

Notice is hereby given that an **EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of the **COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF GOSPORT** will be held in the **TOWN HALL, GOSPORT** on **MONDAY the THIRTIETH DAY of JANUARY 2017 AT 5.00PM AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO ATTEND TO CONSIDER AND RESOLVE THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS –**

1. To receive apologies from Members for their inability to attend the Meeting.
2. To consider any Mayor's Communications.
3. To receive Deputations in accordance with Standing Order No 3.4 and to answer Public Questions pursuant to Standing Order No 3.5, such questions to be answered orally during a time not exceeding 15 minutes.

(NOTE: Standing Order No 3.4 requires that notice of a Deputation should be received by the Borough Solicitor **NOT LATER THAN 12 O'CLOCK NOON ON THURSDAY, 26 JANUARY 2017** and likewise Standing Order No 3.5 requires that notice of a Public Question should be received by the Borough Solicitor **NOT LATER THAN 12 O'CLOCK NOON ON THURSDAY, 26 JANUARY 2017**).

4. Questions (if any) pursuant to Standing Order No 3.3

(NOTE: Members are reminded that Standing Order No 3.3 requires that Notice of Question pursuant to that Standing Order must be received by the Borough Solicitor **NOT LATER THAN 12 O'CLOCK NOON ON FRIDAY 27 JANUARY 2017**).

5. Local Council Tax Support Scheme for Gosport

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the proposed changes to the Local Council Tax Support scheme (LCTS) for Gosport for the forthcoming 2017-2018 year following a Public Consultation undertaken on a wide range of proposals.

6. Local Council Tax Support - Exceptional Hardship Policy.

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the proposed Exceptional Hardship Policy effective from 1st April 2017.

**DAVID WILLIAMS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**TOWN HALL
GOSPORT**

20 January 2017

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

(To be read by the Mayor if members of the public are present)

In the event of the fire alarm being activated, please leave the Council Chamber and Public Gallery immediately. Proceed downstairs by way of the main stairs or as directed by GBC staff, follow any of the emergency exit signs. People with disability or mobility issues please identify yourself to GBC staff who will assist in your evacuation of the building.

This meeting may be filmed or otherwise recorded. By attending this meeting, you are consenting to any broadcast of your image and being recorded.

MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO NOTE THAT:

(1) IF THE COUNCIL WISHES TO CONTINUE ITS BUSINESS BEYOND 9.30PM THEN THE MAYOR MUST MOVE SUCH A PROPOSITION IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 4.11.18

(2) MOBILE PHONES SHOULD BE SWITCHED OFF OR SWITCHED TO SILENT FOR THE DURATION OF THE MEETING

AGENDA ITEM NO.5

Board/Committee:	Full Council
Date of Meeting:	30 th January 2017
Title:	Local Council Tax Support scheme for Gosport
Author:	Borough Treasurer
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the proposed changes to the Local Council Tax Support scheme (LCTS) for Gosport for the forthcoming 2017-2018 year following a Public Consultation undertaken on a wide range of proposals.

Recommendations

That Council approve the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) for Gosport at Appendix 1 of this report and notes the statutory scheme for Pension Age customers.

1 Background

- 1.1 On 23 January 2012, Council approved the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for Gosport for the 2013/14 financial year following the abolition of the national scheme for Council Tax Benefit. The scheme for Gosport has remained largely unchanged and was last reviewed and approved for the 2016/17 financial year by Council on the 16th December 2015.
- 1.2 Legislation requires that the scheme is approved by full Council for each year.
- 1.3 The scheme that was introduced in Gosport has not been changed since its implementation apart from minor statutory amendments. Historically the rules for the national Council Tax Benefit scheme were aligned with the rules for Housing Benefit and Gosport's own scheme was devised around those rules.
- 1.4 Alignment of the two schemes ensures consistency throughout the benefits system and that individuals' circumstances are treated the same in both schemes. Additionally, that there is no duplication of allowances or disregard of incomes that would otherwise result in an unintended gain or loss to the claimant.
- 1.5 Since 2013 the Government have made several legislative changes to the Housing Benefit which has resulted in staff administering two very different schemes. In order to minimise

administrative costs and re-align the two schemes several changes are proposed to the existing LCTS scheme.

- 1.6 Up to 2013/14 support to the Council Tax Benefit Scheme was provided through a direct subsidy from Government and amounted to £5.7m. The funding responsibility then transferred to individual Local Authorities in 2013/14 alongside the replacement new Local Council Tax Support Scheme. On transfer, the Government reduced the funding for the scheme by 10% and has subsequently provided funding to the LCTS through the Local Government Finance Settlement which has been reducing year on year. It is estimated that compared with the current cost of the scheme (£4.0m), the funding provided from Government is now £3.2m, leaving a shortfall which is currently funded by local taxpayers of £0.8m.
- 1.7 Funding for the scheme will continue to reduce in line with overall funding from Government over the next 3 years and is estimated to reduce to £2.3m per annum by 2019/20. The proposals contained within this report are expected to make a contribution of £0.2m per annum towards the overall shortfall, leaving the total shortfall between cost and funding from Government of £1.5m to be met from local taxpayers by the end of 2019/20.

2.0 Report

2.1 The proposed changes to the scheme are as follows;

1. Reduce an applicant's maximum LCTS from 80% to 70% of their Council Tax liability limited to a Band C level.
2. Remove the family premium for all future working age claimants in line with HB rules from 1/4/2017.
3. Reduce backdating of claims from 6 months to one month.
4. Reduce the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive LCTS from 13 to 4 weeks in line with HB and Pensioner rules.
5. Remove the element of work related activity component in the calculation of the current scheme for new Employment and Support Allowance applicants.
6. Limit the number of dependant children within the calculation for LCTS to a maximum of 2 in line with HB rules, there is currently no restriction.
7. Remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers element) to look after them.
8. To disregard 70% of the new postgraduate loan in the calculation of LCTS.

2.2 The measures from 2-8 inclusive all align the LCTS scheme with the HB and other welfare benefit scheme changes that have taken place since 2013, this will remove anomalies and reduce complex

administration of two different schemes.

2.3 Public Consultation:

A Public Consultation on the Councils proposals was held between 17th October and 11th December 2016 which involved an on-line and hard copy questionnaire available to all residents. Press releases, posters, leaflets and social media were used to inform residents of the consultation and invite them to be involved. All current benefit recipients were issued with a leaflet by post and leaflets were distributed throughout the Borough.

2.4 A Total of 494 responses were received on-line with 2 hard copy survey responses and 4 written responses. The full on-line survey results and the written replies are attached at Appendix 2.

2.5 Following the full consultation the number of responses received has been deemed to be statistically reliable with a confidence level of 97.47%. This also represents a margin of error of 4.38%

The table below summarises the results in relation to the proposals within this report:

Consultation Question:	Answer choice-Yes	Answer choice-No	Answer Choice-don't know
Should the Council keep the current Council Tax Reduction scheme? (Should it continue to reduce Council Tax for Applicant's in this way and to the extent that it does at the moment?)	45.75%	43.87%	10.38%
Reducing the maximum level of support for working age applicants from 80% to 70% Do you agree with this change to the scheme?	50.57%	40.86	8.57
Removing the Family Premium for all new working age applicants. Do you agree with this change to the scheme?	52.69%	31.44%	15.87%
Reducing Backdating to 1 month. Do you agree with this change to the scheme?	72.78%	20.49%	6.73%
Reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks. Do you agree with the change to the temporary absence rule?	85.71%	9.01%	5.28%
To remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the	67.72%	14.24%	18.04

calculation of the current scheme for new Employment and Support Allowance applicants. Do you agree with this change to the scheme?			
To limit the number of dependant children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two. Do you agree with this change to the scheme?	82.28%	12.97%	4.75%
To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers Element) to look after them. Do you agree with this change to the scheme?	70.10%	19.61%	10.29%
To disregard 70% of the new postgraduate loans in the calculation of Council Tax Support. Do you agree with the principle that 70% of any new postgraduate loan should be disregarded?	75.81%	11.94%	12.26%
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?	28.71%	65.05%	6.27%
Find savings from cutting other Council services?	28.04%	63.51%	8.45%
Use the Council's savings	35.23%	51.01%	13.76%

2.6 The scheme at Appendix 1 maintains the following protections for vulnerable Customers:

- The continuation of income disregards for disability benefits, child benefit and maintenance payments.
- The continuation of the full income disregard for war widows and war disablement pension.
- The continuation of “extended payments” or benefit “run-ons” when a Customer starts work or increases their hours in work.
- “fast track” claims to expedite re-claims after a short period of temporary work reducing the requirement for extended verification.

Financial implications

3.0

The proposals set out in this report are estimated to improve the amount of income received through Council Tax of £218,000 (assuming an overall collection rate of 80% which will therefore accommodate provision for those in extreme hardship). Of this sum, £30,000 will be retained by Gosport Borough Council, £156,000 paid over to Hampshire County Council, £23,000 paid over to Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner and £9,000 paid over to the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

Taking into account the additional £30,000 for Gosport Borough Council, the shortfall between the cost of the scheme and the funding from Government for the scheme that will fall on Gosport Borough Council is estimated to be £82,000 which will rise in the future as Government funding to the Council falls.

4 Risk Assessment

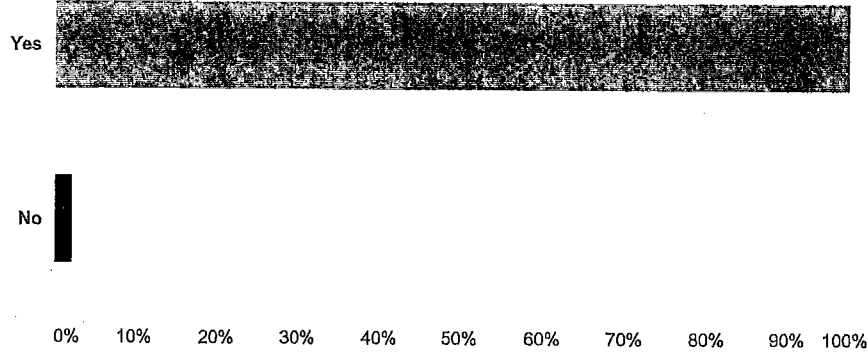
- 4.1 To mitigate any challenges to the Council over new LCTS scheme, an initial Equality Impact risk assessment was undertaken followed by a full Equalities Impact Assessment, which considered all factors of the scheme and the responses to the Consultation.
- 4.2 It is deemed that in a small amount of cases the reductions in LCTS may provide financial difficulties for some claimants. In light of this an Exceptional Hardship Policy is proposed to provide additional support for any LCTS customer suffering from “extreme hardship” This Policy is subject to a separate report submitted at this Council for approval.

Financial Services comments:	As detailed in the report
Legal Services comments:	As detailed in the report
Crime and Disorder:	None
Equality and Diversity:	As detailed in the report
Service Improvement Plan implications:	None
Corporate Plan:	None
Risk Assessment:	See Paragraph 4
Background papers:	Full Council report 23.1.2012 Full Council report 18.12.2013 Full Council report 28.1.2015 Full Council report 16.12.2015 Equality Impact Assessments Local Tax Support Scheme 2013/14 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17
Appendices/Enclosures:	Appendix 1 Proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2017/18 Appendix 2-Public Consultation responses
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Stephanie Pride

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

**Q1 I have read the background information
about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme
(This question must be answered before
you can continue)**

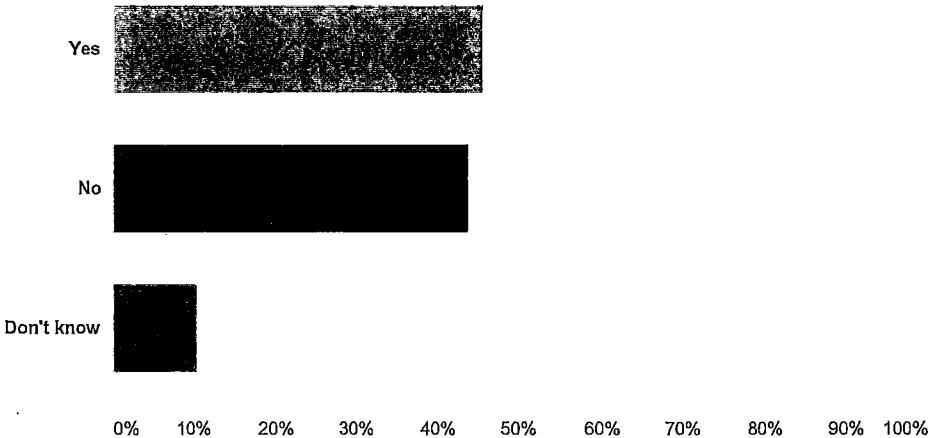
Answered: 494 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	97.77%	483
No	2.23%	11
Total		494

Q2 Should the Council keep the current Council Tax Reduction scheme? (Should it continue to reduce Council Tax for applicants in the way and to the extent that it does at the moment?)

Answered: 424 Skipped: 70



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	45.75%	194
No	43.87%	186
Don't know	10.38%	44
Total		424

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q3 Please use the space below to make any comments you have on protecting the Council Tax Reduction Scheme from cuts

Answered: 126 Skipped: 368

#	Responses	Date
1	I thought the scheme was abit too generous anyway,perhaps still reduce council tax for those in need but a smaller reduction.Then again,we're just making the poor people poorer aren't we.If the rich people and large corporations were paying tax like they should do this wouldn't be an issue.	12/11/2016 2:04 AM
2	more reprisals on CT cheats	12/9/2016 8:44 PM
3	I don't know what you mean by a 'low income' households or how many people within a household that count towards the calculation. Therefore I cannot be sure if I agree that the current scheme should be kept.	12/4/2016 6:21 PM
4	people on low incomes have been very hard hit over the last few years with so many government cuts, this is yet another one for many people, who are already struggling, to have to worry about.	12/2/2016 3:40 PM
5	people on low incomes have been hard hit enough in recent years without more cuts to have to worry about	12/2/2016 2:42 PM
6	Some council tenants are on the breadline and reductions in Tax are the only way they can survive. Cutting them may result in further problems such as homelessness.	11/30/2016 12:05 PM
7	But only for working households on low incomes. Not for households living solely on benefits.	11/29/2016 7:42 PM
8	Any increase to what the public have to pay should go to making REAL changes to the borough	11/28/2016 10:47 PM
9	Reduce expenditure on Falkland Gardens redevelopment, playgrounds which the majority of children will never use and Gosport Football club. If you can squeeze the poor until they hurt you can scrap expenditure on vanity projects.	11/28/2016 4:47 PM
10	The scheme should be reconstructed.	11/28/2016 2:16 PM
11	Protections For elderly and for people receiving DLA..... or very low income	11/28/2016 1:26 PM
12	should not apply to those who have unpaid CT	11/28/2016 10:21 AM
13	Should be cut for pensioners. They should be means tested.	11/28/2016 10:18 AM
14	Benefits are being cut at a ridiculous rate, there are enough people suffering financially without this added implication. If this is reduced surely GBC will have to increase spending elsewhere to accommodate those requiring assistance due to cuts?	11/28/2016 9:44 AM
15	Asking those that don't have the money to pay towards Council Tax is a false economy as you end up spending just as much as you save in staff wages and court costs chasing the debt in subsequent years. The council doesn't have the right to write off the debt as it's the "public" purse but have to attempt recovery through the courts for the judge to see you can't get blood from a stone and subsequently write off the debt themselves. Asking everyone to pay 20% when community charge was introduced was an excellent idea but the practicality of collecting the 20%, well it cost more than it would have agained the council in the long run.	11/27/2016 9:10 AM
16	Once again it is people on a low income who are already struggling that is being targeted	11/27/2016 9:00 AM
17	Council Tax is a regressive tax, not based upon income. As such, people on a low income are unfairly penalised by Council Tax	11/26/2016 11:10 AM
18	Council tax reduction should be limited to those who are in single occupancy or have disabilities only	11/26/2016 9:09 AM
19	With a wide range of additional costs in the pipeline, both benefit changes and the predicted inflation, this change could make life impossible for those already struggling financially.	11/25/2016 1:15 PM
20	Government benefit is not enough to help pay for housing too. Stop the hsg/cncl tax benefits but get the government to raise the JSA ESA etc first!	11/24/2016 3:57 PM
21	I would prefer to pay more Council Tax to ensure that the poorest in the Borough continue to be supported.	11/24/2016 10:34 AM
22	The whole reduction scheme should be scrapped unless for the elderly	11/24/2016 8:43 AM
23	Those who are on low income should be supported. I would like to add that i am not one of them	11/24/2016 7:58 AM
24	Any changes should be funded by central government	11/24/2016 7:25 AM
25	I am on a low income and after paying bill is rent and stuff struggle to pay council tax	11/24/2016 6:40 AM
26	You should protect the discount for carers and homes with disabled residents. Carers cannot work.	11/23/2016 11:19 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

27	A tax reduction scheme would still be beneficial but perhaps revised so that small adjustments across the area will decrease the councils outgoings.	11/23/2016 11:15 PM
28	I am lucky enough to be able to afford my council tax and my bills and food etc, others are not so lucky. With less help, more people will end up struggling or evicted	11/23/2016 10:31 PM
29	I come from a low income family and I feel the help I get is enough already without not having to pay all my council tax fee	11/23/2016 10:00 PM
30	People on low incomes do not have the disposable income and if the help was not there many more people living in poverty. It would also save council money as it would cost considerably more to take residents to court.	11/23/2016 9:53 PM
31	What are low income families and oaps supposed to do if you scrap the reduction scheme	11/23/2016 9:50 PM
32	My partner and me work hard for our family but as we are on a low income we cannot afford to pay the council tax without any help.	11/23/2016 9:39 PM
33	I'm on a low income ! I live on esa and the amount of support I receive already is ridiculous	11/23/2016 9:16 PM
34	Everyone's council tax should be reduced as we have less to pay for in the town, no police station etc	11/23/2016 8:27 PM
35	I think it needs to be considered situation to situation. If you apply due to illness or a form of disability then you are unable to afford this through no fault of your own but if you are unemployed and are fully able to work these should be treated differently	11/23/2016 8:23 PM
36	Unable to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people should services be cut due to lack of funding	11/23/2016 8:14 PM
37	should be on your property not you income if its to much ,move,	11/23/2016 6:58 PM
38	We have to protect the vulnerable	11/23/2016 6:31 PM
39	People on low income can barely afford to eat some weeks, if the stop getting assistance with council tax as well ? any people will be in desperate need or end up in court	11/23/2016 6:31 PM
40	its helps pensioners	11/23/2016 6:25 PM
41	Everyone uses the same services and therefore should pay the same prices	11/23/2016 4:04 PM
42	As a disabled person I have had so many cuts to the support I receive, I know that I would end up in further arrears if the council tax support was cut any further. I feel like a total burden on society but don't know what else to say but the truth, I can't afford any more?	11/23/2016 4:00 PM
43	More people will struggle	11/23/2016 2:46 PM
44	Council tax is a large amount for low income families every week and it could become the choice of heating or council tax . Then people would be taken to court if they don't pay causing more distress for low income families .	11/23/2016 2:42 PM
45	Its unfair to make no claimants pay more to subsidise non payers. More checks should be made on claimants as often they do lie on forms	11/23/2016 10:54 AM
46	The council tax reduction scheme is issued the only way that people who are living on basic benefits can afford even a one bedroom flat there is money that can be taken from wasted expenditure in other areas	11/23/2016 10:23 AM
47	Less reduction should be given	11/23/2016 12:27 AM
48	I am on income support and carers and I have very little at the end of the month and would like to know council tax is one weight lifted off my mind	11/22/2016 9:42 PM
49	It should continue to help pensioners, those unable to work due to disability and those on a low income for instance capped at family's with low income and no more than two children and single parents.	11/22/2016 9:07 PM
50	I currently get £47 esa every fortnight and my partner earns about £60 a week. I'm 40 weeks pregnant and we're expected to pay £97 a month council tax due to the reductions. We're barely scraping by after getting food shopping for the month, paying 2 water bills, electric bills, gas bills? £128 rent top up and a phone bill due to being unable to have a landline in the property. I feel that there should be no more cuts as every month we are penniless yet expected to pay this large sum of tax. I don't understand how you work out your council tax based on such a low income!	11/22/2016 8:55 PM
51	The services council tax is used for seems to benefit those who get council tax reductions more than those who do not qualify for the reduction	11/22/2016 8:20 PM
52	The gosport residents requiring council tax assistance are already struggling with many cuts being made by the government. Please let's give them a small break!	11/22/2016 8:07 PM
53	No, working people should not have to pay more	11/22/2016 8:06 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

54	We are a working family just making ends meet. We would struggle if council tax goes up. We make sacrifices in all aspects of our lives in order to pay bills and child care. We don't drink, smoke, gamble and go out rarely. We holiday in the UK. It would put a strain on us and could force us out of home. Discount should only go to very needy. If you can afford to go on holiday, go out, smoke, drink then you should pay your way and contribute like we all have to.	11/22/2016 6:57 PM
55	We should all pay to keep costs down	11/22/2016 6:43 PM
56	If the council made real savings on middle management and beauracracy instead of making savings on items that make headlines then you might not have to cut ctax reduction. Also have you tried making a byelaw that states if any councillors or council staff make profit from information gained whilst in employment of Gosport council, then a fee should be levied.	11/22/2016 6:13 PM
57	It should not be cut	11/22/2016 4:51 PM
58	Regardless of income all use services all should pay for those services. There should be. O reduction	11/22/2016 3:25 PM
59	People on benefits do not get any benefit increases for 3 years and the price still rise , plus many are poorer off due to the bedroom tax	11/22/2016 2:41 PM
60	Why should those who claim benefits, so do nothing to bring g money in to the town receive even more?	11/22/2016 12:52 PM
61	The low income discount should only apply to those working if you are on benefits then no discount should be given.	11/22/2016 12:28 PM
62	If people are on low income they are struggling enough as it is! Reducing the help they receive is going to make it harder for those people to live and manage to keep living in gosport!	11/22/2016 11:36 AM
63	I don't think reducing discount from families already struggling is doing anyone any favours ... they simply won't pay as they won't be able to afford to and then there will be costly court costs in trying to get it from families who simply don't have it!	11/22/2016 11:32 AM
64	Why should I work 50+ hours a week and have to pay full council tax on top of national insurance and income tax and someone who isn't willing too look for work or pay taxes get a discount, surely I should get a discount for that part I play in the community.	11/22/2016 11:26 AM
65	none	11/22/2016 10:26 AM
66	We must continue to provide support for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society.	11/21/2016 11:58 AM
67	they have already been asked to pay more with no more income to pay it.	11/21/2016 10:28 AM
68	I am living in a E property on a low income with savings. If I have to pay more I would. You can not expect the working poor to pay what they do not have.	11/21/2016 10:24 AM
69	Personally with the programs seen on TV this provides mixed feelings. I feel some are milking the system and we have those genuinely in need of the support. I believe a balance has to be found, but other ways should be considered.before increasing the Council Tax if this means reducing services then this should be considered.	11/20/2016 10:07 PM
70	For those truly in need, I believe that this is a great deal of financial help	11/20/2016 11:19 AM
71	It's foolish for Gosport Council to think families who can't afford to heat their homes can pay new increased tax bills.	11/19/2016 2:32 PM
72	I'd rather see a slight rise in every ones Council Tax	11/18/2016 5:03 PM
73	I'd rather see a small rise in every ones Council Tax	11/18/2016 5:02 PM
74	Council tax reduction is important for people who are already suffering from other cuts to welfare and benefits due to the conservative government. People who pay council tax may be willing to pay a little more, but where savings can be used in the interim then they should, to prevent unnecessary hardship to those already struggling.	11/16/2016 9:25 PM
75	If the scheme gets cuts it could potentially effect many vulnerable people and families who are on a low wage and put them into financial deficit.	11/16/2016 8:30 PM
76	Putting extra financial pressures on individuals already struggling with their finances is a recipe for disaster that should be avoided at all costs.	11/16/2016 8:18 PM
77	People who are currently in receipt of this benefit wouldn't manage to find the additional money to pay for the increase, if they had it now they wouldn't qualify	11/16/2016 6:18 PM
78	To save money for this stop jobs for the boy paper work you sent letter went to get 8 pound back if you cut sending letter by half and people hour on waste of time get the people chasing the people who never pay the bill	11/16/2016 1:46 PM
79	The percentage of reduction received could be assest on the amount of adults living in the building that are over the age of 18 working or receiving benefits,People that are unemployed for a year or less, full reduction. The percentage could be reduced by x percent there after.	11/16/2016 12:40 AM
80	The government say everyone gets an amount to live on yet bills are becoming higher and benefits are not. Disabled people have been hit hard lately with cut backs yet their not exempt.	11/15/2016 11:06 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

