

Appendix E (Part 3)

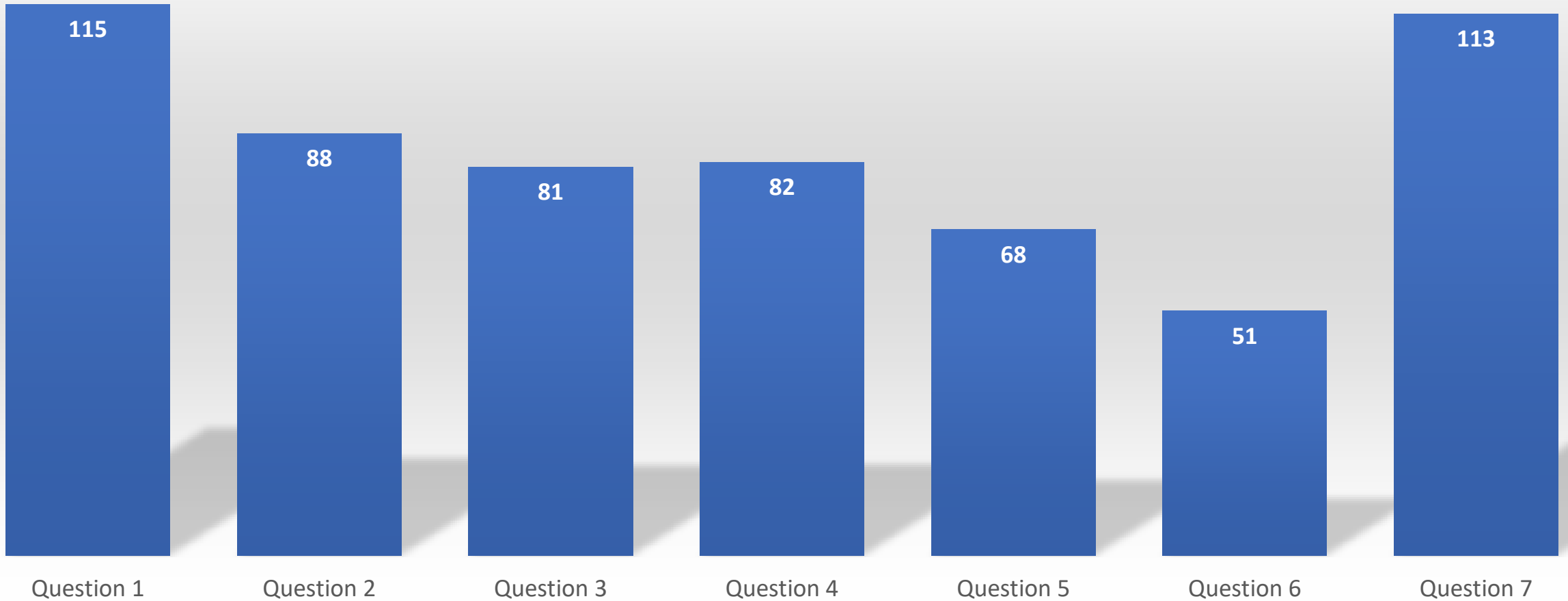
Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26

Consultation Comments

December 2024

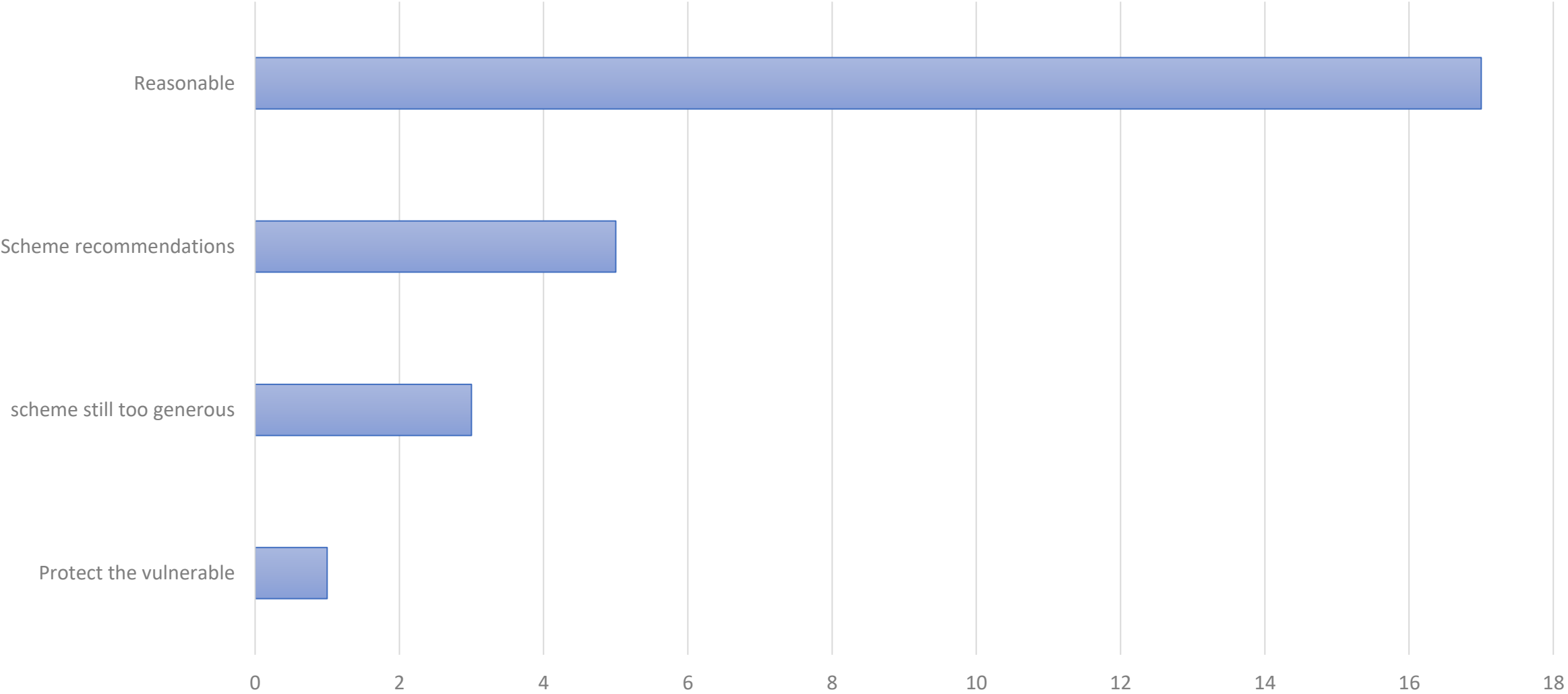
598 Total comments received

Number of comments received by question

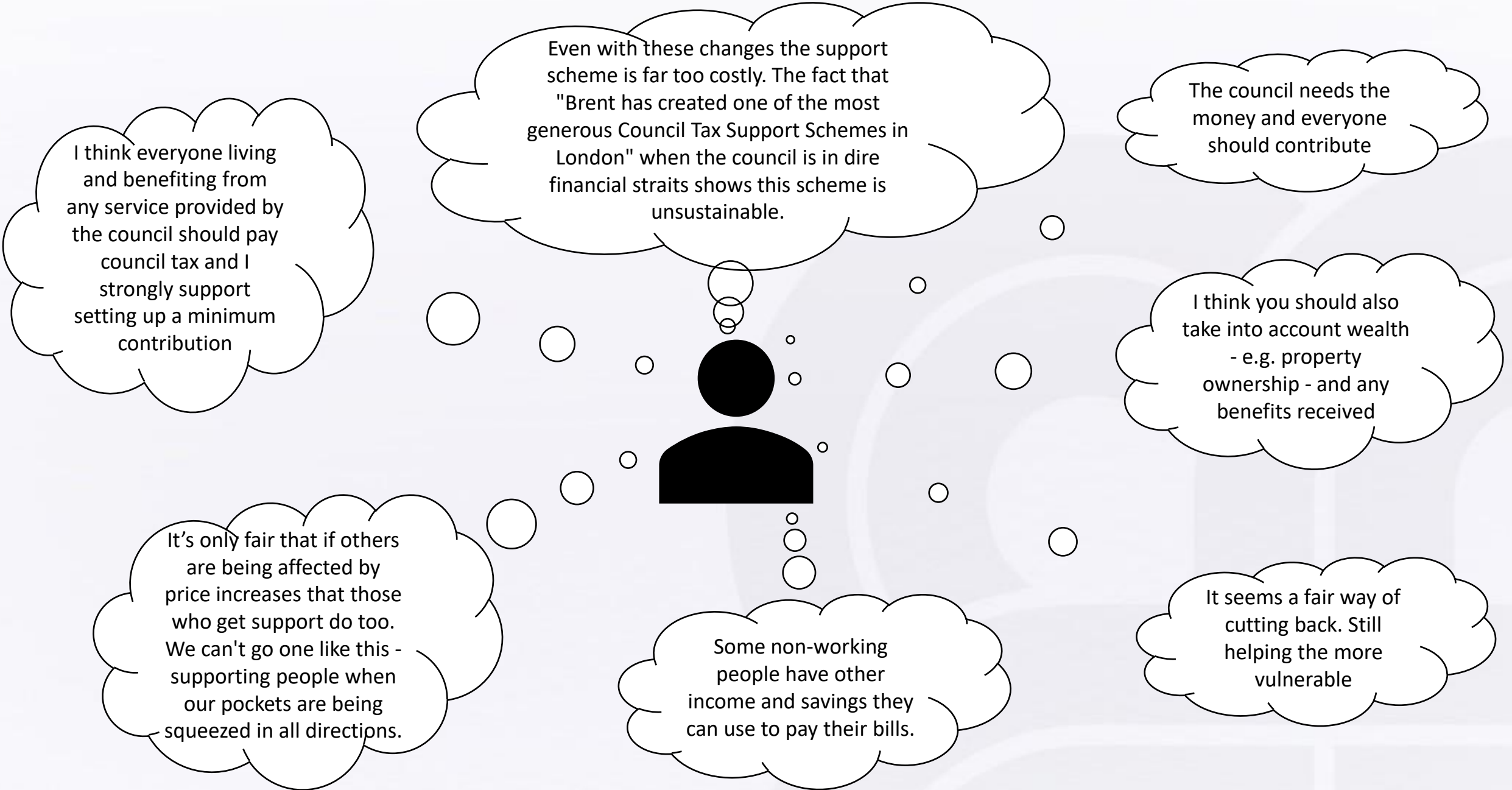


Out of those respondents that 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with this proposal these were the common themes that emerged:

Agree/Strongly Agree



Out of those respondents that 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with this proposal these were some comments we received:



I think everyone living and benefiting from any service provided by the council should pay council tax and I strongly support setting up a minimum contribution

Even with these changes the support scheme is far too costly. The fact that "Brent has created one of the most generous Council Tax Support Schemes in London" when the council is in dire financial straits shows this scheme is unsustainable.

