

Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) 2020-21 – Public Consultation

October 2019

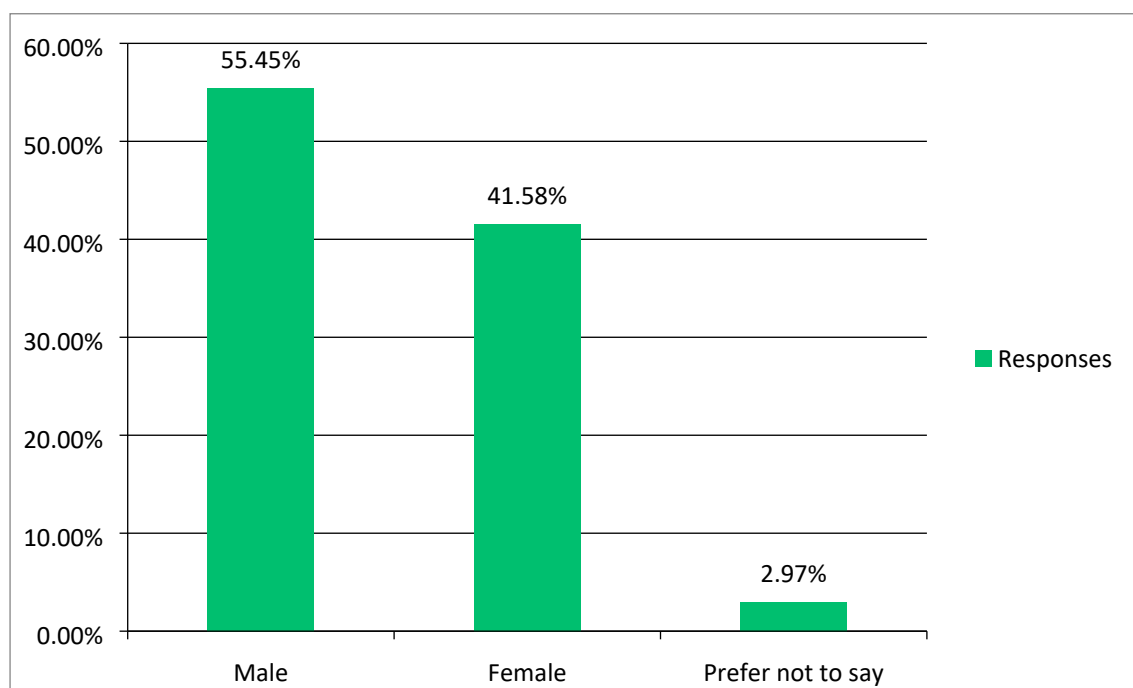
Overview

The consultation was launched on Tuesday 3 September 2019 and concluded at midnight on Friday, 5 October.

There were a total of 111 responses to the online consultation.