81	80% discount seems very high. I'd like to know how many households get this level of discount.	11/15/2016 9:14 PM
82	Lower income families are already struggling, don't make it impossible for them.	11/15/2016 7:20 PM
83	With the provisions outlined in terms of eligibility.	11/15/2016 5:29 PM
84	Gosport is geographically disadvantaged and employment costs are higher because of the travel time and distance to remote jobs. The low paid will need support.	11/15/2016 4:09 PM
85	Don't protect it	11/14/2016 8:30 PM
86	People receiving council tax reduction are amongst those already hardest hit by benefit caps and reductions. Increase the higher bands to compensate	11/14/2016 7:12 PM
87	The cuts should be adjusted by certain groups not a blanket cut for everyone except pensioners. There are single parents with children under 5, they should be in their own category, and come infant school age, then the tax reduction should be reduced as in theory the parent is able to work, or work more hours due to the hours the child is at school. Everyone should not be group as "working age" as there are legitimate reasons of not being employed.	11/14/2016 2:42 PM
88	We all have a moral duty to take care of those less able to take care of themselves, and to protect the most vulnerable, worst-off members of our society. In addition, cutting support for the worst-off members of our society causes serious damage to social cohesion: this is help for those who have the least, and reducing that help will inevitably lead to increases in homelessness and crime. Cuts here are a false economy, as well as a moral wrong.	11/14/2016 1:01 PM
89	I am a working single mum who relies entirely on surviving from top up benefits including council tax support. Any reduction to this will result in detrimental suffering to my son and myself quality of life, which is already breadline surviving week to week with no light at the end of the tunnel until i can go back to work full time. I have cutback in every area of my life, there is no extras or savings or luxuries.	11/14/2016 10:46 AM
90	Less help given to the most vulnerable will inevitably lead to greater hardship. Also, it is likely to lead to further debt with the inability to pay for many.	11/14/2016 10:31 AM
91	A possible solution would be to treat all Council Tax reductions as the same (i.e. not solely restrict any reductions to reductions to people of working age).	11/11/2016 5:40 PM
92	I think the scheme should continue but the level of reduction should be reviewed and, where possible, brought in line with the Housing Benefit scheme	11/10/2016 11:56 AM
93	There have been enough working age benefit cuts already, We need to increase the Council Tax for all.	11/8/2016 7:37 PM
94	Stop taking off low income families it's such a struggle any way when you are having to cope!	11/5/2016 10:33 AM
95	People who are low earners are already paying a substantial amount of council tax. Having to pay more will force low earners into poverty, including single parents and their children	11/4/2016 2:41 PM
96	Savings should be considered from all Council Services.	11/1/2016 7:16 PM
97	I feel reducing the Council Tax Support that is being paid will help with the savings needed.	11/1/2016 3:10 PM
98	Reducing the reduction scheme alongside raising Council Tax for all seems a reasonable option. Should also remove the 1 month discount for empty properties.	11/1/2016 2:56 PM
99	The question needs to be how much any reduction should be, how much that would save the Council and balanced against the effect on those losing the benefit - eg making people homeless would be unacceptable and actually lead to greater costs to the Council/Community in the medium to long term	10/28/2016 2:30 PM
100	the people claiming are the poorest in the town now, why make things even worse for them.	10/27/2016 1:21 PM
101	Important to protect the most vulnerable in our community	10/26/2016 10:25 PM
102	I,for one, already have a problem paying the current amount of CTR, which at present is £17.00 pm. As I am on ESA, due to mental health problems, any increase in CT will only exacerbate my already fraught financial circumstances, and will only add to the stress I currently suffer. While I understand that GBC has to look at making savings to cope with relentless Government cuts, once again it is the poorest and most vulnerable in our society that are bearing the brunt. Surely this has to stop somewhere (bearing in mind that working age benefits have been frozen at 2010 levels, and will continue to be until 2020), where are we to find this extra money? The current scheme should stay as it is.	10/24/2016 6:57 PM
103	More commercial awareness and leadership. Services cost money, residents need to appreciate their value for money services.	10/24/2016 5:22 PM
104	If council tax needs to rise across the board to protect the most vulnerable then that's what needs to happen.	10/22/2016 4:17 PM
105	Families struggling cannot afford to be stretched any further.Older people out of work many women who should by now be pensioners if not for the change in ages will not be eligible for the full reduction if it changes	10/22/2016 1:56 PM
106	The scheme helps the most vulnerable in our society and should be protected	10/22/2016 1:09 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

107	make cuts WITHIN the council office, and cut the ELITE workers wages, after all you dont open 5 days a week, p 3 and a half days at the moment[???] try and get someone on a friday afternoon. STEPPED OUT OF THE OFFICE- VISITING outside the office, lunch-break.??? the list of excuses are endless. these people are stealing our money. I am not sitting back and taking it anymore. watch this space.	10/21/2016 10:53 PM
108	I am a recipient of the CTRS and I am currently really struggling to make ends meet for myself and my two young children. It is vital for our day to day survival that I do not have any increases in my outgoings. My situation is a temporary one, I come from a professional background and intend to return to work asap, but the benefit support I get at this present time is necessary for me and my children to live.	10/21/2016 1:21 PM
109	They can reduce it from 80% to 70%	10/21/2016 10:08 AM
110	Local children's centres are already being closed to cut costs, giving our young children even less opportunities than we have around here already. I also believe that if people who are struggling already are made to pay more, those people are going to end up in debt and suffer extreme hardship. Its hard enough for some people to get by and manage to put food on the table, even as a working parent as there isn't that much help for us either, with childcare costs being sky high. You can make us pay more and benefit certain services but if people don't have the funds to use them then there is really no point.	10/20/2016 11:05 PM
111	for council tenants that are out of work because they cannot work because of mental or physical issues already struggle with council tax as it is it would make things alot more worse including more debt should this change.	10/20/2016 9:59 PM
112	Stop taking back handers and allowing corrupt councillors to have it for themselves to stop wasting money on redecorating offices on a regular basis because they are bored with how it looks	10/20/2016 9:00 PM
113	you cannot keep on taking money from the sick and disabled members of the community because of the government	10/20/2016 5:05 PM
114	I believe there may need to be a small increase in Council Tax.	10/20/2016 2:49 PM
115	THIS SCHEME PROTECTS THE POOREST IN OUR SOCIETY THE POOREST SHOULD NOT BE MADE TO SUFFER MORE THAN THEY ARE DO IF IT IS FELT THAT THE CURRENT SCHEME CANNOT BE MAINTAINED THERE SHOULD BE ONLY A VERY SMALL INCREASE AND IT SHOULD NOT EFFECT ANYONE IN RECEIPT OF ANY DISABILITY BENEFIT PAYMENT	10/20/2016 1:32 PM
116	People on low income struggle and with all other benefit cuts they will be unable to afford to live.	10/19/2016 10:42 PM
117	Reduce it by say 5% per year for say 5 years. Would need details to be more accurate but you can see the intention.	10/19/2016 8:45 PM
118	Seems unfair to remove this help from those who most need it	10/19/2016 6:45 AM
119	Means test minimum earning, ie, £12k single occupancy	10/18/2016 7:09 PM
120	Every one is finding it hard to manage at the moment	10/18/2016 4:03 PM
121	A thorough examination must be made by the Council of all the incomes of those in the households receiving the Reduction before it is paid.	10/18/2016 12:35 PM
122	It would seem cuts are going to be essential but perhaps these can be modified by also increasing council tax for everyone, thus spreading the load rather than just the most vulnerable suffering.	10/18/2016 11:56 AM
123	It is always the poorest who suffer from cuts	10/18/2016 11:44 AM
124	I receive a reduction being a single person, however if this was to increase I for one would struggle. With no receipt of any benefits and not having anyone else contributing to my bills.	10/17/2016 6:17 PM
125	It is important for people who live on there own to have a reduction and for those who are on a low income. Council tax is an extra bill that some people cannot afford...we could see a rise in the amount of homeless people in Gosport due to people being evicted from there homes as they can't afford to pay it! A case of eat or pay the extra council tax because the council have got to make cuts!!	10/17/2016 5:28 PM
126	Everyone has to accept cuts	10/17/2016 4:49 PM

Option 1 – Reducing the maximum level of support for working age applicants from 80% to 75%

The Council currently can provide support of up to 80% towards an applicant's Council Tax. This is limited to a Band C level, so any applicant who lives in a property with a higher band would receive support calculated on this basis. The proposed option would require all working age applicants to pay a minimum payment of 25%. It would mean that for a typical Band C property, the minimum payment would be £6.44 per week or £4.83 per week if the applicant has a single person discount.

These figures are based on the Council Tax payable for 2016/17 year. Reducing the maximum level of support available is a simple change to the scheme which is easily understood. The Council is conscious that any minimum payment must be affordable given the household's circumstances.

The benefits of this are:

It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand.
It is fair because everyone shares the increase

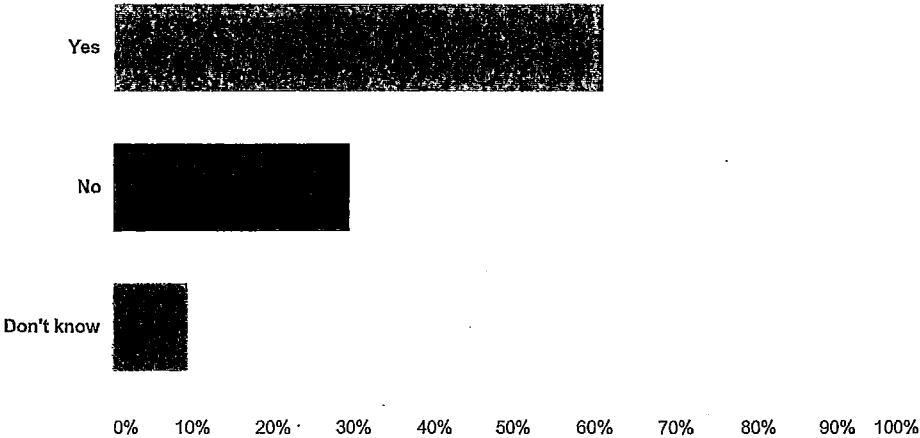
The drawback of doing this is:

All working age households receiving Council Tax Reduction will be required to pay more.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q4 Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

Answered: 387 Skipped: 107



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	61.24%	237
No	29.46%	114
Don't know	9.30%	36
Total		387

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q5 If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Answered: 86 Skipped: 408

#	Responses	Date
1	I'll check the other options first thanks	12/11/2016 2:06 AM
2	It would make already claimants suffer more	12/9/2016 8:47 PM
3	Although the cut seems marginal to wealthier people even small cuts can mean some have to cut back on food etc. People in higher bands pay could afford to pay more.	11/30/2016 12:08 PM
4	putting up the council tax for those not eligible for the reduction	11/28/2016 11:11 PM
5	Scrap expenditure on vanity projects, Falkland gardens, Alver valley playgrounds, Gosport Football Club.	11/28/2016 4:48 PM
6	5% may not seem like much but that could make a difference to someone already struggling.	11/28/2016 9:46 AM
7	It will result in people on a low income having to find more money for Council Tax. As a volunteer at Gosport Citizens Advice, I see too many people with problems paying CT as it is.	11/26/2016 11:11 AM
8	Maintaining the current levels and seeking alternative revenue.	11/25/2016 1:16 PM
9	I think you need to look at all those who con the bloody system	11/24/2016 9:16 AM
10	Get rid of it apart from the elderly. Working age people can afford their whole council tax bill	11/24/2016 8:44 AM
11	Increase tax for those who can afford it	11/24/2016 7:59 AM
12	Increase the overall council tax amount for all households instead of squeezing more money out of the poorer community	11/24/2016 7:48 AM
13	Not really quite sure	11/24/2016 6:41 AM
14	Leave the people on low incomes alone. Life is hard enough.	11/23/2016 11:19 PM
15	Maybe look at the income levels instead of the help thresholds as people who are that poor will struggle to put even a few pounds per week	11/23/2016 10:37 PM
16	I still feel that this is too much help	11/23/2016 10:02 PM
17	How do you expect people on low income to pay more	11/23/2016 9:41 PM
18	Reduction from 80% to 60%	11/23/2016 9:23 PM
19	I have no alternative idea but working age applicants tend to struggle with money (if they are in work), I believe everyone should pay council tax but less than the current rate	11/23/2016 8:30 PM
20	Just because you are working age does not mean you are able to work. There are people out there who would love to work but due to disability they are unable.	11/23/2016 8:25 PM
21	Increase the % when calculating next year's banding council tax . To households paying full amount.	11/23/2016 8:21 PM
22	should be kept at % for singles and more for pensioners	11/23/2016 6:26 PM
23	Increase the amount of council tax paid by those living in the highest bands of housing, or means test council tax to pensioners too?	11/23/2016 4:04 PM
24	Keeping it the same	11/23/2016 2:47 PM
25	There is wasted money being spent on things such as the mayors car	11/23/2016 10:26 AM
26	I am on a very low income due to being in able to work and on benefits with out the council tax reductions I wouldn't be able to pay full amount	11/22/2016 10:12 PM
27	I think the level of support is too high even at 75%. I believe a level at 50% is fair.	11/22/2016 10:04 PM
28	As I have said I am on income support and carers and don't need the extra stress of trying to find the money for council tax and don't really have extra to spend	11/22/2016 9:45 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

29	Although you say it is fair to share the increase across all working age households. Not all working age households are the same. It is not fair that some people are on low incomes through no fault of their own and that this could put an even bigger strain on their living situation if they have to pay more. Why can't you cap it per household income eg. If a household earns more than a combined income of more than X amount they have to pay 25%. Then the next have to pay 20%, 15% and then, so on and so forth with other income amounts.	11/22/2016 9:19 PM
30	Opinions aren't listened to but.. Instead of reducing the council tax help, why not stop wasting thousands of pounds on Christmas lights? Why not cut the pay of the overpaid staff? What about deducting the pay of the mayor? The amount of money within the council that is wasted on ridiculous things is a joke. Some people need more help than others so instead of helping them, the plan is to make them suffer even more whilst the rich get richer. The pay of Mark and Lynn Hook (mayor and mayoress) and other high end councillors is absolutely ridiculous! Instead of cutting the council tax help, you should cut their cash. They're hardly struggling and I know this as I'm friends with the mayors daughter.	11/22/2016 9:05 PM
31	I find it difficult to think of an alternative or which areas could be tweaked without knowing the full options or which council departments could be considered.	11/22/2016 8:15 PM
32	That the council work harder for the people that have voted them into their position and fight back rather than folding like a deck chair and trying for headlines and social media outcries	11/22/2016 8:17 PM
33	If we have to have any reduction then this should be no more than 25%	11/22/2016 3:26 PM
34	We are poor enough	11/22/2016 2:42 PM
35	Council tax is high enough, with what doesn't seem to be equivalent usage back, ie adequate bin collections etc, so why should we pay more because we work full time just to give it to those who won't work?!	11/22/2016 12:55 PM
36	I think it should be done on working age occupancy if you live in a 3 bed they pay more than 2 bed due to the fact they should have more working age to contribute.	11/22/2016 12:32 PM
37	Again, why should I pay more than I already do so that someone else who isn't working can not pay as much	11/22/2016 11:27 AM
38	Discount too generous	11/21/2016 5:47 PM
39	the working poor are being charged more already and paying high rents with no increase in their income	11/21/2016 10:29 AM
40	The working poor can not take any more.	11/21/2016 10:25 AM
41	stop disregarding payments received by by service and ex service personnell	11/19/2016 7:08 PM
42	More scrutiny into other savings & cutbacks.	11/19/2016 2:35 PM
43	Prefer a rise in all Council Tax	11/18/2016 5:04 PM
44	Increase tax for higher bands than C as they can afford it. Taxing the poor more, with inflation and brexit on the horizon is unfair. The nasty Tory party shows it's true colours again.	11/18/2016 4:27 PM
45	Maybe reduce the reduction a bit more	11/17/2016 3:12 PM
46	Increase council tax so that support can be maintained at 80%.	11/17/2016 11:50 AM
47	I would suggest using savings in the interim and petitioning strongly against further cuts (directed to the government) as they cannot keep depriving local people and councils already struggling to make ends meet just so that they may line the pockets of their rich friends.	11/16/2016 9:28 PM
48	Making cut backs in other areas of the council	11/16/2016 8:34 PM
49	Those that can afford to pay more paying more (and I include myself in this statement).	11/16/2016 8:20 PM
50	Get people that can do the job and understanding what wrong	11/16/2016 1:47 PM
51	As previous statement. The single person discount is for people that are working. These people use the services less than others. How many households have a discount with more than 1 working age person that are not working but receive a larger discount.	11/16/2016 12:48 AM
52	I agree to an extent, although I think those claiming any part of PIP should not have to pay any more than 10%	11/15/2016 11:10 PM
53	Increase council tax for all of Gosport	11/15/2016 7:21 PM
54	Increase the Council Tax to spread the cost	11/15/2016 4:40 PM
55	Increase Council Tax to spread the cost	11/15/2016 4:11 PM
56	Raise revenue by charging for on-the-road parking of vehicles.	11/15/2016 4:11 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

57	The cuts should be adjusted by certain groups not a blanket cut for everyone except pensioners. There are single parents with children under 5, they should be in their own category, and come infant school age, then the tax reduction should be reduced as in theory the parent is able to work, or work more hours due to the hours the child is at school. Everyone should not be group as "working age" as there are legitimate reasons of not being employed.	11/14/2016 2:43 PM
58	"everyone sharing the burden" means all council tax payers with the ability to pay (ie council tax should be increased). Anyone in receipt of council tax reduction lacks the ability to pay. Reducing the level of support to 75% isn't everyone sharing the burden, it is only the poorest sharing the burden, which is morally wrong and socially damaging.	11/14/2016 1:04 PM
59	How is it ok? If I work the maximum I can around school hours pay more council tax for a 2 bedroom flat than my many friends in the same area, who because they are married but live in large houses? How ethically can that be ok?	11/14/2016 10:48 AM
60	Those who are in a position to pay more should be required to do precisely that.	11/14/2016 10:34 AM
61	The council needs to balance the books & so I believe this needs to be done.	11/11/2016 5:41 PM
62	I think the maximum level of support should be no more than 70% if savings of 10-15% are to be made	11/10/2016 1:05 PM
63	Leave as in and increase level of Council Tax for all.	11/8/2016 7:37 PM
64	I work on a low income and get no help with my council tax..people on benefits get more than I get per week/month and don't have to pay council tax???.....that seems so unfair as I've always worked no matter what..and get no help with council tax.	11/5/2016 4:32 PM
65	Cut back on things for examples all the letters with the postage that is unnecessary every time you make a change such as 1p to people. How about emailing people that's cheaper.	11/5/2016 10:37 AM
66	Increase council tax for those who can afford it	11/4/2016 2:44 PM
67	More people will fail to pay more when receiving less, therefore surely the costs for court applications and hiring Ross & Roberts will increase - counteracting the money saved through the decrease	11/1/2016 3:57 PM
68	stay as we are	10/31/2016 1:24 PM
69	no wage rises for council staff, or cut expenses from all councilors. this would save more than enough.	10/27/2016 1:25 PM
70	Reducing the maximum level of support is not enough, council tax should also increase. Would prefer trimming fat from contractors and stopping gratuity payments.	10/24/2016 5:26 PM
71	Increase council tax for the borough, everyone should share the burden it is not the job of the most vulnerable	10/22/2016 4:18 PM
72	Higher earners should take a larger share of the burden. Those on low incomes can afford any rise.	10/22/2016 2:38 PM
73	Reducing the Maximum to 60%	10/22/2016 2:25 PM
74	Raise council tax or look at cutting services which only affect more affluent residents	10/22/2016 1:12 PM
75	zero hours contracts for council staff, get more part-time workers, it is good enough for us. it is good enough for you.???	10/21/2016 10:57 PM
76	Reducing the amount of support to the poorest people in the community will affect them and their children much more than a slight increase for people earning more. As someone who has always worked before, I would be happier to pay, for example, £10 a month more than to take £10 away from a family who are potentially struggling so much they are using food banks, etc to get by on a day to day basis. It is morally wrong to allow children to be living in poverty and to further stretch people who are already living in poverty.	10/21/2016 1:33 PM
77	Cut the costs of sending out leaflets about council tax and start sending people texts via technology to make everyone more aware. Ten pound a month may not be all to some people, but to others it's a few days worth of food. Or electric. Why don't you introduce solar panels over supermarkets and other town areas, even houses, in the long run you're using free sunlight to generate electricity saving you so much over time.	10/20/2016 11:06 PM
78	Use money taken from car parking and parking fines to actually pay for things in Gosport and to reduce costs in other departments such as waste and use more energy efficient lighting	10/20/2016 9:06 PM
79	exempt people who are too ill or disabled to work	10/20/2016 5:07 PM
80	I would like to see the layabouts that are hell bent on not working and causing trouble in the community and making people's life a misery be forced to take a job (any job offered) instead of living off the hard working who actually struggle to pay council tax and other bills to provide for their family. Help should be given to those who have provided to the system, not cost the system unnecessary amounts of money. Help the people that need it and the people that work hard and care about the town we live in.	10/20/2016 2:11 PM
81	make people how work pay more	10/20/2016 1:57 PM

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82	THIS DOES NOT TAKE ACCOUNT OF DISABLED PERSONS TO MAKE THE WORK SHY PAY MORE IS FINE BUT PEOPLE UNABLE TO WORK SHOULD NOT BE FINANCIALLY WORSE OF AS THEY DO NOT HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EARN ANYTHING IN A LOT OF CASES	10/20/2016 1:35 PM
83	There needs to be some protection for those on very low incomes. I'm a full time carer and receive just £30 per week yet already have to pay community charge where most carers in other local authority's do not and I have to top up my rent you try and live on £30 per week	10/20/2016 12:06 PM
84	It is an option	10/19/2016 8:46 PM
85	Surely a 5% change is insignificant	10/19/2016 6:48 AM
86	although this seems like a small amount to someone who earns good money, for those who are on low incomes trying to feed a family this could be the difference to food on the table or paying the council tax!	10/17/2016 5:31 PM

Option 2 – Reducing the maximum level of support for working age applicants from 80% to 70%

The Council currently can provide support of up to 80% towards an applicant's Council Tax. This is limited to a Band C level so any applicant who lives in a property with a higher band would receive support calculated on this basis. The proposed option would require all working age applicants to pay a minimum payment of 30%. It would mean that for a typical Band C property, the minimum payment would be £7.73 per week or £5.79 if the applicant has a single person discount. These figures are based on the Council Tax payable for 2016/17 year. Reducing the maximum level of support available is a simple change to the scheme which is easily understood. The Council is conscious that any minimum payment must be affordable given the household's circumstances.

