

## Council Tax Support

**Council**

**Date: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2012**

### Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation Summary

The consultation ran from 16<sup>th</sup> August 2012 until 9<sup>th</sup> November 2012. There were 348 formal responses and a number of other comments, which are shown below. Of the formal responses, 328 were made online and 20 paper copies were received.

In order to publicise the consultation, press releases were issued at the beginning and towards the end of the consultation period and promoted on social media. Officers went to a number of Locality meetings and held a Welfare reforms conference attended by over 200 people and included representatives from the Advice Agencies, Tenants Representatives and other Voluntary Sector bodies. All 10,000 working age Council Tax Benefits claimants who may be impacted were written to, in addition to 10,000 other residents chosen at random.

#### 1.1 Formal responses to the questions were as follows:

<b>Q1 Should the Council protect all households in Swindon which contain an individual with a disability from the financial impact of any changes under the move to a local Council Tax Support scheme?</b>							
Responses from Council Tax Benefit claimants		Responses from other Council Tax payers		Responses from people who assist people in making claims		Total responses	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
82	25	118	118	16	17	205	143
76.6%	23.4%	50%	50%	48.5%	51.5%	58.9%	41.1%
<b>Q2 Are there any other specific groups that should be protected from any changes in the move to a local Council Tax Support scheme?</b>							
Responses from Council Tax Benefit claimants		Responses from other Council Tax payers		Responses from people who assist people in making claims		Total responses	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
69	37	40	195	21	12	115	232
65.1%	34.9%	17%	83%	63.6%	36.4%	33.1%	66.8%

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Andy Stevens  
Direct Dial 01793 464661, [anstevens@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:anstevens@swindon.gov.uk).

## Council Tax Support

Council

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2012

**Suggestions for other groups that should be protected and numbers of responses include :**

Single Parents : 21  
 Families/children: 18  
 Unemployed: 12  
 Low Income: 12  
 ESA claimants: 10  
 Carers: 4 (\*many 'live in' carers can qualify for Council Tax discounts)  
 Single Persons: 4  
 Low paid: 4  
 War Disability Pensions: 2  
 Students : 2 (\*already exempt or discounted from Council Tax)  
 Foster carers: 1

**Q3. Should the maximum level of Council Tax Support be set at 80% of the Council Tax bill?**

Responses from Council Tax Benefit claimants		Responses from other Council Tax payers		Responses from people who assist people in making claims		Total responses	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
34	73	141	96	11	22	175	173
31.8%	68.2%	59.4%	40.1%	33.3%	66.6%	50.3%	49.7%

**Q3b. If you have answered "no" to Q3, what do you believe the maximum level of Council Tax Support should be?**

Responses from Council Tax Benefit claimants		Responses from other Council Tax payers		Responses from people who assist people in making claims		Total responses	
More than 80%	Less than 80%	More than 80%	Less than 80%	More than 80%	Less than 80%	More than 80%	Less than 80%
38	34	44	50	15	7	85	85

## Council Tax Support

Council

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2012

52.8%	47.2%	46.8%	53.2%	68.2%	31.8%	50%	50%
<b>Q4. Should the second adult rebate be withdrawn?</b>							
Responses From Council Tax Benefit claimants		Responses from other Council Tax payers		Responses from people who assist people in making claims		Total responses	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
56	51	178	59	24	9	234	112
52.3%	47.6%	75.1%	24.9%	72.7%	27.3%	67.6%	32.4%
<b>Q5. Should child benefit be treated as a source of income when calculating a household's entitlement to Council Tax Support?</b>							
Responses From Council Tax Benefit claimants		Responses from other Council Tax payers		Responses from people who assist people in making claims		Total responses	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
38	70	179	58	14	19	218	129
35.2%	64.8%	75.5%	24.5%	42.4%	57.6%	62.8%	37.2%
<b>Q6. Should the maximum level of Council Tax Support payable be capped at the entitlement for a Band D property?</b>							
Responses From Council Tax Benefit claimants		Responses from other Council Tax payers		Responses from people who assist people in making claims		Total responses	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
61	44	177	59	22	11	242	103

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## Council Tax Support

Council

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2012

58.1%	41.9%	75%	25%	66.6%	33.3%	70.1%	29.9%
<b>Q6b. If you have answered “no”, to question 6, at what level should a cap be set?</b>							
Responses From Council Tax Benefit claimants		Responses from other Council Tax payers		Responses from people who assist people in making claims		Total responses	
Higher / no cap	Lower	Higher / no cap	Lower	Higher / no cap	Lower	Higher / no cap	Lower
41	3	39	19	10	2	80	22
93.2%	6.8%	67.2%	32.8%	83.3%	16.7%	78.4%	21.6%
<b>Q7. Should the minimum level of savings held before people start contributing to their Council Tax bills be reduced from £16,000 to £6,000?</b>							
Responses From Council Tax Benefit claimants		Responses from other Council Tax payers		Responses from people who assist people in making claims		Total responses	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
61	43	150	86	20	10	211	133
58.6%	41.4%	63.6%	36.4%	66.6%	33.3%	61.3%	38.7%
<b>Q7b. If you have answered “no” to question 7, what level of savings do you believe should be the minimum held before people are expected to contribute to their Council Tax bills?</b>							
Lower than £6,000						6	

