-74	9
75-84	2
85+	0

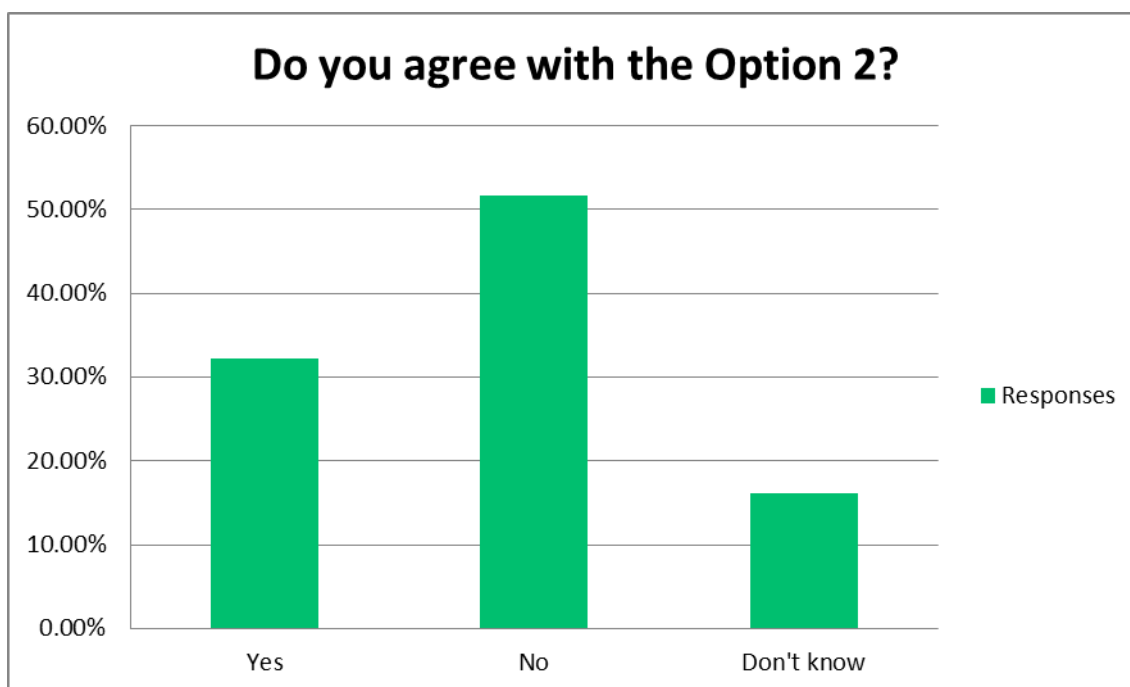
Disability	
Disabled	26
Not Disabled	26

Ethnicity	
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White British	52
Asian	1
Black	0
Mixed	0
Other	0

CTS	
In receipt of CTS	32
Not in receipt of CTS	24

Option 2 - To reduce the standard level of non dependant deduction from £15 to £10 for all claimants who have a non dependant living with them who works more than 16 hours per week?



Gender	Yes	No	Don't know
Male	16	25	2
Female	23	34	16

Age	Yes	No	Don't know
18-24	0	1	2
25-34	5	12	4
35-44	12	15	5
45-54	9	11	1
55-64	5	11	6
65-74	5	7	1
75-84	2	1	0
85+	0	1	0