The council needs the money and everyone should contribute

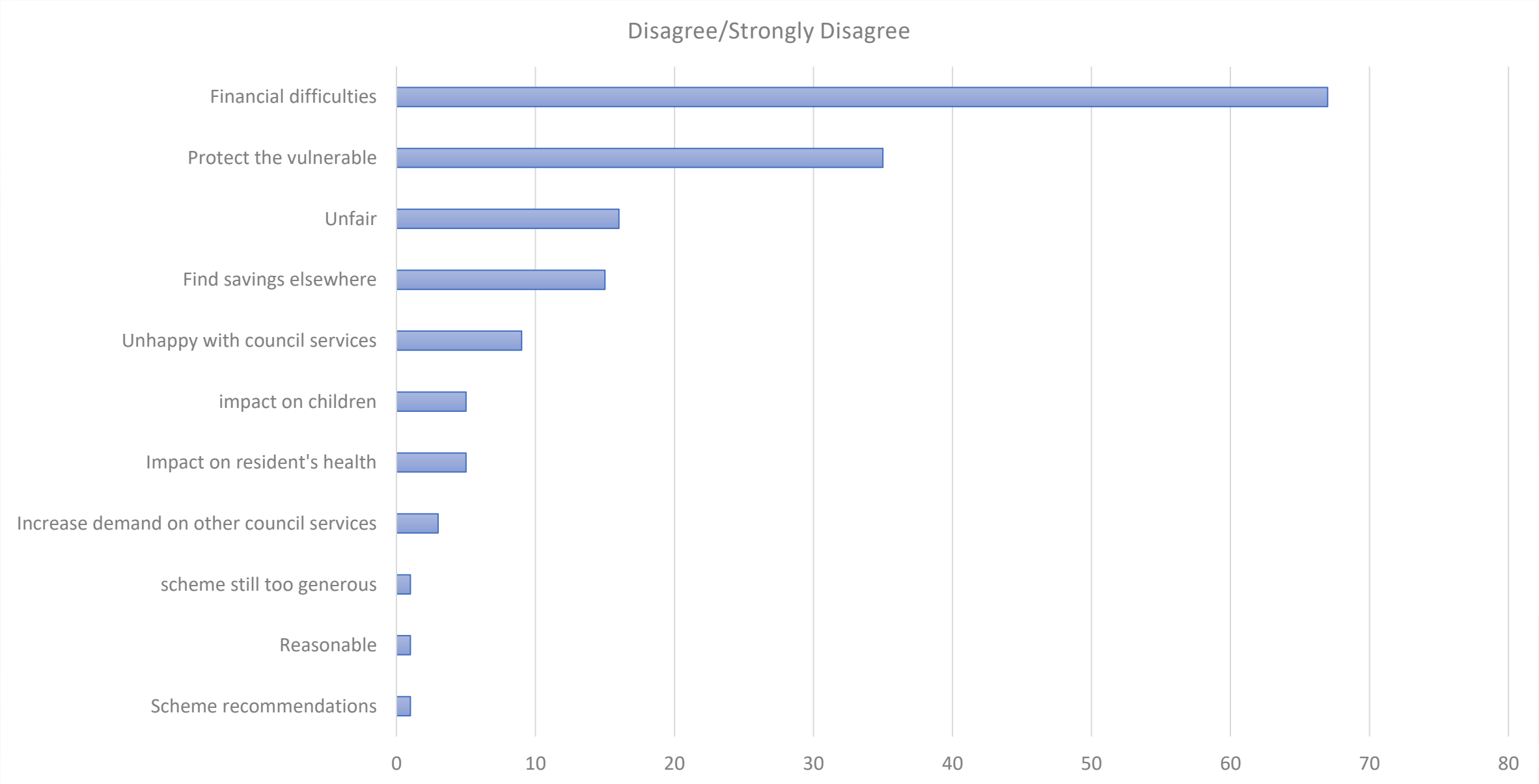
I think you should also take into account wealth - e.g. property ownership - and any benefits received

It's only fair that if others are being affected by price increases that those who get support do too. We can't go one like this - supporting people when our pockets are being squeezed in all directions.

Some non-working people have other income and savings they can use to pay their bills.

It seems a fair way of cutting back. Still helping the more vulnerable

Out of those respondents that 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with this question these were the common themes that emerged:



Out of those respondents that 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with this proposal these were some comments we received:

Working age recipients who cannot work as they are physically disabled, how is this a fair system??

35% would result in a bill of around £500-£550 per year. Where is that money going to come from when state benefits are paid at fixed rates and isn't exactly generous. All the council will be doing is pushing me and others on very low fixed incomes, into increased poverty.

no one has the money

This will cause unnecessary hardship at a time when people are struggling expediently this needs to be reconsidered

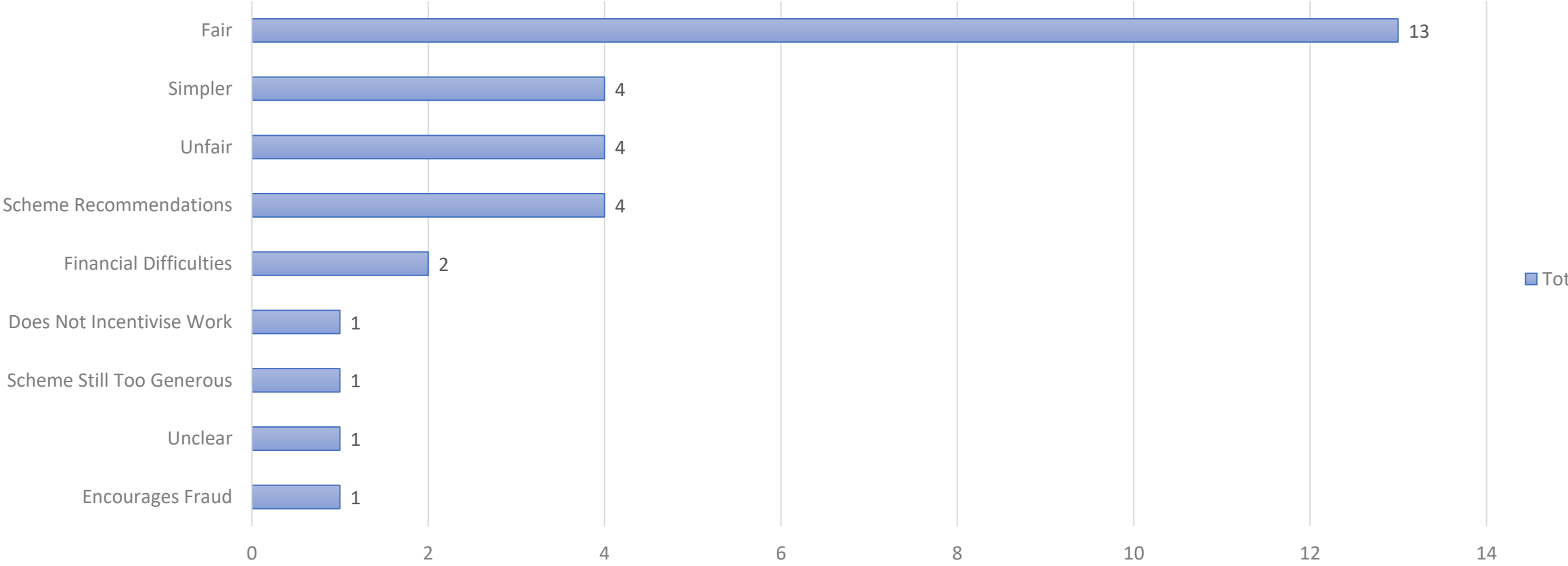
People who receive council tax benefit do so because they can't afford to pay the fee. It makes no sense to try to extract money from an individual who doesn't have the funds. You'd be wasting time and money in the process.

This appalling. You're supposed to be Labour but you're penalising the poorest.

People are already struggling with bills and council tax bills to go up is high detrimental!!

Out of those respondents that 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with this proposal these were the common themes that emerged:

Agree/Strongly Agree



Out of those respondents that 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with this proposal these were some comments we received:

Having this makes it more streamlined and easier to manage and saves the money required where it is sensible to do from.

I agree with the £20 non dependant deduction for those who work but feel £8 is a lot for those who can't work due to an illness or disability

young people should pay council tax

A pound adjustment is easier to understand and explain. The percentage discount should be ditched in favour of a pound discount.

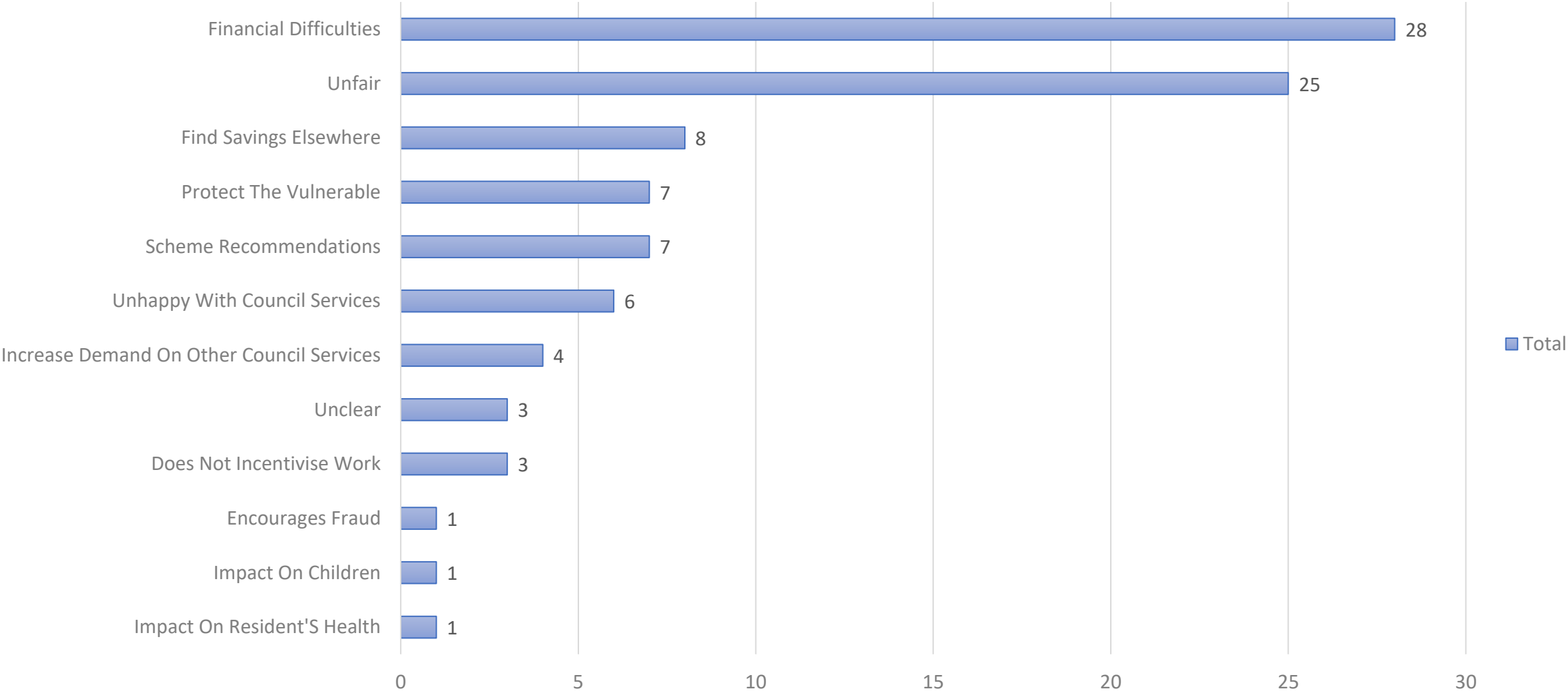
This is an improvement, but the system needs a complete overhaul. If a household has a working adult, then there should be zero Council Tax Support, and the full tax rate should apply

