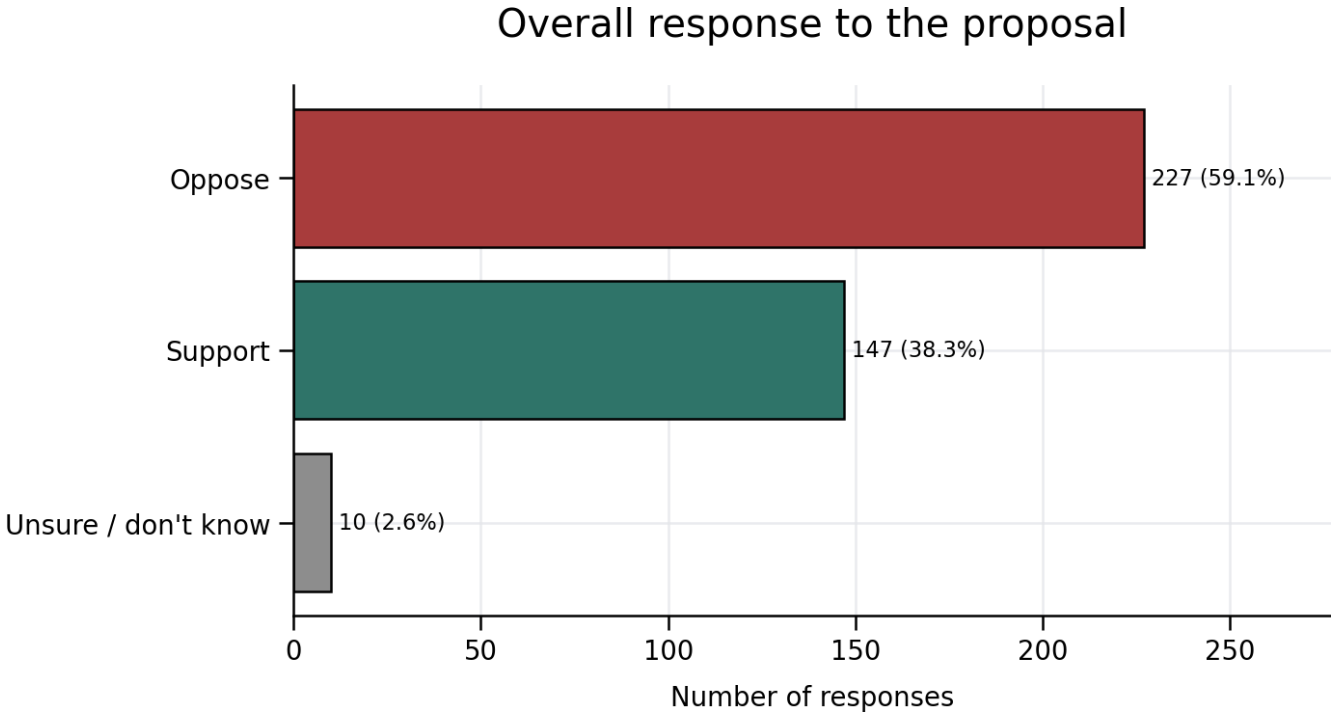
Shropshire Council - Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation report - October 2026

Proposal to disregard Child Benefit when calculating Council Tax Support

Analysis of 385 consultation responses



Prepared from: Copy of Council Tax Support Scheme 2027 22.10.26.xlsx

1. Executive summary

The consultation shows a clear overall majority opposed to the proposal, while also revealing strong support among some groups most likely to experience the direct effects of the change. The responses therefore present a significant policy trade-off between targeted support for low-income families with children and concerns about affordability, fairness and the effect on other taxpayers and services.

Response	Number	Percentage
Oppose	227	59.1%
Support	147	38.3%
Unsure/I don't know	10	2.6%
No response	1	0.3%
Total records	385	100.0%

Key findings

- Opposition centred on the financial cost, the source of replacement funding, possible pressure on Council Tax or services, and the principle that Child Benefit is household income.
- Support centred on Child Benefit being intended for children, the cost-of-living pressure on families, consistency with the treatment of Child Benefit in other benefit calculations, and the potential to reduce hardship.
- Respondents who said they had children were divided: 103 supported, 107 opposed and 2 were unsure.
- Respondents aged 25-34 and 35-44 were more supportive, while respondents aged 55-64 and 65-74 were more opposed.
- Several respondents, including carers and disabled respondents, asked the council to consider other disregards or wider support. Others argued that low-income adults without children and pensioners should not be overlooked.