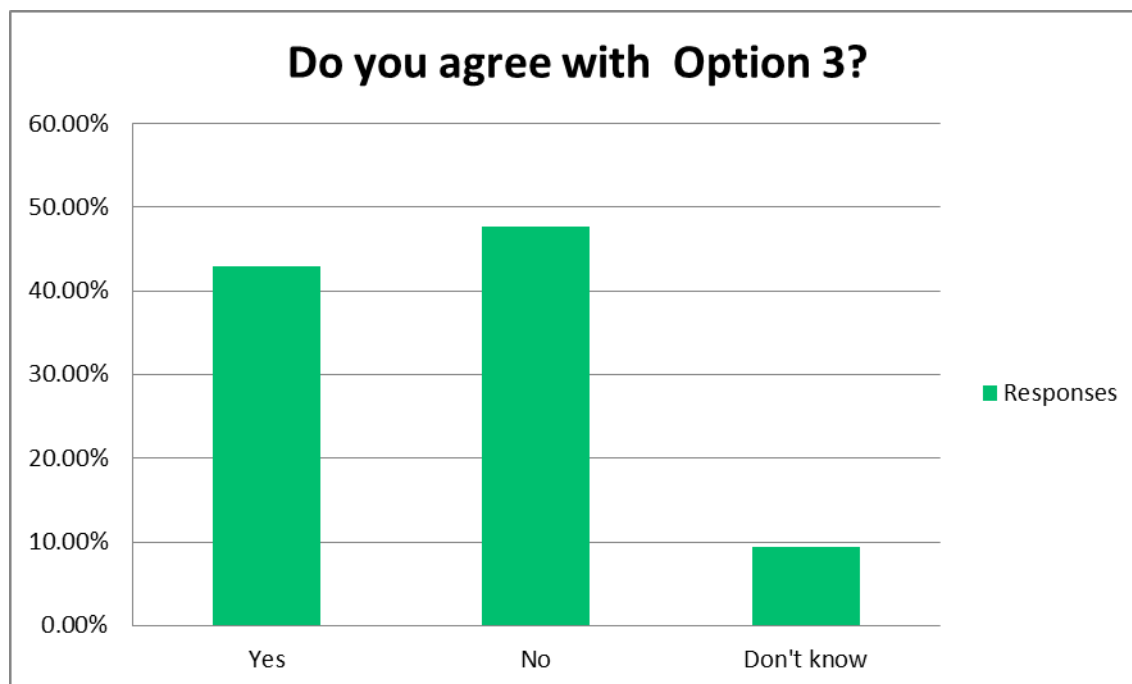
Disability	Yes	No	Don't know
Disabled	12	19	6
Not Disabled	22	37	10

Ethnicity	Yes	No	Don't know
White British	34	53	18
Asian	1	2	0
Black	0	0	0
Mixed	0	0	0
Other	0	1	0

CTS	Yes	No	Don't know
In receipt of CTS	19	19	10
Not in receipt of CTS	17	44	7

Overall, a greater proportion of responders (52%), were not in favour of reducing the non-dependant deduction to £10 per week for working age applicants. The comments on this option were split between those who felt non-dependants are often paid a low wage so cannot afford £15 per week, to those who felt that if there are non-dependants working in a household they should be paying the higher amount as a contribution.

Option 3 - To disregard Child Maintenance paid to a claimant or partner in the calculation of Council Tax Support?



Gender	Yes	No	Don't know
Male	12	32	2
Female	40	23	10

Age	Yes	No	Don't know
18-24	2	0	0

25-34	8	9	4
35-44	14	18	1
45-54	10	11	0
55-64	7	10	5
65-74	8	6	2
75-84	3	1	0
85+	0	1	0