The benefits of this are:

It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand.
It is fair because everyone shares the increase

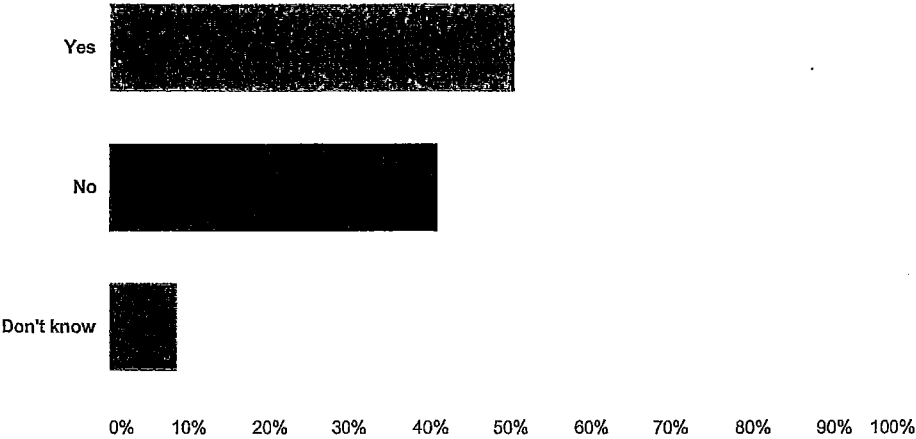
The drawback of doing this is:

All working age households receiving Council Tax Reduction will be required to pay more

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q6 Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

Answered: 350 Skipped: 144



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	50.57%	177
No	40.86%	143
Don't know	8.57%	30
Total		350

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q7 If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Answered: 79 Skipped: 415

#	Responses	Date
1	Same as previous question out is worse	12/9/2016 8:48 PM
2	Extra consideration given to the most vulnerable	11/29/2016 5:28 PM
3	Scrap vanity projects.	11/28/2016 4:48 PM
4	Option 1 is preferable in the short term.	11/28/2016 2:19 PM
5	The previous option	11/28/2016 11:32 AM
6	10%! If GBC employed more traffic wardens or foot patrol workers to impose on the spot fines for those breaking the rules, Gosport would be an affluent town. Walk in town and see cyclists cycling through high street, litter louts, illegally parking everywhere.	11/28/2016 9:49 AM
7	A smaller cut would be better everyone expect it to go up once a year	11/27/2016 9:04 AM
8	See my comment to the previous question	11/26/2016 11:12 AM
9	Option 1	11/24/2016 9:21 AM
10	Why should me and my husband have to pay more for the people claiming benefits when we both work full time and suffer because of this	11/24/2016 9:17 AM
11	Just get rid of the scheme altogether unless for the elderly that way council tax won't increase for those of us who work hard	11/24/2016 8:45 AM
12	Increase tax for those who can afford it	11/24/2016 7:59 AM
13	See previous comment	11/24/2016 7:49 AM
14	There must be a solution to this I would of thought	11/24/2016 6:43 AM
15	Every penny counts to people on low incomes. Why go after the poorest in our community?	11/23/2016 11:20 PM
16	Please see my previous comments	11/23/2016 10:38 PM
17	Reducing from 80% to 60%	11/23/2016 9:24 PM
18	No alternative, council tax still costs us too much	11/23/2016 8:31 PM
19	not every body gets a pay rise	11/23/2016 6:28 PM
20	As per my answer in previous question. Means test all pensioners paying council tax?	11/23/2016 4:07 PM
21	Majority of people already struggle to pay council tax aswell as other household bills, dropping it to 70% allowing people to pay an extra 10% may mean families going into debt.	11/23/2016 10:41 AM
22	Stop wasting money in other areas	11/23/2016 10:26 AM
23	It's still not enough, If people accept a home in a decent area where schools are good and the area is nice they should sacrifice and pay. As a household who work hard we couldn't afford a nice area with good schools but we still pay full council tax why should we be worse off and our children especially who are forced to attend schools which require improvement because we did the best we could working hard when actually sitting back would have benefited them more, nice home, lots of disposable cash weekly, it's too easy!! 50% minimum!	11/22/2016 10:10 PM
24	I am on a low income as it is and i can just about scrap though each month	11/22/2016 9:47 PM
25	Like I said previously. It is not fair on those who are unable to get higher paid jobs. Especially given the lack of job opportunities in Gosport and its poor infrastructure. 25% or 30%, it still needs to be based on household incomes those in a higher bracket pay more than those on a lower income.	11/22/2016 9:34 PM
26	See previous	11/22/2016 9:06 PM
27	I think those without any reductions already pay more than enough to make up for those that don't	11/22/2016 8:21 PM
28	This suggestion is worse than the first one that was proposed. The poorest of our society aren't even going to be able to start helping themselves if the sheer stress of simply existing gets much worse.	11/22/2016 8:19 PM
29	As for the last answer	11/22/2016 6:18 PM
30	Again if we have to have a reduction then no more than 25%	11/22/2016 3:27 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

31	Have a means test and the wealthier you are the slightly more you pay	11/22/2016 2:42 PM
32	No same answer as before	11/22/2016 12:33 PM
33	This really does depend on how much these people are made to live on in the first place..if they can't pay other bills or afford food then too much of a payment for them will be difficult to pay! 5% seems fair	11/22/2016 11:40 AM
34	Stop making hard working people like myself subsidise others council tax. I simply do not see how this is fair	11/22/2016 11:28 AM
35	Discount too generous	11/21/2016 5:47 PM
36	10% is too high on working people already struggling to meet financial commitments. 5% is acceptable.	11/21/2016 12:00 PM
37	the working poor can not share the same burden as the better off.	11/21/2016 10:30 AM
38	no special treatment of ex service or service personell	11/19/2016 7:08 PM
39	Tax all properties above band C more, they can afford it, the poor cannot. The nasty Tory party will not be elected again if they target the poor.	11/18/2016 4:29 PM
40	Reduce it a bit more	11/17/2016 3:12 PM
41	Increase council tax so that support can be maintained at 80%.	11/17/2016 11:51 AM
42	Making cuts in other areas that doesn't involve making the boroughs most vulnerable residents worse off financially	11/16/2016 8:37 PM
43	Those that can afford to pay more paying more (and I include myself in this statement).	11/16/2016 8:20 PM
44	Same answer as before concerning disabled people of working age	11/15/2016 11:11 PM
45	Increase council tax for all	11/15/2016 7:22 PM
46	Option 1 will mandate a contribution, but it should not be a significant increase. 10% seems too much.	11/15/2016 5:31 PM
47	Increase the Council Tax to spread the cost	11/15/2016 4:40 PM
48	Raise revenue by charging for use of land currently occupied for free: charge for on-the-road parking of vehicles. Road-side battery charging of electric vehicles will be needed soon.	11/15/2016 4:14 PM
49	Increase Council Tax to spread the cost	11/15/2016 4:12 PM
50	The cuts should be adjusted by certain groups not a blanket cut for everyone except pensioners. There are single parents with children under 5, they should be in their own category, and come infant school age, then the tax reduction should be reduced as in theory the parent is able to work, or work more hours due to the hours the child is at school. Everyone should not be group as "working age" as there are legitimate reasons of not being employed.	11/14/2016 2:43 PM
51	As with the previous question, this proposal is morally wrong and socially damaging. The fair alternative is to increase council tax contributions for those with the ability to pay.	11/14/2016 1:05 PM
52	No because some people like myself do not have the freedom of an option. We are cornered. People choose to marry by circumstance. I personally did not choose to lose a partner/a dad/a provider yet I am penalised in every way as if it was a choice.	11/14/2016 10:49 AM
53	Those who are in a position to pay more should be asked to do so. That is to say those who are in work and receiving more than £20,000 p.a.	11/14/2016 10:36 AM
54	An idea may be to phase in a reduction to the reduction over a number of years, to lessen the jolt of having the increase all in one go.	11/11/2016 5:43 PM
55	Leave as in and increase level of Council Tax for all.	11/8/2016 7:38 PM
56	This change is even more unaffordable	11/4/2016 2:45 PM
57	Reduce the maximum level of support to 75%	11/1/2016 7:18 PM
58	same as before Q5.	11/1/2016 3:58 PM
59	as stated previously.	10/27/2016 1:26 PM
60	Try selling off a few more assets. The Council seems to like doing this anyway!	10/24/2016 7:07 PM
61	Low income household's need to appreciate the services provided. They are essential services and 'must' be paid for as a matter of priority over luxuries.	10/24/2016 5:31 PM
62	Reducing the maximum to 60%	10/22/2016 2:25 PM
63	Anything that does not impact on the most vulnerable people in our society	10/22/2016 1:14 PM
64	use the MILLIONS of pounds you have squirreled away.it is OUR MONEY.???	10/21/2016 10:58 PM
65	Please see my last answer	10/21/2016 1:33 PM
66	Option 1.	10/21/2016 12:28 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

67	Solar panels like I said in the previous question. Everyone may share the increase but not everybody is in the same boat here. Some of us are sailing in yachts while others are sitting in old canoes.	10/20/2016 11:09 PM
68	this will make it harder for tenants on benefits to keep on top of their bills leading to more debt being owed to the council in the long run I currently struggle to find the £20 I'm paying now	10/20/2016 10:02 PM
69	The corrupt councillors obviously want a pay rise for doing naff all so hit out at people who they think don't need money	10/20/2016 9:09 PM
70	Option 1	10/20/2016 2:51 PM
71	Same	10/20/2016 2:12 PM
72	make working people pay more	10/20/2016 1:58 PM
73	SAME AS PREVIOUS THIS SHOULD NOT INCLUDE DISABLED HOUSEHOLDS	10/20/2016 1:36 PM
74	I'm of working age but a full time carer people in my position must be recognised for what we do. we are working very hard often like me 24/7/365 for £30 a week?	10/20/2016 12:10 PM
75	Again it is an option. Without detail of financial implications to the budget it is hard to give a concrete answer	10/19/2016 8:47 PM
76	5% is enough to add on	10/18/2016 3:44 PM
77	This can be a lot of money for already struggling households	10/18/2016 11:59 AM
78	I think trying to find this much extra per week would, in the long term, be detrimental to some of the poorer in society	10/17/2016 6:18 PM
79	No increase at all to anyone...have a review of the whole council system and spend the money more wisely to allow those people who really need support to continue to have it.	10/17/2016 5:35 PM

Option 3 – Reducing the maximum level of support for working age applicants from 80% to 65%

The Council currently can provide support of up to 80% towards an applicant's Council Tax. This is limited to a Band C level so any applicant who lives in a property with a higher band would receive support calculated on this basis. The proposed option would require all working age applicants to pay a minimum payment of 35%. It would mean that for a typical Band C property, the minimum payment would be £9.01 per week or £6.76 per week if the applicant has a single person discount. These figures are based on the Council Tax payable for 2016/17 year. Reducing the maximum level of support available is a simple change to the scheme which is easily understood. The Council is conscious that any minimum payment must be affordable given the household's circumstances.

The benefits of this are:

It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand.

It is fair because everyone shares the increase

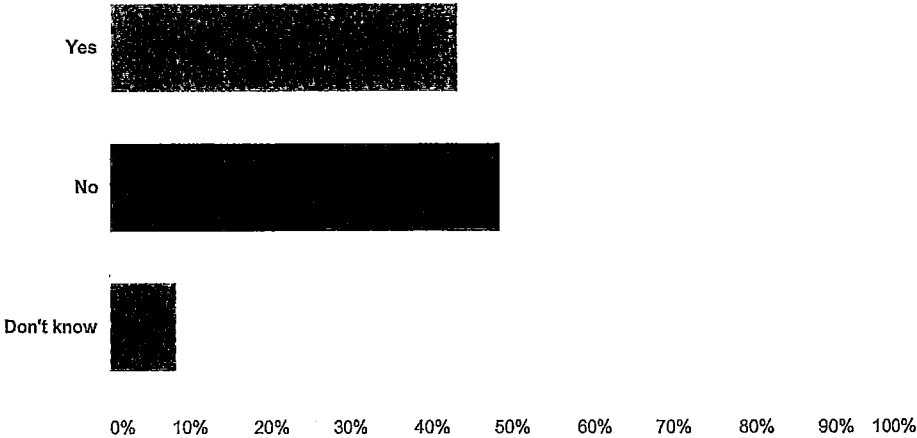
The drawback of doing this is:

All working age households receiving Council Tax Reduction will be required to pay more.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q8 Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

Answered: 338 Skipped: 156



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	43.20%	146
No	48.52%	164
Don't know	8.28%	28
Total		338

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q9 If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Answered: 79 Skipped: 415

#	Responses	Date
1	Going with option B so far	12/11/2016 2:10 AM
2	Going with option B so far	12/11/2016 2:07 AM
3	ditto previous answer	12/9/2016 8:49 PM
4	I think maybe you could consider a phased approach of 5% decrease for those who have been on job seekers allowance for longer than 6 months, 10% decrease when there are on it over a year, and so on.....	12/4/2016 6:26 PM
5	Scrap vanity projects	11/28/2016 4:49 PM
6	Option 1 preferred.	11/28/2016 2:20 PM
7	The first option, 75%	11/28/2016 11:32 AM
8	As previously mentioned, concentrate on raising income on imposing fines on the rule breakers not the poor and needy.	11/28/2016 9:50 AM
9	Option 1	11/27/2016 11:10 PM
10	Again a smaller percentage	11/27/2016 9:05 AM
11	See my comment to the previous question. As a relatively well off pensioner I do not see why my CT could be protected were I on a lower income. If we must have CT, then it should be increased for all in order to fund continued subsidy for the poorest CT payers in Gosport	11/26/2016 11:14 AM
12	Option 1	11/24/2016 9:22 AM
13	If the scheme has to remain then I think 65% is more than fair	11/24/2016 8:46 AM
14	As above	11/24/2016 8:00 AM
15	See first comment	11/24/2016 7:50 AM
16	Increase tax on the bigger houses. They can afford to pay a few more pounds. People already living on poverty cannot	11/23/2016 11:21 PM
17	This is going to be even more unaffordable for people who are poor enough to need it	11/23/2016 10:39 PM
18	Reducing from 80% to 60%	11/23/2016 9:25 PM
19	Means test everyone including pensioners who pay council tax? This rate would put me in dept because I wouldn't be able to pay it?	11/23/2016 4:10 PM
20	Option 2	11/23/2016 12:30 AM
21	50%!	11/22/2016 10:11 PM
22	Low income and don't need the extra stress	11/22/2016 9:48 PM
23	See previous	11/22/2016 9:06 PM
24	Your suggestions are getting more ridiculous with each question. As previously commented how can we the public offer any alternatives if we don't know which departments of the council are available for tweaking.	11/22/2016 8:23 PM
25	Again for the first option	11/22/2016 6:18 PM
26	Again no reduction if we have to then 25% only	11/22/2016 3:28 PM
27	This is a more realistic amount.	11/22/2016 12:34 PM
28	It now seems that every option on here means that I will have to pay more council tax so others can have theirs at a reduced price	11/22/2016 11:29 AM
29	A reduction of 5% only.	11/21/2016 12:00 PM
30	people on higher income have seen their council tax remain the same for many years and are better placed to carry the burden going forward	11/21/2016 10:32 AM
31	An increase across the board for those that currently pay council tax. I believe a small increase would aid the deficit	11/20/2016 11:20 AM
32	stop treating ex service/service people as special cases	11/19/2016 7:09 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

33	Tax properties above band C more as they can afford it. Do not impoverish the poor even further. Brexit and inflation will create even more hardship for gosport residents. Shame on the nasty Tories for even considering this.	11/18/2016 4:33 PM
34	Would suggest a reduction of 60 p c	11/17/2016 3:13 PM
35	Cutting funds for other less needed areas in the council	11/16/2016 8:39 PM
36	Those that can afford to pay more paying more (and I include myself in this statement).	11/16/2016 8:21 PM
37	Dive to people who need it not to the scrogers	11/16/2016 1:50 PM
38	I think this will help towards making people homeless as nearly £10 a week is a lot of money to those on any form of benefit	11/15/2016 11:13 PM
39	Increase council tax for all	11/15/2016 7:22 PM
40	Option 1	11/15/2016 5:31 PM
41	Increase the Council Tax to spread the cost	11/15/2016 4:41 PM
42	Introduce permits for vehicle parking on-the-road. Prohibit commuting in excess of the DWP tolerable limit (1 hour commute by public transport). Designate high-density housing areas in "old" Gosport as small urban electric car parking only areas. Raise revenue by selling permits.	11/15/2016 4:19 PM
43	Increase Council Tax to spread the cost	11/15/2016 4:13 PM
44	Option 1 or 2. Reducing support is a good thing but reducing it too much could end up with increased homelessness.	11/14/2016 3:52 PM
45	The cuts should be adjusted by certain groups not a blanket cut for everyone except pensioners. There are single parents with children under 5, they should be in their own category, and come infant school age, then the tax reduction should be reduced as in theory the parent is able to work, or work more hours due to the hours the child is at school. Everyone should not be group as "working age" as there are legitimate reasons of not being employed.	11/14/2016 2:43 PM
46	Getting worse aren't we? The only fair alternative is for those with the ability to pay to shoulder the burden. The bigger the cut, the greater the moral wrong and the greater the damage done to social cohesion.	11/14/2016 1:06 PM
47	Usually if it benefits someone on low income they "rob peter to pay paul" by taking it off them in another area of the benefits system. I am living proof of this as my debts have increased directly proportionally to the councils reform and reduction in both my benefits and council tax even though my working hours/wage have been cut. The minimum wage increase has NOT offset this as the council takes away more than I earn extra.	11/14/2016 10:51 AM
48	It is obvious from the construction of this questionnaire, that the Council has already decided to enforce this increase.	11/14/2016 10:38 AM
49	To phase in the reduction to the reduction and increase the scope of whom the reduction in reduction would apply (why only working age people?)	11/11/2016 5:44 PM
50	Leave as in and increase level of Council Tax for all.	11/8/2016 7:38 PM
51	Again, only increasing council tax for higher earners	11/4/2016 2:46 PM
52	Reducing the maximum support to 75%	11/1/2016 7:18 PM
53	Same as Q.5	11/1/2016 4:06 PM
54	Alternatives as stated on previous question. Also lowering the maximum would not affect all those with a reduction equally as it will affect those who receive the maximum the most. Would need to reduce the reduction given to all claimants not just those with maximum reduction.	11/1/2016 3:05 PM
55	why not just put these poor people down.	10/27/2016 1:27 PM
56	Too big a jump in one go	10/27/2016 12:13 PM
57	Too much consideration given to low income residents. Services must be paid for.	10/24/2016 5:32 PM
58	Reducing The maximum to 60%	10/22/2016 2:25 PM
59	Higher charge for households in the more affluent properties	10/22/2016 1:15 PM
60	as before	10/21/2016 10:59 PM
61	please see my initial answer	10/21/2016 1:34 PM
62	Option 1.	10/21/2016 12:29 PM
63	Why is a single person to pay nearly three quarters of a couple working? How is that fair?	10/20/2016 11:10 PM
64	this will be a struggle for people to keep on top off I struggle to pay the £20 i am paying now this change would destroy me	10/20/2016 10:03 PM
65	Whoever thought this up is a nazi	10/20/2016 9:11 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

66	Option 1	10/20/2016 2:51 PM
67	Same	10/20/2016 2:12 PM
68	make working people pay more	10/20/2016 1:59 PM
69	SAME AS OPTION 1 & 2 DISABLED PERSONS SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM ANY LESSENING OF THERE BENEFIT AMOUNT	10/20/2016 1:37 PM
70	Protection must be built in for the very lowest paid	10/20/2016 12:11 PM
71	As before	10/19/2016 8:48 PM
72	It may be too big a reduction in one year but phasing in over two years would be fine.	10/18/2016 12:51 PM
73	Raise Council Tax	10/18/2016 12:38 PM
74	This is a huge amount of money for struggling households	10/18/2016 12:00 PM
75	I would prefer a 5% cut	10/18/2016 11:45 AM
76	Reduce to 75%	10/17/2016 6:18 PM
77	As per previous responses	10/17/2016 5:35 PM
78	Option 2 is a more affordable Increase	10/17/2016 5:02 PM
79	Too big an increase in one go. Would be ok to aim for this but would be a shock to suddenly increase by this much	10/17/2016 4:23 PM

Option 4 – Removing the Family Premium for all new working age applicants

The removal of family premium from 1st April 2017 for new claims will bring the Council Tax Reduction scheme in line with Housing Benefit. The family premium is part of how we assess the 'needs' of any applicant which is compared with their income. Family Premium is normally given when an applicant has at least one dependant child living with them. Removing the family premium will mean that when we assess an applicant's needs it would not include the family premium (currently £17.40 per week). This change would not affect those on Universal Credit, Income Support, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance or Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance.

The benefit of this is:

It brings the working age Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with Housing Benefit changes proposed by Central Government. The change has already been introduced for pension age applicants by Central Government;

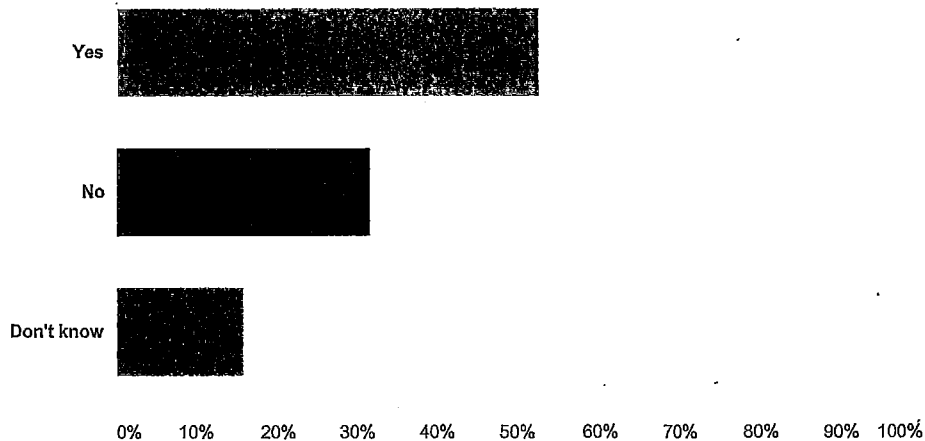
The drawbacks of doing this are:

New working age residents may see a reduction in the amount of support they received.
Some households with children will pay more

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q10 Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

Answered: 334 Skipped: 160



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	52.69%	176
No	31.44%	105
Don't know	15.87%	53
Total		334

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q11 If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Answered: 56 Skipped: 438

#	Responses	Date
1	I don't understand,you want to charge families for being families?Charge people for having children?Is this China? How about you have a dog and cat premium so dog and cat owners have to pay extra.Cats defecate all over the place,dogs do the same and the amount of lazy owners who don't clean up after them is ridiculous.Put the cost on them.	12/11/2016 2:16 AM
2	Seems like an inherently complex option.Can it be understood by general council tax payers who will underwrite this scheme?	11/28/2016 2:24 PM
3	May help but initially could cause financial implications. Raise rent by a couple of pound a month.	11/28/2016 9:52 AM
4	Option 1	11/27/2016 11:12 PM
5	Lower the rate of the premium	11/27/2016 9:07 AM
6	See previous comment. It is very hard on GBC to have to fund this support, yet the alternative, of creating yet more poor families is worse. Those who can afford it should pay more CT.	11/26/2016 11:20 AM
7	This proposed scheme should be fair to all. Why should people who CHOSE not to work benefit more?	11/26/2016 9:12 AM
8	No i have a child why should i pay more because of this	11/24/2016 9:18 AM
9	As above	11/24/2016 8:00 AM
10	Families cannot afford this. This is ridiculous.	11/23/2016 11:22 PM
11	Having a child doesn't necessarily mean that they can't afford to pay	11/23/2016 10:40 PM
12	Make the people claiming benefits pay this too! They tend to have more disposable income than working parents	11/23/2016 8:33 PM
13	Why would you penalise people for having children????	11/23/2016 6:34 PM
14	The need remains for those on low income	11/23/2016 6:33 PM
15	It depends how bad key it would affect those families?	11/23/2016 4:13 PM
16	Low income don't need the extra stress	11/22/2016 9:49 PM
17	Not all families who work can afford to pay more. If your a single parent your likely to be hard up already. This puts strain on the most vulnerable and those that are trying to work. It should be capped for those who have more than two children.	11/22/2016 9:38 PM
18	So, more people with children go homeless? Wonderful. I've been in Agnew House and Barclay House and the rent there is extortionate at £800. As a council, you're basically saying "we will reduce all council tax help for people on low income so we have more money to waste on VERY OVERPRICED hostels where you are treated as animals with no human rights."	11/22/2016 9:09 PM
19	Would this not affect the single working parents more? Once child care is taken into consideration and other necessary payments I think it is tight enough for them. What departments are available please do we can think about and offer alternatives?	11/22/2016 8:26 PM
20	I believe households with children even those working full time need the additional support	11/22/2016 8:22 PM
21	Just stop trying to work the figures, the council needs to fight for its people not join with the government and use different ways to confuse people for ultimately the same effect	11/22/2016 6:20 PM
22	They get a job not do nothing a receive benefits	11/22/2016 12:35 PM
23	I am a part-time working single mother, I don't know how to get round this but cutbacks will make me worse off and I'm only just managing now!!!	11/22/2016 11:54 AM
24	To a certain extent yes..if the person is already claiming benefits for certain things then even more help should not be needed people who do not claim and work earn less than those that do claim benefits and are still expected to pay full council tax!!	11/22/2016 11:43 AM
25	Same as the previous 3 answers	11/22/2016 11:30 AM
26	this is terrible, again the working poor will be hit so that they will be better off not working	11/21/2016 10:34 AM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

27	Tax the wealthy more band C and above to make up the shortfall. Implement any of these changes at your peril. You will never be elected again. Maybe the head of the council can give up his big fat pay rise and perks. Scumbags.	11/18/2016 4:36 PM
28	Cut back other services the council offers	11/16/2016 8:40 PM
29	Those that can afford to pay more paying more (and I include myself in this statement) but there should be a level of responsibility from people who choose to have children if they can't afford to do so.	11/16/2016 8:23 PM
30	Waste off money you or waste time thst can go on cut council tax	11/16/2016 1:51 PM
31	I think a set percentage is best, the only part of that and all options is that it is for all working age people. Those who receive PIP and can not work due to their condition should be exempt as the option of finding a job does not exist. This is aimed at those with chronic conditions as well as permanent disabled	11/15/2016 11:20 PM
32	Penalising children being brought up in poverty is not good for the future of the borough. The burden should be shared across all residents receiving the discount	11/15/2016 9:17 PM
33	Increase council tax for all	11/15/2016 7:23 PM
34	This seems like a big change that would tend to cause hardship. Bringing coherence with housing benefit would be useful, though. Can this be brought in over time?	11/15/2016 5:33 PM
35	Low income household with young children are at a disadvantage and need support. High costs are heating and fuel costs for private vehicles.	11/15/2016 4:21 PM
36	Unfair system - should be same for everyone Increase Council Tax to cover	11/15/2016 4:15 PM
37	It is important that children from disadvantaged families are properly supported. I would support the proposed change is the family support premium could be ring-fence the amount for child-specific activities (such as reading support) rather than just going into the family weekly budget where it could be spend on fags , booze or other non-child items.	11/15/2016 9:24 AM
38	That's not fair, everyone should pay the same amount, new working age applicants should not be penalised, the majority of people do not choose to be in the situations they find themselves in.	11/14/2016 2:45 PM
39	This proposal punishes poor people with children and increases child poverty. Shame on you for suggesting it. The fair alternative is as I have pointed out in previous answers: increase council tax for those with the ability to pay.	11/14/2016 1:08 PM
40	Yes if it lowers the "reduction" no if not.	11/14/2016 10:52 AM
41	Electing a new government that doesn't see the most vulnerable in society as irrelevant.	11/14/2016 10:39 AM
42	Leave as in and increase level of Council Tax for all.	11/8/2016 7:39 PM
43	Its directly hitting single parents	11/4/2016 2:47 PM
44	Again families should not be bearing the burden of cuts to local councils. Council tax should increase for all households so all households shoulder the costs	10/22/2016 4:20 PM
45	Make single people pay more. People with children already pay more for everything. They are raiding the the next generation of tax payers!	10/22/2016 2:42 PM
46	Any alternative must not impact on the poorest in our society	10/22/2016 1:17 PM
47	cut the COUNCIL STAFF.	10/21/2016 11:00 PM
48	Please see my initial answer.	10/21/2016 1:35 PM
49	Sack the bastards in charge	10/20/2016 9:11 PM
50	Get the people who dont work to pay more why should working people always be affected by the cuts by doing this hopeful it will make them try harder at finding a job.	10/20/2016 7:44 PM
51	Option 1 as there may be a child with complex and therefore expensive needs in the household and removal of the Family Premium would unnecessarily disadvantage them.	10/20/2016 2:54 PM
52	make working people pay more	10/20/2016 2:00 PM
53	THE WORK SHY PAY MORE THIS SEEMS FAIR WORK IS ALWAYS A WAY AHEAD FOR PEOPLE ESPECIALLY THE ONES WHO HAPPILY LANGUISH ON BENEFIT SCHEMES AGAIN THOUGH THE DISABLED SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM ANY INCREASE	10/20/2016 1:39 PM
54	Got to be fair and seen to be so!	10/19/2016 8:49 PM
55	Low income families are suffering enough.	10/18/2016 3:46 PM
56	We must try to protect families from cuts	10/18/2016 11:45 AM

Option 5 - Reducing Backdating to 1 month

Currently claims for Council Tax Reduction from working age applicants can be backdated for up to 6 months where an applicant shows they could not claim at an earlier time. Central Government has reduced the period for Housing Benefit claims to 1 month. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme be aligned with the changes for Housing Benefit.