This is a fair ask, as ND's who are working need to contribute

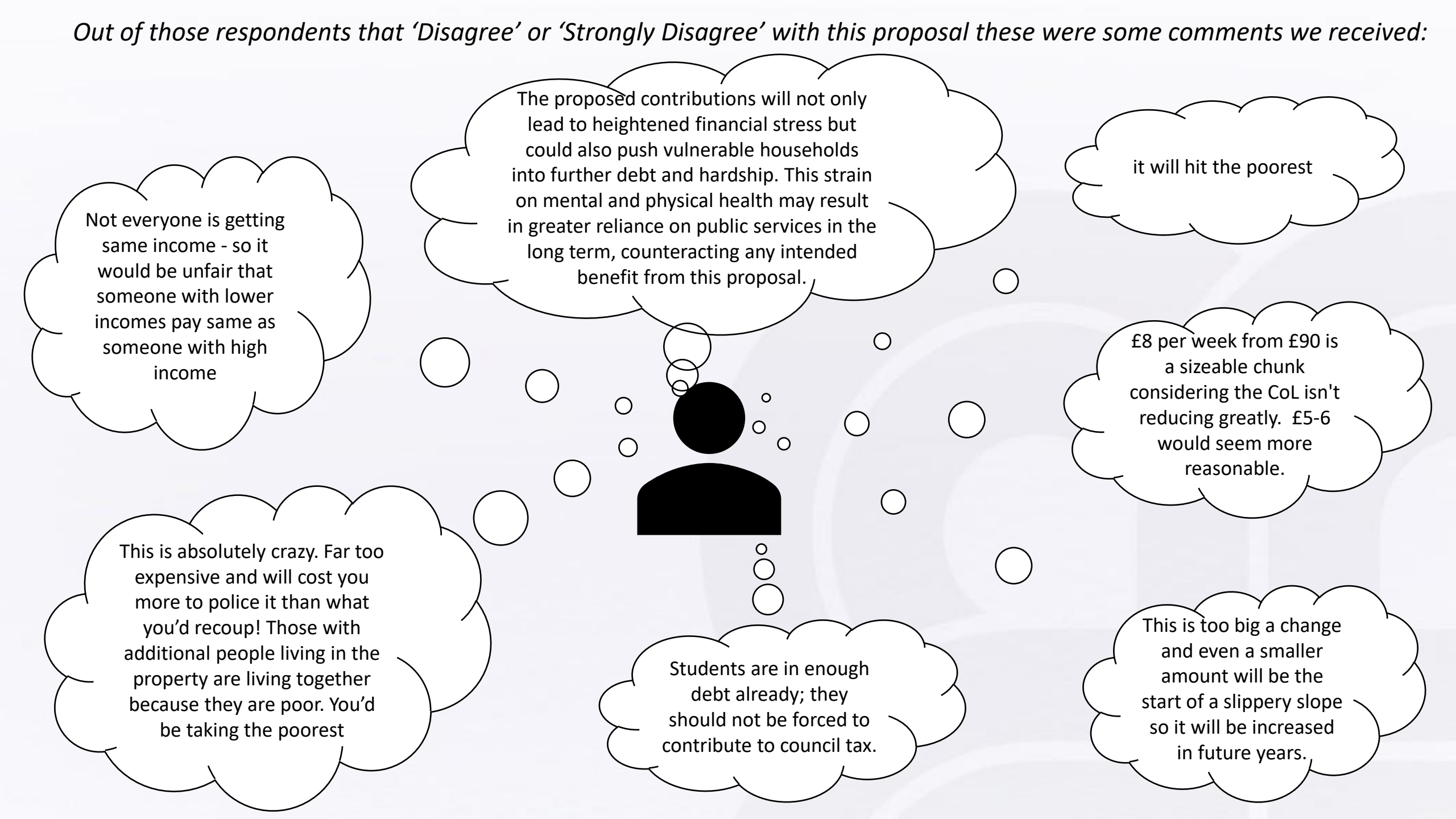
Please consider how this is inherently encouraging people to stay out of work and / or take on 'cash in hand' jobs

Out of those respondents that 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with this question these were the common themes that emerged:

Disagree/Strongly Disagree



Out of those respondents that 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with this proposal these were some comments we received:



Not everyone is getting same income - so it would be unfair that someone with lower incomes pay same as someone with high income

The proposed contributions will not only lead to heightened financial stress but could also push vulnerable households into further debt and hardship. This strain on mental and physical health may result in greater reliance on public services in the long term, counteracting any intended benefit from this proposal.

it will hit the poorest

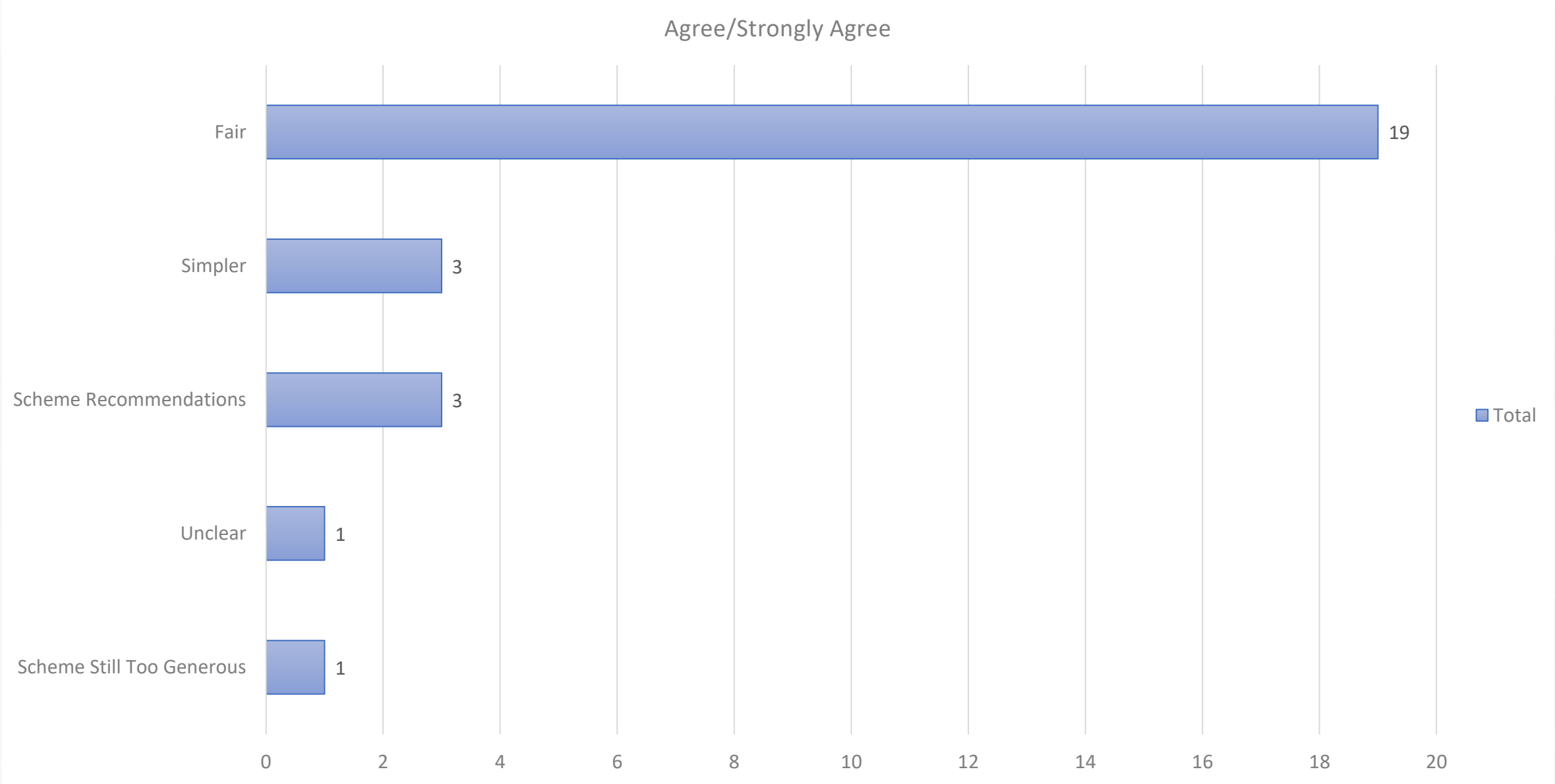
£8 per week from £90 is a sizeable chunk considering the CoL isn't reducing greatly. £5-6 would seem more reasonable.

This is absolutely crazy. Far too expensive and will cost you more to police it than what you'd recoup! Those with additional people living in the property are living together because they are poor. You'd be taking the poorest

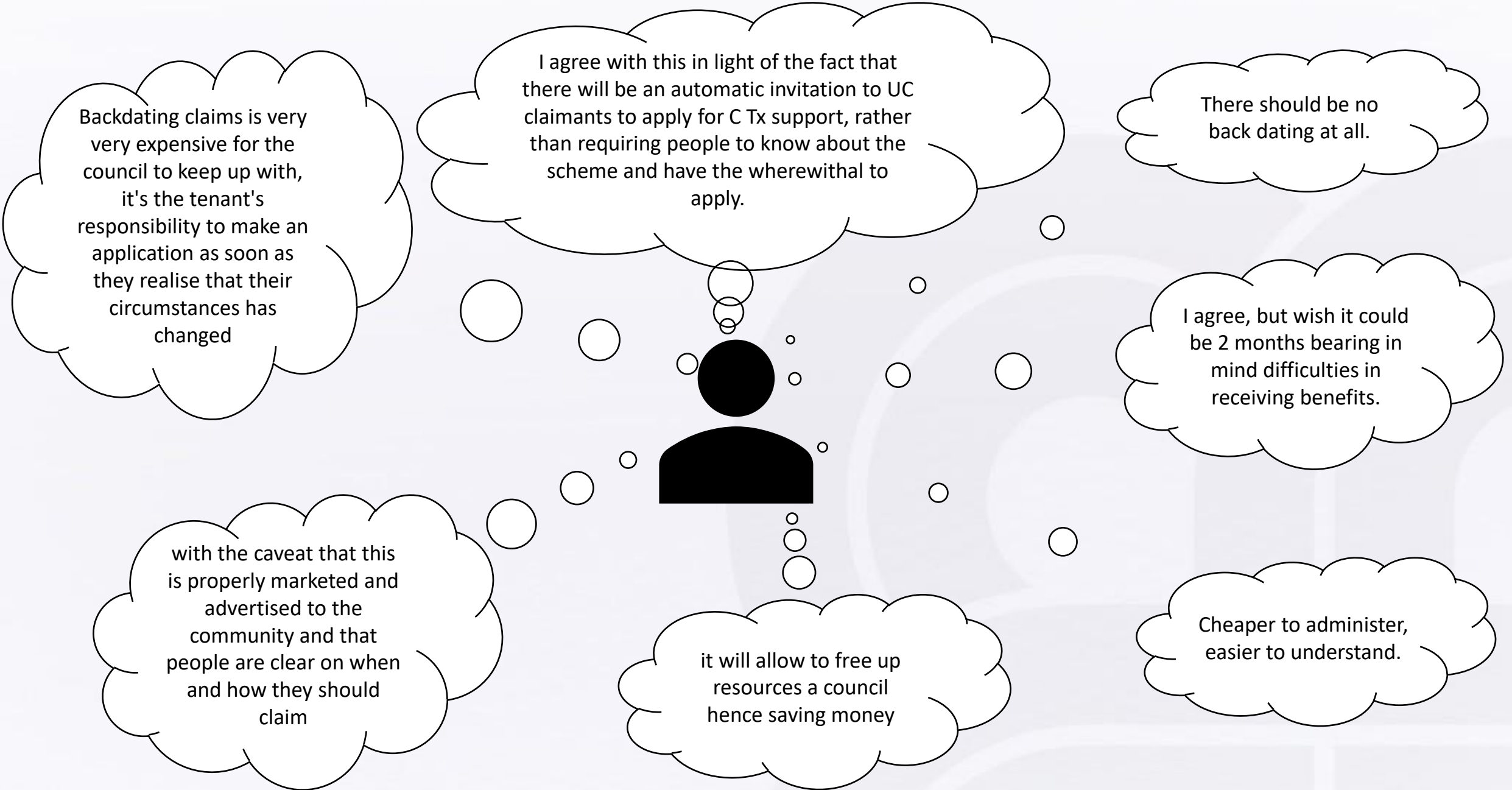
Students are in enough debt already; they should not be forced to contribute to council tax.