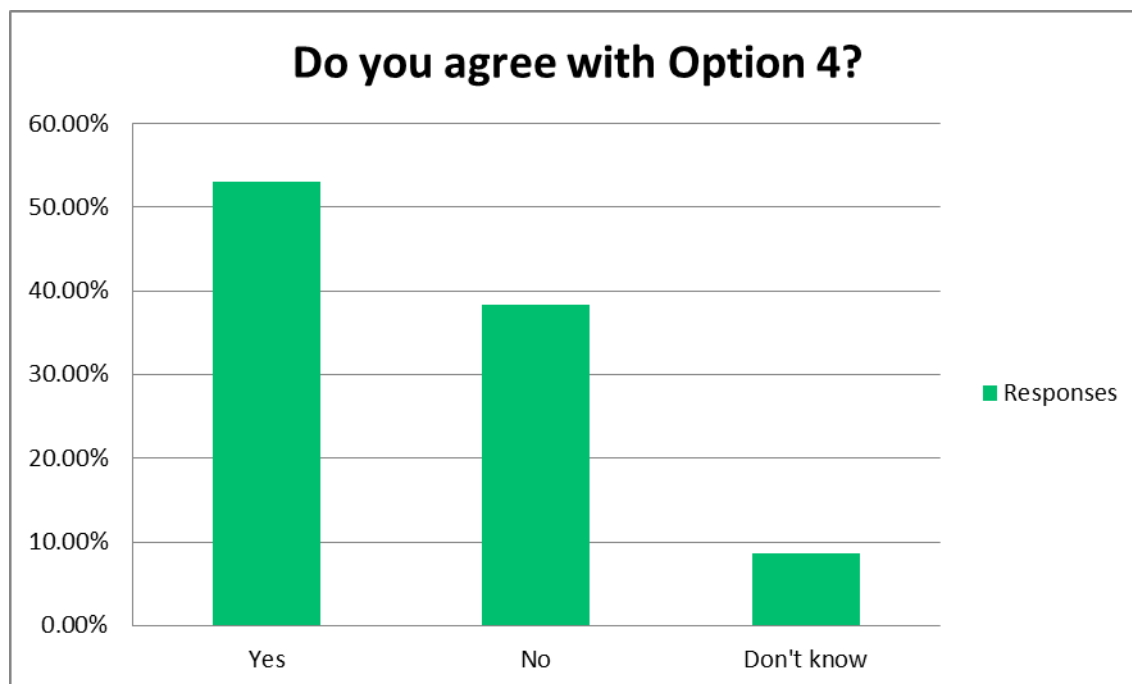
Disability	Yes	No	Don't know
Disabled	17	19	5
Not Disabled	32	34	5

Ethnicity	Yes	No	Don't know
White British	48	48	11
Asian	1	1	1
Black	0	0	0
Mixed	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0

CTS	Yes	No	Don't know
In receipt of CTS	23	20	9
Not in receipt of CTS	29	40	1

Although less than half of responders agreed with this option, those who commented mainly felt that maintenance should be used towards the costs of raising a child. Comments were also received that it is often not a reliable source of income.

Option 4 – To disregard Child Benefit paid to a claimant or partner in the calculation of Council Tax Support



Gender	Yes	No	Don't know
Male	16	28	2
Female	46	18	9

Age	Yes	No	Don't know
18-24	2	0	0
25-34	13	6	2
35-44	20	12	1
45-54	7	12	1
55-64	10	8	4
65-74	9	5	2
75-84	3	1	0
85+	0	1	0