The benefit of this is:

It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand when claiming Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

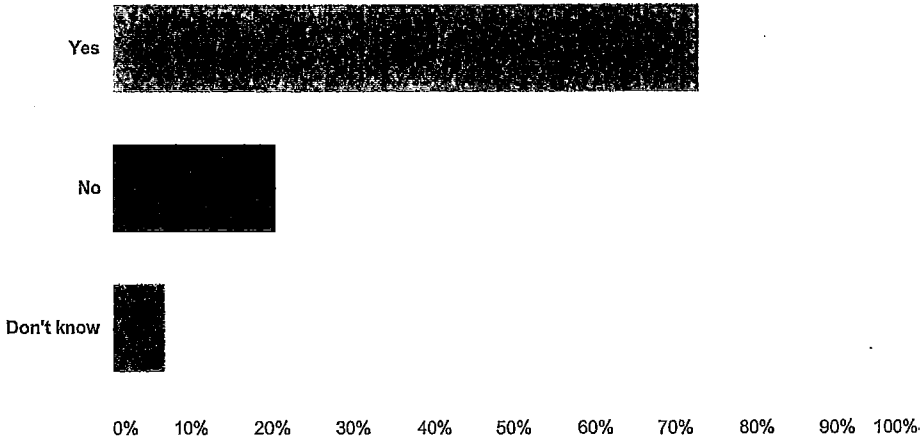
The drawback of this is:

New working age residents may see a reduction in the amount of support they received if they are unable to claim on time.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q12 Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

Answered: 327 Skipped: 167



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	72.78%	238
No	20.49%	67
Don't know	6.73%	22
Total		327

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q13 If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 452

#	Responses	Date
1	Seems sensible.	12/11/2016 2:17 AM
2	I think 1 month is a little too short, maybe a compromise of 3 months.	12/4/2016 6:29 PM
3	Many new applicants will be confused enough without adding this	11/29/2016 5:29 PM
4	Make it easier for an application. Not just on line	11/28/2016 10:21 AM
5	Maybe not 6 months to one month, three may be more reasonable but allow for exceptional circumstances.	11/28/2016 9:53 AM
6	Option 1	11/27/2016 11:12 PM
7	At the Gosport Citizens Advice we see a number of clients who have got into debt partly because of their failure to claim what they are entitled to, through ignorance, shame of claiming benefits, disorganisation. This proposal will do nothing to help these people. For alternatives, see previous answers.	11/26/2016 11:22 AM
8	As above	11/24/2016 8:00 AM
9	Leave it as it is.	11/23/2016 11:22 PM
10	People should be supported in claiming on time	11/23/2016 10:41 PM
11	Maybe do 3 months if there is a genuine reason why it's taken that long. I don't think it would take 6 months to make a claim	11/23/2016 10:05 PM
12	When using housing and council tax benefit in the past it has taken longer than the current 3 months back dating to get a claim assessed and back dated, changing that to 1 month is unfair	11/23/2016 8:36 PM
13	Always get as much of what you are owed. Did they not use/need any services in the time they didn't pay?	11/23/2016 12:33 AM
14	One month is ample time for anyone working or not to get their financial paperwork in order.	11/22/2016 10:13 PM
15	Because this helps pay upfront fees if needed	11/22/2016 9:49 PM
16	If you've been unable to apply and are in genuine need, you should be able to backdate up to 6 months. If it was due to laziness, then it should be 1 month. I don't understand why you wouldn't ask for the help straight away if you needed it, unless you were unaware that the help was there.	11/22/2016 9:10 PM
17	It does depend on the reasons for a full 6 month back date though....	11/22/2016 8:28 PM
18	Dont know how this would work considering people have to provide 3 monthly payslips?	11/22/2016 3:23 PM
19	No backdating at all should be from application date. Not submitting is lazy and shouldn't be rewarded	11/22/2016 12:36 PM
20	If changed at all, 3 months is more acceptable. Any change in circumstances indicates a turbulent time in ones life, claiming a rebate may not be a top priority, but people should not be penalised by not claiming promptly.	11/21/2016 12:03 PM
21	this seems reasonable	11/21/2016 10:35 AM
22	Change to a 3month Max. Back date	11/20/2016 11:21 AM
23	Tax above band C more. Create higher bands of council tax for luxury properties and second holiday homes. Don't destroy poor people's lives. What more do expect from the nasty Tory party though.	11/18/2016 4:39 PM
24	Charging people with high incomes to pay more council tax	11/16/2016 8:42 PM
25	It take you long to get it right	11/16/2016 1:52 PM
26	This option is trivial and expensive to manage. Raise revenue instead. There is a tsunami of consumption on the A32 in-and-out of Gosport. Develop industry in Gosport and regulate the commute to employments further than Fareham.	11/15/2016 4:24 PM
27	don't backdate at all	11/14/2016 8:14 PM
28	If people don't claim then that's their own fault for not looking into help, options, etc, I agree that you can only back date by 1 month.	11/14/2016 2:46 PM
29	The change to housing benefit is also wrong. This punishes people for circumstances beyond their control. Increase council tax for those with the ability to pay.	11/14/2016 1:09 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

30	The communication between council and third party agencies should be more accurate so a months notice is enough.	11/14/2016 10:53 AM
31	Yet again, just more Tory cuts and little else.	11/14/2016 10:40 AM
32	This seems a fairer option	11/4/2016 2:47 PM
33	people should get what they are entitled to.	10/27/2016 1:30 PM
34	Backdating should not be given unless extenuating circumstances apply. It is the claimants responsibility to make timely claims.	10/24/2016 5:36 PM
35	make the system less complicated and find ways to inform or help applicants so the need to backdate is reduced	10/22/2016 1:20 PM
36	See my original answer.	10/21/2016 1:36 PM
37	Possibly reduce backdating to 2 or 3 months, as 1 month seems a bit arbitrary as claimant may have been ill or had other delaying problem, but 6 months is overgenerous.	10/21/2016 12:37 PM
38	Sack the bastards in charge	10/20/2016 9:12 PM
39	Option 1	10/20/2016 2:55 PM
40	The rate at which bureaucracies work will not allow the paperwork to processed in a month; reduce back-dating to 3 months.	10/18/2016 12:41 PM
41	Backdating to 3 months	10/18/2016 11:12 AM
42	3 months	10/17/2016 4:24 PM

Option 6 - Reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks

Within the current scheme, applicants can be temporarily absent from their homes without it affecting the Council Tax Reduction. This replicated the rule within Housing Benefit. Housing Benefit has been changed so that if a person is absent from Great Britain for a period of more than 4 weeks, their benefit will cease. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect the changes in Housing Benefit. There will be exceptions for certain occupations.

The benefits of the Council doing this are:

The treatment of temporary absence will be brought into line with Housing Benefit

It is seen as fair

There are exceptions for certain occupations including the armed forces and mariners.

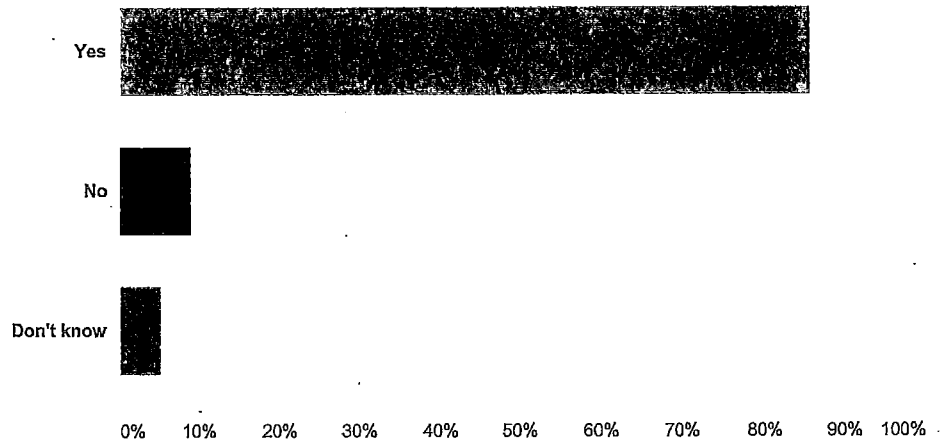
The drawback of this is:

If a person is absent from Great Britain for a period which is likely to exceed 4 weeks, their Council Tax Reduction will cease from when they leave the Country. They will need to re-apply on return

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q14 Do you agree with the change to the temporary absence rule?

Answered: 322 Skipped: 172



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	85.71%	276
No	9.01%	29
Don't know	5.28%	17
Total		322

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q15 If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 469

#	Responses	Date
1	I would propose a reduction after 6 months abroad, 4 weeks is ridiculous. Many people work abroad on short term assignments, 6 months is reasonable.	11/29/2016 7:52 PM
2	This should be two weeks	11/24/2016 7:27 AM
3	As a worker entitled to no help, I cannot afford to be out of the country for four weeks, so if they need help then they should have extenuating circumstances to remain eligible	11/23/2016 10:43 PM
4	If they can go away they can pay	11/23/2016 12:20 PM
5	Possability of reducing payment or stopping after 4 weeks but not needing to reapply?? maybe an emergency for departure from uk	11/23/2016 11:00 AM
6	In my opinion the only full exception would be bereavement abroad where evidence should be provided.	11/22/2016 10:16 PM
7	Though exceptions when proven stuck in another country example the Icelandic volcanic eruptions and being caught in a war zone.	11/22/2016 8:29 PM
8	If someone can afford to be out the country for over 4 weeks then they can afford to carry on paying full amount of council tax	11/22/2016 12:38 PM
9	But only if Armed Forces are part of the occupations that are exempt.	11/21/2016 12:05 PM
10	Should only cease once 4 weeks is up not when they first leave	11/15/2016 7:24 PM
11	If the Council Tax does not cease why should the reduction and why should they have to re-apply, the have already been approved	11/15/2016 4:43 PM
12	The Council Tax still has to be paid, so the reduced rate should stand	11/15/2016 4:19 PM
13	I agree that the period of absence regulations need to be a little more flexible. As well as exemptions for certain occupations provable reasons for absence of hospitalisation of parent should be considered.	11/15/2016 10:25 AM
14	don't allow more than 2 weeks	11/14/2016 8:15 PM
15	4 weeks is a substantial reduction from the current 13 weeks. There might possibly be a compromise position that does not punish people for circumstances beyond their control.	11/14/2016 1:11 PM
16	This is totally fair as any arrangements in place to go abroad for genuine reasons should not need council tax support and housing benefit.	11/14/2016 10:54 AM
17	Just how many people are likely to be affected by this. A ridiculously small number making this proposal pointless.	11/14/2016 10:42 AM
18	This would unfairly affect people who want to visit family who live long distances away as when they come back they will have to apply under a new rules. It would be discriminating against residents from other Countries. We should leave it as it is	11/4/2016 2:44 PM
19	I don't agree with this ruling. If Housing Benefit and Council Tax stopped, then by this logic would there rent also stop if in a Housing property? If people can afford to be away for 4+ weeks then in my opinion they should be able to pay...	11/1/2016 3:55 PM
20	if they can afford to go away for long periods of time they can afford to pay their council tax.	10/27/2016 1:31 PM
21	No backdating for relief whilst absent.	10/24/2016 5:38 PM
22	What about families with exceptional circumstances, ie families who take their disabled children abroad for therapies that are unavailable in the UK	10/22/2016 4:22 PM
23	If people exceed 8 weeks is more reasonable.	10/20/2016 11:12 PM
24	Option 1 as this proposal will only cause unnecessary paperwork and therefore not be cost effective.	10/20/2016 2:57 PM
25	Some older people like to go and tour europe, cheap dover ferries, cheaper fuel, very cheap off season campsites. Much cheaper than paying energy bills in the uk and why not they have earned it. Only for the pensionable aged though.	10/18/2016 7:31 AM

Option 7 - To remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of the current scheme for new Employment and Support Allowance applicants.

From April 2017, all new applicants of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) who fall within the Work Related Activity Group will no longer receive the component in either their ESA or within the calculation of Housing Benefit. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect the changes.

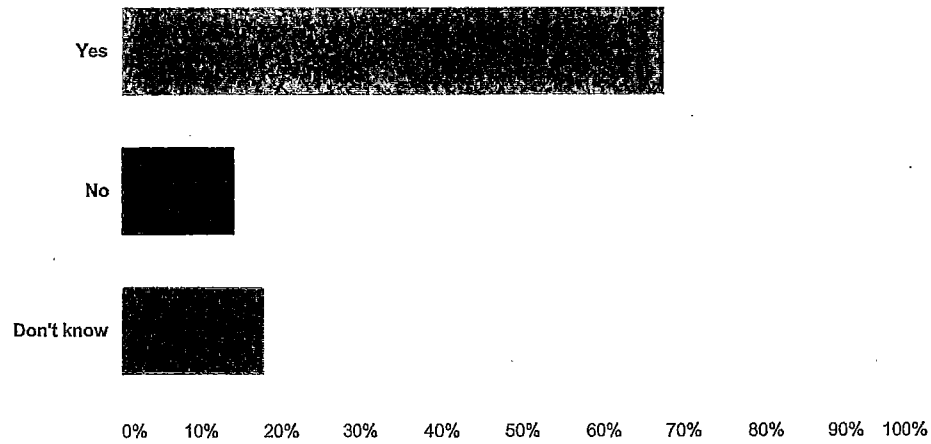
The benefits of the Council doing this are:

The treatment of ESA will be brought into line with Housing Benefit
It avoids additional costs to the Council Tax Reduction scheme.
Persons receiving ESA will not experience any reduction in Council Tax Reduction.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q16 Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

Answered: 316 Skipped: 178



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	67.72%	214
No	14.24%	45
Don't know	18.04%	57
Total		316

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q17 If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 470

#	Responses	Date
1	Leave the disabled alone. Concentrate elsewhere, again suggest more fees on the ground or in the van to impose fines.	11/28/2016 9:54 AM
2	I've never completed a questionnaire when I've answered so many Don't knows.	11/26/2016 9:16 PM
3	I guess this would simplify a complicated system	11/26/2016 11:24 AM
4	There should be a gradual phasing in of this scheme in order to allow people returning to work time to adjust their budgets	11/26/2016 9:15 AM
5	These people (a lot of the time with mental health problems, like myself) are trying to get themselves back into a state to work, learning new skills and bettering themselves. Taking away the council tax help will only then stress them, cause more problems and make them end up back on support group ESA where they can't work. I feel this is unfair when people are trying their hardest. ESA is for disabilities. Why not cut the help for those fraudulently claiming benefits, those who have more money than they know what to do with and those that decide they can't work but have no reason to not be in work?	11/22/2016 9:17 PM
6	I don't fully understand what you are proposing here. I have never had experience with esa and therefore am not aware of the types and regulations surrounding this type of benefit.	11/22/2016 8:31 PM
7	Should get no discount if on benefits	11/22/2016 12:39 PM
8	and existing claimants	11/19/2016 7:10 PM
9	That right	11/16/2016 1:53 PM
10	The reduction received should be in line with how long they are claiming ESA. 1st Year maximum and then reduced further to a set maximum pro rata	11/16/2016 12:59 AM
11	The government have made it very hard by changing the criteria of getting into support group so those who can not work due to their condition are being put in work related group and will never be well enough to work	11/15/2016 11:24 PM
12	Did not understand this question	11/14/2016 8:45 PM
13	I can't understand the impact on claimants of this proposal from the wording you have used.	11/14/2016 1:13 PM
14	I do not know what this element is for and do not have it.	11/14/2016 10:55 AM
15	For those struggling to find work, who find themselves in this category, it will simply make their efforts harder.	11/14/2016 10:44 AM
16	People receiving ESA are disabled, if they require support with council tax they should get the help they need.	10/22/2016 4:23 PM
17	You really haven't explained this at all well, so I have no idea what you are proposing here!	10/22/2016 2:48 PM
18	I don't understand the implications here and as fairly intelligent expect the most vulnerable will not understand either,	10/22/2016 1:24 PM
19	I don't believe those who can't work should be targeted.	10/20/2016 11:13 PM
20	people out of work struggle to pay top ups as it is why should it be made more difficult to them	10/20/2016 10:08 PM
21	could you explain this in plain English	10/20/2016 5:11 PM
22	make working people pay more	10/20/2016 2:03 PM
23	THIS TARGETS THE DISABLED THIS IS TOTALLY UNFAIR AND REPREHENSIBLE THAT IT IS EVEN BEING CONSIDERED	10/20/2016 1:42 PM
24	If someone is clearly not able to work because of a disability, how do you expect them to pay when you cut ESA payments all the time?	10/17/2016 5:38 PM

Option 8 - To limit the number of dependant children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two.

Within the current scheme, applicants who have children are awarded a dependant's addition of £64.99 per child within their applicable amounts. There is no limit to the number of dependant's additions that can be awarded. From April 2017 Central Government will be limiting dependant's additions in Universal Credit, Housing Benefit and Tax Credits to a maximum of two. This will only affect households who have a third or subsequent child on or after 1st April 2017. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect the changes in Housing Benefit and Central Government Benefits. There will be exceptions where: there are multiple births after 1st April 2017 (and the household is not already at their maximum of two dependants within the calculation); adopted children or where households merge.

The benefits of the Council doing this are:

Council Tax Reduction will be brought into line with Housing Benefit, Universal Credit and Tax Credits

It is simple and administratively easy

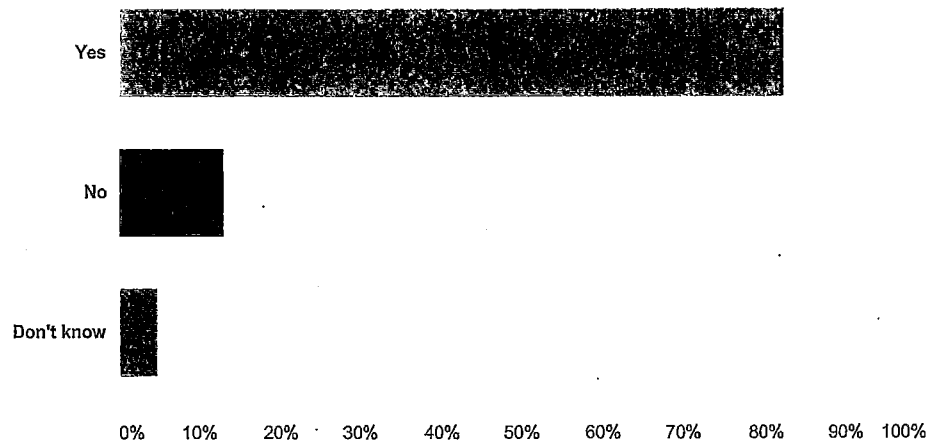
The drawbacks of doing this are:

Applicants who have a third or subsequent child after 1st April 2017 (and are not excepted from the rules) may receive less Council Tax reduction than an applicant who has more children born before 1st April 2017

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q18 Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

Answered: 316 Skipped: 178



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	82.28%	260
No	12.97%	41
Don't know	4.75%	15
Total		316

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q19 If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 465

#	Responses	Date
1	It seems sensible as they'd get more child benefit/tax credit anyway which would make up the loss though for some families I think it wouldn't be fair	12/11/2016 2:22 AM
2	I agree with the above but would go further. In the case of single mothers, no reduction at all should be given. No council property should be given to them and no child allowances should be given for more than 1 child.	11/29/2016 7:57 PM
3	We cant make children suffer this will just lead to long term issues such as crime etc..	11/26/2016 9:53 PM
4	Again this would penalise larger families and make them poorer. Is this a good thing for Gosport? For solutions see previous answers	11/26/2016 11:25 AM
5	People who think its ok to keep popping out kids is a joke. People who foster or adopt shouldnt have to pay more they are doing good	11/24/2016 9:20 AM
6	As above	11/24/2016 8:01 AM
7	The change on 1st April should be for all to achieve a consistent approach. Perhaps a reduction over the period of a year to soften the blow to larger families, so some money would be needed as a buffer.	11/23/2016 11:22 PM
8	I've never heard of this. Is the amount per year or month as it's not stated. I have two children, do I receive this? No! Pay the amount due based on the home.	11/22/2016 10:23 PM
9	Should be two births, not two children. Twins/triplets in a second pregnancy are not too common so the cost would not be restrictive	11/22/2016 9:30 PM
10	I think 3 children should be the limit. Many families have 3 children so this should be a max of 3 children.	11/22/2016 9:18 PM
11	If there is currently no cap, could the applicable children be capped at 3 or 4 instead of 2? Any more children than that in this day and age is completely irresponsible if you are not able to support yourself.	11/22/2016 8:37 PM
12	You want children you pay for them over 2	11/16/2016 1:54 PM
13	I personally think it shouldn't be from the 1st April 17 but start now. Those who get maintance from absent parents get money not counted towards benefits should have that money counted towards all benefits as it is discrimination to those married and raising children. The types of benefits both parties receives are the same and the amounts based on number of children with each child getting a certain amount	11/15/2016 11:31 PM
14	Shame on you and shame on the government. This proposal can only increase child poverty. The fair alternative is to increase council tax for those with the ability to pay, not for the poorest (regardless of how many children they have!)	11/14/2016 1:14 PM
15	I believe and have seen evidence of families choosing extra children to claim benefits and not work. I believe this will be a good deterrant for this.	11/14/2016 10:55 AM
16	Smacks of something they would enact in communist China.	11/14/2016 10:45 AM
17	Unfair	11/8/2016 7:41 PM
18	If people are poor enough to receive this allowance they will be even poorer if another child is born. This would be discriminating against the poor because they are poor and like restricting the number of children the poor can have. The Authority should go back to the Government and insist that this is unethical.	11/4/2016 2:50 PM
19	The drawbacks as detailed above should be brought in line over a period of no more than 3 years.	10/24/2016 5:41 PM
20	People should not be penalised for having larger families, this punishes children.	10/22/2016 4:24 PM
21	Parents already have a hard time paying for everything. Why not make richer childless people pay more	10/22/2016 2:51 PM
22	All vulnerable families should have the highest council tax reduction regardless of number of children	10/22/2016 1:27 PM
23	Please see my initial answer	10/21/2016 1:38 PM
24	make working people pay more	10/20/2016 2:03 PM
25	NO LIMIT	10/18/2016 7:17 PM
26	It seems a strange way to enforce population control	10/18/2016 11:47 AM
27	Limit to three children after April 2017, and two children after April 2018	10/18/2016 11:14 AM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

28	Reduce amount for 2nd and subsequent children, but do not take away altogether	10/17/2016 6:21 PM
29	Too make this fair include applicant who have 3 or more children prior to 1st April 2017	10/17/2016 5:08 PM

Option 9 – To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers Element) to look after them.