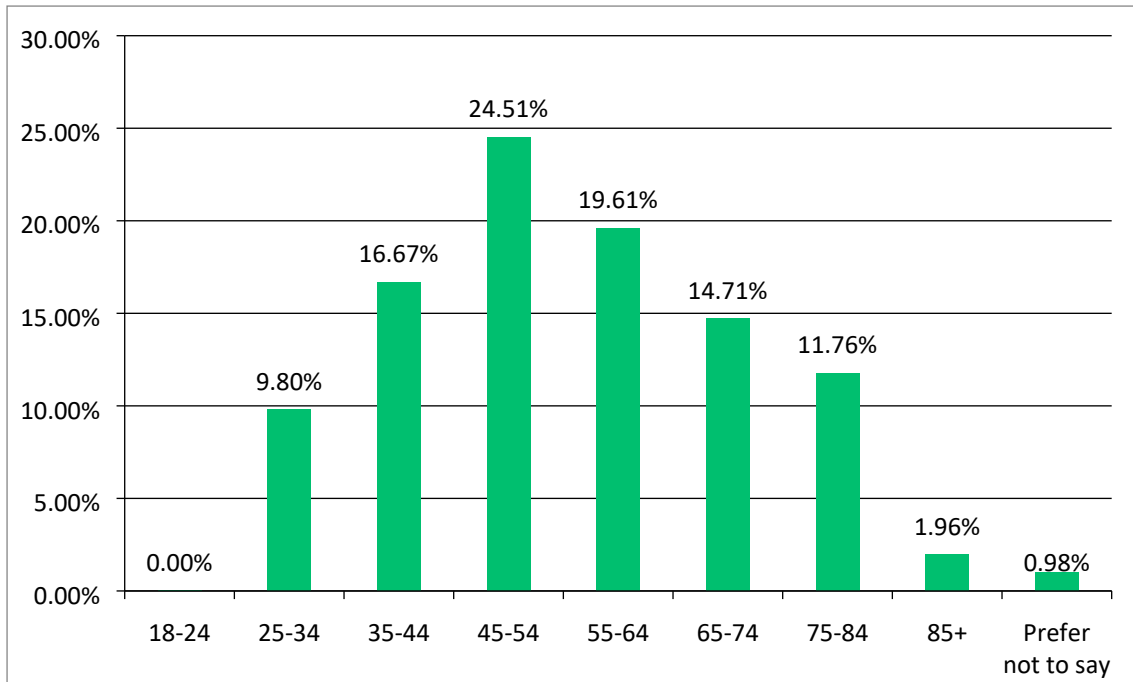
Results

Gender breakdown



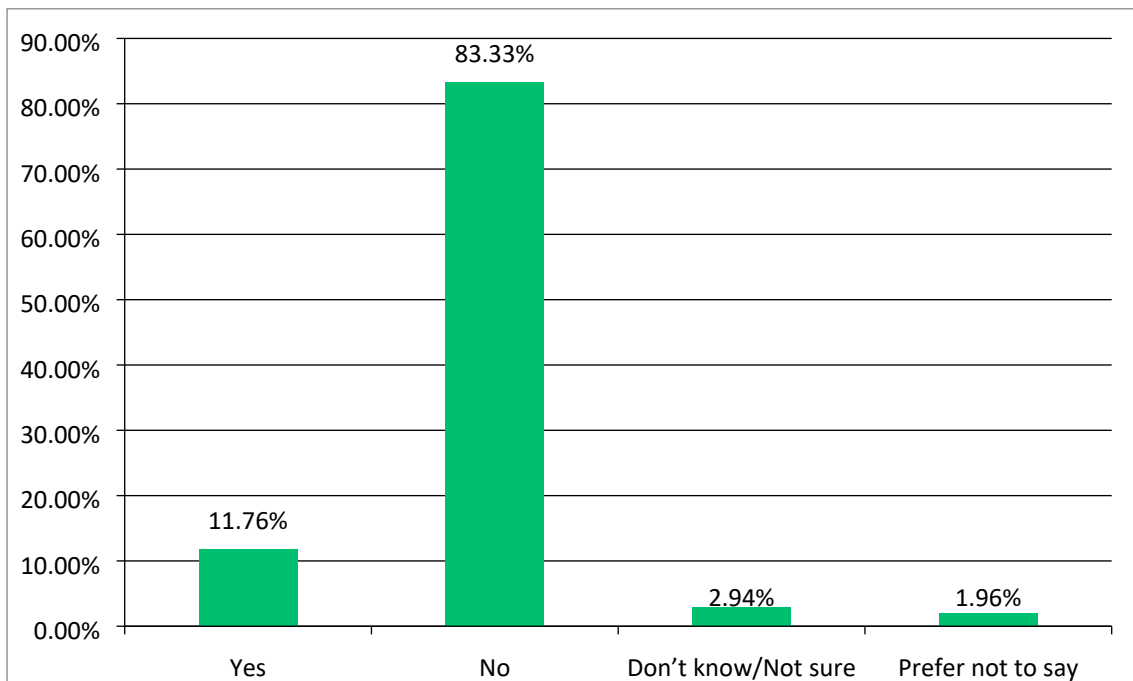
- More than half of respondents (55%) were male and 42% were female (3% did not want to say)
- 10 respondents did not give an answer

