



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

Joint Strategic Committee  
5 December 2017  
Agenda Item 9

Key Decision: No

Ward(s) Affected: All

**Council Tax Support Schemes for 2018/19**

**Report by the Director for Digital & Resources**

**Executive Summary**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 Members are asked to recommend to their respective Full Councils the Council Tax Support Schemes in respect of 2018/19.

1.2 To assist in their decision this report includes details of the the costs of the 2017/18 Council Tax Support schemes and an analysis of the responses that were received to the public consultations that were conducted during October 2017 in respect of options for the schemes for 2018/19.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 The Joint Strategic Committee is asked to:

(i) Note the content of this report

(ii) Recommend to Adur District Council that

1. Either

- a. The Council Tax Support scheme for Adur District Council in respect of working age customers for 2018/19 should be based upon the scheme for 2017/18 with no restrictions; or
- b. The Council Tax Support scheme for Adur District Council in respect of working age customers for 2018/19 should be based upon the scheme for 2017/18 with the introduction of
  - A £5.00 weekly restriction; and
  - A discretionary budget to support those in severe financial difficulties

2. No other changes should be made beyond necessary technical amendments required to keep the scheme consistent with the national rules in respect of Housing Benefit

3. A further public consultation should be conducted during the summer of 2018 to inform the decision in respect of the scheme to be implemented in respect of 2019/20

(iii) Recommend to Worthing Borough Council that:

1. The Council Tax Support scheme for Worthing Borough Council in respect of working age customers for 2018/19 should be based upon the scheme for 2017/18 with

- a. The £5.00 weekly restriction retained; and
- b. The discretionary budget to support those in severe financial difficulties retained; and
- c. No other changes made beyond necessary technical amendments required to keep the scheme consistent with the national rules in respect of Housing Benefit

2. A further public consultation should be conducted during the summer of 2018 to inform the decision in respect of the scheme to be implemented in respect of 2019/20

### **3. Context**

- 3.1 Since April 2013 Members have had the freedom to set a local Council Tax Support Scheme in respect of “working age” customers. Both Councils opted to retain the national scheme for 2013/14 and 2014/15 and whilst Adur District Council also retained the national scheme since, Worthing Borough Council introduced a £5.00 per week restriction from 1 April 2015 for all “working age” customers together with a discretionary budget to allow additional assistance to be provided where appropriate.
- 3.2 There are statutory protections for all pensioners and refugees, so local schemes only apply to “working age” customers.
- 3.3 At the meeting of Adur Full Council held on 23 February 2017 it was resolved that:
- There should be no restrictions introduced in respect of the 2017/18 scheme; and
  - No other changes should be made beyond necessary technical amendments required to keep the scheme consistent with the national rules in respect of Housing Benefit; and
  - A further public consultation should be conducted during 2017 to inform the decision in respect of the 2018/19 scheme
- 3.4 Worthing Borough Council delegated the decision about the 2017/18 scheme to the Cabinet Member for Resources (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Customer Services) and on 25 January 2017 it was determined
- The £5.00 weekly restriction should be retained; and
  - No other changes should be made beyond necessary technical amendments required to keep the scheme consistent with the national rules in respect of Housing Benefit; and
  - A further public consultation should be conducted during 2017 to inform the decision in respect of the 2018/19 scheme
- 3.5 At its meeting held on 12 September 2017 the Joint Strategic Committee considered a report about the questions to be included in the public consultation for each Council and consultations were subsequently conducted from 29 September 2017 to 20 October 2017.
- 3.6 The content of the consultations was compiled ensuring that the outcomes of the case *R(on the application of Moseley (in substitution of Stirling Deceased)) (AP) (Appellant) v London Borough of Haringey (Respondent)* were met such that the documents
- Were clear and understandable, and therefore not unduly complex or lengthy
  - Included information about realistic alternatives

### **4. Issues for consideration**

- 4.1 The introduction of local schemes was accompanied by a reduction of around 10% in the amount of subsidy paid to local authorities. However, the cost of benefits fell during 2013/14 and the final net cost of introducing the scheme in 2013/14 was substantially lower than expected:

	<b>2013/14 estimated cost of CTS</b>	<b>Council share of overall cost</b>	<b>Grant received</b>	<b>Net cost</b>	<b>Percentage shortfall in funding</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>%</b>
Adur	4,975	856.7	-850	6.7	0.78%
Worthing	7,049	1,004	-947	5.7	5.68%

4.2 Whilst Adur District Council also retained the national scheme for 2015/16 - 2017/18, Worthing Borough Council amended the scheme in 2015/16 and has retained this amended scheme since. The scheme approved within Worthing:

- Introduced a £5.00 per week restriction for all “working age” customers; and
- Created a discretionary £80,000 budget in partnership with the County Council to allow additional assistance to be provided where appropriate; and
- Provided 1 x FTE additional member of staff to the Revenues & Recovery Team in anticipation of the additional recovery work that would arise