Currently when another person is paid Carers Allowance to look after a Council Tax Reduction applicant, then the Severe Disability Premium is not included when working out their needs (Applicable Amounts).

The reason for this is that it avoids paying for the same care twice. This proposed change will align the scheme with Housing Benefit by treating persons who receive the Universal Credit (Carers Element) in the same way as anyone receiving Carers Allowance

The benefit of this is:

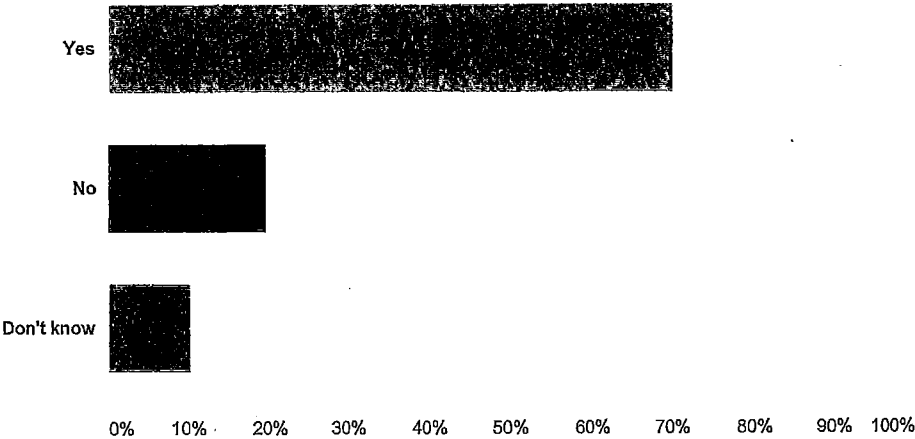
Council Tax Reduction will be brought into line with Housing Benefit;
It is simple and administratively easy

The drawbacks of doing this are:

There are no drawbacks to this change as persons receiving Universal Credit (Carers Element) will be treated in the same way as those receiving Carers Allowance who look after any person who claims Council Tax Reduction

Q20 Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

Answered: 311 Skipped: 183



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	70.10%	218
No	19.61%	61
Don't know	10.29%	32
Total		311

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q21 If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 465

#	Responses	Date
1	If there are no negatives then why not	12/11/2016 2:24 AM
2	Fines to those breaking the law.	11/28/2016 9:55 AM
3	Although it will increase costs for some, it will simplify a complicated system	11/26/2016 11:26 AM
4	Carers don't not have the CHOICE to work and are often the forgotten and poorly undervalued in society with little financial benefit from the government	11/26/2016 9:18 AM
5	Should not be entitled to two payments for the same thing	11/24/2016 7:28 AM
6	seriously?! Penalising disabled people and their carers?! They should be exempt for the pittance they receive	11/23/2016 11:24 PM
7	Carers Allowance is dispicable and should not count. They are struggling enough without extra hardship. I have no alternative, just don't do it	11/23/2016 10:46 PM
8	These people still need help and not be penalised	11/23/2016 6:35 PM
9	I think in these circumstances every case needs to be assessed individually. If a person within the home receives the allowance i.e a child with ADHD who is in school and the parent is able to work then they should go to work and pay. If it's 24 hour care they should not have to pay anything but true assessments should be carried out.	11/22/2016 10:27 PM
10	As I am on carers and dont want to have to pay extra in the place I am living	11/22/2016 9:52 PM
11	giving less benefits/tax reductions to people classed as disabled through addiction or those who do not work and have too many children.	11/22/2016 4:50 PM
12	If caring for severe disabled person should not be hit financially as probably saving the council money by being a carer	11/22/2016 12:42 PM
13	It's a scam to make the needy suffer more	11/22/2016 12:33 PM
14	Don't feel I know enough about these benefits or those receiving them to comment with any authority.	11/21/2016 12:10 PM
15	Otherwise they get it twice	11/16/2016 10:59 AM
16	Not clear - Looks like a smoke and mirrors exercise	11/15/2016 4:45 PM
17	The question assumes that the SDP is used solely for care costs, whereas the premium can be used for things other than care which improve a disabled person's quality of life. If the person is genuinely severely disabled, they need all the help they can get. It should be retained. I	11/15/2016 9:34 AM
18	Did not understand the question	11/14/2016 8:50 PM
19	How can there be "no drawbacks" if you are removing an entitlement? Insufficient information provided.	11/14/2016 1:15 PM
20	It is fair and reasonable.	11/14/2016 10:56 AM
21	If their are no 'drawbacks' what is the point of asking for an opinion?	11/14/2016 10:47 AM
22	The Carers allowance is so small it should vbe disregarded when the Cared for has a severe disability. The Council should go back to the Governemnt and say the lack of funds is unreasonable.	11/4/2016 2:54 PM
23	Again we should not be expecting those with disabilities to shoulder the burden of austerity. Council tax should rise for every household as that is the only fair and right way to share the increase	10/22/2016 5:49 PM
24	If there is no change how will it save money?!	10/22/2016 1:29 PM
25	As long as the disabled person is not out of pocket, I would agree	10/21/2016 1:39 PM
26	Wouldn't the benefit cap have to be amended to mix council tax with housing benefit?	10/20/2016 11:15 PM
27	Option 1 as this option is unfair it runs the risk of disadvantaging people.	10/20/2016 3:00 PM
28	make working people pay more	10/20/2016 2:04 PM
29	Immoral	10/18/2016 7:18 PM

Option 10 - To disregard 70% of the new postgraduate loans in the calculation of Council Tax Support

The Government has introduced a new loan for Post Graduate students from this Academic Year. Most students (unless vulnerable) will not normally qualify for Council Tax Support and in certain cases may be disregarded from Council Tax altogether. All welfare benefits have been adjusted to disregard 70% of any new Post Graduate loan to take account of the amount the student will spend on books, travel etc.

It is proposed that our Council Tax Support Scheme be aligned with these changes

The benefit of this is:

It will bring the Council Tax Support Scheme into line with other welfare benefits

The drawback of this is:

None

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

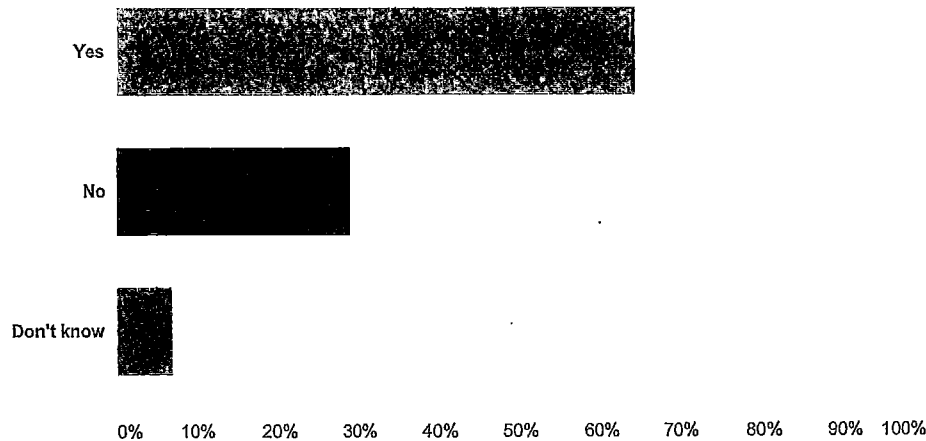
Q23 If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 479

#	Responses	Date
1	If there really are no negatives	12/11/2016 2:26 AM
2	None. Students should pay their way in the same way as any other working citizen.	11/29/2016 7:59 PM
3	I dont think giving more loans to graduates helps them get on their feet and make a living	11/28/2016 10:52 PM
4	They struggle enough. A couple of pound on rent a month, a couple of pence increase to local amenities etc	11/28/2016 9:57 AM
5	I really don't think this will make much difference and will simplify administration	11/26/2016 11:27 AM
6	I don't agree that any should be disregarded.	11/23/2016 9:09 AM
7	100% should be taken into consideration, it's an outgoing inherited from trying to better ones self	11/22/2016 10:29 PM
8	Grants, student loans etc are all there for the books, travel etc, if they are living here whilst studying then they should pay council tax	11/22/2016 1:00 PM
9	disregard less	11/19/2016 7:13 PM
10	They is a luck of skill people	11/16/2016 1:56 PM
11	How much is disregarded currently? Does this proposal result in post graduate students having to use some of the new loan to pay council tax, or not? Insufficient information.	11/14/2016 1:17 PM
12	Postgraduates should be receiving effective and fast solutions to getting work and not require this.	11/14/2016 10:57 AM
13	Why 70%? Surely it should be 100% as the student will son be paying back this loan and earning more so will be able to contribute even more in the future.	10/22/2016 3:01 PM
14	make working people pay more	10/20/2016 2:04 PM
15	I don't think it is good for the country to keep young people in permanent debt for getting an education. This proposal should be totally abandoned	10/16/2016 11:49 AM

Q24 Do you agree with the principle that the capital limit should be reduced to £6000?

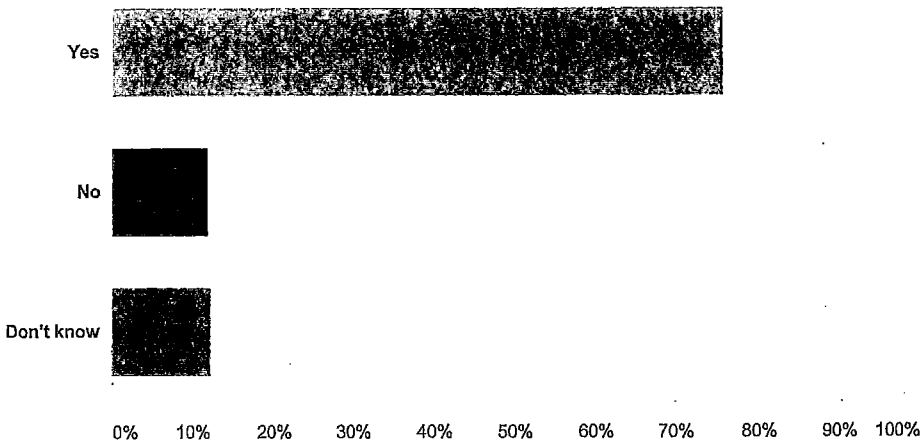
Answered: 309 Skipped: 185



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	64.40%	199
No	28.80%	89
Don't know	6.80%	21
Total		309

**Q22 Do you agree with the principle that
70% of any new postgraduate loan should
be disregarded?**

Answered: 310 Skipped: 184



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	75.81%	235
No	11.94%	37
Don't know	12.26%	38
Total		310

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q25 If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Answered: 55 Skipped: 439

#	Responses	Date
1	The majority of young people are trying to save to get mortgages. If they have to constantly eat away at their savings, this will never happen, they will forever be renting and will forever need housing benefit which is more cost for the council.	12/11/2016 2:32 AM
2	I propose it remains as it is with the £16k threshold. It makes no sense to penalize people who have save a little sum to help them in emergencies. £16k these days is very little.	11/29/2016 8:01 PM
3	10,000 would be a better choice	11/28/2016 11:50 PM
4	The proposed £16000 to £6000 gap is too great. £12000 of savings etc might be a more viable threshold. I cannot see how reduction to £6000 is "low risk to hardship".	11/28/2016 2:34 PM
5	Too much of a drop, perhaps £8000 or £10000 would be more acceptable.	11/28/2016 9:58 AM
6	Punishing people for doing the right thing and having savings is not the right thing to do. Making people use up their safety nets will just put them at risk and then they will fall harder on welfare in the end...	11/26/2016 9:58 PM
7	Of all the proposals, this one would have least effect on the poorest in Gosport, since they do not have capital savings at all.	11/26/2016 11:27 AM
8	Look towards more efficiently collecting arrears of council tax premiums first. Many people who are fortunate to have savings is the result of careful budgeting within the household or because they are/have been in paid employment and have sensibly saved a few pennies	11/26/2016 9:22 AM
9	Why should people who work hard to save for deposits to buy be made to suffer	11/24/2016 9:21 AM
10	This is too large a drop in figure, 10,000 is too big and a considerable amount of money to an average earner, halving this would be more realistic, figure to drop to £11,000 instead.	11/23/2016 11:27 PM
11	Reduce from current £16000 to £8000	11/23/2016 9:31 PM
12	People are entitled to savings! Everybody needs something to leave their children etc	11/23/2016 9:26 PM
13	It's a horrible and punitive action against the vulnerable	11/23/2016 6:36 PM
14	over 6k with savings etc	11/23/2016 6:34 PM
15	Not sure as some people are saving for their funerals and this would reduce this saving drastically	11/23/2016 4:10 PM
16	middle aged people may have to use retirement funds if savings lowered	11/23/2016 11:04 AM
17	The money saved has already been taxed! Single occupancy should always have a discount.	11/22/2016 10:34 PM
18	It should be zero, if you need help you should have no savings at all and this benefit is to help the most vulnerable. If you have savings and can afford to put away money for a rainy day you can afford to pay your council tax.	11/22/2016 9:46 PM
19	Maybe first bringing it down to £10000 then 1 or 2 years later reducing it again to £6000. I honestly can't think why a person on benefits would have this amount of savings?? So my alternative is a staged reduction.	11/22/2016 8:40 PM
20	Stay the same	11/22/2016 6:49 PM
21	Too large a change too quickly. Lessen the difference	11/22/2016 12:21 PM
22	We are encouraged to save for our pensions, the Government should not penalise us for this in other ways! This is a significant reduction, which is unacceptable. An alternative would be a more palatable amount of 10,000.	11/21/2016 12:13 PM
23	Leave it as it is. If someone has been financially prudent rather than feckless they should not be penalised when on hard times by this proposal.	11/20/2016 11:19 AM
24	I think the capital limit should be reduced to £10,000.	11/17/2016 12:01 PM
25	Everyone should be encouraged to save in order to enrich their (and their dependents) lives.	11/16/2016 8:27 PM
26	lower	11/16/2016 11:02 AM
27	Lower than £6000	11/16/2016 11:00 AM
28	I agree in principle but £6000 is low. Stats indicate that the people who have the most savings do not pay council tax.	11/16/2016 1:16 AM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

29	16k is hardly a fortune and having money in the bank can bring great comfort to elderly residents. If for people of working age only then I do agree	11/15/2016 9:25 PM
30	This is directly aimed at the poor who have saved a little towards old age. If they are at the level to be entitled to a Council Tax reduction, taking it away would mean digging into their savings for old age.	11/15/2016 4:54 PM
31	A reduction could cause severe damage to the housing stock. House refurbishment and repair needs heaps of capital. If anything...raise the capital limit and encourage saving and investment; stimulate growth by improving the standards of existing housing.	11/15/2016 4:32 PM
32	This goes against the govt initiatives to encourage people to save for their old age. I would exclude any capital invested in pensions or ISAs. Tax-efficient saving should continue to be encouraged. Also for any capital help in the applicant's primary residence.	11/15/2016 9:34 AM
33	Keep the savings level the same as feel people who are saving for retirement may be once against penslised for saving ad opposed to those that just spend al, their money with complete disregard for the future	11/14/2016 8:53 PM
34	This is too great a degree of change, but a compromise position might be possible. Perhaps reduce the capital limit to £12,000?	11/14/2016 1:18 PM
35	I find it outrageously unfair people who own housing or have savings get benefits/tax support which clearly isn't imperative to their survival.	11/14/2016 10:58 AM
36	reduce to £10,000	11/11/2016 2:29 PM
37	Leave as in and increase level of Council Tax for all.	11/8/2016 7:43 PM
38	I think it should only be reduced, to at least half the national average salary.	11/8/2016 11:14 AM
39	Again I say that the Council should be fighting for fair daels for their residents and not accepting cuts from the Government so readily.	11/4/2016 3:06 PM
40	Reduce the capital cap but not by such a huge amount	11/4/2016 2:52 PM
41	if they have 6k, they are not on the bread line.	10/27/2016 1:37 PM
42	The resident has saved hard to create this 'buffer' for their finances which will work against them in some instances. This is penalising someone for saving to stabilise their future as oppose to those who spend to gain benefits.	10/24/2016 5:53 PM
43	What if the £6000+ saving is to cover disability costs etc again the rise in council tax should be universal and not just affect the most vulnerable	10/22/2016 5:51 PM
44	£3000 should be the limit	10/22/2016 2:30 PM
45	Seems a large drop maybe 10,000	10/22/2016 1:32 PM
46	The disabled would be lucky to have any savings let alone £6000	10/20/2016 5:14 PM
47	£6000 goes nowhere these days.	10/20/2016 3:02 PM
48	A LADDER OF BENEFIT SHOULD BE USED BETWEEN THE 6 THOUSAND AND THE 16 THOUSAND POUNDS SPLIT THE 10 THOUSAND INTO 4 BANDS OF 2.5K EACH AND REDUCE OR INCREASE THE BENEFIT AS A PERSON PASSES BETWEEN THE BAND LEVELS	10/20/2016 1:47 PM
49	£6000 will pay for a funeral with not a lot left over. This mitigates against those who have saved.	10/19/2016 9:19 PM
50	£16000 to £6000 is a big drop, making the new limit £10000 would be fairer all round.	10/19/2016 12:52 PM
51	Career descision	10/18/2016 7:20 PM
52	People must be encouraged to save more while they are working and not penalised.	10/18/2016 3:55 PM
53	Capital limit should be reduced to £3000	10/18/2016 2:08 PM
54	£6,000 is barely enough to cover any emergency that may crop up and is too low.	10/18/2016 12:08 PM
55	Even £16000 is low considering annual commitments. Why should those who have gone without extras for years to build up savings intended to support them in later years be penalised in favour of those who have spent every penny and now look to the State to support them	10/18/2016 11:20 AM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q26 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.

Answered: 305 Skipped: 189

Increase the level of...



Find savings from cutting...



Use the Council's...



0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 1.2 1.4 1.6 1.8 2

	Yes	No	Don't know	Total	Weighted Average
Increase the level of Council Tax	28.71%	65.02%	6.27%	303	1.78
	87	197	19		
Find savings from cutting other Council Services	28.04%	63.51%	8.45%	296	1.80
	83	188	25		
Use the Council's savings	35.23%	51.01%	13.76%	298	1.79
	105	152	41		

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q27 If the Council were to choose these other options to make savings, what would be your order of preference? Please rank in order of preference by writing a number from 1 – 3 in the boxes below, where 1 is the option that you would most prefer and 3 is the least.

Answered: 296 Skipped: 198

Increase the level of...

Reduce funding available fo...

Use the Council's...

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

	1	2	3	Total	Score
Increase the level of Council Tax	35.69% 101	16.25% 46	48.06% 136	283	1.88
Reduce funding available for other Council Service	22.26% 63	45.94% 130	31.80% 90	283	1.90
Use the Council's saving	43.60% 126	36.33% 105	20.07% 58	289	2.24

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q28 Please use this space to make any other comments on the scheme

Answered: 58 Skipped: 436

#	Responses	Date
1	It depends what other services you'd cut and how much savings you have. If you expect residents to use their savings for bills then why doesn't the council do the same. If you want to keep your savings for emergencies then you have to respect residents to do the same.	12/11/2016 2:46 AM
2	Bringing the CTR scheme in line with the rules for other benefits is fair enough but I think that an increase in the CTX charge should also be brought in so that it isn't just the poorest/most vulnerable who are hit. Why should a well-off household be protected from a CTX increase whilst a poor family have their bill go up due to changes in the CTR scheme?	12/6/2016 4:02 PM
3	Other than a mortgage or rent the council tax is the next highest monthly bill and therefore it should not be increased any further. Using council savings is such a short term solution and should only be used in an emergency but not until they are exhausted.	12/4/2016 6:44 PM
4	Council tax it must be stressed is increasingly hurting lower paid workers. Most lower paid workers do not have the protection public sector workers have, we are enduring great hardship, higher taxes, hidden inflation, and the agony of greater transfers of our money to be better off. We need a cut in taxes now to compensate including local authority. Rubbish destructive policies like equalities proves government to be totally profligate with our money. It is morally wrong.	11/30/2016 5:01 PM
5	Savings are there to spend when the need arises.	11/29/2016 8:05 PM
6	Instead of making oversized restrictions and increases why not use the current model and use a simple +/- of 1%	11/28/2016 11:53 PM
7	The real problem is the excessively high rates of council tax currently charged - brought about by political manipulation in the Blair/Brown government. Councils must live within their means. Lower rates more equitably shared, with fewer categories for exemption/reduction, is the way forward.	11/28/2016 2:55 PM
8	Hire some traffic wardens to make the council money, like fbc	11/26/2016 11:15 PM
9	Appreciate	11/26/2016 10:10 PM
10	The largest houses in Gosport are taxed at a lower rate than they should be. People like me, who can afford to pay more to the benefit of Gosport, should be forced to do so. A higher band to take into greater account these larger properties with more affluent residents would raise a small amount of money to help offset costs and be fairer for society	11/26/2016 11:31 AM
11	An option you appear to have overlooked is saving costs through improving efficiency. I doubt very much the council is anywhere near to 80% efficient. The council needs to measure its cost versus service output efficiency and improve it year on year until it gets to at least 80%. Achieving efficiency of >80% should then be the on-going target to strive for until you achieve 95%, for sure this is more difficult but commercial organisations achieve it so there's no reason the Council cannot. The cost of those final 5 percentage points of efficiency to get to 100% are too expensive for the returns gained....don't even think about 100%.	11/25/2016 10:24 AM
12	Stop paying so much for mps outings and shit	11/24/2016 9:23 AM
13	It would have been nice to know how much savings the Council had and what this is intended for as this may have changed my rankings.	11/24/2016 9:11 AM
14	I'm on low income but I don't claim help with my council tax because I watch what I spend and like to pay my bills by myself. If the council tax goes up I may be forced to start claiming for help myself	11/23/2016 10:13 PM
15	Please when you make these decisions ensure that you consider that not all WORKING AGE families are able to work and have disabilities which prevent them from working or may care for someone with a disability.	11/23/2016 8:33 PM
16	If you put in proper tarmac lay by's you will not need grass cutting ext, in long run this will save money	11/23/2016 6:37 PM
17	All I know is that I'm already in dept for council tax and rent and can't afford to pay more. Maybe you should just require any of us over 40 who can't work or afford our bills to either live in large work house type places to save money on the cost of housing us, or literally have any of us who don't fancy that option put down so we don't have to live in shame and misery? But cutting the benefits to other essential services is also not the answer and makes us even more guilty and miserable than we already do? I feel very sorry for those who must make these decisions. But there are many areas in local councils and government where money is wasted and still need looking at?	11/23/2016 4:39 PM
18	Adults working full time should not have their council tax increased to pay for adults that aren't working. It is hard enough for families where both parents work as it is	11/23/2016 4:35 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

