

Council Tax Reduction Consultation Summary

Introduction

The council undertook consultation on a draft Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme for 2015/16. The draft scheme is included as appendix 4 of this report.

Details of the consultation were reported in the Homing In magazine which is sent to all tenants of the council, other recipients of CTR were written to and invited to reply. Primarily respondents were invited to reply on line but a phone number was also provided to discuss any issues and to request a paper version of the consultation.

Respondents

Have you or someone in your household received Council Tax Reduction in the last two years?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	159	72.6	74.6
	No	48	21.9	22.5
	Don't know / not sure	6	2.7	2.8
	Total	213	97.3	100.0
Missing	No response	6	2.7	
Total		219	100.0	

Do you support or work with someone/people who claim Council Tax Reduction?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	27	12.3	13.0
	No	151	68.9	72.9
	Don't know / not sure	29	13.2	14.0
	Total	207	94.5	100.0
Missing	No response	12	5.5	
Total		219	100.0	

The majority of respondents are from households where a person has received Council Tax Reduction in the last two years; just over 10% of respondents are people who support people who claim Council Tax Reduction in some way including carers; landlords; council staff; support workers and advisors from the community and voluntary sector; neighbours and friends.

Questions and summary of replies

Q1. Do you agree or disagree that, given the reduction in money available to pay for Council Tax discount, the most discount a person can get will be 75% off their Council Tax bill?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Definitely agree	19	8.7	9.3
	Tend to agree	28	12.8	13.7
	Tend to disagree	33	15.1	16.2
	Definitely disagree	124	56.6	60.8
	Total	204	93.2	100.0
Missing	No response	3	1.4	
	Don't know / not sure	12	5.5	
	Total	15	6.8	
Total		219	100.0	

From the total of valid responses 77% of people tended to disagree or strongly disagreed and 23% of people tended to agree or definitely agreed with the measure to increase the minimum contribution to 25% of Council Tax.

Q2. Is there anything we haven't considered or any further comments you'd like to make about the Council Tax discount being based on 75% of their full Council Tax bill?

The main themes which were raised in the comments were that it is already very hard to live on the level of income provided by benefits and that this change would make it harder; That wealthy people should be made to pay a higher proportion of tax to cover reductions in funding; That it is unfair to tax the poor; That disabled people should be exempt; That the increase is too large and increases should be made in smaller increments; that collections issues will mean the charge will be self-defeating; That the raise could lead to greater debt and family breakdown; That a higher level of council efficiency is required; That carers should be protected; That taxes on landlords with empty homes should be increased

Q3. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to limit the increase in Council Tax current CTR claimants have to pay to £5 per week as a result of the changes in proposal A?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Definitely agree	46	21.0	24.5
	Tend to agree	50	22.8	26.6
	Tend to disagree	19	8.7	10.1
	Definitely disagree	73	33.3	38.8
	Total	188	85.8	100.0
Missing	No response	5	2.3	
	Don't know / not sure	26	11.9	
	Total	31	14.2	
Total		219	100.0	

From the total of valid responses 51% tended to agree to definitely agreed and 49% disagreed with the proposal to limit the increase that claimants have to pay to £5

Q4. Is there anything we haven't considered or any further comments you'd like to make about the proposal to limit the Council Tax increase as a result of the changes set out in A to £5 per week for current claimants?

The main themes in response to this question were: That it will still be too much; that a limit is welcome; That single people should be a priority; That larger families use more services and therefore should not be protected; That it should not just affect larger families but everyone; That the level should be £3

Q5. Do you agree or disagree that a person cannot claim CTR if they have more than £6,000 in savings?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Definitely agree	46	21.0	22.3
	Tend to agree	47	21.5	22.8
	Tend to disagree	24	11.0	11.7
	Definitely disagree	89	40.6	43.2
	Total	206	94.1	100.0
Missing	No response	4	1.8	
	Don't know / not sure	9	4.1	
	Total	13	5.9	
Total		219	100.0	

From the total of valid responses 45% of people tended to agree or definitely agreed and 55% of people definitely disagreed with the proposal to limit the amount of savings a person can hold and claim CTR to £6,000.

Q6. Is there anything we haven't considered or any further comments you'd like to make about reducing the level of savings a person may hold to £6,000?