## Council Tax Support

Council

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2012

Between £6,001 and £10,000						18	
Between £10,001 - £16,000						56	
More than £16,000						48	
<b>Q8. Should the expected contribution to Council Tax from non-dependent household members be increased by £5 (per week)?</b>							
Responses From Council Tax Benefit claimants		Responses from other Council Tax payers		Responses from people who assist people in making claims		Total responses	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
50	56	173	63	17	16	223	123
47.2%	52.8%	73.3%	26.7%	51.5%	48.5%	64.4%	35.6%
<b>Q8b. If you have answered “no” to question 8, what change should be made to the expected contribution from non-dependent household members?</b>							
Higher than £5						12 (9.5%)	
Lower than £5						24 (19%)	
No change						90 (71.5%)	
<b>Questions On Alternative Options</b>							
<b>Q9. Should recipients of Council Tax Support contribute to their Council Tax bill a different amount than the current 20p for every £1 earned, if their income increases?</b>							
Responses From Council Tax Benefit claimants		Responses from other Council Tax payers		Responses from people who assist people in making		Total responses	

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## Council Tax Support

Council

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2012

				claims			
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
36	70	149	87	13	20	186	158
34%	66%	63.1%	36.9%	39.4%	60.6%	54.1%	45.9%
<b>Q9b. If you have answered “yes” to question 9, how much of every extra £1 earned should recipients of Council Tax Support contribute to their Council Tax bill?</b>							
Responses From Council Tax Benefit claimants		Responses from other Council Tax payers		Responses from people who assist people in making claims		Total responses	
Less than 20p	More than 20p	Less than 20p	More than 20p	Less than 20p	More than 20p	Less than 20p	More than 20p
19	15	12	131	6	7	33	146
<b>Q10. Should the amount assessed as the minimum basic living level be reduced from the nationally determined amount?</b>							
Responses From Council Tax Benefit claimants		Responses from other Council Tax payers		Responses from people who assist people in making claims		Total responses	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
18	89	80	155	12	20	98	246
16.8%	83.2%	34%	66%	37.5%	62.5%	28.5%	71.5%
<b>Q10b. If you have answered “yes” to question 10, by how much should the minimum basic living level be reduced from the nationally determined amount?</b>							

## Council Tax Support

Council

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2012

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Up to 10%	40	41.6%
Between 11% and 20%	34	35.4%
More than 20%	22	23%

### 1.2 Informal Responses from organisations:

Swindon Carers – “I would invite the council to exempt all carers who are responsible for paying council tax from the changes. Although carers ultimately have the decision as to whether to be carers or not, they save the council significant sums in care costs. I feel that carers should not be penalised for giving up their time and their ability to increase their income from work in order to support people with disabilities.”

British Legion – Requested protection for War Disablement Pensioners, War widows and widowers and that such pensions and compensation payments continue to be disregarded as income.

Swindon Tenants Voice & Housing Advisory Forum responses:

1. Asked the Council to request that Central Government reverse the reduction in Council Tax Benefit subsidy.
2. That irrespective of the answer to question one above, no reductions in Council Tax Benefits or Support be made.

### 1.3 Other Informal comments and responses from individuals include:

- Swindon Borough council should petition Central Government for additional funding.
- Do not wish to see reductions in services (concerned about Home Line)
- Swindon Borough Council should ask Central Government to create a new higher Council Tax band.
- Reduce Council Tax Benefits.
- Increase Council Tax for all Council Taxpayers.

## Council Tax Support

Council

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2012

### 1.4 Equalities Monitoring

Age	Consultation numbers (% in brackets)	Swindon Population Estimate (2009 estimates)
Up to 19	1 (0.3%)	24.35%
20-29	14 (4.0%)	12.98%
30-39	63 (18.2%)	15.64%
40-49	73 (21%)	16.00%
50-59	74(21.3%)	11.67%
60-64	29 (8.4%)	9.26%
65 & over	45 (13%)	10.11%
Rather not say	48 (13.8%)	
Consider themselves to have a disability	Consultation numbers (% in brackets)	Swindon Population Estimate
Yes	40 (11.5%)	15.26%
No	225 (64.8%)	84.74%
Rather not say	82 (23.6%)	

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Gender	Consultation numbers (% in brackets)	Swindon Population Estimate
Male	172 (49.6%)	50.01%
Female	124 (35.7%)	49.99%
Transgender	3 (0.9%)	
Rather Not Say	48 (13.8%)	
Ethnic Background	Consultation numbers (% in brackets)	Swindon Population Estimate
White British	262 (75.5%)	88.53%
Any other white background	11 (3.2%)	4.56%
Black or Black British	4 (1.2%)	1.07%
Asian, Indian & Pakistan,	9 (2.7%)	3.16%
Any other mixed heritage	4 (1.2%)	1.45%
Chinese	1 (0.3%)	
Any other background	1 (0.3%)	1.23%
Rather not say	55 (15.9%)	
Religion/belief	Consultation numbers (% in brackets)	Swindon Population Estimate
No religion	103 (29.7%)	19.13%
Christian	144 (41.5%)	

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Buddhist	0 (0%)	0.28%
Muslim	5 (1.4%)	1.03%
Hindu	2 (0.6%)	0.56%
Jewish	1 (0.3%)	0.07%
Sikh	0 (0%)	0.56%
Other	12 (3.5%)	0.36%
Rather not say	80 (23.1%)	7.95%
Sexual orientation	Consultation numbers (% in brackets)	Swindon Population Estimate
Lesbian , Gay, Bisexual	11 (3.2%)	6%
Heterosexual/ Straight	253 (72.9%)	94%
Rather not say	83 (23.9%)	