

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME CONSULTATION RECORD

Date	Item/ Event	Notes
27/8/2012	e-mail from individual	<p>The Questionnaire designed as the method of public consultation is inflexible so my response is as under:</p> <p>Principle 1 - All people of working age should pay some Council Tax The scheme proposes that all working age claimants of Local Council Tax support will be required to pay at least a minimum contribution to their Council Tax – in the draft scheme this is set at 20% of the full Council Tax bill. This would mean a minimum payment of £152 per year for a single person and £203 for a couple in a Band A property. RESPONSE: 100% Support should be available to those in most need.</p> <p>Principle 2 - Council Tax support should be targeted at those who need it most Council Tax support will continue to be calculated based on comparing income to a “Living Allowance” which reflects the circumstances of individual households. The proposed LCTS would continue to offer support for those with additional costs relating to special circumstances by allowing for these additional costs in the Living Allowance or ignoring income relating to these special circumstances in the calculation. In this way the proposed LCTS would continue to provide additional support to those caring for others, living with a disability, bringing up a family, to war widow(ers) and for those living with disablement from war. Full details of these special allowances is provided in the draft LCTS. RESPONSE: Support should be targeted at those who need it most.</p> <p>Principle 3 - Council Tax support should be targeted at people on low incomes Under the current scheme support is provided to single householders, regardless of their income and capital, where another adult in their home has a low income – this is known as the “second adult rebate”. It is proposed that this support is not included in the new LCTS scheme, and that support should be made available only to those people with low incomes. RESPONSE: Support should be targeted at those who need it most.</p>

	<p>Principle 4 - Every working age adult in the household should be expected to contribute to Council Tax payments</p> <p>Under the current scheme Council Tax support is reduced to reflect income from other adults living in the claimant’s house – these are known as “non-dependants” and include people such as adult sons and daughters, a mother, father or friend of the claimant living in the house on a non- commercial basis. These people are assumed to be giving the claimant some money towards their Council Tax regardless of whether or not they actually do. The draft LCTS scheme proposes continuing this principle so that the income of all adults in the household is taken into account.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Every working age adult in the household should be expected to contribute to Council Tax payments.</p> <p>Principle 5 - The new LCTS should help encourage working age people to work</p> <p>The proposed scheme will continue to include some key incentives to encourage working age people to work. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignoring the first £10 of a single claimant’s earnings, £15 of a couple’s earnings and £30 of a single parent’s earnings for the purpose of calculating their weekly income for support purposes. • Making an allowance for at least part of the cost of childcare for people who work. • Payment of LCTS for the first 4 weeks when a claimant (or partner) moves from benefits into work. • A “rapid reclaim” process for anyone claiming support again after a break of 12 weeks or less. <p>RESPONSE: The new LCTS should help encourage working age people to work. No benefit should have an effect that any working age person feels they are better off on welfare benefits in lieu of working.</p> <p>Principle 6 - The new LCTS scheme should be based on the key features of the present housing benefit scheme</p> <p>This will reduce the risks and costs to the Council in introducing a brand new scheme, and will mean that people can apply for housing benefit and LCTS on the same form, and that both can be calculated at the same time, with similar rules of entitlement.</p> <p>RESPONSE: The Council should adopt the most efficient method of operation.</p>
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3/9/12	Public Drop In - Yarm	<p>4 attendees. 2 arrived almost at the end of the session having gone to the other community centre first. NB for future sessions give the address of the venue too.</p> <p>A number of passers by spoken to as well most have seen the document & a number said they would complete it.</p> <p>Specific comments from individuals were recorded on questionnaires & submitted through the usual channels, unless individuals indicated that they would complete the document at home.</p> <p>One resident indicated that an area of social housing had not received the documents & asked if this was deliberate. Residents there don't get the Herald & Post delivered. Noted</p>
3/9/12	Infinity Financial Inclusion Partnership Meeting	<p>Briefed InFInity members on the LCTS draft scheme and the consultation process. A slot is booked on the agenda for the welfare reform event (9 October) for facilitated discussion. Questions raised relating to what our recovery policy would be- would it be cost effective to take recovery action.</p>
3/9/12	Renaissance Northern area Partnership	<p>People should be made aware of all the good work that the council are doing especially in the face of adversity and financial pressure.</p> <p>KP suggested using the community right to challenge on these changes and do a e petition to raise the issue with central government. The Board agreed to let KP raise this at the Voice meeting.</p> <p>Concerns over peoples ability to pay and lack of employment opportunities raised.</p>
4/9/12	Health and Wellbeing Board	<p>Requested information relating to numbers affected in each ward.</p> <p>LS agreed to attend further public meetings if requested.</p> <p>Question raised relating to approach adopted by other Tees Valley authorities.</p>
5/9/12	Local Public Services Board	<p>Scheme and wider welfare reform issues outlined.</p>