4.3 Over the past few years the cost of Council Tax Support has fallen as local employment has improved and as the result of the introduction of the £5.00 weekly restriction in Worthing from 1 April 2015 the overall cost has been:

	<b>2012/13 Actual</b>	<b>2013/14 Actual</b>	<b>2014/15 Actual</b>	<b>2015/16 Actual</b>	<b>2016/17 Actual</b>	<b>2017/18 Estimate</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Adur	5,195	4,975	4,633	4,414	4,313	4,546
Worthing	7,287	7,049	6,754	5,201	5,167	5,764
	12,482	12,024	11,387	9,615	9,480	10,310
Annual decrease (-) / increase		-3.7%	-5.3%	-15.6%	-1.4%	8.8%

4.4 However, the grant towards the cost of Council Tax Support Schemes has been consolidated into the Revenue Support Grant which has fallen each year and will cease by 2018/19. This means that the Councils face an ever-increasing cost associated with the scheme. By 2017/18, the level of subsidy is estimated to be:

	<b>2017/18 cost of CTS</b>	<b>Council share of overall cost</b>	<b>Grant received</b>	<b>Net cost</b>	<b>Percentage shortfall in funding</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>%</b>
Adur	4,546	797.0	-422.4	374.6	47.0
Worthing	5,764	747.0	-477.1	269.9	36.1

4.5 The amount of subsidy that the Councils are required to contribute towards the cost of the schemes will continue to increase as Revenues Support Grant is reduced. However, by 2018/19 neither Council will receive any Revenue Support Grant so the net cost to the Council should stabilise and only increase in line with Council Tax increases from 2019/20 onwards

4.6 Based on a 2% increase in both the basic Council Tax and the Social Care levy from West Sussex County Council in 2018/19, the level of subsidy will increase as follows:

<b>Net Cost of Council Tax Support</b>	<b>2013/14 Actual</b>	<b>2015/15 Actual</b>	<b>2015/16 Actual</b>	<b>2016/17 Actual</b>	<b>2017/18 Estimate</b>	<b>2018/19 Estimate</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Adur	6.7	46.3	101.8	243.6	374.6	541.4
Worthing	57.0	125.9	16.5	133.5	269.9	355.6

4.7 The restriction implemented in Worthing in respect of 2015/16 resulted in all working age” customers being asked to pay at least £261.43, subject to being able to apply for additional financial support by way of a discretionary award.

4.8 For those customers who were previously in receipt of maximum Council Tax Support (and therefore had £nil to pay) this represented a significant change and considerable work was undertaken to engage with these customers to discuss a realistic payment arrangement and ensure that financial inclusion was maximised.

4.9 Additionally, the issue of a summons and the Magistrates’ Court granting a Liability Order results in costs being added to the account. If an account is subsequently referred to an Enforcement Agent additional statutory fees of either £75.00 or £310.00 will also become due (the level of the fees depends on the stage at which the customer engages with the Enforcement Agent).

4.10 In conjunction with the Customer Service Team, an empathetic approach has been taken when considering payment arrangements and where appropriate customers have been provided with assistance to complete an application form for a discretionary award and/or signposted to debt advice agencies. For Members’ information, the annual in-year collection rates for the last three financial years have been

	<u>Adur</u>	<u>Worthing</u>
2014/15	97.62%	98.15%
2015/16	97.67%	97.38%
2016/17	97.89%	97.58%

4.11 Members should be aware that the introduction of a restriction in Adur or an increase in the restriction in Worthing from April 2018 will coincide with the introduction of the full roll-out of Universal Credit by the Department for Work & Pensions. Residents claiming Universal Credit are currently subject to a period of at least six weeks before they receive payment of their full entitlement.

## 5. Engagement and Communication

- 5.1 Separate consultations for the two Councils have been undertaken between 29 September 2017 and 20 October 2017.
- 5.2 The consultations were publicised via social media, a press release and by including paper copies with all Benefit award letters that were issued. Hard copies of the consultations were also available at the Shoreham Centre and Portland House, with an electronic copy being publicised on the Councils' website. Additionally, members of the Housing Team encouraged Adur Homes tenants to submit responses.
- 5.3 The results from the consultation for Adur District Council are shown in appendix 1 and the results for Worthing Borough Council are shown in appendix 2. In summary:

<u>Question</u>	<u>Percentage of respondents</u>	
	<u>Adur</u>	<u>Worthing</u>
Should a £5.00 per week restriction be introduced (in Adur) or retained (in Worthing)?	Yes: 41.18% No: 52.94% Not sure: 5.88%	Yes: 51.65% No: 34.07% Not sure: 14.29%
Should the rules for Council Tax Support be aligned with the rules for Housing Benefit/Universal Credit?	Yes: 70.59% No: 11.76% Not sure: 17.65%	Yes: 56.04% No: 14.29% Not sure: 29.67%

- 5.4 In order that Members are aware of the impact that the introduction or increase of any restriction on particular client groups, details of the number of live claims for working age customers currently in receipt of Council Tax Support are shown in appendix 3.
- 5.5 Appendix 4 contains an analysis of the position (as at 16 November 2017) of the Council Tax payments received from working age Council Tax Support customers, together with details about recovery action that has been taken for unpaid sums. The analysis only relates to Worthing Borough Council because additional functionality has previously been commissioned from the Councils' software supplier, but this is not yet available in respect of the Adur database.