Age breakdown



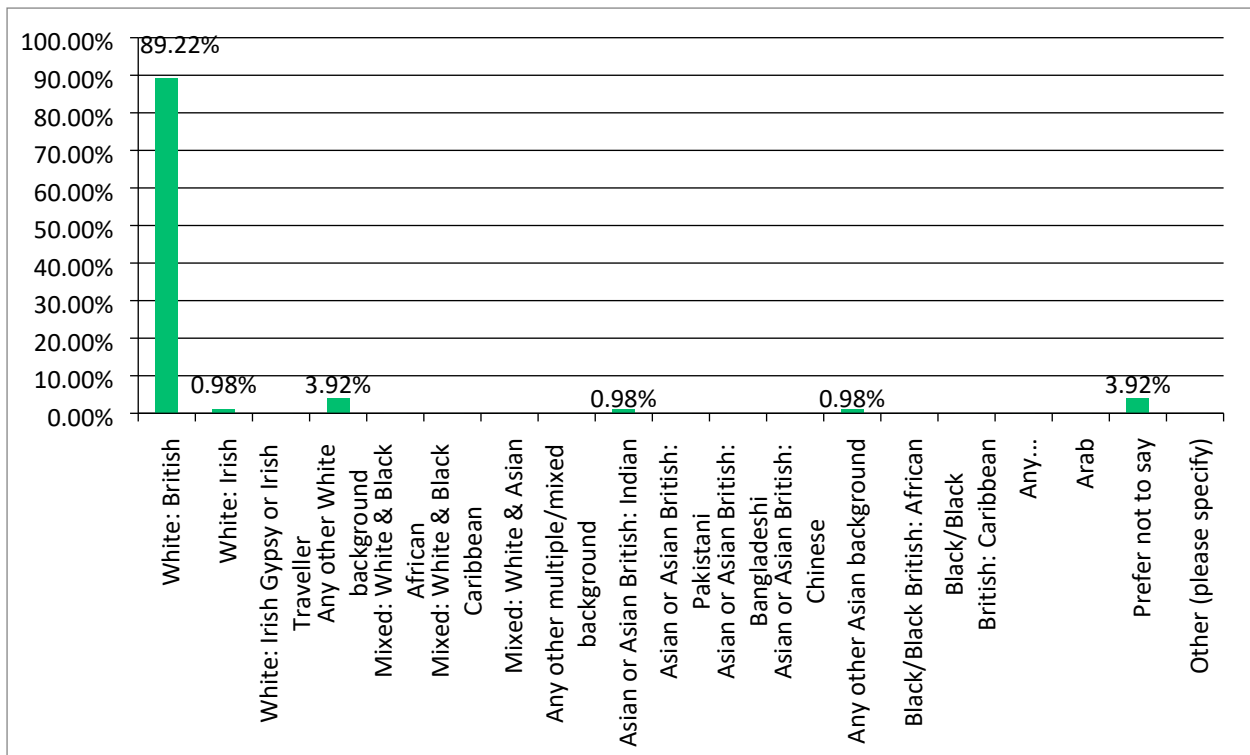
- Majority of respondents were aged between 35 and 64 (61%)

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?



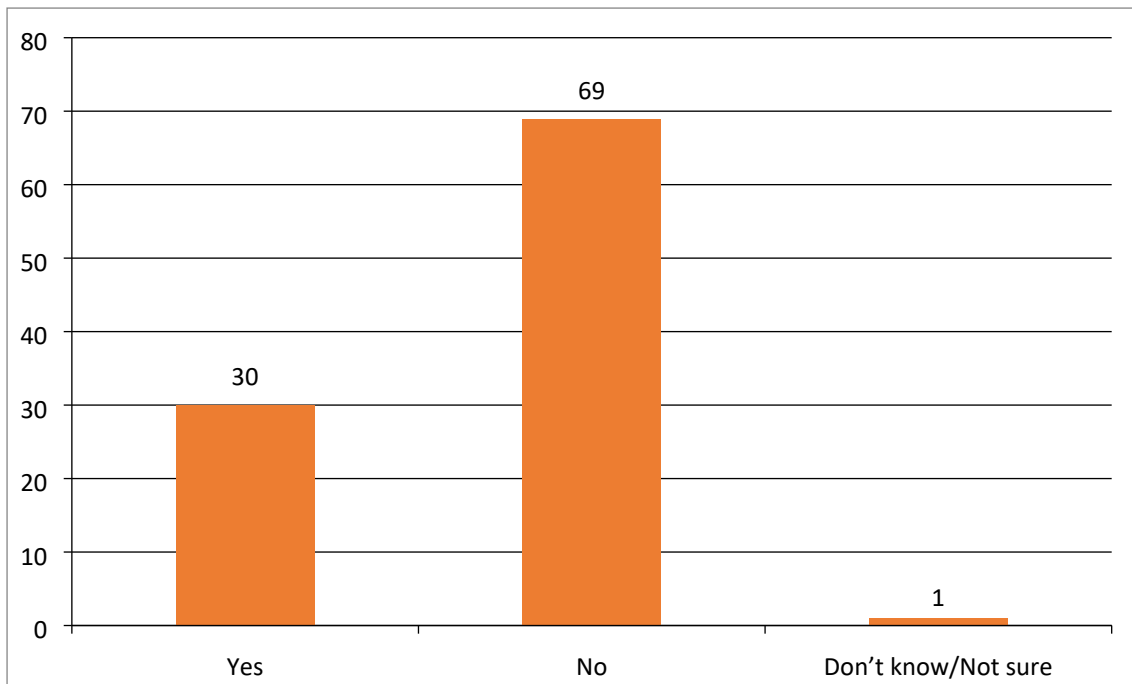
- Just over 1 in 10 of respondents (12%) had some form of disability that limited their day-to-day activities or stated that they had a disability which has lasted (or is expected to last) at least 12 months.