This is too big a change and even a smaller amount will be the start of a slippery slope so it will be increased in future years.

Out of those respondents that 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with this proposal these were the common themes that emerged:



Out of those respondents that 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with this proposal these were some comments we received:



Backdating claims is very very expensive for the council to keep up with, it's the tenant's responsibility to make an application as soon as they realise that their circumstances has changed

I agree with this in light of the fact that there will be an automatic invitation to UC claimants to apply for C Tx support, rather than requiring people to know about the scheme and have the wherewithal to apply.

There should be no back dating at all.

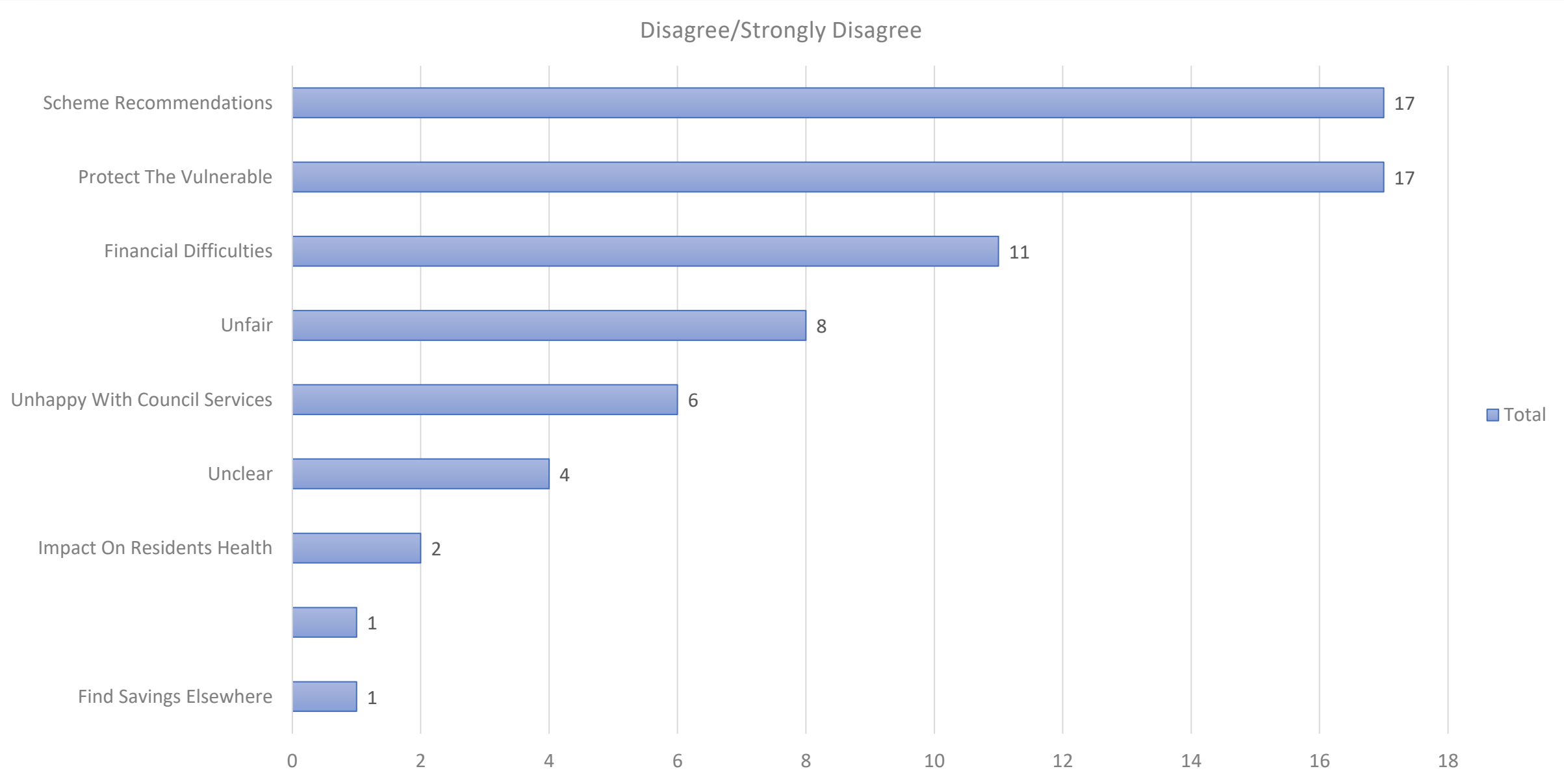
I agree, but wish it could be 2 months bearing in mind difficulties in receiving benefits.

with the caveat that this is properly marketed and advertised to the community and that people are clear on when and how they should claim

it will allow to free up resources a council hence saving money

Cheaper to administer, easier to understand.

Out of those respondents that 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with this question these were the common themes that emerged:



Out of those respondents that 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with this proposal these were some comments we received:

Most of the time people don't know they can apply for discount. So, it's fair to get 3 month back as LA don't share easily any information regarding possibility of financial help

You will make it harder for people already struggling. They will have to find this deficit from elsewhere (be it food, energy etc.) Sometimes people fall on hard times - after contributing and paying tax for a very long time! Do not kick people when they are down.

Limited backdating of claim should be three months

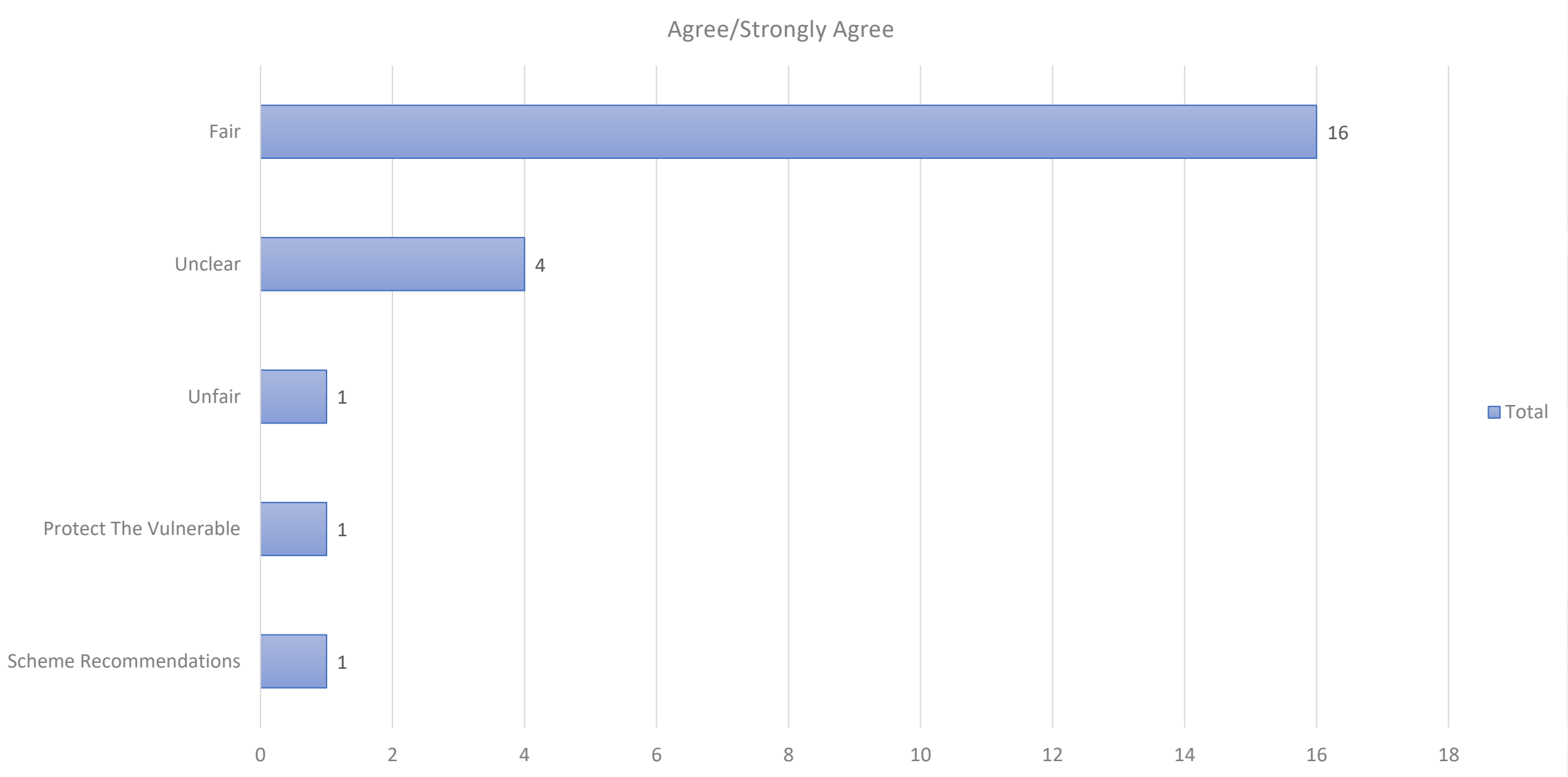
This should stay the same. Otherwise, the very poorest in our community face spiralling debt.

There should be some mechanism for people to appeal in the case of the backdated payment being the result of an error by the council itself

Again, people claim due to hardship making things more stressful for people is totally unacceptable

Some people will deserve the longer backdating because of their circumstances of why they did not claim earlier.

Out of those respondents that 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with this proposal these were the common themes that emerged:



Out of those respondents that 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with this proposal these were some comments we received:

with the caveat that the proposed notification system actually works and has adequate human oversight, and that redress and compensation mechanisms are available to people when it fails.

However, it will mean additional bureaucracy + additional staff requirement which will cost the council monies. There should be a cost/benefit analysis regarding additional costs to process additional applications.

