

Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2017/18

Consultation Report

Part 1 - Public Consultation results

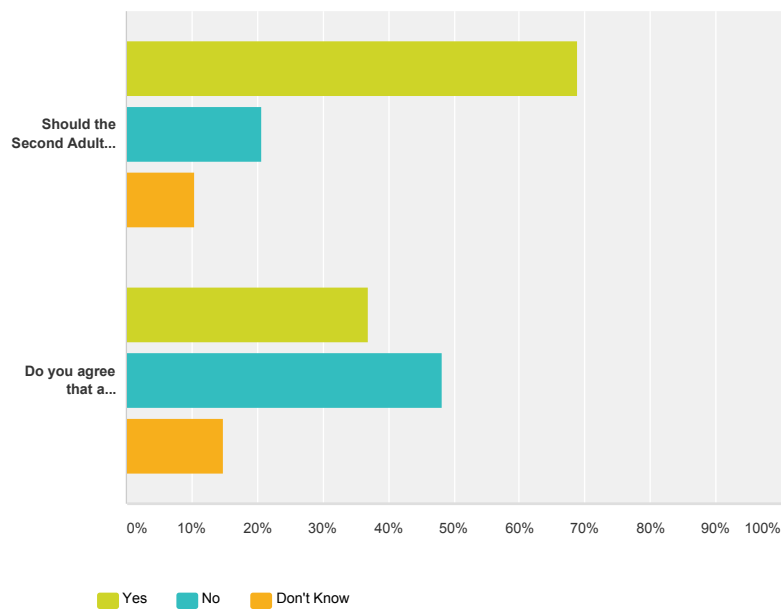
Part 2 - Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and
Policy Development Panel – 22 November 2016

Part 1 - Public Consultation results

Council Tax Support

Q1 Second Adult Rebate – The current scheme gives a reduction in Council Tax up to 25% to a claimant whose income is too high to receive Council Tax Support but who has other adults living in their household whose combined income is low. This change would affect around 34 households and would be phased in over a 3 year period.

Answered: 29 Skipped: 1

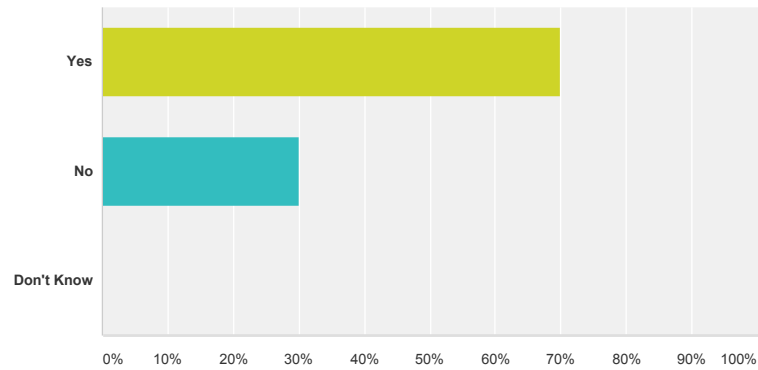


	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total
Should the Second Adult Rebate be abolished for working age claimants as it takes no account of their income?	68.97% 20	20.69% 6	10.34% 3	29
Do you agree that a transitional scheme is appropriate?	37.04% 10	48.15% 13	14.81% 4	27

Council Tax Support

Q2 Minimum level of Council Tax Support - At the moment Council Tax Support is paid even if a person is only entitled to a few pence per week. It is proposed to introduce a minimum award of £5 per week in order to reduce administration in the scheme. This change would affect around 246 households. Do you agree it is a sensible approach to have a minimum weekly support level?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0