## 6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 When the £5.00 restriction was introduced by Worthing Borough Council in 2015/16, the Council saw an immediate increase in Council Tax income, however to achieve this level of income the Council needed to invest in additional staff, a new hardship fund, and allow for an increased level of write off. The eventual financial benefit was:

	Overall gain in 2015/16	Worthing Borough Council share
	£'000	£'000
Estimated impact of reduced Council Tax Support cost on Council Tax income	1,098.7	153.5
<b>Less:</b> Additional staffing required	-20.0	-20.0
<b>Less:</b> Hardship Fund	-80.0	-20.0
<b>Less:</b> Allowance for increased write offs @ 5%	-54.9	-7.7
	943.8	105.8

- 6.2 If Adur members choose to implement a £5.00 per week restriction accompanied by a discretionary Council Tax Support Hardship Fund, the financial gain in respect of 2018/19 is estimated to be:

	Overall	Adur District Council share
	£'000	£'000
Impact of reduced Council Tax Support cost on Council Tax income	739.5	126.5
<b>Less:</b> Additional collection costs	-20.0	-20.0
<b>Less:</b> Hardship Fund	-80.0	-20.0
<b>Less:</b> Allowance for increased write offs @ 5%	-37.0	-6.3
	602.5	80.2

## 7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 In respect of 2013/14 and 2014/15 both Councils adopted an amended “default” Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Adur also adopted the “default” Council Tax Reduction Scheme in respect of 2015/16 and 2016/17. In all instances this was in accordance with The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (England) Regulations 2012, Statutory Instrument 2012 No. 2886 and The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012, Statutory Instrument 2012 No. 2885.
- 7.2 Any Council Tax Reduction Scheme must comply with the relevant sections of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 and with the delegated legislation under that Act as contained within The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Default Scheme) Regulations 2012 and the Council Tax Reduction Schemes ( Prescribed Requirements) Regulations 2012, as amended.
- 7.3 Further, under Schedules 4 paragraph 3 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 the Councils are required before making the Schemes (and to do so in the following order) to consult with the major precepting authorities, publish a draft scheme in such manner as it thinks fits and consult with such other person as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the Scheme. Note that any revision of a Scheme must follow the same process as the making a Scheme. In the case of *R (Moseley) v*

*London Borough of Haringey [2014] UKSC 56* the Supreme Court held that the statutory duty of consultation required the consultees to be provided with information about the draft scheme but also with an outline of the realistic alternatives and an indication of the authority's main reasons for adopting the draft scheme.

7.4 There is therefore a requirement to consult annually with residents.

## **Background Papers**

Localising Support for Council Tax in England report to the Joint Strategic Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2014

Welfare Reform Act 2012

Local Government Finance Bill 2012

Minutes of the meetings of the Joint Strategic Committee of Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils held on 26 July 2012, 28 November 2012, 3 December 2013, 2 December 2014, 2 February 2016 and 10 January 2017

Minutes of the Adur Full Council meeting held 23 February 2017

Decision made by the Council Executive Member for Resources for Worthing Borough on 25 January 2017 (reference W/RES/007/16-17)

Report considered by the Joint Strategic Committee on 12 September 2017

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## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

Whilst Council Tax represents an important source of income to the Councils, financial support must be provided to residents on a low income via appropriate Council Tax Support schemes.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

### **3. Environmental**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

### **4. Governance**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

## Appendix 1 - results from the consultation for Adur District Council

Seventeen responses were received.

Q1. Of the respondents

- 12 (70.59%) live in Adur
- 2 (11.76%) live and work in Adur
- 1 (5.88%) lives, works and runs a business in Adur
- 1 (5.88%) lives and works in Adur and also works in Worthing
- 1 (5.88%) doesn't live, work or run a business in either Adur or Worthing

Q2. The age range of respondents:

19 or under	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 or over
0	0	2 (11.76%)	5 (29.41%)	3 (17.65%)	3 (17.65%)	4 (23.53%)

Q3. The annual income of respondents:

£9,999 or under	£10,000 to £14,999	£15,000 to £19,999	£20,000 to £29,999	£30,000 to £39,999	£40,000 or over
3 (17.65%)	1 (5.88%)	2 (11.76%)	3 (17.65%)	3 (17.65%)	5 (29.41%)

Q4. What's your postcode?

A map of respondents' postcodes is shown after the response to question 9.