But will it require more personnel to administer

Needs an equality impact assessment; ensuring support for those who may struggle with an application

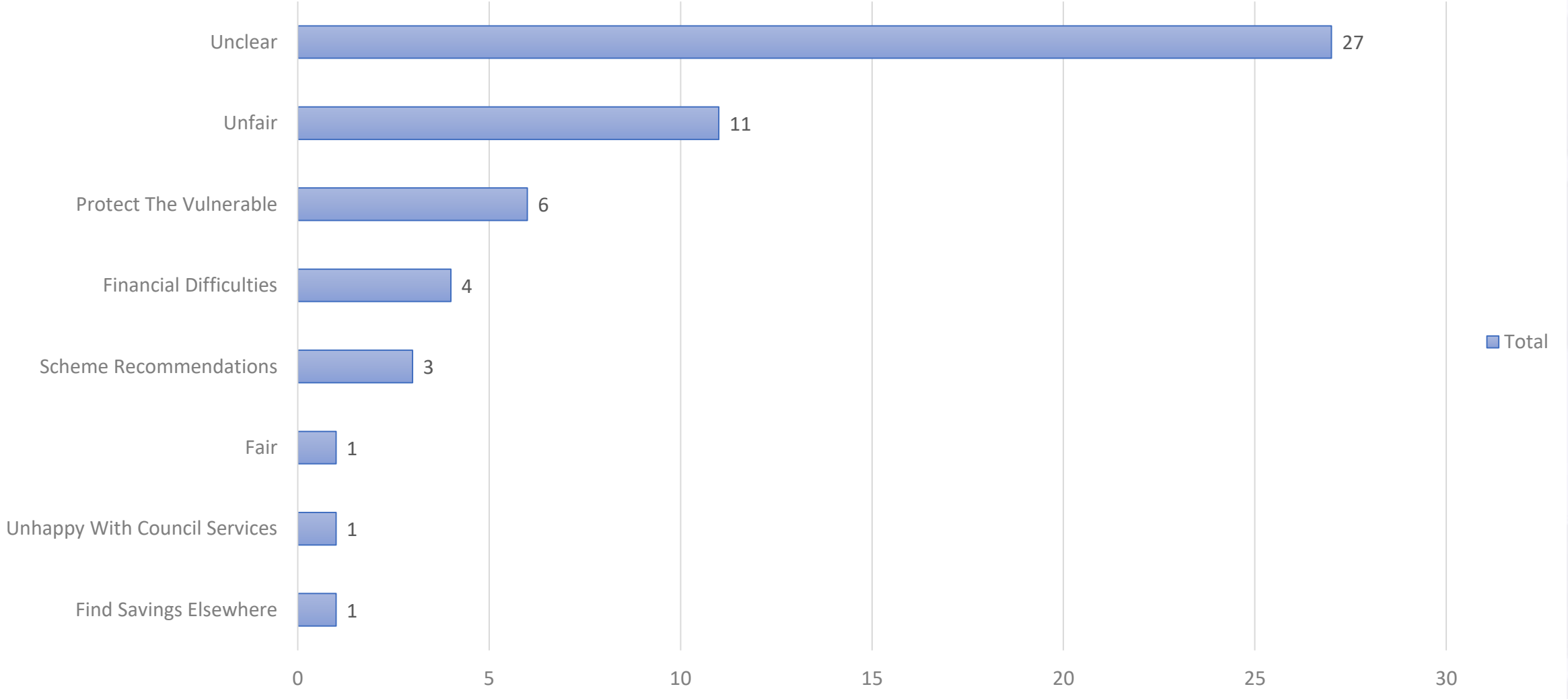
I think this is a brilliant idea. Many people are unaware of the support that is available, and that a separate application must be made to that for UC.

Should be cheaper to administer and fairer too.

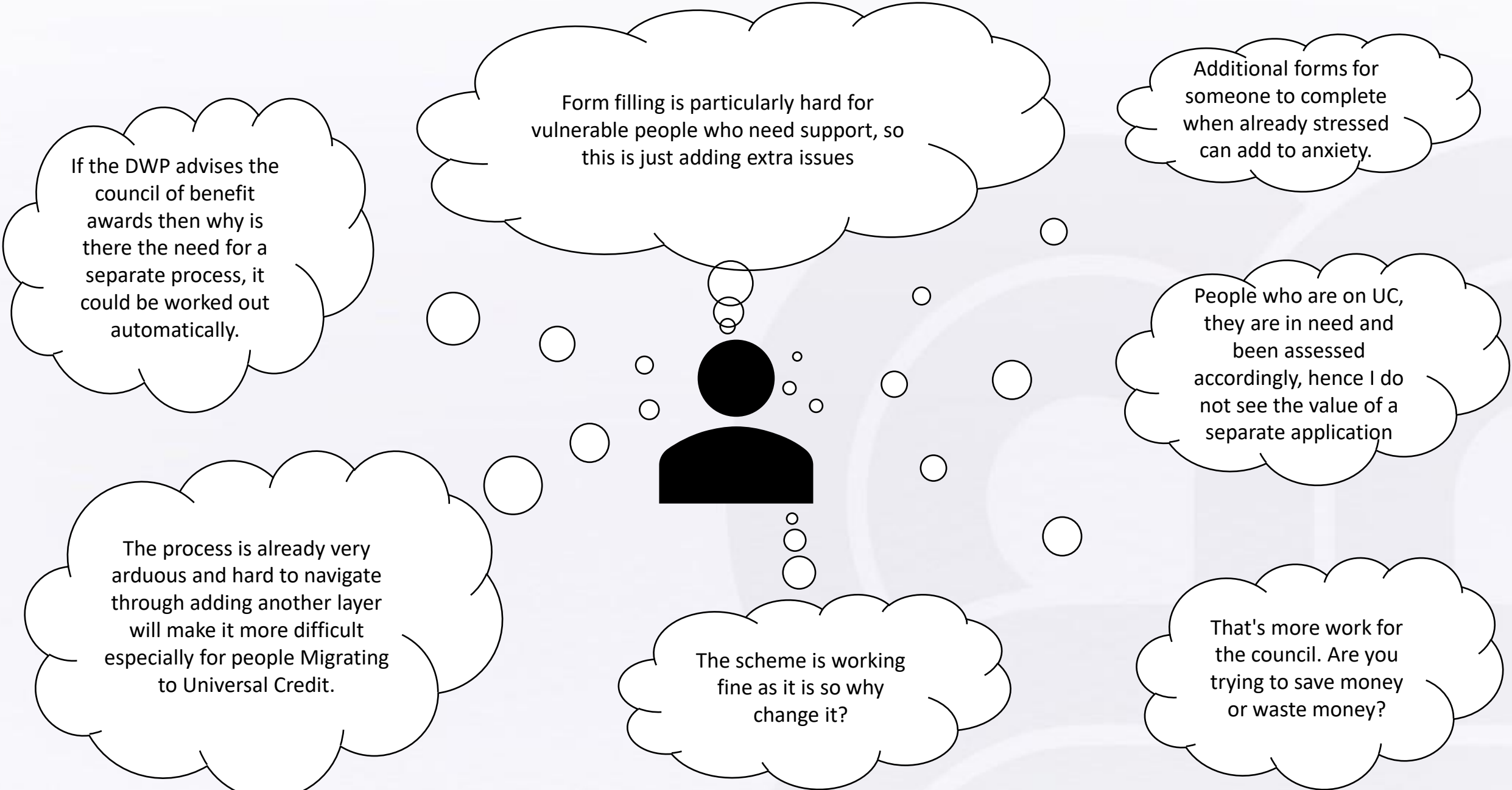
This would be extremely beneficial as it would remove stress associated with making applications, especially when one has to make multiple applications. If Brent has the information from the DWP relating to benefits, there should be an automatic application of any relevant Council Tax Benefit

Out of those respondents that 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with this question these were the common themes that emerged:

Disagree/Strongly Disagree



Out of those respondents that 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with this proposal these were some comments we received:



If the DWP advises the council of benefit awards then why is there the need for a separate process, it could be worked out automatically.

Form filling is particularly hard for vulnerable people who need support, so this is just adding extra issues

Additional forms for someone to complete when already stressed can add to anxiety.

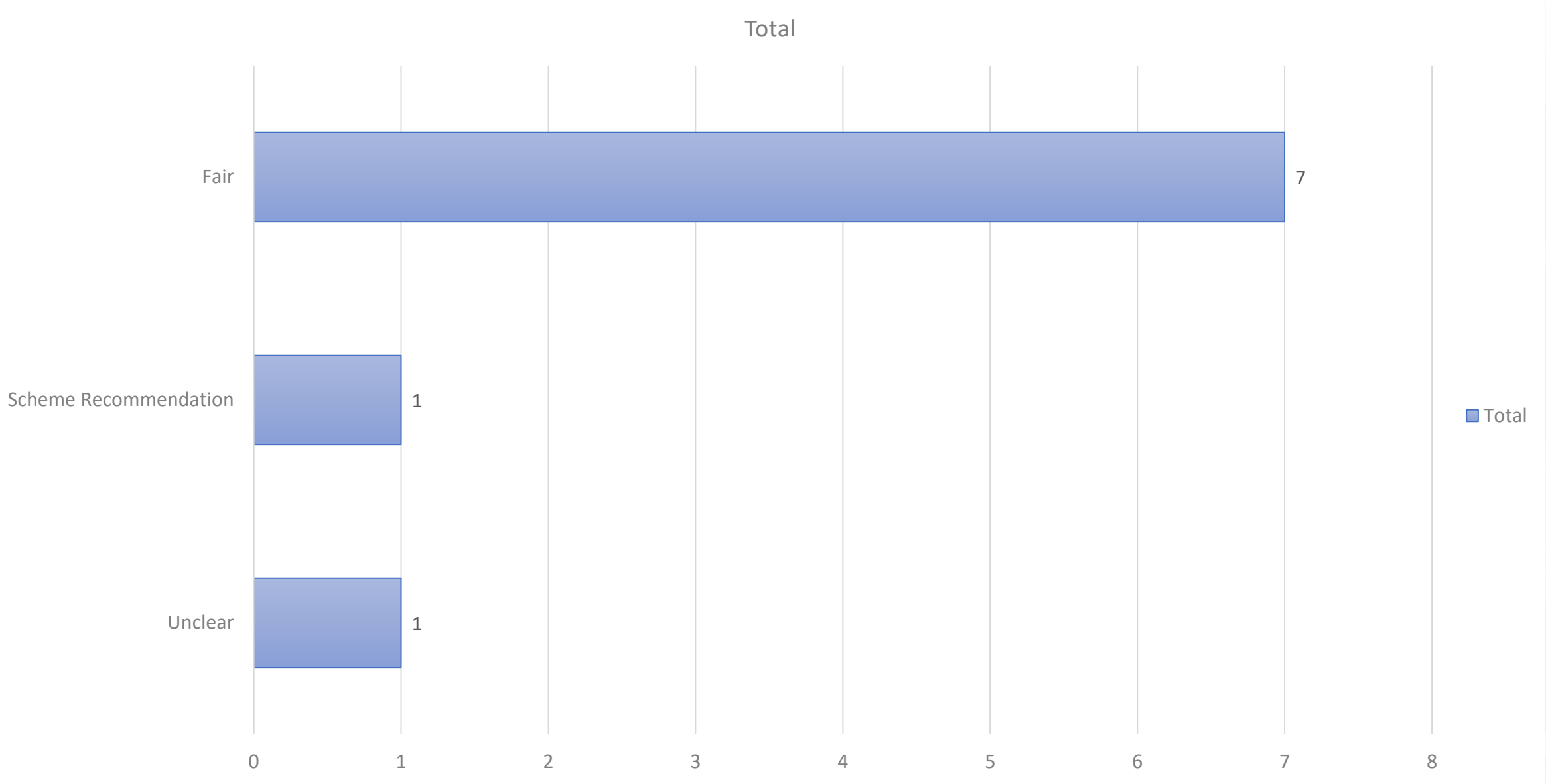
People who are on UC, they are in need and been assessed accordingly, hence I do not see the value of a separate application

The process is already very arduous and hard to navigate through adding another layer will make it more difficult especially for people Migrating to Universal Credit.