Ethnicity



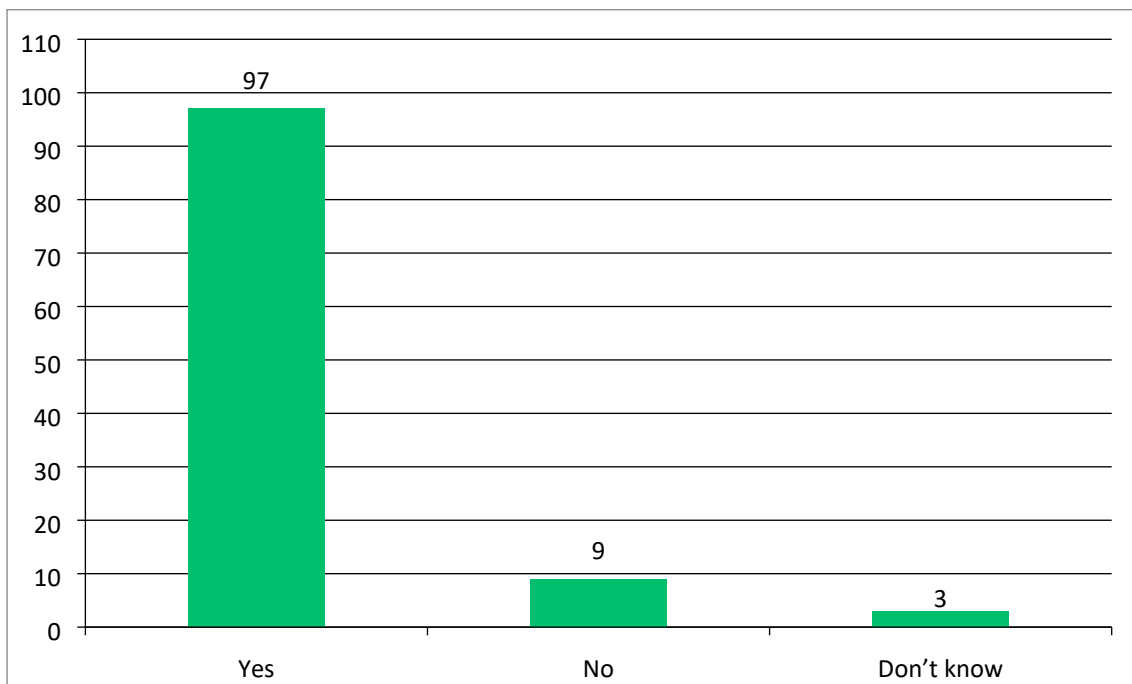
- Vast majority of respondents classified themselves as White: British.
- Other respondents were from the following groups: White:Irish, any other white background, Asian or Asian British:Indian, any other Asian background and 4% preferred not to say.

Are you, or someone in your household, getting a Council Tax Reduction currently?