19	Maybe stop wasting money on surveys like this , and what need do we have for all the ex mayors sitting in the council office doing nothing . Duplicate letters wasting paper and postage . Try using your budget helping people in the community instead of own pockets this is why your elected . Bring more into the town centre hence bringing in more revenue.	11/23/2016 9:04 AM
20	Sorry but I'm sick of seeing people claiming these reductions when overall they have a higher disposable income than my family who work constantly hard to cover full payments on everything!	11/22/2016 10:37 PM
21	Until we know what the council has in savings, it's very difficult to comment on spending any of it	11/22/2016 9:34 PM
22	Help the poor to survive and stop helping the rich get richer quicker!	11/22/2016 9:32 PM
23	I would pay more council tax if you collected my bins weekly, for the love of god!!!	11/22/2016 7:51 PM
24	How can we make a judgement when we don't know what cuts and to which depts they would be? Also why is the council saving? We can't make an informed judgement when we don't know what the saving are for. Is it for an emergency, is it for a worthwhile project? How can you justify cutting services if there are savings not being used?	11/22/2016 7:00 PM
25	I think an overall look at all expenditure on the councils books needs looking at as we are not using our assets to generate revenue.	11/22/2016 12:48 PM
26	Savings must be used for one off payments or improvement schemes such as road works or capital investments. The council must use this money to improve resident's local areas as the money belongs to the residents and the council should not horde it. However it must be used wisely and not used for ongoing costs which are unsustainable.	11/22/2016 12:24 PM
27	Depending on the amount of savings the council has, and what income it gains from investments versus using them to backfill spending cuts.	11/21/2016 12:15 PM
28	services have already been cut to the bone	11/21/2016 10:45 AM
29	As Gosport share services with Portsmouth now there's lots of savings being made that can be spent on the borough of Gosport.	11/20/2016 11:05 AM
30	Please don't do this to the poor. It will create other problems elsewhere that will be more costly to sort out. People can barely hold their heads above the water now. The low income residents of gosport deserve better.	11/18/2016 4:46 PM
31	Gosport Council tax is already higher than many other councils, including Fareham, yet services are not as good. Too many people in Gosport receive too many benefits already.	11/18/2016 10:26 AM
32	As a pensioner myself I don't see why pensioners as a group should be treated any differently to anyone else. They should be subject to the same limits of assistance with council tax and housing benefit as other people. Those able to pay more in order to help those less well off than themselves should do so.	11/17/2016 12:07 PM
33	It's about time that people understand that if you want to get better services you have to pay for them. Overall we live in an affluent area and so this seems the obvious chose.	11/16/2016 8:29 PM
34	Stop sent letter thing what you doing	11/16/2016 2:00 PM
35	Sharing the burden over more people is fairer in my mind. Smaller reductions for all except the most vulnerable	11/15/2016 9:26 PM
36	It is difficult to be certain without access to the figures, but I favour a hybrid approach where the benefit is reduced slightly and the rest of us pay more. It is important that we share the burden, albeit biased by ability to pay. We are, after all, a community.	11/15/2016 5:41 PM
37	Wait for the Brexit policy to evolve.	11/15/2016 4:44 PM
38	The most important thing for Gosport's future prosperity is to focus its efforts on educating our children to a high standard - and promoting tourism and business development here to create jobs - and to retrain the unemployed. Supporting mothers to get back to work is also important. There are too many people here of working age who could retrain and work. Too many people find it easier to remain on benefits than to work.	11/15/2016 9:43 AM
39	I strongly believe that services should be reviewed, stripping out any wasteful steps and focussing on value work, led by the demands of customers. This would help to reduce council service costs and focus on the necessity and not luxury.	11/14/2016 7:48 PM
40	As a pensioner who receives no reduction in council tax or any other benefits I consider a reduction in assistance to low income families is the correct decision. Pensioners and working families not entitled to these benefits should not be expected to shoulder the burden of low income families.	11/14/2016 2:56 PM
41	This scheme exists to provide help to vulnerable members of society when they need it. I am now quite well off, but in my youth (living elsewhere) I needed council tax benefit. Without it, I would have incurred more debts that I would not have been able to pay. I would have likely had court judgements made against me, making it more difficult to get out of poverty. Cutting this kind of support is attacking the poor, who need our help. Those of us, like me, who are affluent can afford to contribute more so that the poorest are supported. We have a moral obligation to do so; a Christian obligation to do so.	11/14/2016 1:23 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

42	I know from working within the council there are many more cost effective reductions that should be made instead of making people like my son and I suffer not able to eat because we do not "fit" the criteria for free school meals or foodbank help.	11/14/2016 11:01 AM
43	Would strongly advise not to do any of the three suggestions in Q26	11/13/2016 10:57 PM
44	Bringing the criteria for Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit into line will assist in simplifying the administration process and make it less complicated for applicants	11/10/2016 1:17 PM
45	I find it wrong that our most vulnerable residents are being asked to pay for the mistakes the Government have made by failing to ensure the rich pay their tax in full.	11/4/2016 3:08 PM
46	The changes seem to fall on the already less well off. Things are hard enough.	11/4/2016 11:47 AM
47	I don't think it is an option to do one or the other. Except for using the Council's saving all the options need to be used to solve this problem. Using the Council's savings is not a solution it just moves the problem to a later date and creates another problem of having less capital to invest requiring more borrowing for investment which brings more costs from interest payments.	11/1/2016 3:52 PM
48	Without knowing the savings amount required for the Council and the predicted amount that each of the measures would save it is impossible to decide whether it is the correct decision when there will be an adverse effect on some of the poorest constituents	10/28/2016 2:38 PM
49	Reduce funding available for other council services, increase council tax and reduce subsidies to low income families - small amount to all three.	10/24/2016 6:05 PM
50	The scheme no doubt provides and supports those most vulnerable and on a low income but it is important that adequate measures ensure it is not abused.	10/22/2016 2:43 PM
51	Cutting aid to the poorest and those most vulnerable is deplorable, the system is complicated already and expecting them to apply 'on line' seems cruel. More assistance should be given to help those already known to the system and easier for those who find themselves in difficult circumstances	10/22/2016 1:42 PM
52	leave the poor ALONE, we find it hard enough. I am going to create a new PARTY, and that will involve GETTING RID OF THE CONSERVATIVE STRONGHOLD IN GOSPORT. I will ask ALL council staff to support me.	10/21/2016 11:06 PM
53	People living on low-mid range incomes/benefits are already being stretched to the very limit thanks to central Government cuts and they rely heavily on things like the CTRS to get by. There is a large group of people who have additional needs but who do not qualify for additional help anymore due to government cuts. Some of these people have already been squeezed as they were previously exempt from paying Council tax at all. I appreciate that as a local government, you are being put in an impossible position by central government with enforced austerity measures, but as a person with an ongoing medical condition, I am someone who has already been affected by government cuts by changes to the criteria for additional financial support (in my case to help me live with an illness that affects my mobility - the costs associated with meeting my and my family's needs means I am further stretched as I get no additional help other than the same benefits anyone would get). There are lots of people on low-mid-range incomes/benefits who are no longer able to apply for additional help for various issues they are facing in their lives, that cost them money over and above 'normal' living costs. They may have additional personal needs like me, or be in specific situations that make their life more difficult financially. Childcare costs for pre-school children alone make it impossible for single parent families with young children or families where both parents earn low incomes to make returning to work full-time financially viable, so are stuck in a poverty trap of part time work and low incomes). It is these kinds of people who cannot take the increase in financial outgoings. Please do not put additional financial pressure on families that have young children to support. It is ultimately the already vulnerable children who suffer in these cases.	10/21/2016 2:01 PM
54	make working people pay more	10/20/2016 2:07 PM
55	OVERALL THE BASIS IS CORRECT BUT I MUST REITERATE THIS SHOULD NOT EFFECT THE DISABLED LIVING AMONGST US THERE LIVES ARE DIFFICULT ENOUGH ALREADY THEY CANNOT DO ANYTHING TO LIFT THERE INCOME	10/20/2016 1:50 PM
56	If the scheme is accepted there must be protection added to help the poorest.	10/20/2016 12:25 PM
57	Local authority spending cuts have already had a drastic effect on services to the most needy.	10/18/2016 3:58 PM
58	On the whole, Council Services in Gosport, and the people providing them, are excellent. They have already been cut to the bone so everything should be done to maintain them at this level. Unfortunately, that means we possibly have to pay a bit more for what we get.	10/18/2016 12:12 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q29 Please use the space below if you would like the Council to consider any other options (please state)

Answered: 32 Skipped: 462

#	Responses	Date
1	Go paperless.Housing benefit applications aren't even available on paper forms anymore,It has to be done online yet,after receiving the benefit,you get a million sheets of paper in the post.You'd save lots of money on paper,ink,postage if you switched to email or at least gave the option to residents.You'd also be helping to save the planet and I think you'll find the majority of people would be happy without the extra paperwork.	12/11/2016 2:46 AM
2	Are these the only savings that have been identified and could others be made from other council costs that are not included here?	12/4/2016 6:44 PM
3	20% pay cut for council staff to bring local authorities in line with private sector workers many of whom are working for half the pay they were before the massive increase in public spending that bought on this endless recession.	11/30/2016 5:01 PM
4	Gosport is a small place and it absolutely does not warrant having it's own council. I propose the council is disbanded and Fareham council becomes Gosport & Fareham council. This would really save money which is being wasted. The town Hall could then be sold off to developers to improve the horrible high street.	11/29/2016 8:05 PM
5	a) Reductions in the wage rates paid to council senior officers.b) Streamlining functions at every level, with consequent reduction in number of departments.c) Deletion of spurious categories for claims against council expenditure.d) More focused income generation from council provided services, especially built estate related functions.	11/28/2016 2:55 PM
6	Introduce a local lottery like Portsmouth has...look for other innovative ways to generate income	11/26/2016 10:10 PM
7	An option you appear to have overlooked is saving costs through improving efficiency. I doubt very much the council is anywhere near to 80% efficient. The council needs to measure it's cost versus service output efficiency and improve it year on year until it gets to at least 80%. Achieving efficiency of >80% should then be the on-going target to strive for until you achieve 95%, for sure this is more difficult but commercial organisations achieve it so there's no reason the Council cannot. The cost of those final 5 percentage points of efficiency to get to 100% are too expensive for the returns gained....don't even think about 100%.	11/25/2016 10:24 AM
8	Bring back our emergency services stop wasting money or scroungers	11/24/2016 9:23 AM
9	Build using low cost housing systems. Modern prefabricated units are available and you have land. The scandal of housing benefit is a cancer that is consuming needed resources. Slum landlord's are lining their pockets at the expense of our community.	11/23/2016 6:43 PM
10	Stop giving money (grants) to places that don't need them i.e. Thorngate Gosport Borough football club . And others that council members are involved in	11/23/2016 9:28 AM
11	Those who receive benefits and are not at work, due to never applying for jobs or cannot be bothered. They should be trained to some "street cleaning rolls" minimal training. If they want reductions they should at least do something to achieve that.	11/23/2016 9:00 AM
12	It's not hard, the discounts are too high, before this I never knew just how high they were.	11/22/2016 10:37 PM
13	People need to contribute but it needs to be fair. Basing it on income is fair. Those who have more money coming in pay 30/35% and it reduces with the wage you have coming in. It should also be capped to two children and you should not have any savings. How you can have savings and claim to need help living is beyond me. There are people out there who have no savings at all and need help and have a low income because they can't get another job. These are the people who need help.	11/22/2016 9:53 PM
14	-Deducting the extortionate pay and funding of the Mayoress, Lynn Hook -Deducting the extortionate pay and funding of the Council Leader, Mark Hook -Deducting the extortionate pay of other high end councillors -Cut the price of the well overpriced hostels and help yourselves and the homeless! -Stop wasting money on unnecessary things like Christmas Lights that are decades old.	11/22/2016 9:32 PM
15	Make community service mandatory for jobseekers. This would save the council money, make my bin collections more frequent and make it less favourable for them to fleece the system! And would provide jobseekers with valuable work experience....win/win	11/22/2016 7:51 PM
16	Needs to be a nationwide council forum that councils meet at and discuss schemes that have and not worked within their boroughs.	11/22/2016 12:48 PM
17	we have seen very little increase in council tax in the last 10 years. People who earn levels about benefit levels can afford to pay a little more. If I saw an increase of say about £10 per month I would think that reasonable	11/21/2016 10:45 AM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

18	Reduction on the amount for service providers. Reduction on Grants etc	11/16/2016 1:20 AM
19	Plan for carbon emission policy and electric vehicles. Utilise existing HCC and GBC assets (space) to raise revenue.	11/15/2016 4:44 PM
20	Education, education, education. More support for local schools and libraries. Invest in tourism - we need visitors to come to Gosport. And improve transport links across the harbour. Sell off any redundant property for businesses (not houses). Sell the Town Hall and move to modern, smaller office space,	11/15/2016 9:43 AM
21	The cuts should be adjusted by certain groups not a blanket cut for everyone except pensioners. There are single parents with children under 5, they should be in their own category, and come infant school age, then the tax reduction should be reduced as in theory the parent is able to work, or work more hours due to the hours the child is at school. Everyone should not be group as "working age" as there are legitimate reasons of not being employed.	11/14/2016 2:50 PM
22	Lobby central government to undo damaging cuts to social welfare, including the cuts to housing benefit. These cuts can only increase poverty, homelessness and crime.	11/14/2016 1:23 PM
23	Reduce marketing and encourage local schools/companies to provide/design leaflets or christmas campaigns. The electoral system could make drastic cutbacks in the "paper system" it hasn't done so in the past.	11/14/2016 11:01 AM
24	Use the savings the Council have to keep the status quo and when they are gone Hand Gosport over to the Government and tell them to try and manage with the pittance they are prepared to allocate to Gosport without penalising the poor and disabled.	11/4/2016 3:08 PM
25	Make the winter fuel allowance for OAP's mean tested, most of them are not in need of it and many low earners/ single parents could benefit instead	11/4/2016 2:54 PM
26	Look at the amounts spent on councillors and the number of councillors we have for our small borough	11/1/2016 5:43 PM
27	Raise public awareness to effectiveness of existing services and contractors who agree to profit caps using 'open book accounting', nothing hidden.	10/24/2016 6:05 PM
28	None	10/22/2016 2:43 PM
29	Protection of poorest should be priority, can we look at raising rate for most valuable properties as these are most likely to be least adversely affected by financial impact , time for the more affluent to step up	10/22/2016 1:42 PM
30	1) dimming street lighting after a certain time at night 2)stopping unnecessary road improvements and be more thought about 3) introduce on the spot fines for littering	10/20/2016 10:21 PM
31	make working people pay more	10/20/2016 2:07 PM
32	Don't have a pay rise to save money	10/19/2016 5:32 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q30 If you have any further comments or questions to make regarding the Council Tax Reduction scheme that you haven't had opportunity to raise elsewhere, please use the space below

Answered: 22 Skipped: 472

#	Responses	Date
1	If residents of CTR are being penalised then so should Housing benefit as I cant claim HB as I own my property after selling and moving from Reading.	12/9/2016 9:01 PM
2	All taxes are much much to high. People cant afford to pay. Civil servants and politicians have never ever been so out of touch with reality.	11/30/2016 5:01 PM
3	Council tax rates are too high and the banding arrangements have become politicized and arbitrary. Too many claimants for reductions are subsidized by the full payments of other council tax payers. Senior citizens on fixed pensions paying full council taxes are discriminated against simply on the basis of lifetime savings exceeding reduction limits. The council tax principle of 'payment for services' has been subverted since the mid 90s by the use of council taxes to pay the salaries of many people in "non-jobs" who are Labour Party supporters. This welfare-dependency culture has been ruinous for local government financing. THERE SHOULD BE NO POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT. ALL COUNCILLORS SHOULD SIT AS INDEPENDENTS.	11/28/2016 2:55 PM
4	Leave the disabled and low income households alone please. The benefit cap is bad enough. Surely with all the extra houses being built in Gosport council tax income has increased!	11/28/2016 10:00 AM
5	Appreciate central government is putting the squeeze on the local council and you have to balance the books but the middle class are getting it from both ends as well increasing council tax as default isn't the way forward, we need to keep working people in Gosport not drive them out..... If an increase is required, please make sure it is balanced between those receiving benefits and those that are not	11/26/2016 10:10 PM
6	The thought of increase in my council tax is frightening. Living in a 2 bed house with my husband both retired and paying council tax E - I think we pay more than our fair share. Perhaps the council should ensure they don't waste money. Don't think I feel qualified, well informed enough to answer most questions. The whole benefit system needs changing. People on benefits if their circumstances change due to having more children then tough. Why should we keep paying for them.	11/26/2016 9:22 PM
7	An option you appear to have overlooked is saving costs through improving efficiency. I doubt very much the council is anywhere near to 80% efficient. The council needs to measure it's cost versus service output efficiency and improve it year on year until it gets to at least 80%. Achieving efficiency of >80% should then be the on-going target to strive for until you achieve 95%, for sure this is more difficult but commercial organisations achieve it so there's no reason the Council cannot. The cost of those final 5 percentage points of efficiency to get to 100% are too expensive for the returns gained....don't even think about 100%.	11/25/2016 10:24 AM
8	Homes with disabled children and carers should be exempt from ALL of these changes. Life is hard enough for them.	11/23/2016 11:26 PM
9	I'm fed up of seeing people who don't work much having everything handed to them on a plate.	11/23/2016 10:13 PM
10	Don't make us working people pay even more!	11/22/2016 7:51 PM
11	People who are in receipt of benefits do not have the worry of losing their home, where as people who are working and supporting their children and have a drop in income currently do. It seems wrong that if you work hard and pay full rent you have this worry but if you are benefits your quite safe. Benefits should only be in place to help in times of desperate need.	11/22/2016 3:31 PM
12	I don't think you should put up the council tax for normal working people. We pay enough out for people who like to scrounge. How about rewarding the working people who pay their way for a change!	11/22/2016 2:21 PM
13	the working poor are paying high rents and getting low wages and can not afford to carry the burden.	11/21/2016 10:45 AM
14	In addition to reducing the capital used to access claims I feel an individuals lifestyle should be looked at. Eg how many holidays they have a year, where they go, what kind of car they drive. In my view I am old fashioned and believe if you can afford to go on holiday twice a year, afford to run a car then you should not be entitled to beneficial support. For example I have a joint income of 33K, entitled to no benefits, can't afford to go on holiday once a year. We struggle but get through.	11/20/2016 10:25 PM
15	It anther keep people in job for doing nothing	11/16/2016 2:00 PM

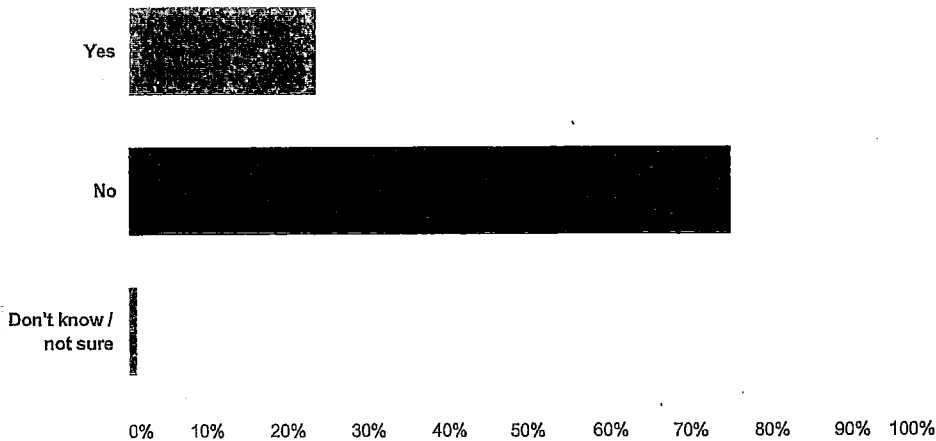
Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

16	Years ago we had a consultation about the Supertram and Rapid Transit bus route. Traffic census data was obtained but we were not permitted to have the information provided to us on the grounds that it was commercially important. Gosport residents need to have that information made available. We need to know why Gosport people are commuting on the A32 and where they are travelling to. Planning is getting to be urgent. Employment costs need to be trimmed and value returned to the commuters and their councils. There is a lot of capacity available on the Rapid Transit bus route. There needs to be a diversion of money away from the petrol station and into infrastructure and the home.	11/15/2016 4:44 PM
17	If you cut any more and continue to outsource functions to neighbouring councils, the questions has to be asked about whether GBC is viable any longer as a stand-alone authority.	11/15/2016 9:43 AM
18	The council should consider all options to endeavour to generate income, one issue is that Central Government ties the hands of Local Authorities. Perhaps the question to ask is why Local Authorities (democratically elected institutions) cannot be given greater autonomy with regards to generating funds. Also perhaps Local Authorities should not be required to pay Central Government funds which the Local Authority has raised.	11/11/2016 5:57 PM
19	There is no indication at all of how much we would be asked to pay. There seems to be an assumption that the less well off should automatically bear the burden.	11/4/2016 11:47 AM
20	Good luck!	10/24/2016 6:05 PM
21	I think the scheme should have limits providing support at the time of need whilst ensuring it is not just an additional income source or a way of just avoiding paying your way. In that respect I think the scheme should be limited to an equivalent of 24 months payments either continuously or cumulatively within a 5 year period (things like time on maternity leave to be disregarded). I do not think it should be payable at all if you are in receipt of housing benefit i.e you claim one or the other whichever is the greatest. It is otherwise two bites of the cherry for help towards housing costs	10/22/2016 2:43 PM
22	make working people pay more	10/20/2016 2:07 PM

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q31 Are you, or someone in your household, getting a Council Tax Reduction at this time?

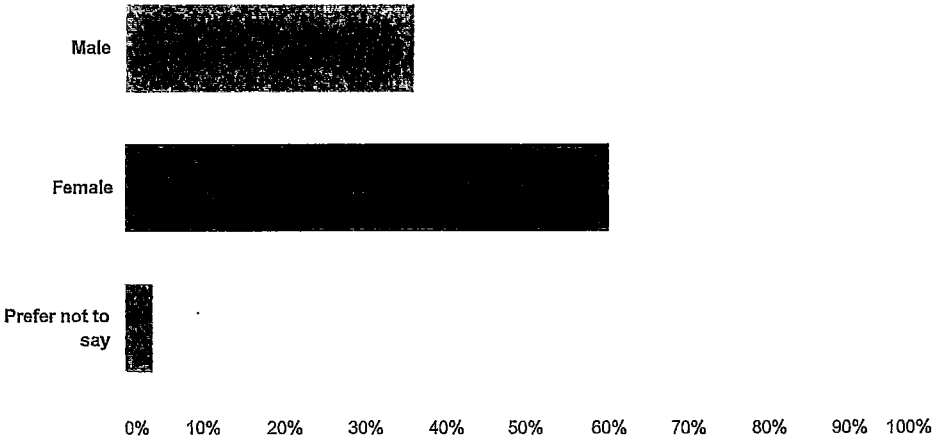
Answered: 296 Skipped: 198



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	23.65%	70
No	75.00%	222
Don't know / not sure	1.35%	4
Total		296

Q32 What is your sex?

Answered: 296 Skipped: 198

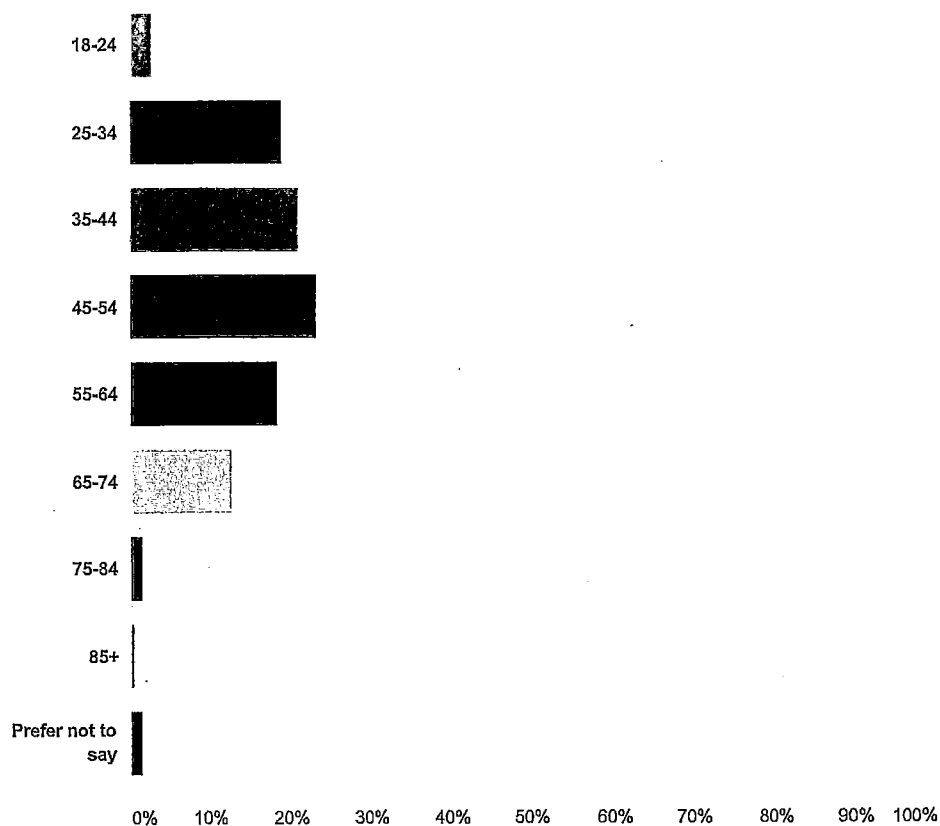


Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	36.15%	107
Female	60.14%	178
Prefer not to say	3.72%	11
Total		296

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q33 Age

Answered: 290 Skipped: 204

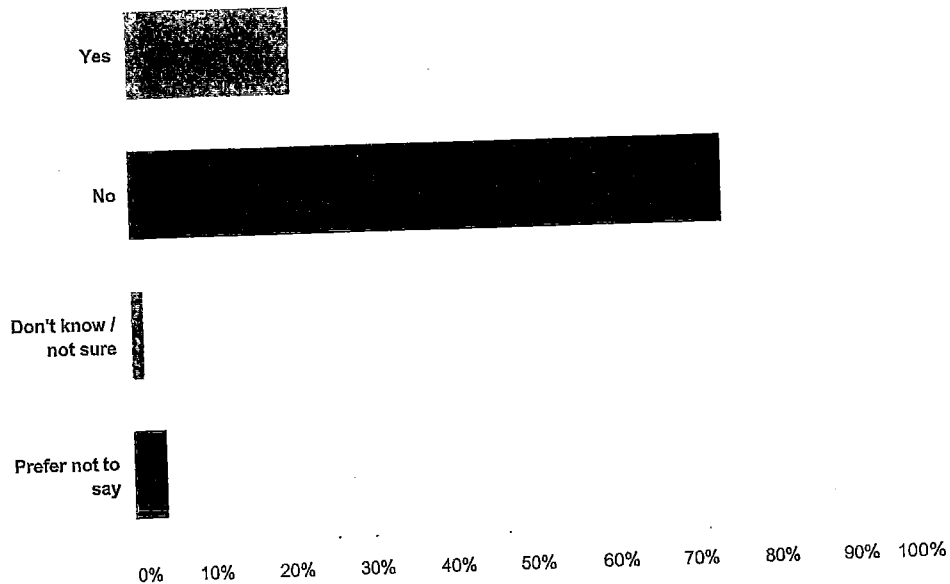


Answer Choices	Responses	
18-24	2.76%	8
25-34	18.97%	55
35-44	21.03%	61
45-54	23.10%	67
55-64	18.28%	53
65-74	12.76%	37
75-84	1.38%	4
85+	0.34%	1
Prefer not to say	1.38%	4
Total		290

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Q34 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?