2. Consultation scope and method

This report analyses the completed responses recorded as part of the consultation. It covers the closed question on overall support, the two general free-text questions and the demographic and equality-monitoring fields.

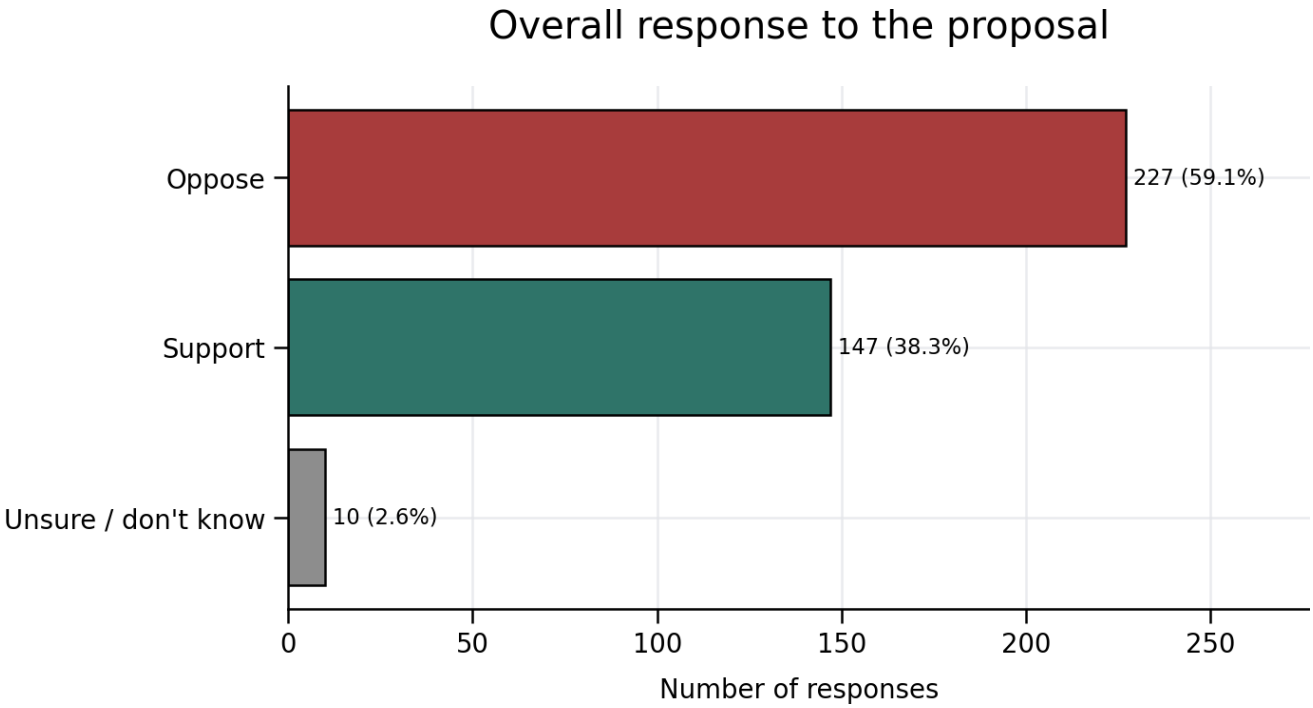
- 385 response records were identified; 384 contained an answer to the main support question and one did not.
- 344 respondents provided an explanation.
- 188 respondents provided an additional comment.
- 50 respondents provided an equality-related comment.
- Quantitative results are presented as counts and percentages. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

- Free-text responses were reviewed thematically. Themes overlap, so one response may contribute to more than one theme.
- Names, email addresses, IP addresses and respondent identifiers are not reproduced in this report.

Limitations

- The consultation sample is self-selecting and may over-represent people with stronger views.
- Demographic fields were optional. “No response” and “prefer not to say” levels limit some subgroup analysis.
- Some subgroups are small. Their percentages should be read with caution and not generalised to the wider population.
- Comments sometimes included factual claims about benefits, taxation or council finances. This report records the views expressed and does not verify those claims.

3. Overall result



Among respondents who answered the main question, opposition exceeded support by 80 responses, a difference of 20.8 percentage points.

4. Main reasons given in support

Child Benefit is intended for children

Supporters commonly said Child Benefit should remain available for food, clothing, school items, childcare and other costs of raising a child, rather than indirectly increasing Council Tax liability.