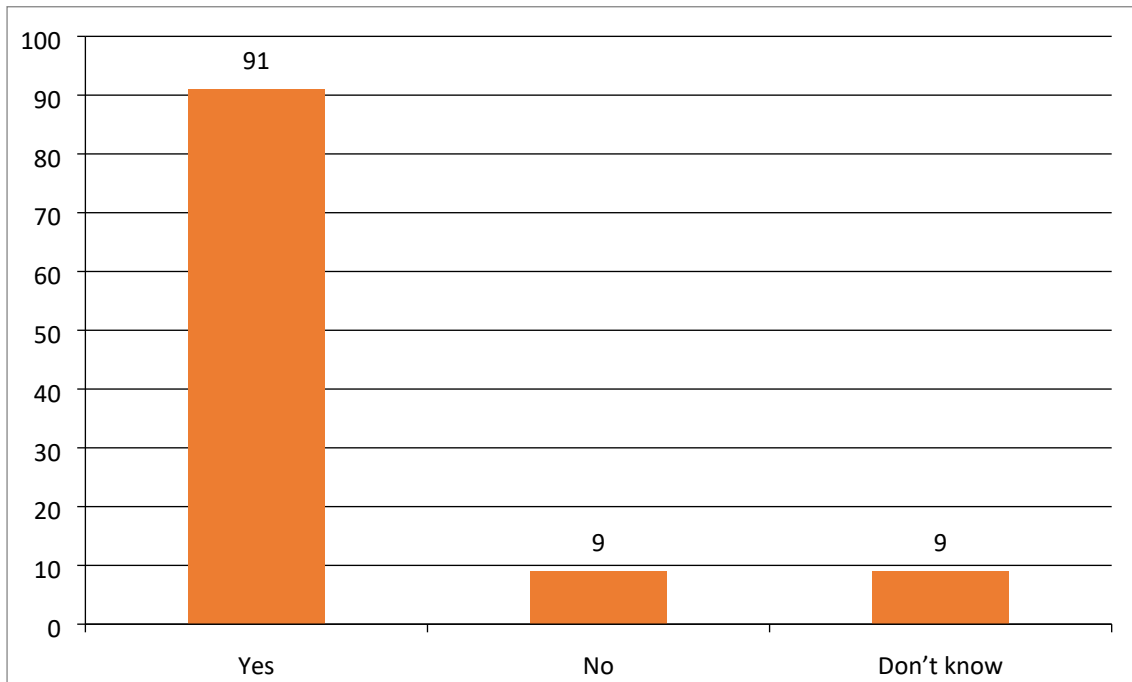
- 30% of those who responded (30) are either in receipt of Council Tax Reduction or someone in their household is.
- 69% were not in receipt of a Council Tax Reduction themselves or didn't have anyone in their household who was.

Have you read the background information about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme?



- 89% of respondents (97) had read the background information on the CTRS and 8% hadn't (9). The remaining respondents 'didn't know'

Do you think the Council should replace the existing scheme to help reduce the number of Council Tax bills and to help with budgeting?