Answered: 291 Skipped: 203



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	20.62%	60
No	73.54%	214
Don't know / not sure	1.72%	5
Prefer not to say	4.12%	12
Total		291

Q35 Ethnic Origin: What is your ethnic group?

Answered: 284 Skipped: 210

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Prefer not to
say



White - British



White - Irish



White - Gypsy
or Irish...

Any other
White...



Mixed/Multiple
ethnic group...

Mixed/Multiple
ethnic group...

Mixed/Multiple
ethnic group...

Mixed/Multiple
ethnic group...

Asian or Asian
British -...

Asian or Asian
British -...

Asian or Asian
British -...



Asian or Asian
British -...

Asian or Asian
British - An...

Black/African/C
aribbean/Bla...

Black/African/C
aribbean/Bla...

Black/African/C
aribbean/Bla...



Other Ethnic
Group - Arab

Other Ethnic
Group - Other



Other (please
specify)



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Answer Choices

Responses

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

Prefer not to say	5.99%	17
White - British	89.79%	255
White - Irish	1.06%	3
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.00%	0
Any other White background	1.41%	4
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African	0.35%	1
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	0.00%	0
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	0.00%	0
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - Any other multi mixed background	0.00%	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0.00%	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0.00%	0
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.35%	1
Asian or Asian British - Chinese	0.00%	0
Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian background	0.00%	0
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African	0.00%	0
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean	0.00%	0
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Any other Black background	0.35%	1
Other Ethnic Group - Arab	0.00%	0
Other Ethnic Group - Other	0.35%	1
Other (please specify)	0.35%	1
Total		284

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	White English	11/23/2016 10:54 PM

Gosport Borough Council

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

What is this about?

Gosport Borough Council has a difficult financial situation to manage over the coming years and will have to make savings and increase income. Part of these savings could come from reducing the amount of financial help provided to residents on low incomes through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

What is Council Tax Reduction?

Council Tax Reduction is a discount for Council Tax. The level of discount is based on the income of the household. Currently the maximum discount is 80% of Council Tax for working age households and up to 100% for pensioners. In addition, the support to working age households is limited to the amount of Council Tax for a Band C premises. There are no proposals within this consultation to change the band capping within the scheme.

Why is a change to the Council Tax Reduction scheme being considered?

Until April 2013 there was a national scheme called Council Tax Benefit. The Government made local Councils responsible for replacement schemes from 1 April 2013 and reduced funding to support the schemes. Since then, funding has further reduced. We also need to make amendments to keep the Council Tax Reduction in line with Housing Benefit which we also administer to keep administration costs low.

Who will this affect?

Working age households in the Borough who currently receive or will apply for Council Tax Reduction. Pension age households will **not** be affected as Central Government prescribed the scheme.

Are there any alternatives to changing the existing Council Tax Reduction scheme?

We have also thought about other ways to make the spending cuts we need to make and maintain the current scheme's level of financial support. These have not been completely rejected and you are asked about them in the Questionnaire, but at the moment we do not think we should implement them for the reasons given.

We have considered:

1 Increase Council Tax

This would mean all council tax payers in the Borough paying towards the scheme.

2 Reduce funding to other Council services

Keeping the current Council Tax Reduction scheme will mean less money available to deliver other Council services; or

3 Use the Council's savings to keep the Council Tax Reduction scheme

Using savings would be a short-term option. Once used they will no longer be available to support and invest in other Council services.

Questionnaire

Have Your Say on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Q1.

I have read the background information about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme:

☒ Yes ☐ No

This question must be answered before you can continue.

Paying for the Scheme

Q2.

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

☐ No ☒ Yes ☐ Don't know

Q3.

Please use the space below to make any comments you have on protecting the Council Tax Reduction Scheme from cuts.

I have Chosen Yes, as this scheme really does help people on low incomes, I myself am a single parent, with no help from the father, and unfortunately at the moment rely on the help I get.

I hope for the future this won't always be the case, but at the moment paying full Council tax would be a real struggle to find. I understand cut backs need to be made, but it's a shame the areas it's needed the most are affected, most recently the closing of much needed children's centres falling victim to this.

Options to change the current Council Tax Reduction scheme

As explained in the background information, the Council is primarily consulting on the following proposals to change the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme from 1st April 2017, which would reduce the cost of the scheme. Your responses are a part of this consultation. Set out below are the proposals being considered.

Option 1 – Reducing the maximum level of support for working age applicants from 80% to 75%

The Council currently can provide support up to 80% towards an applicant's Council Tax. This is limited to a Band C level, so any applicant who lives in a property with a higher band would receive support calculated on this basis. The proposed option would require all working age applicants to pay a minimum payment of 25%. It would mean that for a typical Band C property, the minimum payment would be £6.44 per week or £4.83 per week if the applicant has a single person discount. These figures are based on the Council Tax payable for 2016/17 year. Reducing the maximum level of support available is a simple change to the scheme which is easily understood. The Council is conscious that any minimum payment must be affordable given the household's circumstances.

The benefits of this are:

- It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand.
- It is fair because everyone shares the increase

The drawback of doing this is:

- All working age households receiving Council Tax Reduction will be required to pay more.

Q4.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

(If to be any this one)

Q5.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Option 3 – Reducing the maximum level of support for working age applicants from 80% to 65%

The Council currently can provide support up to 80% towards an applicant's Council Tax. This is limited to a Band C level so any applicant who lives in a property with a higher band would receive support calculated on this basis. The proposed option would require all working age applicants to pay a minimum payment of 35%. It would mean that for a typical Band C property, the minimum payment would be £9.01 per week or £6.76 per week if the applicant has a single person discount. These figures are based on the Council Tax payable for 2016/17 year. Reducing the maximum level of support available is a simple change to the scheme which is easily understood. The Council is conscious that any minimum payment must be affordable given the household's circumstances.

The benefits of this are:

- It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand.
- It is fair because everyone shares the increase

The drawback of doing this is:

- All working age households receiving Council Tax Reduction will be required to pay more.

Q8.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q9.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

First proposal, as it isn't such a big leap.

Option 2 – Reducing the maximum level of support for working age applicants from 80% to 70%

The Council currently can provide support up to 80% towards an applicant's Council Tax. This is limited to a Band C level so any applicant who lives in a property with a higher band would receive support calculated on this basis. The proposed option would require all working age applicants to pay a minimum payment of 30%. It would mean that for a typical Band C property, the minimum payment would be £7.73 per week or £5.79 if the applicant has a single person discount. These figures are based on the Council Tax payable for 2016/17 year. Reducing the maximum level of support available is a simple change to the scheme which is easily understood. The Council is conscious that any minimum payment must be affordable given the household's circumstances.

The benefits of this are:

- It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand.
- It is fair because everyone shares the increase

The drawback of doing this is:

- All working age households receiving Council Tax Reduction will be required to pay more.

Q6.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q7.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

The above.

Option 4 – Removing the Family Premium for all new working age applicants

The removal of family premium from 1st April 2017 for new claims will bring the Council Tax Reduction scheme in line with Housing Benefit. The family premium is part of how we assess the 'needs' of any applicant which is compared with their income. Family Premium is normally given when an applicant has at least one dependant child living with them. Removing the family premium will mean that when we assess an applicant's needs it would not include the family premium (currently £17.40 per week). This change would **not** affect those on Universal Credit, Income Support, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance or Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance.

The benefit of this is:

- It brings the working age Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with Housing Benefit changes proposed by Central Government. The change has already been introduced for pension age applicants by Central Government;

The drawbacks of doing this are:

- New working age residents may see a reduction in the amount of support they received.
- Some households with children will pay more

Q10.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q11.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

The first proposal, if any.

Option 5 - Reducing Backdating to 1 month

Currently claims for Council Tax Reduction from working age applicants can be backdated for up to 6 months where an applicant shows they could not claim at an earlier time. Central Government has reduced the period for Housing Benefit claims to 1 month. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme be aligned with the changes for Housing Benefit.

The benefit of this is:

- It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand when claiming Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

The drawback of this is:

- New working age residents may see a reduction in the amount of support they received if they are unable to claim on time.

Q12.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

Q13.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Option 6 - Reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks

Within the current scheme, applicants can be temporarily absent from their homes without it affecting the Council Tax Reduction. This replicated the rule within Housing Benefit. Housing Benefit has been changed so that if a person is absent from Great Britain for a period of more than 4 weeks, their benefit will cease. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect the changes in Housing Benefit. There will be exceptions for certain occupations.

The benefits of the Council this are:

- The treatment of temporary absence will be brought into line with Housing Benefit
- It is seen as fair
- There are exceptions for certain occupations including the armed forces and mariners.

The drawback of this is:

- If a person is absent from Great Britain for a period which is likely to exceed 4 weeks, their Council Tax Reduction will cease from when they leave the Country. They will need to re-apply on return

Q14.

Do you agree with the change to the temporary absence rule?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

Q15.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Option 7 - To remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of the current scheme for new Employment and Support Allowance applicants.

From April 2017, all new applicants of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) who fall within the Work Related Activity Group will no longer receive the component in either their ESA or within the calculation of Housing Benefit. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect the changes.

The benefits of the Council doing this are:

- The treatment of ESA will be brought into line with Housing Benefit
- It avoids additional costs to the Council Tax Reduction scheme.
- Persons receiving ESA will not experience any reduction in Council Tax Reduction.

There is no drawback

Q16.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

Q17.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Option 8 - To limit the number of dependant children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two

Within the current scheme, applicants who have children are awarded a dependant's addition of £64.99 per child within their applicable amounts. There is no limit to the number of dependant's additions that can be awarded. From April 2017 Central Government will be limiting dependant's additions in Universal Credit, Housing Benefit and Tax Credits to a maximum of two. This will only affect households who have a third or subsequent child on or after 1st April 2017. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect the changes in Housing Benefit and Central Government Benefits. There will be exceptions where: there are multiple births after 1st April 2017 (and the household is not already at their maximum of two dependants within the calculation); adopted children or where households merge.

The benefits of the Council doing this are:

- Council Tax Reduction will be brought into line with Housing Benefit, Universal Credit and Tax Credits
- It is simple and administratively easy

The drawbacks of doing this are:

- Applicants who have a third or subsequent child after 1st April 2017 (and are not excepted from the rules) may receive less Council Tax reduction than an applicant who has more children born before 1st April 2017

Q18.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

Q19.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Option 9 – To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers Element) to look after them

Currently when another person is paid Carers Allowance to look after a Council Tax Reduction applicant, then the Severe Disability Premium is not included when working out their needs (Applicable Amounts). The reason for this is that it avoids paying for the same care twice. This proposed change will align the scheme with Housing Benefit by treating persons who receive the Universal Credit (Carers Element) in the same way as anyone receiving Carers Allowance

The benefit of this is:

- Council Tax Reduction will be brought into line with Housing Benefit;
- It is simple and administratively easy

The drawbacks of doing this are:

- There are no drawbacks to this change as persons receiving Universal Credit (Carers Element) will be treated in the same way as those receiving Carers Allowance who look after any person who claims Council Tax Reduction

Q20.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

(Because there are no drawbacks)

Q21.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?



Option 10 - To disregard 70% of the new postgraduate loans in the calculation of Council Tax Support

The Government has introduced a new loan for Post Graduate students from this Academic Year. Most students (unless vulnerable) will not normally qualify for Council Tax Support and in certain cases may be disregarded from Council Tax altogether. All welfare benefits have been adjusted to disregard 70% of any new Post Graduate loan to take account of the amount the student will spend on books, travel etc. It is proposed that our Council Tax Support Scheme be aligned with these changes

The benefit of this is:

- It will bring the Council Tax Support Scheme into line with other welfare benefits

The drawback of this is:

- None

Q22.

Do you agree with the principle that 70% of any new postgraduate loan should be disregarded?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

Q23.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Option 11 - Reduce the capital limit from the existing £16,000 to £6,000

At present, residents with savings, capital and investments of more than £16,000 are not entitled to any Council Tax Reduction. Under the proposed change; this limit would be reduced to £6,000.

The benefits of this are:

- Only those working age residents with at least £6000 in savings will be affected.
- There is a low risk to causing any hardship

The drawback of this is:

- Where a working age resident has in excess of £6,000 in savings, no reduction whatsoever will be payable.

Q24.

Do you agree with the principle that the capital limit should be reduced to £6000?

☒ Yes ☐ No

☐ Don't know

Q25.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Inbetween. Probably more to YES, as it protects a low risk to hardship, although people do need security and £16,000 isn't a lot in the grand scheme of things, but if it were to protect Council tax benefit then Yes.

Alternatives to reducing the amount of help provided by the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

If the Council keeps the current scheme, we will need to find savings from other services to help meet the expected reduction in Government funding. The proposals set out in this consultation could deliver savings. The alternatives are set out in the background information.

Q26.

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.

Q26.1.

Increase the level of Council Tax

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Don't know

Q26.2.

Find savings from cutting other Council Services

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Don't know

Q26.3.

Use the Council's savings

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Don't know



GOSPORT
Borough Council

Q27.

If the Council were to choose these other options to make savings, what would be your order of preference? Please rank in order of preference by writing a number from 1 – 3 in the boxes below, where 1 is the option that you would most prefer and 3 is the least.

Increase the level of Council Tax

☐

Reduce funding available for other Council Services

☐

Use the Council's savings

☐

Q28.

Please use this space to make any other comments on the scheme.

Q29.

Please use the space below if you would like the Council to consider any other options (please state).

Q30.

If you have any further comments or questions to make regarding the Council Tax Reduction scheme that you haven't had opportunity to raise elsewhere, please use the space below.

About You

We ask these questions:

1. To find out if different groups of people in the Council's population have been able to take part in the consultation and identify if any groups have been excluded. This means it is not about you as an individual but to find out if people with similar characteristics have had their say.
2. To find out if different groups of people feel differently about the options and proposals in comparison to each other and all respondents. This means it is not about you as an individual but to find out if people with similar characteristics have answered in the same way or not.

This information is completely confidential and anonymous. Your personal information will not be passed on to anyone and your personal details will not be reported alongside your responses.

Q31.

Are you, or someone in your household, getting a Council Tax Reduction at this time?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know/Not sure

Q32.

What is your sex?

☐ Male ☒ Female ☐ Prefer not to say

Q33.

Age

☐ 18-24 ☒ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65-74 ☐ 75-84 ☐ 85+ ☐ Prefer not to say

Q34.

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?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know/Not sure ☐ Prefer not to say

Q35.

Ethnic Origin: What is your ethnic group?

☐ Prefer not to say

White

☒ British ☐ Irish ☐ Gypsy or Irish Traveller ☐ Any other White background

Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups

☐ White & Black African ☐ White & Black Caribbean ☐ White & Asian ☐ Any other multi mixed background

Asian or Asian British

☐ Pakistani ☐ Indian ☐ Bangladeshi ☐ Chinese ☐ Any other Asian background

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British

☐ African ☐ Caribbean ☐ Any other Black background

Other Ethnic Group

☐ Arab ☐ Other – please specify below:

Gosport Borough Council Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Questionnaire

What is this about?

Gosport Borough Council has a difficult financial situation to manage over the coming years and will have to make savings and increase income. Part of these savings **could** come from reducing the amount of financial help provided to residents on low incomes through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

What is Council Tax Reduction?

Council Tax Reduction is a discount for Council Tax. The level of discount is based on the income of the household. Currently the maximum discount is 80% of Council Tax for working age households and up to 100% for pensioners. In addition, the support to working age households is limited to the amount of Council Tax for a Band C premises. There are no proposals within this consultation to change the band capping within the scheme.

Why is a change to the Council Tax Reduction scheme being considered?

Until April 2013 there was a national scheme called Council Tax Benefit. The Government made local Councils responsible for replacement schemes from 1 April 2013 and reduced funding to support the schemes. Since then, funding has further reduced. We also need to make amendments to keep the Council Tax Reduction in line with Housing Benefit which we also administer to keep administration costs low.

Who will this affect?

Working age households in the Borough who currently receive or will apply for Council Tax Reduction. Pension age households will **not** be affected as Central Government prescribed the scheme.

Are there any alternatives to changing the existing Council Tax Reduction scheme?

We have also thought about other ways to make the spending cuts we need to make and maintain the current scheme's level of financial support. These have not been completely rejected and you are asked about them in the Questionnaire, but at the moment ~~we~~ ^{we} do not think we should implement them for the reasons given.

We have considered:

1 Increase Council Tax

This would mean all council tax payers in the Borough paying towards the scheme.

2 Reduce funding to other Council services

Keeping the current Council Tax Reduction scheme will mean less money available to deliver other Council services; or

3 Use the Council's savings to keep the Council Tax Reduction scheme

Using savings would be a short-term option. Once used they will no longer be available to support and invest in other Council services.

THE BENEFITS SECTION
DATE OF RECEIPT
07 NOV 2016

POST
Borough Council of Gosport

Questionnaire

Have Your Say on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Q1.

I have read the background information about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme:

☒ Yes ☐ No

This question must be answered before you can continue.

Paying for the Scheme

Q2.

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

☐ No ☒ Yes ☐ Don't know

Q3.

Please use the space below to make any comments you have on protecting the Council Tax Reduction Scheme from cuts.

NO RE TAX COULD BE MADE FROM THE WEALTHY, THE LARGER
PROPERTY OWNERS

Options to change the current Council Tax Reduction scheme

As explained in the background information, the Council is primarily consulting on the following proposals to change the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme from 1st April 2017, which would reduce the cost of the scheme. Your responses are a part of this consultation. Set out below are the proposals being considered.

Option 1 – Reducing the maximum level of support for working age applicants from 80% to 75%

The Council currently can provide support up to 80% towards an applicant's Council Tax. This is limited to a Band C level, so any applicant who lives in a property with a higher band would receive support calculated on this basis. The proposed option would require all working age applicants to pay a minimum payment of 25%. It would mean that for a typical Band C property, the minimum payment would be £6.44 per week or £4.83 per week if the applicant has a single person discount. These figures are based on the Council Tax payable for 2016/17 year. Reducing the maximum level of support available is a simple change to the scheme which is easily understood. The Council is conscious that any minimum payment must be affordable given the household's circumstances.

The benefits of this are:

- It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand.
- It is fair because everyone shares the increase

The drawback of doing this is:

- All working age households receiving Council Tax Reduction will be required to pay more.

Q4.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q5.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

INCREASE THE TAX OF OLDER PEOPLE WHO HAVE PLENTY OF MONEY
IF THE COUNCIL HAS "SAVINGS" AS MENTIONED IN THE INFO GIVEN WHY
DOES IT NEED TO REDUCE THE REDUCTION. I'M ON ESH FOR
INCAPACITY BENEFIT & CAN NOT AFFORD A TAXE IN PLACE

Option 2 – Reducing the maximum level of support for working age applicants from 80% to 70%

The Council currently can provide support up to 80% towards an applicant's Council Tax. This is limited to a Band C level so any applicant who lives in a property with a higher band would receive support calculated on this basis. The proposed option would require all working age applicants to pay a minimum payment of 30%. It would mean that for a typical Band C property, the minimum payment would be £7.73 per week or £5.79 if the applicant has a single person discount. These figures are based on the Council Tax payable for 2016/17 year. Reducing the maximum level of support available is a simple change to the scheme which is easily understood. The Council is conscious that any minimum payment must be affordable given the household's circumstances.

The benefits of this are:

- It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand.
- It is fair because everyone shares the increase

The drawback of doing this is:

- All working age households receiving Council Tax Reduction will be required to pay more.

Q6.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q7.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

INCREASE TAX OF OLDER PEOPLE WHO HAVE PLENTY OF MONEY IN LARGER HOMES
--

Option 3 – Reducing the maximum level of support for working age applicants from 80% to 65%

The Council currently can provide support up to 80% towards an applicant's Council Tax. This is limited to a Band C level so any applicant who lives in a property with a higher band would receive support calculated on this basis. The proposed option would require all working age applicants to pay a minimum payment of 35%. It would mean that for a typical Band C property, the minimum payment would be £9.01 per week or £6.76 per week if the applicant has a single person discount. These figures are based on the Council Tax payable for 2016/17 year. Reducing the maximum level of support available is a simple change to the scheme which is easily understood. The Council is conscious that any minimum payment must be affordable given the household's circumstances.

The benefits of this are:

- It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand.
- It is fair because everyone shares the increase

The drawback of doing this is:

- All working age households receiving Council Tax Reduction will be required to pay more.

Q8.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q9.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

TAX RATE WILL BE I.E. OVER RATED PEOPLE
A CUTE MAKE

Option 4 – Removing the Family Premium for all new working age applicants

The removal of family premium from 1st April 2017 for new claims will bring the Council Tax Reduction scheme in line with Housing Benefit. The family premium is part of how we assess the 'needs' of any applicant which is compared with their income. Family Premium is normally given when an applicant has at least one dependant child living with them. Removing the family premium will mean that when we assess an applicant's needs it would not include the family premium (currently £17.40 per week). This change would **not** affect those on Universal Credit, Income Support, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance or Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance.

The benefit of this is:

- It brings the working age Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with Housing Benefit changes proposed by Central Government. The change has already been introduced for pension age applicants by Central Government;

The drawbacks of doing this are:

- New working age residents may see a reduction in the amount of support they received.
- Some households with children will pay more

Q10.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q11.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

TAX THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE MORE MONEY A LITTLE MORE
--

Option 5 - Reducing Backdating to 1 month

Currently claims for Council Tax Reduction from working age applicants can be backdated for up to 6 months where an applicant shows they could not claim at an earlier time. Central Government has reduced the period for Housing Benefit claims to 1 month. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme be aligned with the changes for Housing Benefit.

The benefit of this is:

- It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand when claiming Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

The drawback of this is:

- New working age residents may see a reduction in the amount of support they received if they are unable to claim on time.

Q12.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q13.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

THE PEOPLE WHO THE HIGH STANDING OVER BENEFIT PEOPLE
WONT BIGGER HOUSE

Option 6 - Reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks

Within the current scheme, applicants can be temporarily absent from their homes without it affecting the Council Tax Reduction. This replicated the rule within Housing Benefit. Housing Benefit has been changed so that if a person is absent from Great Britain for a period of more than 4 weeks, their benefit will cease. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect the changes in Housing Benefit. There will be exceptions for certain occupations.

The benefits of the Council this are:

- The treatment of temporary absence will be brought into line with Housing Benefit
- It is seen as fair
- There are exceptions for certain occupations including the armed forces and mariners.

The drawback of this is:

- If a person is absent from Great Britain for a period which is likely to exceed 4 weeks, their Council Tax Reduction will cease from when they leave the Country. They will need to re-apply on return

Q14.

Do you agree with the change to the temporary absence rule?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q15.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

11

Option 7 - To remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of the current scheme for new Employment and Support Allowance applicants.

From April 2017, all new applicants of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) who fall within the Work Related Activity Group will no longer receive the component in either their ESA or within the calculation of Housing Benefit. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect the changes.

The benefits of the Council doing this are:

- The treatment of ESA will be brought into line with Housing Benefit
- It avoids additional costs to the Council Tax Reduction scheme.
- Persons receiving ESA will not experience any reduction in Council Tax Reduction.