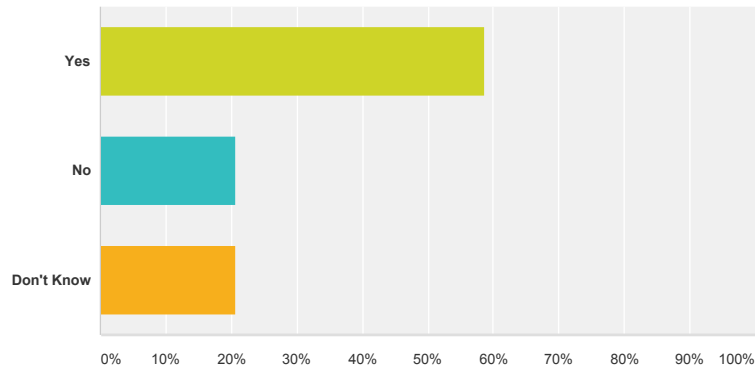


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	70.00%	21
No	30.00%	9
Don't Know	0.00%	0
Total		30

Council Tax Support

Q3 Non-dependent Deductions – A non-dependant is an adult living with a claimant but who is not dependent upon them, for example an adult son, daughter, mother, father or friend. An increase in the amount of non-dependant deductions would mean those getting more money coming into the house would get less Council Tax Support. This change would affect around 144 households. Do you agree increasing non-dependant deductions by 10% will result in reasonable contributions for all households?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 1

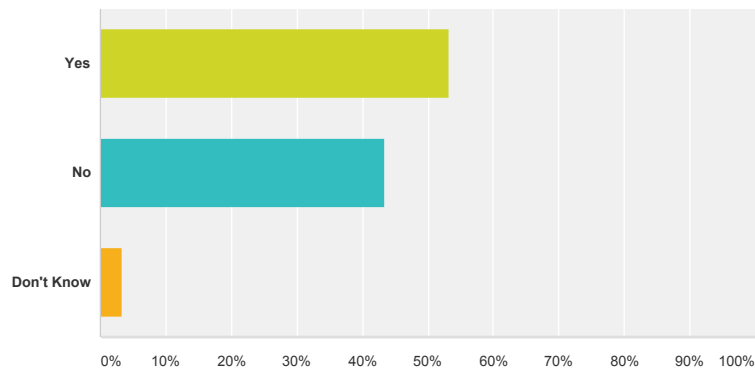


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	58.62% 17
No	20.69% 6
Don't Know	20.69% 6
Total	29

Council Tax Support

Q4 Restrict Council Tax Support to a maximum band – currently there is no restriction on eligibility for Council Tax Support based on the band of the dwelling. If Council Tax Support was restricted, for example to Band D, then the maximum amount of support would be fixed at the level of Council Tax for a Band D dwelling for residents in bands E, F, G or H resulting in those households having to pay a higher proportion of the Council Tax charge. This change would affect around 25 households. Should Council Tax Support be restricted to Band D?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0

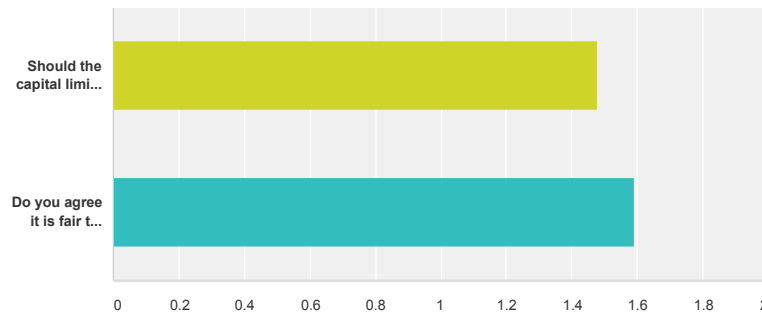


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	53.33%	16
No	43.33%	13
Don't Know	3.33%	1
Total		30

Council Tax Support

Q5 Review capital limits a) Reduce Capital Limit - Currently claimants who have more than £16,000 in capital are not entitled to Council Tax Support. Capital can be in the form of land, property, stocks & shares, premium bonds or cash. As a consequence of reducing the limit some claimants might no longer be eligible for Council Tax Support. This change would affect around 29 households. b) Reduce the lower capital thresholds – Tariff income is a notional adjustment for each £250 (or part thereof) of capital above the threshold (Currently £6,000). £1 is added to assessable income per week when council tax support is determined. This change would affect around 116 households.