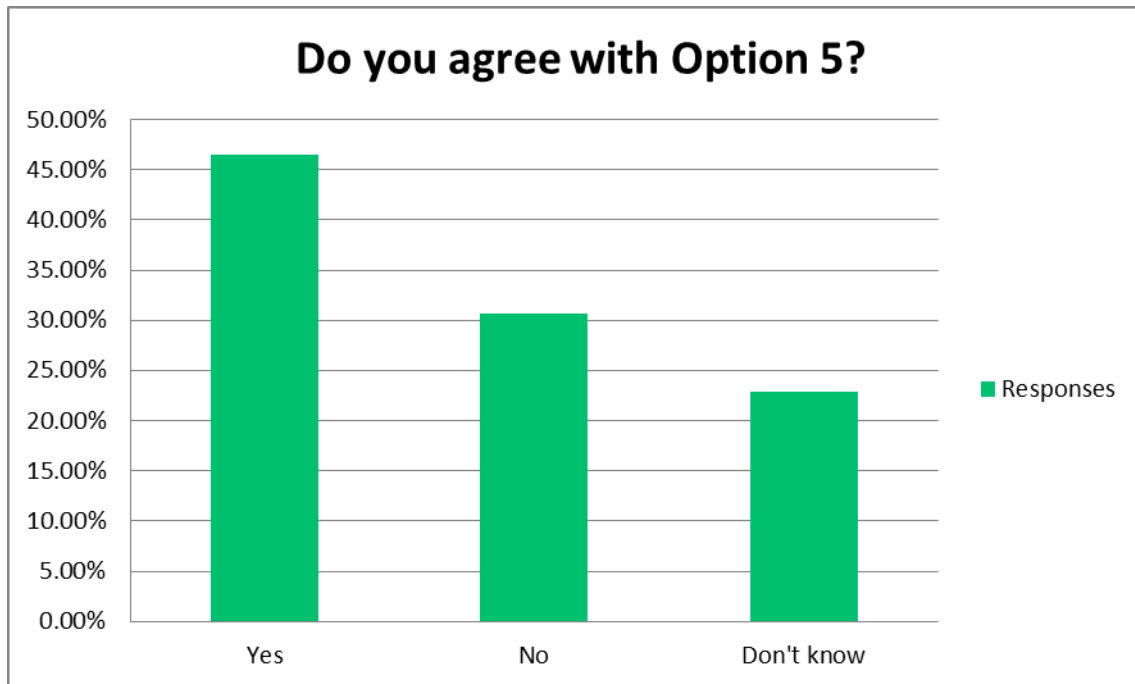
Disability	Yes	No	Don't know
Disabled	20	15	3
Not Disabled	37	28	6

Ethnicity	Yes	No	Don't know
White British	26	39	10
Asian	2	0	1
Black	0	0	0
Mixed	0	0	0
Other	0	1	0

CTS	Yes	No	Don't know
In receipt of CTS	26	18	9
Not in receipt of CTS	40	28	1

The majority of responders agreed with this option. Those who commented felt it would simplify the system. It would also help claimants with budgeting.

Option 5 - Should we apply a fixed income period to Universal Credit claims for Council Tax Support to avoid multiple changes?



Gender	Yes	No	Don't know
Male	23	17	6
Female	32	20	21

Age	Yes	No	Don't know
18-24	1	1	1
25-34	9	6	6
35-44	18	9	6
45-54	8	9	4
55-64	10	6	5
65-74	8	3	5
75-84	2	1	1
85+	0	0	1

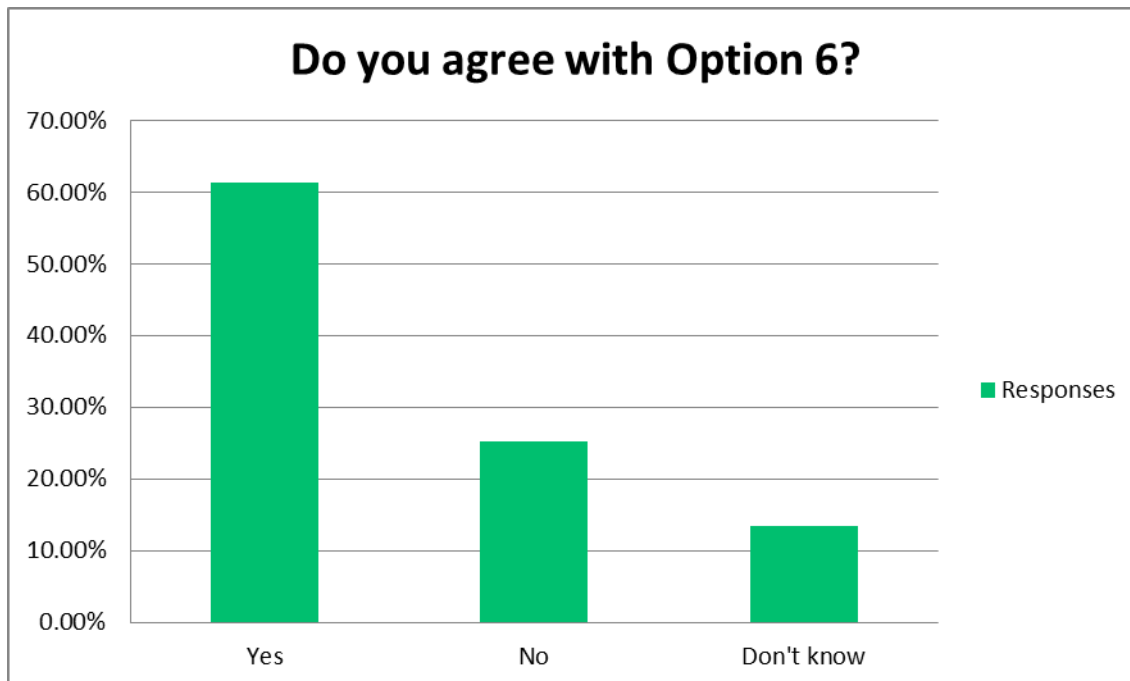
Disability	Yes	No	Don't know
Disabled	20	10	8
Not Disabled	31	25	16