	Yes	No	Don't know/not sure
Q5. Do you currently get Council Tax Support?	4 (23.53%)	12 (70.59%)	1 (5.88%)

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Q6. Are you disabled?	5 (29.41%)	10 (58.82%)	2 (11.76%)

Q7. If we introduce a restriction of £5.00 per week this would mean that all working age customers who get Council Tax Support would be asked to pay Council Tax of at least £26.00 per month. Should we introduce a £5.00 per week restriction with extra help made available for those who would find paying £5.00 difficult?

- Yes = 7 (41.18%)
  - Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support = 1 (5.88%)
  - Not Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support or not sure = 6 (35.29%)
  
  - Disabled = 2 (11.76%)
  - Not disabled or prefer not to say = 5 (29.41%)
  
- No = 9 (52.94%)
  - Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support = 3 (17.65%)
  - Not Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support or not sure = 6 (35.29%)
  
  - Disabled = 3 (17.65%)
  - Not disabled or prefer not to say = 6 (35.29%)
  
- Not sure = 1 (5.88%)
  - Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support = 0
  - Not Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support or not sure = 1 (5.88%)
  
  - Disabled = 0
  - Not disabled or prefer not to say = 1 (5.88%)

Q8. Should the rules for Council Tax Support be the same as the rules for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit (for example, the rules about the way that we work out how much income is coming into the household) so that people understand how the scheme works?

- Yes = 12 (70.59%)
  - Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support = 2 (11.76%)
  - Not Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support or not sure = 10 (58.82%)
  
  - Disabled = 3 (17.65%)
  - Not disabled or prefer not to say = 9 (52.94%)
  
- No = 2 (11.76%)
  - Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support = 1 (5.88%)
  - Not Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support or not sure = 1 (5.88%)
  
  - Disabled = 1 (5.88%)
  - Not disabled or prefer not to say = 1 (5.88%)
  
- Not sure = 3 (17.65%)
  - Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support = 1 (5.88%)
  - Not Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support or not sure = 2 (11.76%)
  
  - Disabled = 1 (5.88%)
  - Not disabled or prefer not to say = 2 (11.76%)

Q9. Are there any other changes that you would like to see?

- Every person uses the services that are supplied ie refuse collection etc so they should cover a token cost £5.00 a week is not a large sum when others may be paying £173 a month or more. Services have to be paid for so everyone should pay something towards the cost.
- Stricter investigation of people's finances including those person who declare themselves self employed and avoidance measures to avoid paying taxes
- I think the changes that are proposed are disgraceful. People on benefits for whatever reason can ill afford £5.00 per week or £26.00 per month. You are leaving people practically destitute. The changes that should be made should be the people working for the council being paid over and above a normal wage causing the council to have a large deficit. People with disability should be exempt from this. There are people paying bedroom tax already and this on top is going to break them. You truly can't squeeze any more money out of the poor can you? They will have to for go something if they have to pay for this like food or heating which they probably can barely afford. And how does £5.00 per week equate to a minimum of £26.00 per month?
- Everyone pays something. It's not fair that some of us pay £200+ per month and others pay nothing. Rules should be put in place that they pay essential bills like council tax before niceties such as Sky TV or fancy mobile phone packages
- If the alternative is to increase council tax in order to prevent a decrease in service, that would be my preferred option.
- Councillors should stop paying themselves 5% increases. Question on rules for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit is incomprehensible to those who don't know the rules



## Appendix 2 - results from the consultation for Worthing Borough Council

Ninety-one responses were received.

Q1. Of the respondents

- 65 (71.43%) live in Worthing
- 17 (18.68%) live and work in Worthing
- 3 (3.30%) live and run a business in Worthing
- 1 (5.88%) lives and works in Worthing and also runs a business in Adur
- 5 (5.49%) work in Worthing

Q2. The age range of respondents was from 22 to 78, with an average age of just over 51.

Q3. What's your postcode?

A map of respondents' postcodes is shown after the response to question 8.

	Yes	No	Don't know/not sure
Q4. Do you currently get Council Tax Support?	25 (27.47%)	64 (70.33%)	2 (2.20%)

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Q5. Are you disabled?	11 (12.09%)	78 (85.71%)	2 (2.20%)

Q6. Should we keep the current £5.00 per week restriction with extra help for those who would find paying £5.00 difficult?

- Yes = 47 (51.65%)
  - Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support = 11 (12.09%)
  - Not Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support or not sure = 36 (39.56%)
  - Disabled = 3 (3.30%)
  - Not disabled or prefer not to say = 44 (48.35%)
- No = 31 (34.07%)
  - Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support = 8 (8.79%)
  - Not Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support or not sure = 23 (25.27%)
  - Disabled = 6 (6.59%)
  - Not disabled or prefer not to say = 25 (27.47%)
- Not sure = 13 (14.29%)
  - Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support = 6 (6.59%)
  - Not Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support or not sure = 7 (7.69%)
  - Disabled = 2 (2.20%)

- Not disabled or prefer not to say = 11 (12.09%)

Q8. Should the rules for Council Tax Support be the same as the rules for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit (for example, the rules about the way that we work out how much income is coming into the household) so that people understand how the scheme works?