The scheme is working fine as it is so why change it?

That's more work for the council. Are you trying to save money or waste money?

Out of those respondents that 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with this proposal these were the common themes that emerged:



Out of those respondents that 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with this proposal these were some comments we received:

The income bands are wages, so they should rise in line with wage inflation, rather than price inflation. Nevertheless, linking to SOME sort of inflation is a good idea.

It's not a bad idea, but growth in earnings would be a more appropriate measure as it pertains directly to income changes and would not be vulnerable to exceptional shocks (e.g. pandemic/war fluctuations)

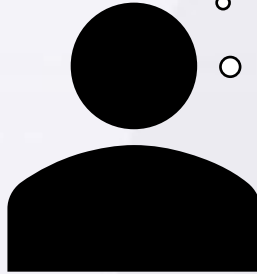
It's probably fair and reasonable

with the caveat that people can challenge rebanding/reassessments if they have not received pay rises /income increases.

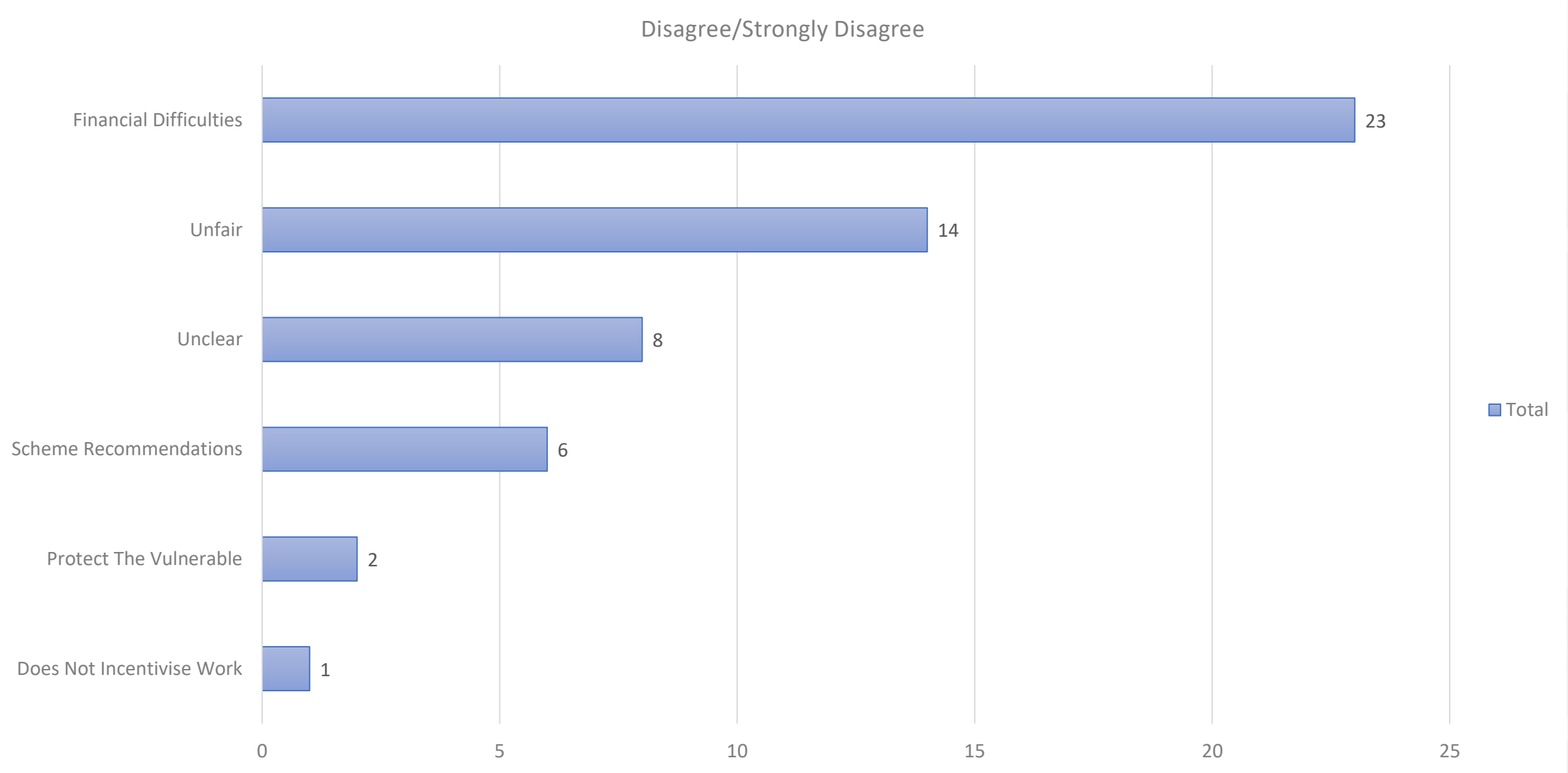
This is fair policy.

Considering inflation (but potentially also deflation) is a reasonable guide factor to use.

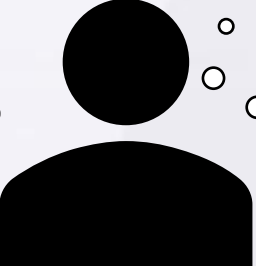
It's fair



Out of those respondents that 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with this question these were the common themes that emerged:



Out of those respondents that 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with this proposal these were some comments we received:



CPI isn't measuring increased council costs, so it's not suitable. The council should work harder to automate it's administration.

A more equitable system would involve assessing adjustments based on the actual cost-of-living increases experienced by low-income households, ensuring that the scheme remains fair and supportive of those who need it most.

Ludicrous. You assume wage increases.

I would only agree if it means I would be paying less than I am now.

Wages do not always increase by CPI, so doing this may widen the disparity between actual income and assumed income. This should be set and agreed on an annual basis, not automatically linked.

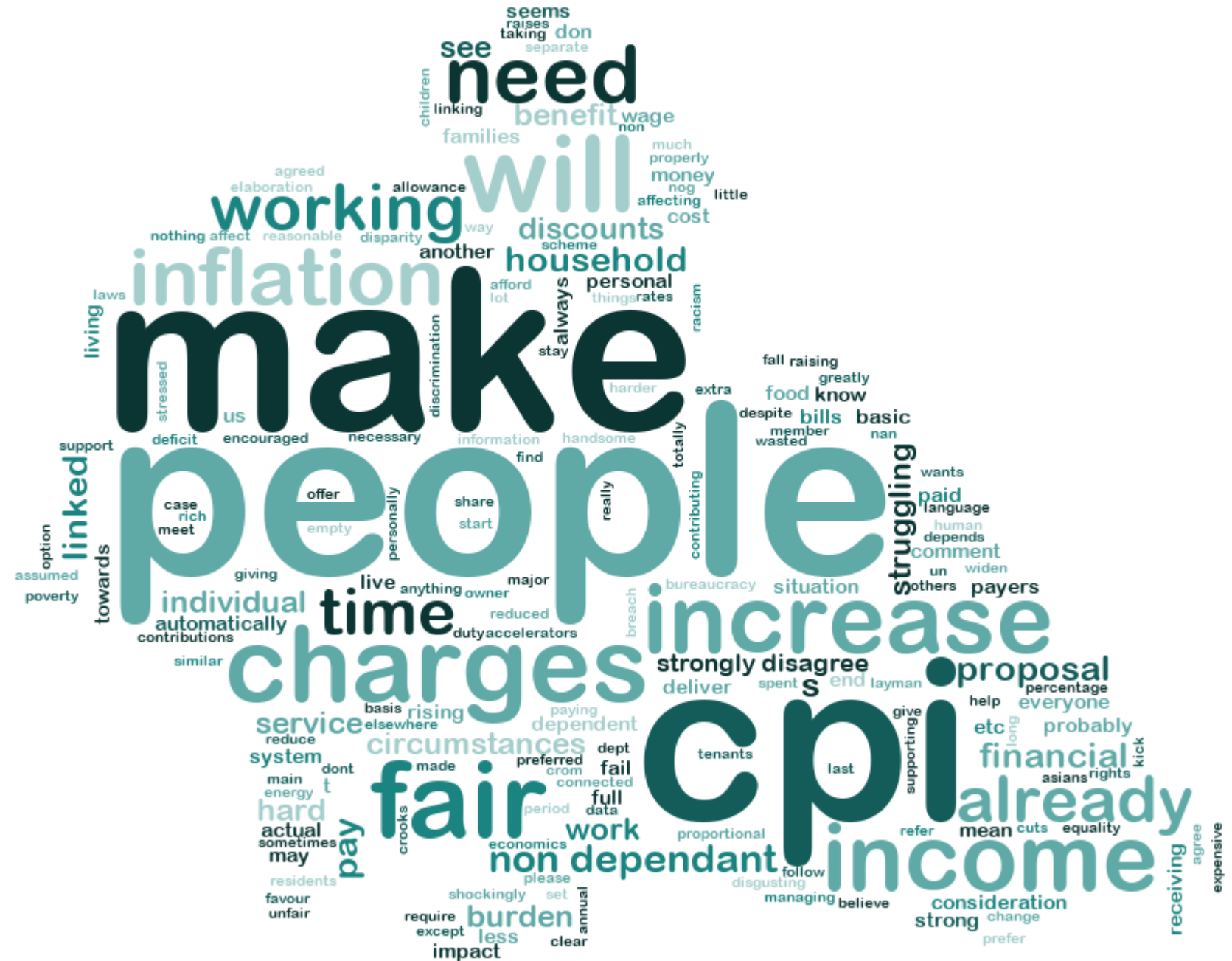
If low income and wages do not keep up with CPI this is an issue

