

## Consultation Results

### Ref 2020 /005 Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021 – 2022

#### Results from the survey by question.

##### 1: Had everyone who had taken part read and understood the information?

This was a mandatory question. Everyone answered yes.

From here onwards, the questions are firstly a multiple choice question, followed by another where they could make comments if they wished. The multiple choice questions were mandatory but where some responses were not submitted online we were unable to control this option, and some questions were left unanswered.

A total of 33 responses were received.

##### 2: Should the Council keep the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme (continue to administer the scheme as it does at the moment)?

Number of responses, followed by the percentage of total.

Yes	7	21.21%
No	20	60.6%
Don't know	6	18.18%
Unanswered	0	0%
Total	33	100%

##### 3: Comments received:

- “The capital limit set at £6,000 is an ageist policy. Treating working age customers unfairly. Expecting them to 'dip into their savings' to pay their Council Tax if they are on a low or nil income. Especially this year we should be supporting people on lower incomes but allow them to have savings enough for their future. Change to £10,000 or £16,000 limit, or £10k with tariff income to £16k.”
- “Changing to allow for any future changes eg covid increases would help those who are entitled and stop it being “taken” from other benefits and disadvantaging them would be good and fair as long as it doesn't inadvertently disadvantage others”.
- “The system needs the flexibility to avoid one branch of government giving and another taking away the same amount.”
- “I feel the pandemic has effected all people not just low earners”.
- “If income has gone up in one area, it has always been par course for other benefits to be reduced. We need this balance to prevent people staying on benefits. On the other hand, we need to ensure that those who work are not penalised and that the reduction shouldn't represent their wages cancelling

out the reduction they would get. This would encourage people to stay in work.”

- “Charge double to 2nd home owners and holiday homes to generate additional funds to provide better support to families in need.”

**4: Do you agree with this change to the scheme - To allow the Council to increase the levels of incomes within each Band to allow for any changes made by Government to other benefits.**

Number of responses, followed by the percentage of total.

Yes	27	81.81%
No	3	9.09%
Don't know	3	9.09%
Unanswered	0	0%
Total	33	100%

**5: Comments received:**

- “Scheme would need to annually move both ways to cope with temporary measures otherwise central government could move benefit burden to councils via short term stealth benefits that are short or fixed term but trigger a more generous level of council tax support.”
- “Every house hold pays less and stop Putting court charges on bills as if people are struggling to pay how dose adding cost help”
- “This should only be done with people in employment based income. Those on benefits do not need extra money as they incur no extra expense such as travel to and from work, parking, childcare etc”.

**6: Do you agree with this change to the scheme - To allow the Council to suspend the use of the Minimum Income Floor for the Self- Employed in exceptional circumstances.**

Number of responses, followed by the percentage of total

Yes	30	90.9%
No	1	3.03%
Don't know	2	6.06%
Unanswered	0	0%
Total	33	100%

**7: Comments received**

- “Again you charge to much as it is”
- “Please ensure our PROVEN self-employed are looked after!”

**8: Question: Do you agree with this change to the scheme - To remove the two child restriction where the claimant or partner or any dependent child in the household receives a disability benefit.**

Number of responses, followed by the percentage of total

Yes	19	57.57%
No	8	24.24%
Don't know	4	12.12%
Unanswered	2	6.06%
Total	33	100%

**9: Comments received**

- “No alternative. DLA and pip are very generous and should more than cover. Parents should not be encouraged to have more children that they cannot afford in the same way parents not in receipt of benefits make financial decisions.”
- “Household income should remain the primary factor in awarding council tax relief and it's distribution should be equal for all families in need irrespective of health status. Disability benefits need to be factored in through different channels.”
- “Who pays for The increase”
- “These household receive many other premiums and extra support that others don't.”
- “This would be unfair on other larger households where restrictions are in place. This also prevents the benefits culture of having more children to get more money.”

**10: Do you agree with this change to the scheme - To amend the scheme to allow for Shared Parental Leave, Parental Bereavement Leave and the Grenfell Tower Residents' Discretionary Fund.**

Number of responses, followed by the percentage of total

Yes	23	69.69%
No	2	6.06%
Don't know	7	21.21%
Unanswered	1	3.03%
Total	33	100%

**11: Comments received**

- None.