Answered: 29 Skipped: 1

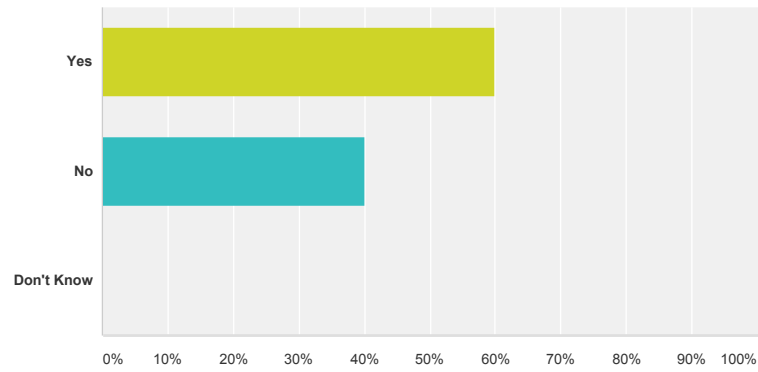


	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total	Weighted Average
Should the capital limit of £16,000 be reduced to £8,000 in line with National limits applied to other benefits?	58.62% 17	34.48% 10	6.90% 2	29	1.48
Do you agree it is fair to reduce the capital threshold from £6,000 to £3,000?	51.72% 15	37.93% 11	10.34% 3	29	1.59

Council Tax Support

Q6 Reduce the level of Council Tax Support available – Currently the scheme provides for a maximum reduction of 75%, requiring working age claimants to pay at least 25% of their Council Tax. Do you agree it is fair to change the maximum amount of support to 70%, and all working age Council Tax payers be required to pay at least 30% of their Council Tax bill? This change would affect around 2,848 households.

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0

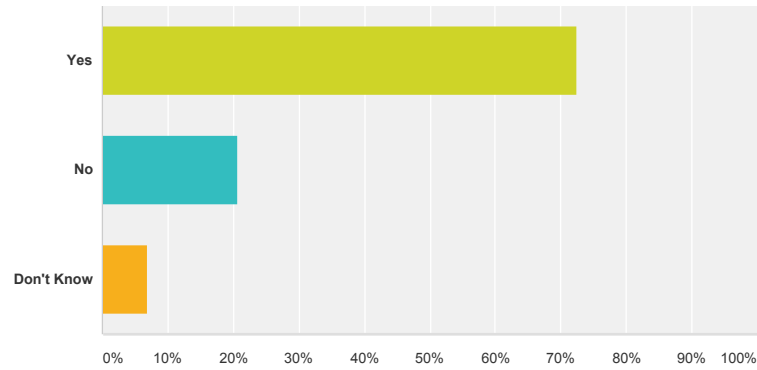


Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	60.00%	18
No	40.00%	12
Don't Know	0.00%	0
Total		30

Council Tax Support

Q7 Restrict Backdating of Awards – All backdating of council tax support is currently applied from the date a change in circumstances occurred or 3 months whichever is the lower time period. As all submissions should be made on a timely basis the government has changed national schemes to restrict backdating to a maximum of 1 month. This will only apply to future claims so no estimate of the impact on households is available. Do you agree that the local scheme should be standardised with national guidelines by backdating of support being limited to a maximum of 1 month?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 1

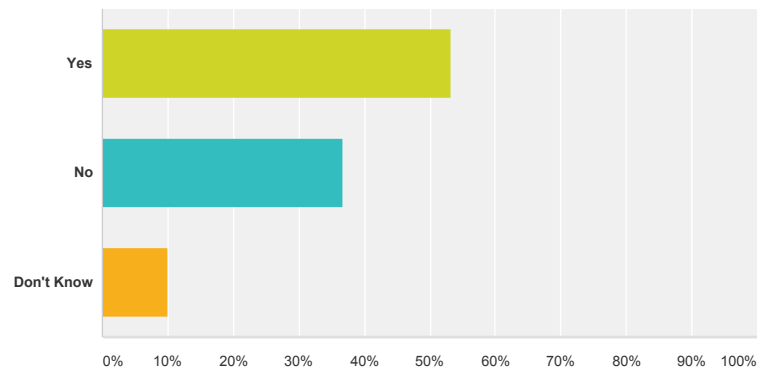


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	72.41%	21
No	20.69%	6
Don't Know	6.90%	2
Total		29