- Yes = 51 (56.04%)
  - Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support = 13 (14.29%)
  - Not Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support or not sure = 38 (41.76%)
    - Disabled = 6 (6.59%)
    - Not disabled or prefer not to say = 45 (49.45%)
- No = 13 (14.29%)
  - Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support = 1 (1.10%)
  - Not Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support or not sure = 12 (13.19%)
    - Disabled = 2 (2.20%)
    - Not disabled or prefer not to say = 11 (12.09%)
- Not sure = 27 (29.67%)
  - Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support = 11 (12.09%)
  - Not Currently in receipt of Council Tax Support or not sure = 16 (17.58%)
    - Disabled = 3 (3.30%)
    - Not disabled or prefer not to say = 24 (26.37%)

Q8. Are there any other changes that you would like to see?

- Adur and Worthing share so much. They could share an approach to help those in the worst of financial plights - the working poor.
- Any family earning under 25,000 per annum should not have to pay council tax at all
- Anyone who receives a benefit of any kind, including a pension, should not have to pay ANY council tax. May I also recommend <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/> as your form could be misleading, denying those who need council tax support the most?
- As someone who believes in progressive taxation I am strongly against any proposal that would mean that those on low incomes should have to pay more. From the information provided it would appear that the £5 restriction would apply to those on lower income and it is not clear exactly what extra help those who would find paying the £5 difficult would get. I don't think they should have to pay the £5 at all. This cost should be borne by those council tax payers who are financially better off, even if this means an increase in Council Tax.
- Better, tighter scrutiny checks for benefit cheats
- Can't think of anything at this present time.
- Clearer information and break down less bundles of letter confusing matters.
- Clearer information for vulnerable residents about how to access reductions and recognition of the fact that AWC has residents living in poverty