10/9/12	Employability Consortium	Scheme and consultation details outlined. Members requested details of the Infinity Welfare Reform event. Copies of questionnaire requested for staff members dealing with work programme.
12/9/12	Public Drop In - Billingham	4 attendees. Individual advice given to 3 people. 1 attendee expressed concern over how people on low incomes could be expected to pay. Encouraged to complete questionnaires to give views.
18/9/12	Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership	Scheme and consultation details outlined. Suggested opportunity for council and registered providers to work together to identify solutions for individuals affected. Both will be recovering debts from low income households. Concern that individuals do not understand the changes and potential impact. Will it be cost effective to recover small sums from people claiming benefit?
19/9/12	Public Drop In - Stockton	8 attendees. Mainly seeking an explanation of the proposals, or advice relating to how the new scheme might affect them personally. 1 questionnaire completed to record the views of attendee. Others took questionnaire home to complete.
20/9/12	Local Safeguarding Childrens Board	Scheme and consultation details outlined
24/9/12	Voice Forum	Concern that proposals will affect some of the most vulnerable residents. Also concerns that some people have not received the document, and that some people affected will not understand the proposals. There is an understanding of the dilemma faced by the council & will respond to the consultation.
24/9/12	Renaissance Western Area Partnership	Meeting cancelled
25/9/12	Renaissance Eastern Area Partnership	Meeting did not go ahead as only 2 members present. Both had already had information about the scheme.
25/9/12	Safer Stockton Partnership	Scheme and consultation details outlined. Comment made that this was an added pressure for people in drug treatment etc that needed to be taken into account by agencies involved.
26/9/12	Public Drop In- Thornaby	2 attendees – both were professionals wanting information to relay to their teams and/ or clients.
26/9/12	BME Network	Meeting inquorate. Update given to members present. Comments made that document should have been written to allow people to answer the questions without reading the details of the proposals.

27/9/12	Renaissance Central Area Partnership	<p>The proposals will affect people already affected by welfare reforms especially those relating to underoccupation in the social rented sector and disability benefits. Members of partnership aware of 5 organisations in the area already who are giving out food parcels.</p> <p>Will the amount collected outweigh the cost of collection – Is it worth it?</p> <p>Some people will have nil income for periods of time – should these be given 100% support for these periods?</p> <p>Non dependants often do not contribute, imposing hardship on the taxpayer. Need to publicise & emphasise the need for non dependants to contribute.</p> <p>Commented on the clarity of the consultation paper.</p>
1/10/12	Public Drop in- Ingleby Barwick	1 attendee. Discussion was related to council tax.
8/10/12	Over 50's forum	Discussion was wide ranging with questions relating to single person discount, council tax banding and appeals. Comments that the questionnaire was very clear and it was a positive step that everyone had been consulted rather than just those claiming benefit. However some attendees thought that this did make for some confusion.
9/10/12	Infinity Welfare Reform Event	Syndicate exercise.
16/10/12	CSI Select Committee	
23/10/12	Executive Scrutiny Committee	
30/10/12	Disability Advisory Group	