Inflation fluctuates wildly

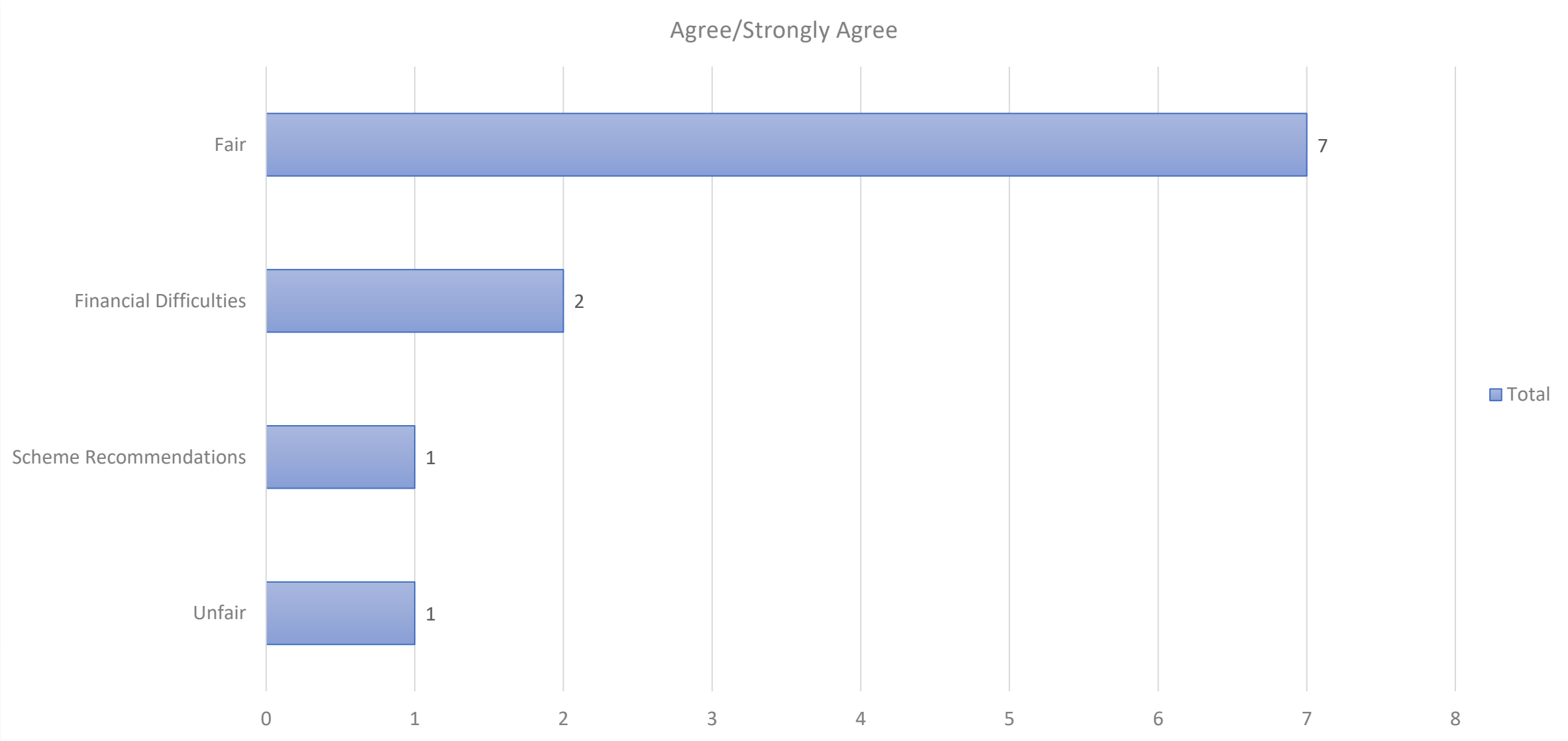
Question 6

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Council's proposal of linking the non-dependant charges to CPI (inflation)

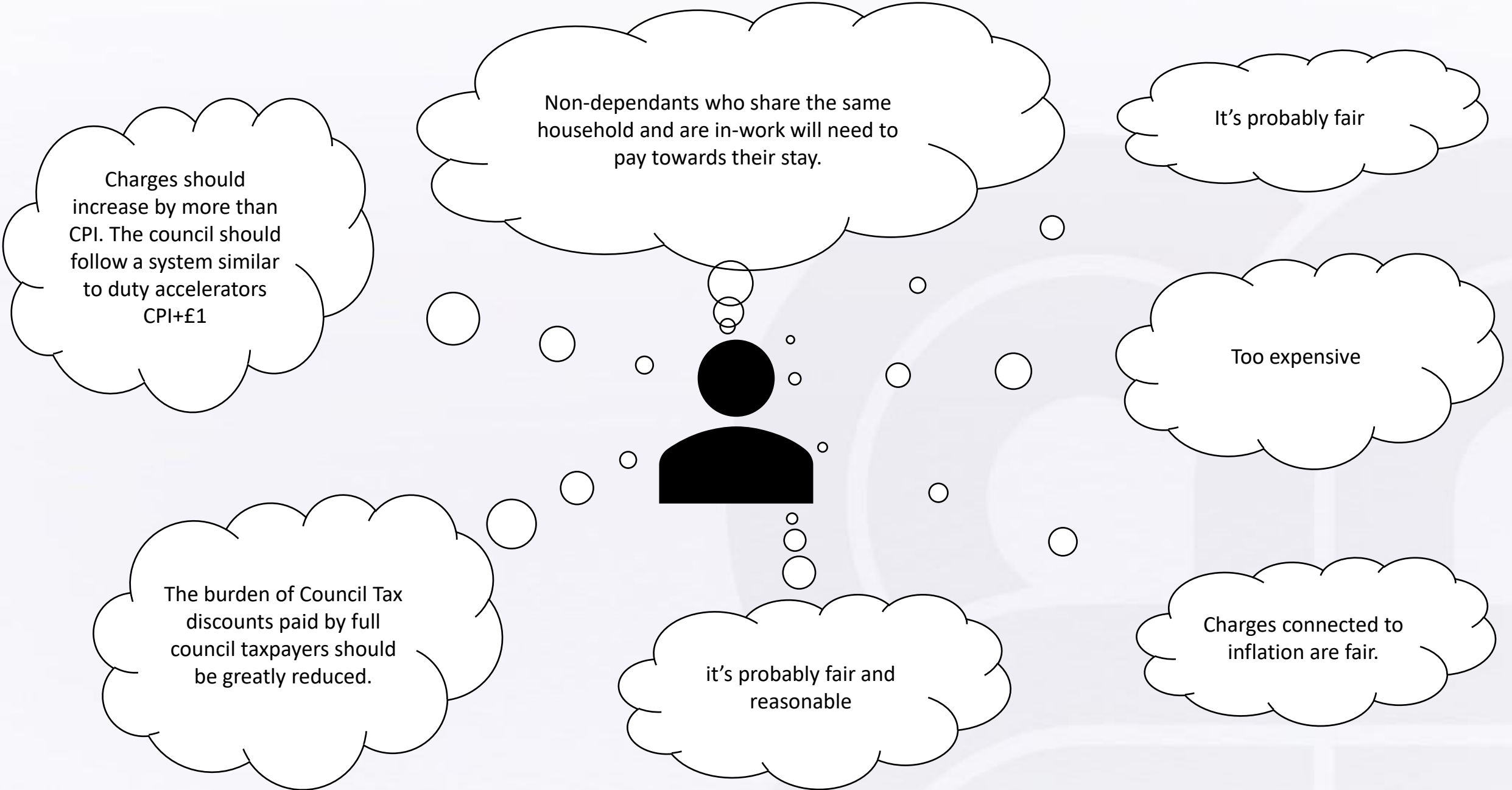
These were the words that were frequently found in customers responses to question one:



Out of those respondents that 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with this proposal these were the common themes that emerged:



Out of those respondents that 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with this proposal these were some comments we received:



Charges should increase by more than CPI. The council should follow a system similar to duty accelerators
CPI+£1

Non-dependants who share the same household and are in-work will need to pay towards their stay.

It's probably fair

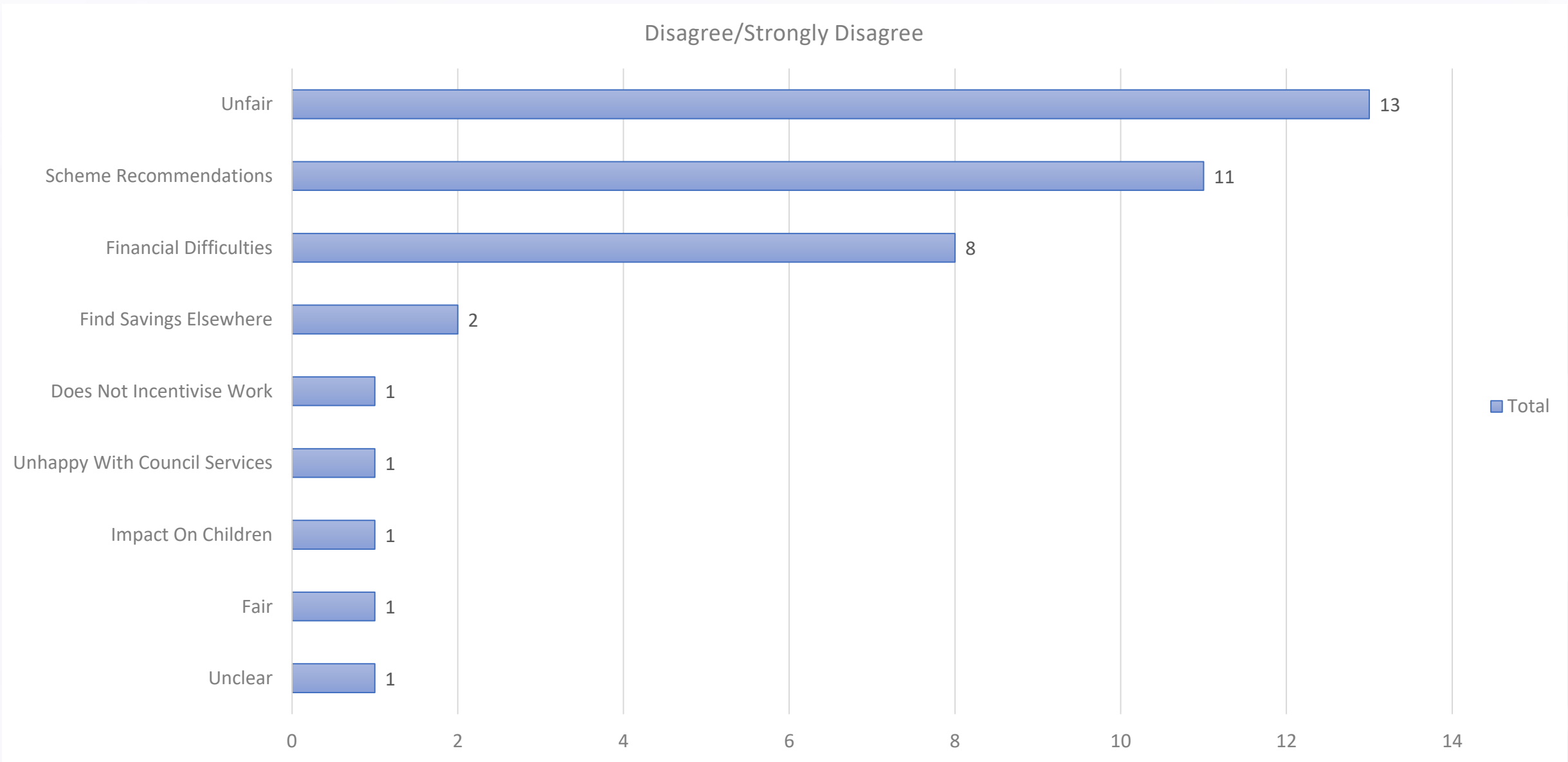
Too expensive

The burden of Council Tax discounts paid by full council taxpayers should be greatly reduced.

it's probably fair and reasonable

Charges connected to inflation are fair.

Out of those respondents that 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with this question these were the common themes that emerged:



Out of those respondents that 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with this proposal these were some comments we received:

It should be linked to council tax raises.