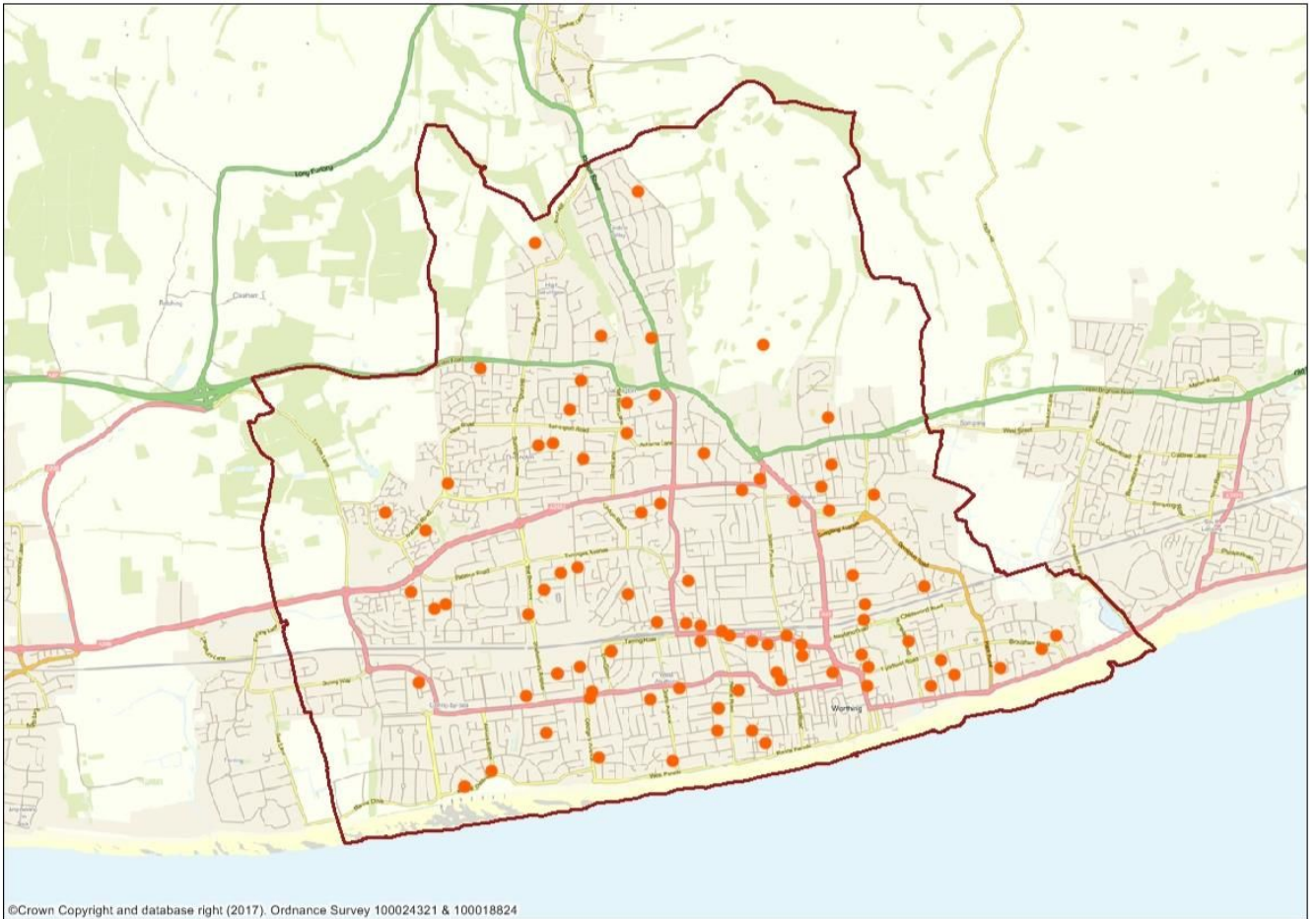
- Council Tax benefit should cover the full amount as it used to. £5 a week is an enormous amount of money if you're benefits and it is immoral to make people choose between paying council tax and food or electricity.
- Extra 1% towards emergency services
- Go back to 100% Council Tax Benefit for the lowest income homes
- Homeless people who manage to sustain a tenancy have huge financial challenges and part of their progress is learn into budget. They have a very tight budget and even £5 council tax is too much. We need to keep this folk in their homes and not risk them back on the streets.
- I believe that council tax should be deducted directly from wages/benefits so that people are not avoiding payments and there would be less money spent chasing those who do not pay.
- I can the most vulnerable in society should have no increase in council tax and if there is a shortfall it should be made up by those who can afford it.
- I do not think punishing the poorest by taking an extra 5 pounds a week will be affordable for them. It would be nice in your consultation to provide some details of how many people this applies to, how many are in arrears, and how much extra it would go up by for everyone else to cover the amount involved. Otherwise it seems a strange way to consult on such an important issue.
- I don't think this consultation is worded correctly and therefore I don't believe the question is asked fairly. The changes I would like to see would be made to the consultation wherein a more fairly worded question is asked. I think the poorest citizens should be exempt from paying the £5.
- I don't want anybody to have to pay extra if they can't afford to. To add £5 per week for those who are not in a position to pay is in my view wrong. An increase in Council Tax for those who can afford it is a better option for a fairer society. The wording of this questionnaire is ambiguous.
- I think council tax should be means tested especially as care workers and other low income families do not necessarily claim benefits
- I think what we should be thinking is how humane we want to be. I realise that putting an idea forward as a way of making people having a stake in their community sounds like a good idea, it negates the fact that people living in poverty don't need the added stress of finding their funding cut and making tax support a very confusing exercise. Raising the council tax by a few pence sends a message about us as human beings
- I thought the idea of making one single benefit payment (Universal Credit) was to assess the income needed which would take into account the cost of outgoings. Unless the Council Tax cost is recognised within the Universal Credit payment made to claimant I cannot agree that they should pay any amount of Council Tax. I would be interested to know how much the council received from the Council Tax Support scheme taking into account the costs paid for administering such a scheme. I am aware that up to now the Adur council has not asked for any payment for Council Tax from those people receiving benefits/Universal Credit which in my opinion is the right thing to do until the cost is added into the Universal Credit.
- I would like spot checks done on single parents claiming benefits, who clearly have their partner living there full time but have their post sent to their parents this is wrong!

- I would like to see that the grass verges are mowed more often and that the grass is collected up (If mowed more often then no need to collect cuttings). If you look a round Worthing at roundabouts etc the impression is one of what a place. All untidy and could not care a hoot. So if it means increasing the tax by a couple of pence per household then do so. Is it the councils policy to let people that care, mow outside their own place so the council do not have to pay. The refuse collection should also remain unchanged with weekly (Household Waste) and twice weekly for (Recyclable Waste).
- If people are working age and on very low income, I don't think they should be charged council tax at all. I note that Adur is now also consulting to bring in a similar scheme so that residents of a property have to pay £5 per week council tax. If Adur managed for several years without imposing council tax on those on low incomes, why cannot Worthing do the same? Both are prosperous areas where revenues from council tax must be relatively high, so that we have been cushioned from the worst effects of austerity. Are there not savings that can be made from other areas of the Council's budget? I believe it is central government that has been cutting funding to local councils, so I would like to see Worthing Council applying more pressure on central government if there are shortfalls in our funding. We are lucky to live in a relatively prosperous part of the country, and should care for those amongst us who have the misfortune of a low-paid job.
- I'm sorry but this consultation document is terribly badly worded. I don't even really know what is meant by £5 per week restriction. And I only heard of this consultation when a friend mentioned it to me. But it seems from what she said that it is basically a plan to penalise the lowest income families by asking them to pay £5 a week more council tax. Is that the case? How is this a good idea? You will simply put more families and children into worse situations than they are in already. Are you aware that child poverty is the single biggest factor in determining the well-being, success, happiness and stability of adults? Do you want to contribute to adding more misery to lives? I believe this consultation should be reworded and clarified, and then the people of Worthing who will be affected the most should be MADE AWARE OF IT.
- Maybe those getting the subsidy could do a bit of payback in their local community? Litter picking for example, giving them pride in their area and if unemployed could look good on CV?
- Need to make the 'help for those who find paying £5 difficult' better known - I certainly haven't heard about it! Asking for help is hard and need to make it easier and simpler otherwise the vulnerable miss out.
- People on a low income or in receipt of benefits should NOT have to pay Council Tax
- People on the very lowest incomes struggle to feed their families and keep them warm. Any extra burden on their budgets could have a detrimental effect on their health. Whilst understanding that the council needs money to provide social services the poor should not be asked to pay for them. If public taxes were distributed between councils instead of paying private companies to run public services we would all be better off!
- People should pay something for the services they receive. This would make them aware of the councils costs and help toward the budget.