**12: Do you think North Devon Council should choose another option rather than any of the four proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme?**

Number of responses, followed by the percentage of total

Yes	3	9.09%
No	21	27.27%
Don't know	7	21.21%
Unanswered	2	6.06%
Total	33	100%

**13: Comments received**

- “As well as the proposal changes we should Change capital from £6k to £16k with income used from £10k to £16k (50p per week per £1000 only) Allowe all of a pension deduction in a person's pay, Send letters so people know what we are basing their claim on, form when and how it fluctuates.”
- “Do not alter the disability child per household threshold. Fairer way might be to include a specific additional percentage of relief if a household member is disabled (one tick on the assessment screen) but keep the benefit otherwise aligned for all household numbers. Increases simplicity and means all qualifying households receive the same amount of benefit as a percentage of council tax. A family with one severely disabled child, for example should receive the same support as any other for that child.”
- “Every person pays 1% of wages or benefits each month taken out of wages like paye the employer or benefit office deals with This then people know what's in there wage packet is actually there's”

**14: Comments received** other comments on the proposed scheme(s).

- All proposed changes are good ones, no draw backs.
- “I believe all options should be looked into and thought about in length to be fair to all and not just the groups mentioned. I feel it is also prudent to look at housing costs as these work alongside council tax benefits (housing benefits). Private rental especially has increased dramatically, eg 2 bed in Roundswell increase of £150 per month, and has a knock on effect to families especially on low wages and in receipt of benefits, local housing allowances are not relevant to actual rental prices.”
- “All the schemes are too generous to very specific groups while those working and earning just about enough to survive get no help on.”
- “The whole council tax reduction scheme needs to be looked at and a more balanced approach to working out entitlements needs to be implemented. Those who don't qualify for the free childcare, who have travel/parking expenses for work and other work related costs need to be looked at with more care. They're often the ones who fall under the radar. Those who do not have jobs, particularly ones with children, will possibly receive extra child

premiums from income support, child tax credits, child benefit etc have no extra expenses and benefit from free health and prescription services.”

- “Even though state benefits aren't classes as income, it seems that those who don't work at all are a lot better off financially than those who work. This needs to be more balanced.”

#### **15: Comments received**

would like North Devon Council to consider any other options (please state).

- “Change capital from £6k to £16k with income used from £10k to £16k (50p per week per £1000 only) Allowe all of a pension deduction in a person's pay, Send letters so people know what we are basing their claim on, form when and how it fluctuates.”
- “Charge double to 2nd homeowners And holiday homes to allow increase support to families in need.”

#### **16: Comments received** any further comments or questions to make regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, that you have not already raised.

- “The capital limit set at £6,000 is an ageist policy. Treating working age customers unfairly. Expecting them to 'dip into their savings' to pay their Council Tax if they are on a low or nil income. Especially this year we should be supporting people on lower incomes but allow them to have savings enough for their future. Change to £10,000 or £16,000 limit, or £10k with tariff income to £16k.”

#### **17: is someone in the household currently received Council Tax Reduction:**

Yes	8	24.24%
No	24	72.72%
Don't know	1	3.03%
Unanswered	0	0%
Total	33	100%

#### **18: asked the sex of the consultee**

Male	12	36.36%
Female	19	57.57%
Prefer not to say	2	6.06%
Unanswered	0	0%
Total	33	100%

**19: asked the age of the consultee**

25-34	1	3.03%
35-44	5	15.15%
45-54	12	36.35%
55-64	10	33%
65-74	3	9.09%
75-84	1	3.03%
Prefer not to say	1	3.03%
Unanswered	0	0%
Total	33	100%

**20: asked about the consultee's health**

Yes	4	24.24%
No	25	75.75%
Prefer not to say	1	3.03%
Unanswered	3	9.09%
Total	33	100%

**21: asked about the consultee's ethnic origin**

White British	25	75.75%
White Gypsy or traveller	1	3.03%
Any other White background	1	3.03%
Other (option added manually by consultee): White English	2	6.06
Prefer not to say	4	12.12%
Total	33	100%