Another method to increase income at a time when people are struggling

This will increase debt and poverty.

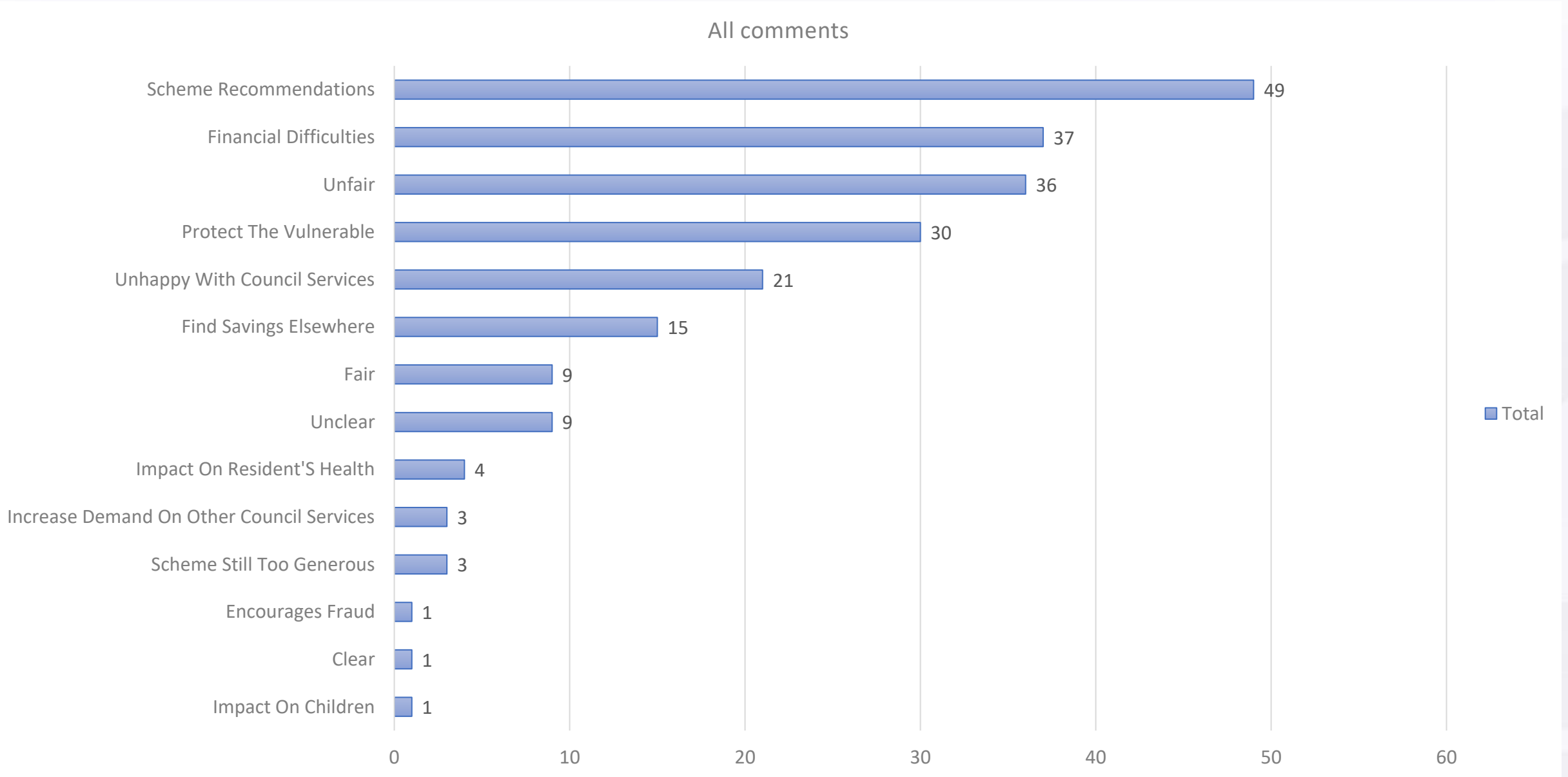
I strongly disagree with the proposal to link non-dependant charges to CPI (inflation), as it fails to consider the varying financial situations of non-dependants. CPI adjustments do not account for the disproportionate impact of rising costs on low-income individuals, especially those earning minimum wage, working part-time, or unemployed.

As above. Not until personal allowance is linked to inflation

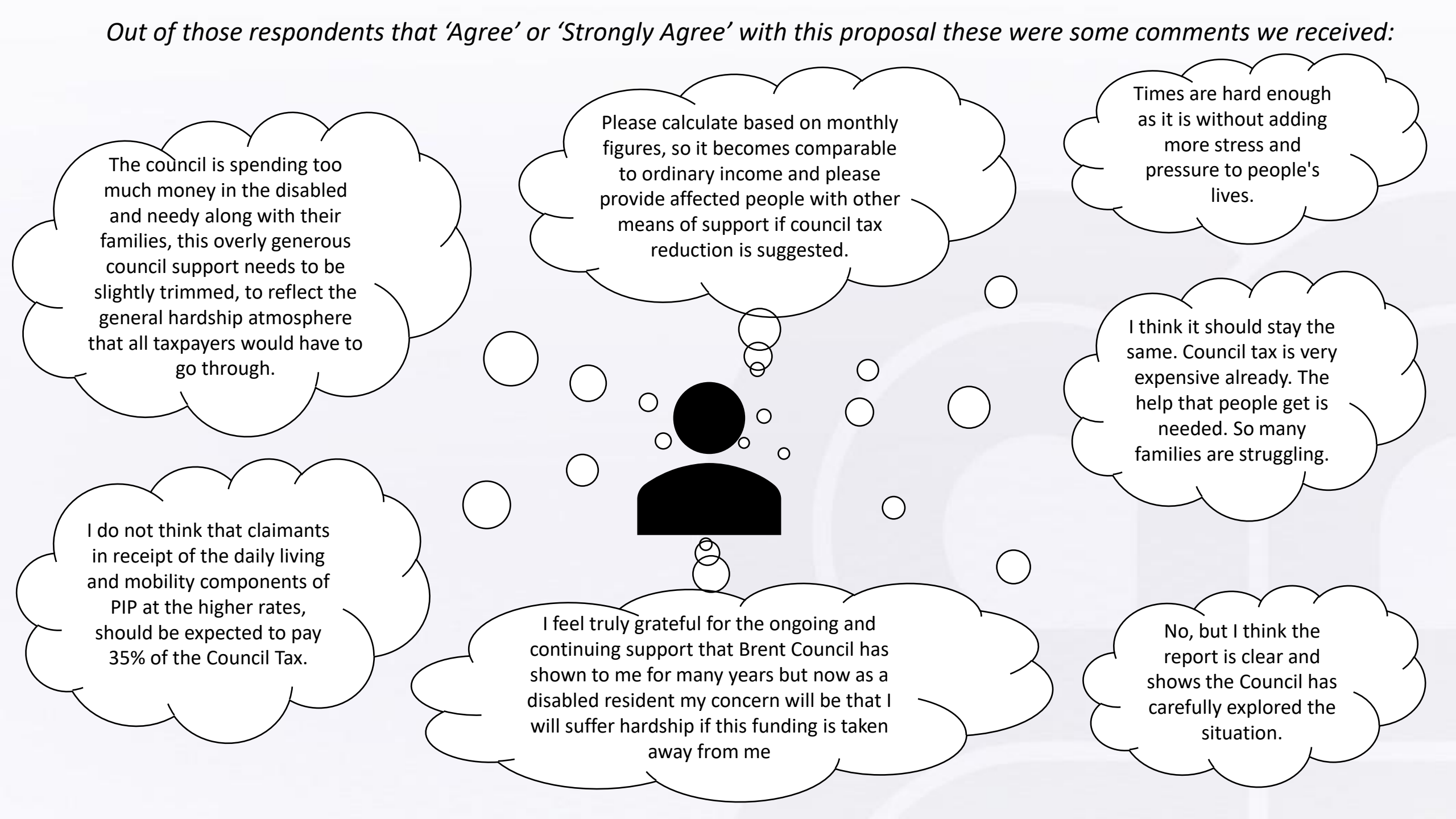
End the dependent charges except for in-work.

Children are stressed they don't need more of it

Out of those respondents that gave final remarks, these were the common themes that emerged:



Out of those respondents that 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with this proposal these were some comments we received:



The council is spending too much money in the disabled and needy along with their families, this overly generous council support needs to be slightly trimmed, to reflect the general hardship atmosphere that all taxpayers would have to go through.

Please calculate based on monthly figures, so it becomes comparable to ordinary income and please provide affected people with other means of support if council tax reduction is suggested.

Times are hard enough as it is without adding more stress and pressure to people's lives.

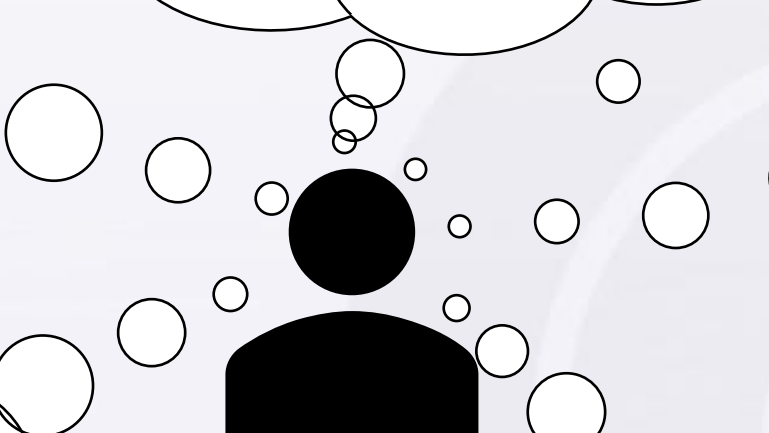
I think it should stay the same. Council tax is very expensive already. The help that people get is needed. So many families are struggling.

I do not think that claimants in receipt of the daily living and mobility components of PIP at the higher rates, should be expected to pay 35% of the Council Tax.

I feel truly grateful for the ongoing and continuing support that Brent Council has shown to me for many years but now as a disabled resident my concern will be that I will suffer hardship if this funding is taken away from me

No, but I think the report is clear and shows the Council has carefully explored the situation.

Email Comments - A total of 11 consultation responses were received via Email, below were some examples:



I was looking out for any scenarios regarding recipients who are on Universal Credit (And PIP) because they are disabled and unable to work. Universal Credit has decreed that because of their disability they are deemed as unable to work. How would the proposed changes affect them?

I cannot even manage to pay this council tax that I am paying it is too expensive 151 pounds I am not on any benefit I cannot manage to pay this please help me

Nowhere on the letter does it say if disabled people will be exempt from any changes and if not how much they would pay.

I just wanted to ask a question about the changes to the Council Tax support scheme. Does this affect the single person's discount?

Currently, I receive Council Tax Support, which has been a vital source of assistance for me and my family. With limited space and resources, this support helps ensure we can meet other essential needs for my children, such as their education and well-being.

Being a Disabled resident, I strongly and fully support the existing rules and regulations about the working age council tax support scheme. Not vulnerable people like me, but all poor working age groups need council's financial assistance and support towards their council tax bill etc, as the rate of inflation is on the rise, and cost of living crisis is continuing.