- People struggle enough on benefits without worrying about council tax as well go back to how it used to be
- Provide decent public services as a mark of a civilised society funded from income or wealth related taxation not flat rate taxes.
- Provide good public services as your duty, funded properly by income or wealth related taxes. This is the decent way a society should look after each other.
- Provide more information on the impact these changes will have on people. Its also not clear to me what's being proposed. I believe this consultation is not useful due to lack of information.
- I feel personally as a single mother of three children, two are dependents and work part-time, it is unfair to expect me to pay the £5 per week as I already make a contribution towards my Council Tax. I am not sure but I don't think I get any help as can be seen by recent mail sent to myself so I do not see why I should then have to pay a further £20 per month. I do believe that all households should contribute to Council Tax especially if they do not contribute at all. I feel it is also wrong that I, a single occupancy, should pay the same as a household with two adults living in it. With twins who will be attending high school next September who is means tested on all the benefits I receive, who is teaching my children the importance of working to contribute to the community, a value I believe is vital for all. The extra £20 I pay through this scheme could really help me provide for my family. I could put it by to pay for their new uniforms for next September.
- I don't think it's fair for people that are already paying Council Tax to pay an extra £5.00 per week on top of this no. The people that don't pay any Council Tax chase them.
- I am disabled and cared for my dear husband for 10 years. He has dementia and I now only got £73 a week. Need to give Worthing Homes £16 a week, £10 for TV and phone which means I have just £47 a week to live on. Not at all fair. This is all so unfair and cruel. I love my husband. We did not ask for him to get dementia and end up in care. I cannot yet get my pension because it is now 66 for pension, again not fair. So I have just £73.10p for all my needs which I guess one day very soon they will stop as they do a lot to people
- Help with rent (only) even if you're not claiming benefits (don't punish people who don't earn a lot by making all their wages go on Council Tax or rent
- Reduce salaries of top council workers and save money that way. Stop paying consultant fees for blindingly obvious answers.
- Remove restriction exemption
- Tax bill needs to be more in line with actual services used by individual taxpayer, rather than be linked to the value of the property. Properties are of a bad quality, so why a single person foreigner that has no other activities (with proof) has to pay this extraordinary money? "To pay for those that they can't afford" is not a valid justification, considering the society we live is money and profit-driven - why should I care when nobody cares about me?
- That the amount is worked out on people's income so those worse off do not pay anything.

- The way in which the question and consultation has been presented is misleading. This is not a restriction or a form a support it is nothing more than putting a tax on people who have minimal income to please those that do. There is not extra help for people who cannot afford the £5 council tax. People on income support who already cannot afford it are being forced to pay it. The above question sounds like the £5 weekly restriction also helps people who would find paying it which is not true. The £5 weekly restriction is a new policy and is a way of freezing council tax rates for those who can afford it by making people who cant, the most vulnerable pay, when previously taxing people on low income support was unthinkable. This means that even people who receive income support as low as £73.10 or £57.90 (if under 25) a week still have to pay £5 a week council tax.
- I work in a homeless hostel and are can see how this tax (£5 restriction) can have detrimental impact on people. After being used to paying low service charge in our projects clients already have the shock of then needing to pay all their bills (water/electric/TV licence) which can leave them very little to pay for food, travel, personal costs etc. Some of them are trying to pay off debts which is how they became homeless. Although £5 a week might not seem much, for most of people who are on income support (JSA/ESA/UC) who are already struggling with their finances and meeting the costs of living, it can make a huge difference and could affect their ability to sustain a tenancy. Council tax should only be paid by people who have sufficient income/earnings and do not rely on income support
- We had no income other than maternity pay for 6 month after my husband tried to kill himself and still had to pay this and we had to go to food banks to be able to eat and pay the bills £129 a week for 2 people is hard enough in hard times without working out if you have £5 fee on top.
- Why charge people who cannot afford it any council tax, surely when they default it costs far more to try and get the money back than simply leaving it.
- Working as a social worker within Worthing, I have seen how damaging to one's finances this £5 weekly payment can be. Amounting to £20 monthly, this is incredibly difficult to pay for those in receipt of benefits. Even more worrying, is the introduction of Universal Credit. Claimants are going to need to budget their finances to a degree that many will find challenging. This is especially so for those with mental health conditions and learning disabilities. The ongoing council tax charge will only further this challenge and cause unwarranted distress.
- Worthing should go back to 100% support. This draconian policy puts the most vulnerable families into debt. The Child Poverty Action Group has grave concerns of the impact of this scheme, which has created serious administrative and financial burdens for local councils. Over the last 4 years 317 052 people in London have been charged £34.7 in court costs alone. This consultation is confusing and the language is inappropriate. Conservative councillors will be shocked if they knew the impact of this policy in Worthing. You are putting the poorest families into debt and you are not being transparent. I have seen no Equality Impact Assessment of this policy and I therefore believe you must go back and reconsider your action immediately. You have failed to meet your duty to the poorest residents of Worthing District and the more affluent will be disgusted when they hear about this in the local press.