Cost of living and child poverty

Supportive comments referred to financial pressure on low-income families, lone parents, working parents, carers and households with disabled children. Respondents said the proposed change could provide practical relief and reduce hardship.

Fairness and consistency

Some respondents described the current treatment as a penalty for receiving Child Benefit and referred to its treatment in other benefit assessments.

Direct personal impact

Several respondents said Child Benefit affected their Council Tax Support entitlement or that Council Tax was one of their most difficult household bills.

Wider disregard requests

Some respondents asked the council to consider disability-related benefits, carers' benefits or childcare elements as part of a wider review.

5. Main reasons given in opposition

Affordability and funding

The most persistent concern was how the reduction in Council Tax income would be funded. Respondents raised possible higher Council Tax, reduced services or additional pressure on the council's financial position.

Child Benefit is income

Many opponents considered any money entering a household to be income for means-testing purposes, whether earned or received as a benefit.

Fairness to other households

Comments frequently mentioned low-income single people, couples without children, working households above benefit thresholds and pensioners, arguing that these groups may also be struggling.

Priority for other services

Some respondents preferred resources to be directed towards roads, social care, waste services, local amenities or general Council Tax restraint.

Work incentives and personal responsibility

Some comments argued that additional support could weaken work incentives or that parents should meet the costs of having children. Some were expressed in strongly negative terms about benefit recipients.

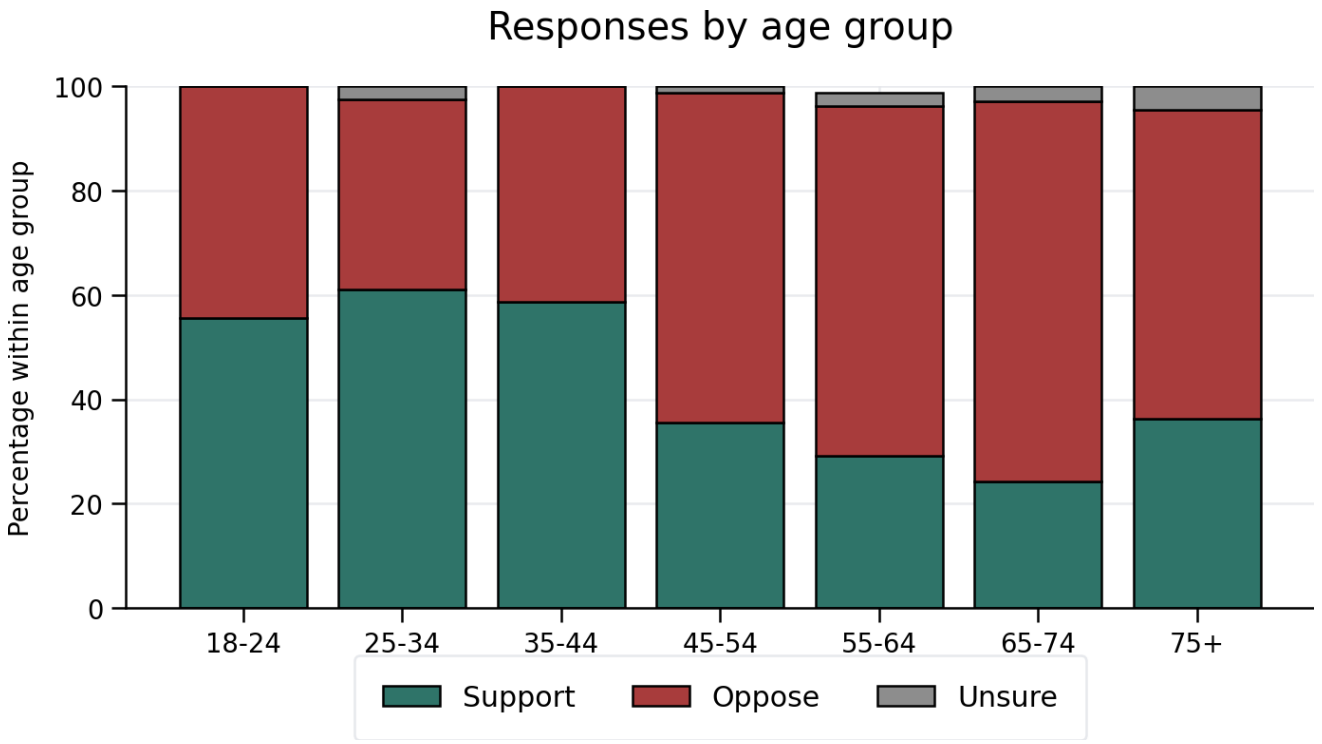
Scope and precedent

A number of respondents questioned whether disregarding Child Benefit could lead to requests to disregard other income sources, or whether family support should be funded nationally.