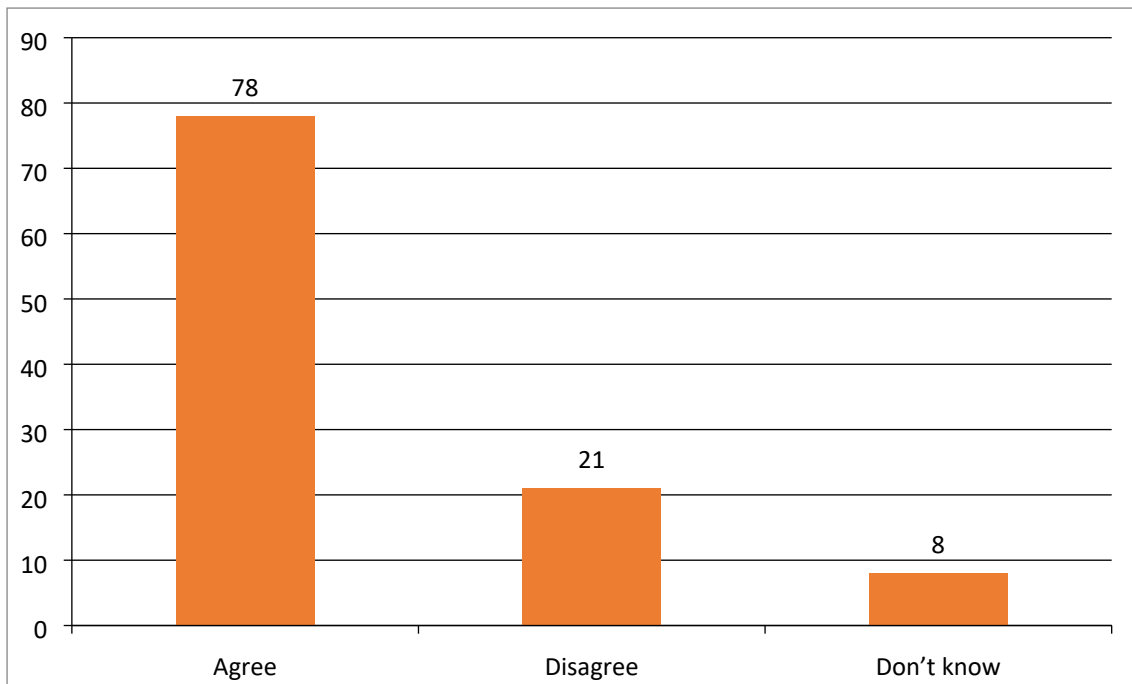


- 109 people responded to this question (2 didn't complete it).
- 83% of people (91) agree that the council should replace the existing scheme to help reduce the number of Council Tax bills and to help with budgeting.
- 8% of respondents (9) don't agree with this proposal
- 11 people didn't know or didn't respond to this question

Other comments:

- **A number of additional comments to this question but majority are very positive including:**
 - "Council seems to be doing the right thing on reducing bills and helping people to budget"
 - "It is easier to budget when the number of variables of income/expenditure is as low as possible"
 - "We are on a low income & struggling with our bills so a changed would helps us massively"
 - "Another sensible initiative by our excellent local Council"
 - "Over the last tax year I have had around 8 different bills come and it gets very annoying"
- An example below of some (albeit in the minority) negative feedback:
 - "Yes by all means change the system but not if it leaves people worse off than before. The banding system is used for non dependant deductions and it is awful. It is not flexible enough and the payments are vastly different for each band so 1 pound income can make a huge difference"
 - "This scheme only benefits one party. cherwell district council and their fat bank balances"

Should the Council introduce income bands?

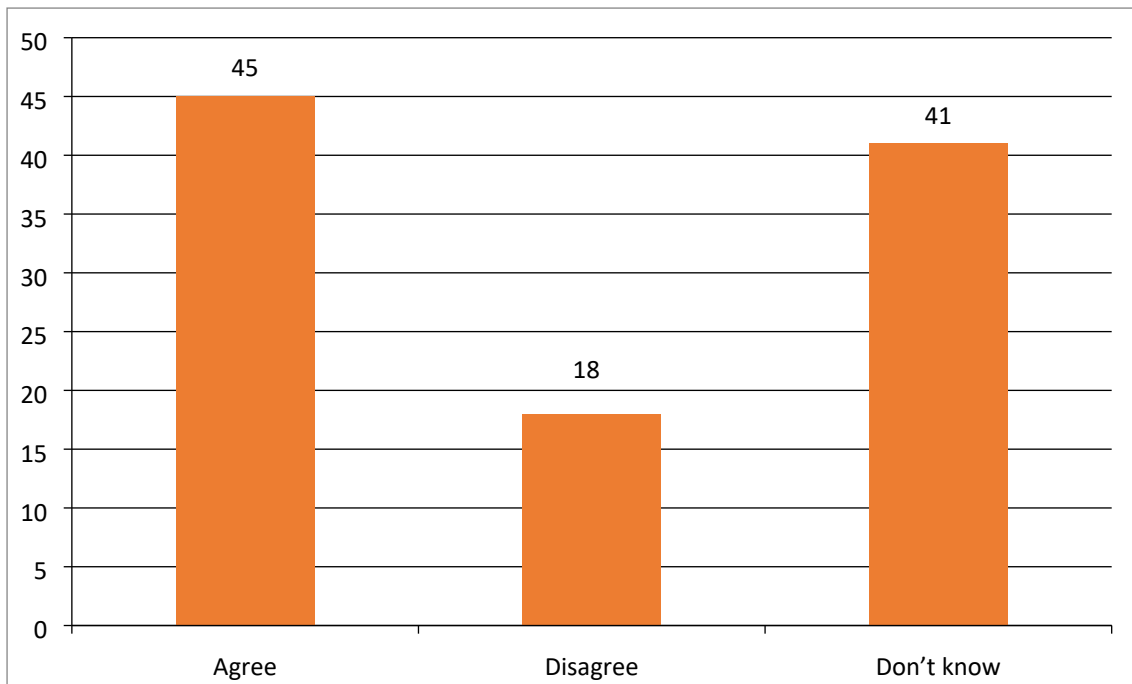


- 73% of respondents (78) agree that the council should introduce income bands.
- 20% of respondents (21) disagreed with the introduction of income bands
- 12 people didn't respond or didn't know in response to this question

Other comments:

- Majority of additional comments are positive and agree that the proposals are sensible and a fairer way to calculate reductions.
- There were a very small number of negative comments:
 - "Other than the standard rise, I am concerned moving to this will increase ours. I am due to go on maternity and need to budget".
 - "I think they're income is still likely to fluctuate if someone is not in steady employment so it may not make any difference to what you say happens already ..."