There is no drawback

Q16.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q17.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

11

Option 8 - To limit the number of dependant children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two

Within the current scheme, applicants who have children are awarded a dependant's addition of £64.99 per child within their applicable amounts. There is no limit to the number of dependant's additions that can be awarded. From April 2017 Central Government will be limiting dependant's additions in Universal Credit, Housing Benefit and Tax Credits to a maximum of two. This will only affect households who have a third or subsequent child on or after 1st April 2017. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect the changes in Housing Benefit and Central Government Benefits. There will be exceptions where: there are multiple births after 1st April 2017 (and the household is not already at their maximum of two dependants within the calculation); adopted children or where households merge.

The benefits of the Council doing this are:

- Council Tax Reduction will be brought into line with Housing Benefit, Universal Credit and Tax Credits
- It is simple and administratively easy

The drawbacks of doing this are:

- Applicants who have a third or subsequent child after 1st April 2017 (and are not excepted from the rules) may receive less Council Tax reduction than an applicant who has more children born before 1st April 2017

Q18.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q19.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Option 9 – To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers Element) to look after them

Currently when another person is paid Carers Allowance to look after a Council Tax Reduction applicant, then the Severe Disability Premium is not included when working out their needs (Applicable Amounts). The reason for this is that it avoids paying for the same care twice. This proposed change will align the scheme with Housing Benefit by treating persons who receive the Universal Credit (Carers Element) in the same way as anyone receiving Carers Allowance

The benefit of this is:

- Council Tax Reduction will be brought into line with Housing Benefit;
- It is simple and administratively easy

The drawbacks of doing this are:

- There are no drawbacks to this change as persons receiving Universal Credit (Carers Element) will be treated in the same way as those receiving Carers Allowance who look after any person who claims Council Tax Reduction

Q20.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q21.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Option 10 - To disregard 70% of the new postgraduate loans in the calculation of Council Tax Support

The Government has introduced a new loan for Post Graduate students from this Academic Year. Most students (unless vulnerable) will not normally qualify for Council Tax Support and in certain cases may be disregarded from Council Tax altogether. All welfare benefits have been adjusted to disregard 70% of any new Post Graduate loan to take account of the amount the student will spend on books, travel etc. It is proposed that our Council Tax Support Scheme be aligned with these changes

The benefit of this is:

- It will bring the Council Tax Support Scheme into line with other welfare benefits

The drawback of this is:

- None

Q22.

Do you agree with the principle that 70% of any new postgraduate loan should be disregarded?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q23.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Option 11 - Reduce the capital limit from the existing £16,000 to £6,000

At present, residents with savings, capital and investments of more than £16,000 are not entitled to any Council Tax Reduction. Under the proposed change; this limit would be reduced to £6,000.

The benefits of this are:

- Only those working age residents with at least £6000 in savings will be affected.
- There is a low risk to causing any hardship

The drawback of this is:

- Where a working age resident has in excess of £6,000 in savings, no reduction whatsoever will be payable.

Q24.

Do you agree with the principle that the capital limit should be reduced to £6000?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q25.

If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Alternatives to reducing the amount of help provided by the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

If the Council keeps the current scheme, we will need to find savings from other services to help meet the expected reduction in Government funding. The proposals set out in this consultation could deliver savings. The alternatives are set out in the background information.

Q26.

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.

Q26.1.

Increase the level of Council Tax

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q26.2.

Find savings from cutting other Council Services

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q26.3.

Use the Council's savings

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know

Q27.

If the Council were to choose these other options to make savings, what would be your order of preference? Please rank in order of preference by writing a number from 1 – 3 in the boxes below, where 1 is the option that you would most prefer and 3 is the least.

Increase the level of Council Tax

Reduce funding available for other Council Services

Use the Council's savings

Q28.

Please use this space to make any other comments on the scheme.

INCREASE TAX FOR THE WEALTHY - BETTER OFF POLK.

u

Q29.

Please use the space below if you would like the Council to consider any other options (please state).

u

Q30.

If you have any further comments or questions to make regarding the Council Tax Reduction scheme that you haven't had opportunity to raise elsewhere, please use the space below.

About You

We ask these questions:

1. To find out if different groups of people in the Council's population have been able to take part in the consultation and identify if any groups have been excluded. This means it is not about you as an individual but to find out if people with similar characteristics have had their say.
2. To find out if different groups of people feel differently about the options and proposals in comparison to each other and all respondents. This means it is not about you as an individual but to find out if people with similar characteristics have answered in the same way or not.

This information is completely confidential and anonymous. Your personal information will not be passed on to anyone and your personal details will not be reported alongside your responses.

Q31.

Are you, or someone in your household, getting a Council Tax Reduction at this time?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know/Not sure

Q32.

What is your sex?

☒ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say

Q33.

Age

☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-34 ☒ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65-74 ☐ 75-84 ☐ 85+ ☐ Prefer not to say

Q34.

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?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know/Not sure ☐ Prefer not to say

Q35.

Ethnic Origin: What is your ethnic group?

☐ Prefer not to say

White

☒ British ☐ Irish ☐ Gypsy or Irish Traveller ☐ Any other White background

Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups

☐ White & Black African ☐ White & Black Caribbean ☐ White & Asian ☐ Any other multi mixed background

Asian or Asian British

☐ Pakistani ☐ Indian ☐ Bangladeshi ☐ Chinese ☐ Any other Asian background

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British

☐ African ☐ Caribbean ☐ Any other Black background

Other Ethnic Group

☐ Arab ☐ Other – please specify below:

Next steps....

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

You may submit further evidence, ideas or comments by email to benefits@gosport.gov.uk

The consultation closes on 11th December 2016.

We will listen carefully to what residents tell us and take the responses into consideration when making a final decision on the 2017/18 scheme.

The new scheme will start on **1 April 2017**. The Council will consider the impact of the scheme annually and consult again if it thinks further changes need to be made.

Pride, Stephanie

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 October 2016 18:01
To: Pride, Stephanie
Subject: Council Tax Consultation

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi Steph

I have seen the proposals going out for consultation and I disagree with the following

- To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers Element) to look after them.

People are awarded SDP due to their severe level of disability and should always be supported, whether they get Carer's Allowance or not.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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November 2016

T. F. E. 10 M.
Borough Council of Gosport

Ref : Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation.

1. I have completed the on-line questionnaire in respect of resident input to the council tax support scheme for low-income households.
2. In addition, I enclose a copy of a letter forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer of the Gosport Borough Council earlier this ^{year} letter. The subject of that letter was council tax. The contents are germane to the purposes of the consultation.
3. The support scheme for low income households cannot be separated from the wider socio-economic context of council tax provision.
4. If council tax rates were not disproportionately high, more people would be able to afford them, with a consequent reduction in the need for multiple categories of claimants for reductions.
5. The consultation questions are fudging this issue. They are also fudging the question of inequitable subsidization of non/low rate council tax payers by full council taxpayers.
6. Inequities are being structurally institutionalized in the council tax system. Far fairer and more transparent principles need to be established.



16 March 2016

Chief Executive Officer

Gosport Borough Council

Town Hall, High St, Gosport PO12 1EB.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Ref : Council Tax Demand 2016/17.

I am in receipt of the Council Tax Demand document for 2016/17. I note with dismay the imposition of a 3.50% increase in the moneys demanded. This should not be allowed to pass uncommented upon.

It now costs me £1510.15 per annum for the privilege of living in my own house, a Band D, property in Lee on Solent. Repeat - **£1510.15**; a great deal of money. This demand takes no account of my ability to pay (both my wife and I are now dependent on pension income only). Nor does it detail the particular range of services that such a large amount of money actually 'purchases' from the Borough Council.

Instead, we are treated to the usual and perfunctory listing of agencies that routinely take a 'cut' from the total amount. To wit – Hants. County Council/Adult Social Care/Hants Police Authority/Hants Fire Authority/Borough Council. There is a strong whiff of bureaucratic and institutionalized expectation here. Almost as if, council tax payers should simply accept the fait accomplis 'right' of municipal authorities to impose a levy without real accountability for spending being shown by these agencies.

I do not object to the principle that residents who receive municipal services should make a financial contribution to their provision. However, despite the large and increasing amounts of money I provide annually, the actual 'service benefits' I receive have not substantially changed in many years. One example will suffice : the rubbish collection service. It is no better than it was 30 years ago .indeed, it is now subsidized by people like me who make additional trips to the recycling centre.

Similarly, when I look at the listing of services in answer to the question : What does my local council do for me? (see ; Coastline pages 6/7, March 2016) I note that many of the listings are not "services" at all. They are functions many of which are underwritten by payments made by users – eg. car parks, markets, allotments, council houses etc. The voluntary sector, which often provides private funds and the manpower to help run these functions, contributes significantly and independently of council funds to the maintenance of such provisions.

The March 2016 edition of Coastline is both defensive and apologetic about council taxes. That is not surprising. In the phrase - "Only £157.74retained by Gosport Council" - the sub-text is : let's divert the blame to Hampshire County Council etc. I interpret this to show official town hall recognition of the excessive nature of council taxes. Similarly, local councillors in political party leaflets trumpet various initiatives – some of them very good ones such as Holbrook Leisure Centre –

which frankly are part of the routine development responsibilities of councils - as vindication of high council taxes. At the same time the claim is made that low inflation rates mean that "in real terms after inflation is taken into account both the Gosport and Hampshire tax is still lower than it was five years ago" (Councillor G.Burgess, In Touch Local Conservatives leaflet).

That statement is disingenuous. The real problem is, of course, that total amounts of council tax demanded are simply too high in any case. This has its origins in the disgraceful hiking of taxes by the Blair/Brown government to 'buy' votes for public sector jobs. The current government has simply 'held the line' over the past few years. The current Chancellor ought to be well aware of, and sensitive to, the reality that excessive council tax demands are a massive imposition on ordinary wage earners; particularly so when set alongside other additional living costs such as mortgage payments, and expensive gas and electricity.

Concluding Comment.

I believe the Banding system for council tax demands is unfair, undemocratic and arbitrary. I also believe that the current rates of council taxes are far too high and should be progressively reduced. There should also be a very clear annual municipal statement as to the goods and services that council tax payers actually purchase and, perhaps more importantly, **DO NOT PURCHASE**. I suspect that as often as not in the annual cycle of council payments, 'slippage occurs' and money is diverted to causes and uses which have no justification in terms of council tax payer entitlements. I shall be monitoring council spending in the next financial year very carefully. If I find evidence of public moneys provided by me (and other council tax payers) being used for such things as subsidized housing for foreign vagrants and similar; I will consider the legal avenues available to challenge such questionable practices.

Yours sincerely



- Gosport Borough has enjoyed a huge expansion in housing in recent years. Cherque Farm. Royal Clarence Yard, Lee residential blocks and so on. All this new property must have provided a large additional income stream to Gosport Borough Council from all the extra council tax payments. I think the Council needs to explain in public documentation how much additional revenue Gosport Borough has earned from these sources and why/how it is used to ameliorate council expenditure. To not do so risks charges of undemocratic action, and possibly even sharp fiscal practice to the detriment of resident taxpayers.

EVERY TIME

THE BENEFITS SECTION
DATE OF RECEIPT
03 NOV 2016
POST
Borough Council of Gosport

COUNCIL WANTS

MONEY, THEY
EXPECT COUNCIL TAX
PAYERS TO PAY FOR

EVERYTHING, DON'T PUT
UP THE COUNCIL TAX, THE
COUNCIL TAX IS HIGHER

ALL READY,
YOU WANT COUNCIL TO MAKE
SAVINGS, TAKE ALL THE PLUGS
OUT OF THE GOSPORT DISCOVERY
LIBRARY, SO PUBLIC CAN'T CHARGE
THEIR LAPTOPS, MOBILE PHONES/

Local Council Tax **Support Consultation.**

What is this about?

Gosport Borough Council has a difficult financial situation to manage over the coming years and will have to make savings and increase income. Part of these savings could come from reducing the amount of financial help provided to residents on low incomes through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for working age households.

Pension age households will not be affected as Central Government prescribes the scheme for pension age households.

What is Council Tax Reduction?

Council Tax Reduction is a discount for Council Tax. The level of discount is based on the income of the household. Currently the maximum discount is 80% of Council Tax for working age households and up to 100% for pensioners. In addition, the support to working age households is limited to the amount of Council Tax for a Band C premises. There are no proposals within this consultation to change the band capping within the scheme.

Why is a change to the Council Tax Reduction scheme being considered?

Until April 2013 there was a national scheme called Council Tax Benefit. The Government made local Councils responsible for replacement schemes from 1 April 2013 and reduced funding to support the schemes. Since then, funding has further reduced. We also need to make amendments to keep the Council Tax Reduction in line with Housing Benefit which we also administer to keep administration costs low.

Who will this affect?

Working age households in the Borough who currently receive or will apply for Council Tax Reduction. Pension age households will not be affected as Central Government prescribe the scheme.

How can you get involved?

To read more about the proposals and give us your views visit
www.gosport.gov.uk

Consultation runs from 17th October 2016 to 11th December 2016.

Alternatively you can pick up printed copies of the documents to read and complete in writing from the Town Hall or contact the Benefits Section on Tel: (023) 9254 5325 who will send them to you.

For any other questions regarding other alternative formats, please contact us.



GOSPORT
Borough Council

AGENDA ITEM NO.6

Board/Committee:	Full Council
Date of Meeting:	30 th January 2017
Title:	Local Council Tax Support - Exceptional Hardship Policy.
Author:	Borough Treasurer
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the proposed Exceptional Hardship Policy effective from 1st April 2017.

Recommendations

That Council approve the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) Exceptional Hardship Policy at Appendix 1.

1 Background

- 1.1 Under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 the Council is required to provide a local Council Tax Support Scheme following abolition of the national scheme in 2013.
- 1.2 In addition to the support scheme the Council has additional discretionary powers to enable it to reduce Council Tax liability where statutory discounts, exemptions and reductions do not apply or in such circumstances where the Council feels the level of discount, exemption or reduction is insufficient given the circumstances.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 Currently, the Council does not have a formal Exceptional Hardship Policy for Council Tax, instead it considers and manages such cases through its Write Off process.
- 2.2 Recent challenges against other Authorities have confirmed the importance of a Council approved Policy for discretionary discounts.
- 2.3 The Council's Local Council Tax Support scheme awards discounts up to the maximum levels set in that scheme (currently set at 80% but proposed to reduce to 70% for 2017 18).

- 2.4 An Exceptional Hardship scheme would consider making an additional award between the award of Local Council Tax Support and the Taxpayers Council tax liability.
- 2.5 The Exceptional Hardship Policy will clearly set out the Council's Policy on awarding any additional assistance to LCTS Customers who are suffering extreme financial hardship and ensure transparency of decision making and equality of service to our Customers.

A Policy document has been prepared and is at Appendix 1.

3 Financial Implications

The cost of payments through the Exceptional Hardship Policy are estimated at circa £55,000 and have been taken into account in setting the Council Taxbase for 2017/18 and therefore in the overall Council Tax income estimated to be received for the year.

4 Risk Assessment

- 4.1 To mitigate any challenges to the Council over the new Exceptional Hardship Policy, an initial Equality Impact risk assessment has been undertaken.
- 4.2 The Policy mitigates any risk that might arise from proposed changes to the LCTS scheme from 1st April 2017.

Financial Services comments:	As detailed in the report
Legal Services comments:	As detailed in the report
Crime and Disorder:	None
Equality and Diversity:	As detailed in the report
Service Improvement	None

Plan implications:	
Corporate Plan:	None
Risk Assessment:	See paragraph 4
Background papers:	Local Council Tax Support scheme 2016/17
Appendices/Enclosures:	Appendix 1 Exceptional Hardship Policy.
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Stephanie Pride

Gosport Borough Council

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME.

EXCEPTIONAL HARDSHIP POLICY.

1.0 Background

1.1 An Exceptional Hardship Fund (EHF) has been set up by the Council to assist applicants for Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) who are facing 'exceptional hardship'. The fund has been created to provide further assistance where an applicant is in receipt of LCTS but the level of support being paid by the Council does not meet their full Council Tax liability.

1.2 The EHF will be available to any applicant (whether pension or working age) where their daily award of LCTS does not meet 100% of their Council Tax liability (less any appropriate discounts and non-dependant deductions).

1.3 The main features of the fund are as follows:

- The operation of the Fund will be at the total discretion of the Council;
- The Fund will be operated by the Benefits Section on behalf of the Council;
- There is no statutory right to payments from the fund although the Council will consider all applications received;
- Exceptional Hardship Fund payments are not payments of Council Tax Reduction/Support (as defined within S13a of the Local Government Finance Act 1992);
- Exceptional Hardship Fund payments will only be available from 1st April 2017 and **will not be available for any other debt other than outstanding Council Tax**;
- A pre-requisite to receive a payment from the Fund is that an amount of LCTS **must be in payment** for any day that an EHF payment is requested;
- Where an Exceptional Hardship Payment is requested for a previous period, Exceptional Hardship must have been proven to have existed throughout the whole of the period requested;

- Exceptional Hardship Payments are designed as a short-term help to the applicant only and it is expected that payments will be made for a short period only; and
- All applicants will be expected to engage with the Council and undertake the full application process. Failure to do so will inevitably mean that no payment will be made.

2.0 Exceptional Hardship Fund and Equalities

2.1 The creation of an Exceptional Hardship Fund facility meets the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010

2.2 This policy has been created to ensure that a level of protection and support is available to those applicants most in need. It should be noted that the Exceptional Hardship Fund is intended to help in cases of **extreme** financial hardship and not support a lifestyle or lifestyle choice. Whilst the definition 'Exceptional Hardship' is not defined by this policy, it is accepted that changes to the level of Council Tax support generally could cause financial hardship and any payment made will be at the total discretion of the Council. Exceptional Hardship should be considered as 'hardship beyond that which would normally be suffered'

3.0 Purpose of this Policy

3.1 The purpose of this policy is to specify how the Council will operate the scheme, to detail the application process and indicate a number of factors, which will be considered when deciding if an Exceptional Hardship Fund award can be made.

3.2 Each case will be treated on its own merits and all applicants will be treated fairly and equally in the accessibility to the Fund and also the decisions made with applications.

4.0 The Exceptional Hardship Fund Process

4.1 As part of the process of applying for additional support from the Exceptional Hardship Fund, all applicants must be willing to undertake **all** of the following:

- Make a separate application for assistance;
- Provide full details of their income and expenditure;
- Accept assistance from either the Council or third parties such as the CAB or similar organisations to enable them to manage their finances more effectively including the termination of non- essential expenditure;

- Identify potential changes in payment methods and arrangements to assist the applicant;
- Assist the Council to minimise liability by ensuring that all discounts, exemptions and reductions are properly granted; and
- Maximise their income through the application for other welfare benefits, cancellation of non-essential contracts and outgoings and identifying the most economical tariffs for the supply of utilities and services generally.

4.2 Through the operation of this policy the Council will look to:

- Allow a short period of time for someone to adjust to unforeseen short-term circumstances and to enable them to “bridge the gap” during this time, whilst the applicant seeks alternative solutions;
- Enable long term support to households in managing their finances;
- Help applicants through personal crises and difficult events that affect their finances;
- Prevent exceptional hardship;
- Help those applicants who are trying to help themselves financially; and
- Encourage and support people to obtain and sustain employment.

4.3 EHF payments cannot be awarded in the following circumstances:

- Where full Council Tax liability is being met by LCTS;
- For any other reason, other than to reduce Council Tax liability;
- Where the Council considers that there are unnecessary expenses/debts etc. and that the applicant has not taken reasonable steps to reduce these;
- To pay for any overpayment of LCTS caused through the failure of the applicant to notify changes in circumstances in a timely manner or where the applicant has failed to act correctly or honestly; or
- To cover previous years' Council Tax arrears

5.0 Awarding an Exceptional Hardship Fund Payment

The Council will decide whether or not to make an Exceptional Hardship Fund award, and how much any award might be.

5.1 When making this decision the Council will consider:

- The shortfall between LCTS and Council Tax liability;
- Whether the applicant has engaged with the Exceptional Hardship Payment process;
- If a Discretionary Housing Payment has already been awarded to meet a shortfall in rent;
- The personal circumstances, age and medical circumstances (including ill health and disabilities) of the applicant, their partner any dependants and any other occupants of the applicant's home;
- The difficulty experienced by the applicant, which prohibits them from being able to meet their Council Tax liability, and the length of time this difficulty will exist;
- Shortfalls due to non-dependant deductions;
- The income and expenditure of the applicant, their partner and any dependants or other occupants of the applicant's home;
- How reasonable expenditure exceeds income;
- All income received by the applicant, their partner and any member of their household irrespective of whether the income may fall to be disregarded under the LCTS scheme;
- Any savings or capital that might be held by the applicant, their partner and any member of their household irrespective of whether the capital may fall to be disregarded under the LCTS scheme;
- Other debts outstanding for the applicant and their partner;
- The exceptional nature of the applicant and/or their family's circumstances that impact on finances; and
- The length of time they have lived in the property

5.2 The above list is not exhaustive and other relevant factors and special circumstances will be considered.

5.3 An award from the Exceptional Hardship Fund does not guarantee that a further award will be made at a later date, even if the applicant's circumstances have not changed.

5.4 An Exceptional Hardship Fund payment may be less than the difference between the Council Tax liability and the amount of LCTS paid.

5.5 The level of payment may be nil if the authority feels that, in its opinion, the applicant is not suffering 'exceptional hardship' or where the applicant has failed to comply with the Exceptional Hardship process.

6.0 Publicity

The Council will make a copy of this policy available for inspection and will be published on the Council's website.

7.0 Claiming an Exceptional Hardship Fund payment

7.1 An applicant must make a claim for an Exceptional Hardship Fund award by submitting an application to the Council. The application form can be obtained via the telephone, in person at the Council offices and/or via the Council's website.

7.2 Applicants can request assistance with the completion of the form from the Benefits Service at the Council Offices.

7.3 The application form must be fully completed and supporting information or evidence provided, as reasonably requested by the Council.

7.4 In most cases the person who claims the Exceptional Hardship Fund award will be the person entitled to LCTS. However, a claim can be accepted from someone acting on another's behalf, such as an appointee, if it is considered reasonable.

8.0 Changes in circumstances

8.1 The Council may revise an award from the Exceptional Hardship Fund where the applicant's circumstances have changed which either increases or reduces their LCTS entitlement.

9.0 Duties of the applicant and the applicant's household

9.1 A person claiming an Exceptional Hardship Fund payment is required to:

- Provide the Council with such information as it may require to make a decision;
- Tell the Council of any changes in circumstances that may be relevant to their ongoing claim; and
- Provide the Council with such other information as it may require in connection with their claim.

10.0 The award and duration of an Exceptional Hardship Payment

10.1 Both the amount and the duration of the award are determined at the discretion of the Council, and will be done so on the basis of the evidence supplied and the circumstances of the claim.

10.2 The start date of such an award and the duration of any award will be determined by the Council. In any event, the maximum length of the award will not exceed the end of the financial year in which the award is given.

11.0 Award of the Exceptional Hardship Fund payment

11.1 Any Exceptional Hardship Fund award will be made direct onto the customer's Council Tax account, thereby reducing the amount of Council Tax payable.

12.0 Overpaid Exceptional Hardship Fund Payments

12.1 Overpaid Exceptional Hardship Fund payments will generally be recovered directly from the applicant's council tax account, thus increasing the amount of council tax due and payable.

13.0 Notification of an award

13.1 The Council will notify the outcome of each application for Exceptional Hardship Fund payments in writing. The notification will include the reason for the decision and advise the applicant of their appeal rights.

14.0 Appeals

14.1 Appeals against the Council's decision may be made in accordance with Section 16 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

14.2 The Council taxpayer must in the first instance write to the Council outlining the reason for their appeal.

14.3 Where an appeal is received, an officer other than the original decision maker will reconsider the decision and notify the Council taxpayer accordingly.

14.4 Where the Council taxpayer remains aggrieved, a further appeal can then be made to the Valuation Tribunal. This further appeal should be made within 2 months of the decision of the Council not to grant any reductions.

15.0 Fraud

15.1 The Council is committed to protect public funds and ensure funds are awarded to the people who are rightfully eligible to them.

15.2 An applicant who tries to fraudulently claim an Exceptional Hardship Fund payment by falsely declaring their circumstances, providing a false statement or

evidence in support of their application, may have committed an offence under The Fraud Act 2006.

15.3 Where the Council suspects that such a fraud may have been committed, this matter will be investigated as appropriate and may lead to criminal proceedings being instigated.

16.0 Complaints

16.1 The Council's 'Compliments and Complaints Procedure' (available on the Council's website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about this policy.

17.0 Policy Review

17.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every year and updated as appropriate to ensure it remains fit for purpose. However, the review may take place sooner should there be any significant changes in legislation.