Ethnicity	Yes	No	Don't know
White British	47	34	26
Asian	2	1	0
Black	0	0	0
Mixed	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0

CTS	Yes	No	Don't know
In receipt of CTS	23	12	17
Not in receipt of CTS	35	26	9

Those who commented on this option felt that it would be good for those on zero hours contracts and felt it was difficult to budget when the amount of Council Tax payable changed each month. Some responders felt this change would make payments more manageable.

Option 6- To apply a tolerance to Universal Credit claims for Council Tax Support to avoid multiple changes?



Gender	Yes	No	Don't know
Male	32	12	2
Female	41	17	15

Age	Yes	No	Don't know
18-24	1	1	1
25-34	12	7	2
35-44	18	8	7
45-54	12	7	1
55-64	15	2	4
65-74	11	4	1
75-84	4	0	0
85+	0	1	0

Disability	Yes	No	Don't know
Disabled	28	4	6
Not Disabled	39	24	9

Ethnicity	Yes	No	Don't know
White British	64	27	16
Asian	2	0	1
Black	0	0	0
Mixed	0	0	0

Other	0	0	0
CTS	Yes	No	Don't know
In receipt of CTS	29	11	12
Not in receipt of CTS	47	20	3

Option 6 received the highest number of positive responses. Most responders who commented felt this made the scheme fairer for those in receipt of Universal Credit and a sensible way of saving on administration costs.

Survey Demographics and Applied Weighting

The table below shows the profile of the survey respondents in relation to the population of Swale.

This table tells us that men and women are correctly represented. It also shows that people aged 25 years and under and those aged 75 and over are under-represented.

Those with a disability are correctly represented.

The results in this report have not been weighted by age, sex or disability because we do not consider the variances to be significant.

	Survey		Population	
	Count	%	Count	%
Gender (Over 18s Mid-year Population Estimates)				
Men	46	37.4%	56,261	49%
Women	77	62.6%	58,927	51%
Age (Over 18s Mid-year Population Estimates)				
18 to 24 years	3	2%	11,413	10%
25 to 34 years	21	17%	18,158	16%
35 to 44 years	33	27%	17,656	15%
45 to 54 years	21	17%	21,144	18%
55 to 64 years	24	19%	18,443	16%
65 to 74 years	17	14%	16,347	14%
75 years and over	5	4%	12,027	11%
Ethnicity (2011 Census 18 years and over)				
White groups	112	97%	101,848	97%
BME	4	3%	3,027	3%
Disability (2011 Census all people)				
Disability	40	35%	25,322	19%
No Disability	73	65%	110,513	81%