Council Tax Support

Q8 Remove family premium for new CTS applications - A family premium is currently awarded on all claims which include children. From May 2016 the government removed this premium from Housing Benefit for all new claims or additional responsibility for a child(ren).The council is proposing to adopt this change into the council tax support scheme This will only apply to future claims so no estimate of the impact on households is available.Do you agree that the local scheme should be standardised with national guidelines by removing family premium?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0

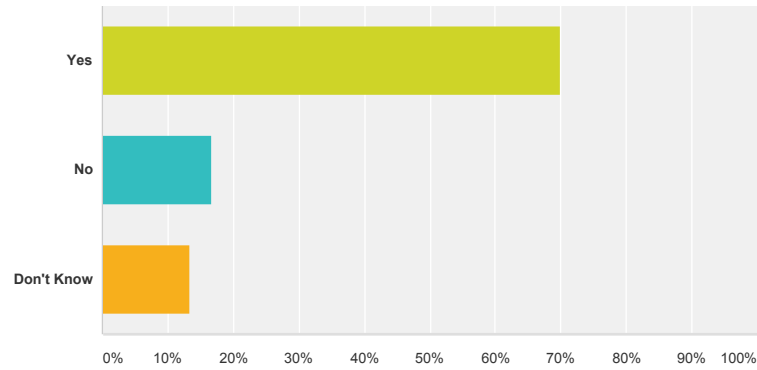


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	53.33%	16
No	36.67%	11
Don't Know	10.00%	3
Total		30

Council Tax Support

Q9 Introduce the council policy on hardship into the scheme – In order to allow individual circumstances to be examined when the new scheme is introduced in April 2017 it is proposed to include a version of the existing council on hardship. This will be time limited and be applied when hardship has been established. This will only apply to future claims so no estimate of the impact on households is available. Do you agree that the local scheme should be standardised with other council policies by introducing a hardship claim process as part of the new council tax support scheme?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	70.00%	21
No	16.67%	5
Don't Know	13.33%	4
Total		30

Part 2 - Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel – 22 November 2016

Joint Scrutiny – 22nd November 2016

Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Executive Director Commercialisation which recommended that changes to the Local Council Tax support scheme were reviewed and comments as appropriate be included in the report to Cabinet following consultation.

Appendix A set out the detail of the proposed changes together with some examples of the impact for claimants. In summary, the amendments which would be consulted on were:

- Abolish second adult rebate, with a three year transitional implementation
- Introduce a minimum weekly amount (£5) of Council Tax Support
- Decrease the non-dependant deduction rate
- Restrict Council Tax to band D for support purposes
- Lower the maximum capital limit to £8,000 (from £16,000)
- Lower the capital threshold to £3,000 (from £6,000)
- Limit the back dating of benefit to 1 month (from 3 months)
- Remove the family premium for new applications of Council Tax Support
- Reduce the maximum level of discount from 75% to 70%

Details of the potential number of claimants that could be affected by each proposed change were detailed within Appendix A to the report.

Members were advised that the consultation period was still open, and that it would end on 14 December 2016. All councillors could submit comments outside of the scrutiny process.

Members considered the report and the following points were made:

- If changes were agreed, how would publicity around the changes be handled?
 - Claimants that the Authority were aware of that would be affected would be written to, and the changes would also be publicised.
- Those in higher banded properties could be asset rich but cash poor, and could also be affected.
 - The Authority needed to take a position on where to draw a line. This view could be considered as part of the consultation.
- Some people could be in more than one of the proposed categories for change, and could therefore be hit quite hard. This may only be a small number but for those that it could affect, they needed to be advised how they could be helped.
- With regard to non-payment, the Authority needed to mitigate for both parties – the Council who were owed money, and Council Tax payers that owed money.

- The Authority did try to assist with those that could not pay, whilst pursuing those that would not pay.
- There was a cost to the consultation exercise – did it have to be undertaken and was it worth it?
 - All authorities were required to review their schemes annually.

AGREED:

- a) That the report of the Interim Executive Director Commercialisation be noted; and
- b) That the comments of the Joint Panel be considered as part of the consultation process.