The main themes in response to this question were: That £6,000 is very little; That the proposal is fair; That the limit should be £10,000; That accommodation costs including deposits and rent in advance will mean people may need to hold at least £6,000 in savings; That it is not fair and penalises people who have saved money; That the drop is too much; That people need savings for an emergency; That people need savings to cover the cost of a funeral; That disabled people should be exempt; that the limit should be reduced further and that the limit should be kept at £16,000.

Q7. Do you agree or disagree that the amount non-dependants are expected to pay should be doubled?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Definitely agree	44	20.1	23.0
	Tend to agree	45	20.5	23.6
	Tend to disagree	26	11.9	13.6
	Definitely disagree	76	34.7	39.8
	Total	191	87.2	100.0
Missing	No response	10	4.6	
	Don't know / not sure	18	8.2	
	Total	28	12.8	
Total		219	100.0	

From the total of valid responses 46% of people tended to agree or definitely agreed and 54% of people tended to disagree or strongly disagreed with the proposal to double the amounts non-dependents pay.

Q8. Is there anything we haven't considered or any further comments you'd like to make about non-dependant deductions being doubled?

The main themes in response to this question were: That the increase would be too much; That the proposal is fair; That it would mean grown up children would not be able to save money; that the levels and bands could be altered in other ways; That non-dependants may not pay the contributions and the council should be very clear about how this is calculated; That it penalises those who work; That this is Council Tax not Poll Tax; That rich people should be taxed more; that the amounts should be increased to a higher amount; that there should be no increase; that it is unfair because grown up children can't afford their own rent; and that it will increase costs elsewhere

Q9. Do you agree or disagree that Child Benefit should be counted as an income when working out CTR?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Definitely agree	38	17.4	19.6
	Tend to agree	33	15.1	17.0
	Tend to disagree	19	8.7	9.8
	Definitely disagree	104	47.5	53.6
	Total	194	88.6	100.0
Missing	No response	6	2.7	
	Don't know / not sure	19	8.7	
	Total	25	11.4	
Total		219	100.0	

From the total of valid responses 37% of people tended to agree or definitely agreed and 63% of people tended to disagree or definitely disagreed with the proposal that Child Benefit should be counted as an income when working out CTR.

Q10. Is there anything we haven't considered or any further comments you'd like to make about counting child benefit as an income?

The main themes in response to this question were: That Child Benefit is for children not anything else; That the provision would have an impact on child poverty; the proposal is not fair and shouldn't happen; that the proposal is right; That this change is not affordable; That Child Benefit is not an income; that this is just a way to cut costs; That wealthy people should not get Child Benefit and that child maintenance should be counted in addition to Child Benefit.

Q11. Do you agree or disagree that Second Adult Rebate will no longer be paid to people of working age?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Definitely agree	40	18.3	24.0
	Tend to agree	41	18.7	24.6
	Tend to disagree	28	12.8	16.8
	Definitely disagree	58	26.5	34.7
	Total	167	76.3	100.0
Missing	No response	10	4.6	
	Don't know / not sure	42	19.2	
	Total	52	23.7	
Total		219	100.0	

From the valid responses 48% of people tended to agree or definitely agreed and 52% of people tended or definitely disagreed with the proposal to end Second Adult Rebate.

Q12. Is there anything we haven't considered or any further comments you'd like to make about Second Adult Rebate no longer being paid to people of working age?

The main themes in response to this question were: That it could create pressure on housing; That the proposal is right; That it is unfair; That it is right to end it because it is too complex; That people in this position should be means tested; That carers should be exempted from the change.

Q13. Do you agree or disagree that the earnings disregard will support Disabled people and carers moving into work or in low paid work?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Definitely agree	93	42.5	50.0
	Tend to agree	52	23.7	28.0
	Tend to disagree	12	5.5	6.5
	Definitely disagree	29	13.2	15.6
	Total	186	84.9	100.0
Missing	No response	9	4.1	
	Don't know / not sure	24	11.0	
	Total	33	15.1	
Total		219	100.0	

From the valid responses 78% of people tended to agree or definitely agreed and 22% of people tended or definitely disagreed that the proposals to increase earning disregards would support Disabled people and carers moving into work.

Q14. Is there anything we haven't considered or any further comments you'd like to make about the earnings disregard?

The main themes in response to this question were: That the disregard should be more; that the proposal is welcome; that this should be extended for everyone; that it is not fair because other people will have to pay more; that many Disabled people cannot work; That the proposal is a small measure and may not have much affect; that Disabled people receive higher benefits than others already.