6. Responses by demographic group

Subgroup results describe this consultation sample only. They do not demonstrate the views of the wider population and should not be used to predict individual opinions.

Age



Age	Total	Support	Oppose	Unsure	No answer
18-24	9	5 (55.6%)	4 (44.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0
25-34	41	25 (61.0%)	15 (36.6%)	1 (2.4%)	0
35-44	63	37 (58.7%)	26 (41.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0
45-54	76	27 (35.5%)	48 (63.2%)	1 (1.3%)	0
55-64	79	23 (29.1%)	53 (67.1%)	2 (2.5%)	1
65-74	70	17 (24.3%)	51 (72.9%)	2 (2.9%)	0
75+	22	8 (36.4%)	13 (59.1%)	1 (4.5%)	0
No response	25	5 (20.0%)	17 (68.0%)	3 (12.0%)	0

The strongest support within the recorded age groups was among respondents aged 25-34 and 35-44. Opposition was the majority response in the 45-54, 55-64, 65-74 and 75+ groups. The 18-24 group was small and should be interpreted cautiously.

Children in household

Children	Total	Support	Oppose	Unsure	No answer
Yes	212	103 (48.6%)	107 (50.5%)	2 (0.9%)	0

Children	Total	Support	Oppose	Unsure	No answer
No	103	30 (29.1%)	69 (67.0%)	4 (3.9%)	0
Prefer not to say	50	8 (16.0%)	39 (78.0%)	2 (4.0%)	1
No response	20	6 (30.0%)	12 (60.0%)	2 (10.0%)	0

Respondents who reported having children were closely divided. Respondents who reported having no children were more likely to oppose the proposal in this sample.

Gender

Gender	Total	Support	Oppose	Unsure	No answer
Female	237	111 (46.8%)	119 (50.2%)	6 (2.5%)	1
Male	99	25 (25.3%)	73 (73.7%)	1 (1.0%)	0
Prefer not to say	31	5 (16.1%)	25 (80.6%)	1 (3.2%)	0
Prefer to self-describe	2	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0
No response	16	5 (31.2%)	9 (56.2%)	2 (12.5%)	0

7. Equality considerations

The equality-monitoring responses indicate that the proposal may have different practical effects across households, but the consultation data alone cannot establish the scale of those effects.

Comments referred particularly to disability, caring responsibilities, lone parents and households with disabled children. Other respondents asked that low-income adults without children and pensioners should also be considered.

A separate Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment has been completed.

8. Conclusions

The consultation result is not supportive overall. Of the 384 respondents who answered the main question, 59.1% opposed the proposal, 38.3% supported it and 2.6% were unsure.

The qualitative responses show that the issue is not simply a division between support for families and opposition to welfare. Respondents on both sides raised the cost of living and fairness of the Council Tax system.

Supporters focused on the purpose of Child Benefit and the value of leaving more support available for children.

Opponents focused on affordability, equal treatment of other struggling households and the possibility that costs could affect other taxpayers or services. Respondents who were unsure mainly sought clearer financial information before reaching a view.

Appendix A. Respondent profile

Characteristic	Response profile
Age	55-64: 79; 45-54: 76; 65-74: 70; 35-44: 63; 25-34: 41; 75+: 22; 18-24: 9; No response: 25
Economic status	Employed/self-employed: 187; retired: 100; full-time carer/home: 23; other/prefer not to say/no response: 75
Household income	Prefer not to say: 95; £25,000 to £39,999: 66; £17,000 to £24,999: 56; £40,000 to £59,999: 44; £9,500 to £16,999: 31; £75,000 and over: 24; No response: 19; £60,000 to £74,999: 17; Don't know: 14; £6,500 to £9,499: 10; £6,499 or less per year: 9
Children	Yes: 212; No: 103; Prefer not to say: 50; No response: 20
Disability/illness	No: 209; limited a little: 59; limited a lot: 43; prefer not to say/no response: 74
Unpaid carer	Yes: 83; no: 230; prefer not to say/no response: 72
Ethnicity	White (British; Irish; Welsh): 289; Prefer not to say: 63; No response: 20; Other ethnic group: 6; Other white background eg Bulgarian, French, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, White South African, etc: 3; other categories: 4