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### Appendix 3 - current numbers of working age customers in receipt of Council Tax Support

Total caseload

- Adur: 2,274
- Worthing: 3,492

<u>Customer circumstances</u>	<u>Adur</u> (number of claims)	<u>Worthing</u> (number of claims)
Passported - War Pensioners	0	1
Passported - Disabled	848	1,410
Passported - Carer	45	166
Passported - Disabled child	44	16
Passported - Couples and lone parents with at least one child in the household	328	387
Passported - but also working	9	40
Passported - other circumstances	130	406
Non-Passported-War Pensioners	4	2
Non-Passported - Disabled	158	267
Non-Passported - Carer	15	39
Non-Passported - Disabled child	31	11
Non-Passported - Couples and lone parents with at least one child in the household	497	332
Non-Passported - and working	106	266
Non-Passported - other circumstances	59	149

*“Passported” means the customer is in receipt of Income Support, income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance or income-related Employment & Support Allowance. In Adur, under the rules for the 2017/18 Council Tax Support schemes they generally have no Council Tax to pay.*

**Appendix 4 - analysis of the position (as at 16 November 2017) for Worthing Borough Council in respect of Council Tax payments received from working age Council Tax Support customers and details about recovery action that has been taken for unpaid sums**

<u>In respect of Council Tax bills for 2017/18</u>	<u>Working age CTS customers (number/value and percentage)</u>	<u>Non-working age CTS customers * (number/value and percentage)**</u>
Total number of accounts	3,492 (7.00%)	46,428 (93.00%)
Total value of gross Council Tax charged (before CTS is awarded)	£4,079,878 (5.25%)	£73,628,135 (94.75%)
Total value of Council Tax Support awards	£2,838,760	N/A
Net Council Tax charged	£1,241,118 (1.99%)	£61,235,398 (98.01%)
Council Tax payments received	£712,082 (1.55%)	£45,203,344 (98.45%)
Net Council Tax remaining to be paid	£529,036 (3.19%)	£16,032,054 (96.81%)
Summons and Court costs raised	£70,860 (35.04%)	£131,390 (64.96%)
Summons and Court costs withdrawn	£3,475 (28.57%)	£12,169 (71.43%)

\* The percentage relates to the total value or number

\*\* This column includes pensioners in receipt of Council Tax Support

Current recovery status in respect of Council Tax bills for 2017/18 where a Liability Order has been granted

<u>In respect of Council Tax bills for 2017/18</u>	<u>Working age CTS customers (number and percentage)</u>	<u>Non-working age CTS customers * (number and percentage)**</u>
Accounts where a Liability Order has been granted and a response from the customer is awaited in respect of a letter asking them to contact the Revenues & Recovery Team	199 (68.86%)	90 (31.14%)
Accounts where a Liability Order has been granted and a payment arrangement has been made with the customer	175 (30.38%)	401 (69.62%)
Accounts where a Liability Order has been granted and an Attachment of Earnings has been set up (for deductions from earnings to be made by the employer)	6 (4.92%)	116 (95.08%)
Accounts where a Liability Order has been granted and an Attachment of Benefit has been set up (for deductions from benefits to be made by the DWP)	17 (77.27%)	5 (22.73%)
Accounts where a Liability Order has been granted and an Attachment of Earnings or an Attachment of Benefit is pending	94 54.02%)	80 (45.98%)
Accounts referred to Enforcement Agents (bailiffs)	31 (12.30%)	221 (87.70%)
Accounts where a summons has been issued but a Liability Order has not yet been obtained because the Court date has not yet been reached	48 (25.40%)	141 (74.60%)
Accounts where a Liability Order has been obtained and a decision needs to be made about what the next recovery action should be	60 (28.17%)	153 (71.83%)
Accounts where a Liability order has been obtained and the outstanding balance is due to be written off	1 (33.33%)	2 (66.67%)
Accounts where a Liability Order has been obtained but further recovery action has been temporarily suspended	16 (61.54%)	10 (38.46%)

\* The percentage relates to the total number

\*\* This column includes pensioners in receipt of Council Tax Support