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed income bands?

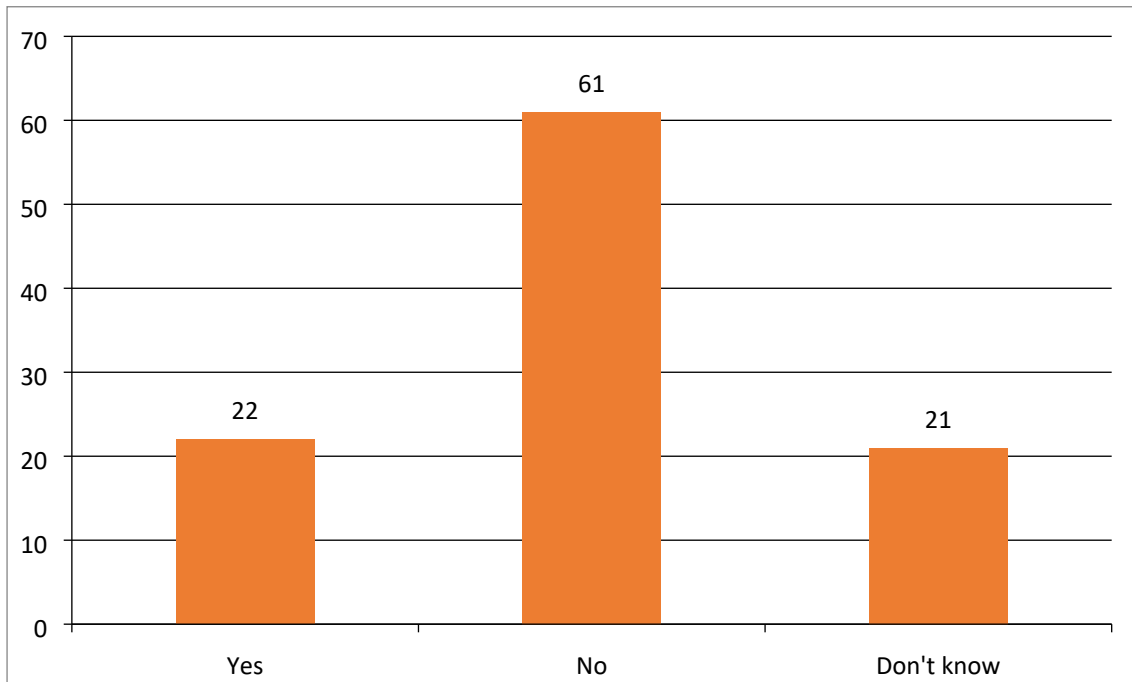


- 43% of respondents (45) agree with the proposed income bands
- 17% of respondents (18) disagree with the proposed income bands
- 41 people didn't know and 4 didn't respond to this question

Additional comments:

- There were a mixture of additional comments but some of those who responded commented that did not seem to have information on the banding included in what was sent out to them.
- Other responses included:
 - "Bands are evenly spaced and seem fair"
 - "I agree that there should be a limited number of bands but there needs to consider the impact of moving from one band for another. The threshold at the higher ends of the suggested bands may need reconsidering as 1p more or less per week can mean a 25% drop/increase in a Council Tax bill"

Should the Council keep the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme? (i.e. make no changes and continue with the current scheme)



- Just over a fifth (21%) agree that the Council should keep the current CTRS.
- 59% (61) don't agree that the Council should keep the current scheme.
- 7 people didn't respond and 21 people didn't know.

Other comments:

- Majority of additional comments received were in favour of changing the current scheme:
 - "New scheme is claimed to be more efficient and cost effective"
 - "The arguments in favour of changing make sense to me"
 - "The proposed scheme should reduce the need to adjust bills. This will make savings on administering CTR and free up time which can be better spent elsewhere. It should also reduce customer contact to an already overstretched Contact Centre"
 - "Too much admin work to keep current scheme"

Summary/Conclusion:

- Those in favour of changing the system vastly outnumbered those that were against the proposed changes.
- Those in favour felt the new system would be fairer, simpler and help with administration costs and time.
- Some respondents didn't appear to have the banding information included in what was sent out to them.