Age Male	Population		Survey	
	Count	%	Count	%
18 to 24 years	6,039	5%	2	1%
25 to 34 years	9,001	8%	27	8%
35 to 44 years	8,421	7%	27	8%
45 to 54 years	10,388	9%	40	12%
55 to 64 years	9,252	8%	41	12%
65 to 74 years	7,927	7%	21	6%
75 years and over	5,233	5%	7	2%
Age Female				
18 to 24 years	5,374	5%	2	1%
25 to 34 years	9,157	8%	32	10%
35 to 44 years	9,235	8%	47	14%
45 to 64 years	10,756	9%	39	12%
55 to 64 years	9,191	8%	31	9%
65 to 74 years	8,420	7%	17	5%
75 years and over	6,794	6%	0	0%

Calculated using the ONS Mid-year population estimates

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnort hernireland>

Responses to the consultation questions

Have your say on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

I have read the background information about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. This question must be answered before you can continue.		
Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Response Count
Yes	98.51%	132
No	1.49%	2
Answered		134
Skipped		0

Should the Council keep the current Council Tax Reduction scheme? (Should it continue to reduce Council Tax for applicants in the way that it does at the moment?)		
Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Response Count
Yes	48.46%	63
No	39.23%	51
Don't know	12.31%	16
Answered		130
Skipped		4

Do you agree with the Option 1?		
Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Response Count
Yes	49.62%	65
No	44.27%	58
Don't know	6.11%	8
Answered		131
Skipped		3

If yes, should we decrease to 20%?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
20%	88.06%	59
Answered		59
Skipped		67

Do you agree with the Option 2?		
Answer Choices	Responses Percentage	Response Count
Yes	32.26%	40
No	51.61%	64
Don't know	16.13%	20
Answered		124
Skipped		10

Do you agree with Option 3?		
Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Response Count
Yes	42.97%	55
No	47.66%	61
Don't know	9.38%	12
Answered		128
Skipped		6

Do you agree with Option 4?		
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Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Response Count
Yes	53.13%	68
No	38.28%	49
Don't know	8.59%	11
Answered		128
Skipped		6

Do you agree with Option 5?		
Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Response Count
Yes	46.46%	59
No	30.71%	39
Don't know	22.83%	29
Answered		127
Skipped		7

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Response Count
Yes	61.42%	78
No	25.20%	32
Don't know	13.39%	17
Answered		127
Skipped		7

Do you think we should choose any of the following options to fund the changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme? Please select one answer for each source of funding.				
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total
Increase the level of Council Tax	24	88	16	128
Reduce funding available for other Council Services	36	73	18	127
Use the Council's savings	74	38	19	131
Answered	132			
Skipped	2			

If the Council were to choose these other options to make savings, what would be your order of preference?				
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total
Increase the level of Council Tax	24	16	91	131
Reduce funding available for other Council Services	34	36	61	131
Use the Council's savings	68	41	24	133
Answered	133			
Skipped	1			

Are you, or someone in your household, getting a Council Tax Reduction at this time?		
Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Response Count
Yes	42.11%	56
No	53.38%	71
Don't know/unsure	4.51%	6
Answered		133
Skipped		1

What is your sex?		
Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Response Count
Female	57.89%	77
Male	34.59%	46
Prefer not to say	7.52%	10
Answered		133
Skipped		1

What is your age?		
Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Response Count
18-24	2.26%	3
25-34	15.79%	21
35-44	25.56%	34
45-54	15.79%	21
55-64	18.05%	24
65-74	12.78%	17
75-84	3.01%	4
85+	0.75%	1
Prefer not to say	6.02%	8
Answered		133
Skipped		1

Disability: Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?		
Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Response Count
Yes	30.30%	40
No	55.30%	73
Don't know/unsure	2.27%	3
Prefer not to say	12.12%	16
Answered		132

Skipped	2
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Ethnic Origin: What is your ethnic group?		
Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Response Count
White British	84.85%	112
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	0.00%	0
Asian or Asian British	2.27%	3
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	0.00%	0
Other ethnic group	0.76%	1
Prefer not to say	9.85%	13
Other (please specify)		5
Answered		132
Skipped		2