

CABINET AGENDA



**TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2023 AT 7.30 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 2 - THE FORUM**

The Councillors listed below are requested to attend the above meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Membership

Councillor Tindall (Leader)
Councillor Bromham
Councillor Dhyani

Councillor England (Deputy Leader)
Councillor Weston
Councillor Wilkie

For further information, please contact Corporate and Democratic Support or 01442 228209

AGENDA

- 10. COUNCIL TAX BASE REPORT & SUPPORT SCHEME (Pages 2 - 33)**



Report for:	Cabinet
Title of report:	Revisions to the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/25, the Council Tax Base 2024/25 and Forecast Council Tax Position as at 31 March 2024
Date:	12th December 2023
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Ron Tindall, Leader of the Council
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Council Tax Support Scheme revisions- consultation responses from major preceptors Appendix 2 – Revisions to the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/25 survey response report for public consultation
Background papers:	CA/75/21 – report to Cabinet on proposals for changes to CTS and the consultation process FINAL - 2024 Council Tax Support Policy Cabinet Sept 2023 1.pdf (dacorum.gov.uk) Council Tax Support Fund 2023-24 guidance Council Tax Support Fund guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	CTS – Council Tax Support HCC – Hertfordshire County Council PCC – Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire

Report Author

Lexi Schultz, Team Leader, Financial and Regulatory Accounting

Lexi.schultz@dacorum.gov.uk/ 01442 228533

Chris Baker, Head of Revenues & Benefits

Chris.baker@dacorum.gov.uk/ 01442 228290 (ext. 2290)

Responsible Officer

Nigel Howcutt, Chief Finance Officer



nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk/ 01442 228662(ext.2662)

<p>Corporate Priorities</p>	<p>A clean, safe and enjoyable environment</p> <p>Building strong and vibrant communities</p> <p>Ensuring economic growth and prosperity</p> <p>Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need</p> <p>Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery</p> <p>Climate and ecological emergency.</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Purpose of the report:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To advise of the responses to consultation on proposed changes to the Council Tax Support scheme from April 2024. 2. To advise of options for Council in respect of the proposed Council Tax Support scheme changes. 3. To agree the estimated Collection Fund surplus or deficit as at 31 March 2024. 4. To determine the Council Tax Base for 2024/25.
<p>Recommendations to the decision makers:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To recommend that Council changes the council tax support scheme from April 2024 to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. increase the backdating period for working age CTS applications to three months in line with pension age applications; b. remove the restriction for residents in properties from bands E to H for maximum CTS to be calculated using band D. 2. To approve an additional one off payment of support to Council Tax Support Claimants. 3. That Cabinet approves the Collection Fund surplus estimate of £665,115.33 as at 31 March 2024. The Dacorum Borough Council share of this surplus is £77,517.77. 4. Cabinet recommends to Council that Dacorum’s share of the Council tax surplus (£77,517.77) be transferred to the funding equalisation reserve, specifically to manage fluctuations in the collection fund position. 5. That Cabinet approve the payment profile for the surplus identified at 3) above and contained at section 2.39 to this report (Table 4). 6. That Cabinet approves the calculation of the Council’s tax base for the year 2024/25 incorporating an estimated collection rate of 98.5%. 7. That, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by the

Council as its tax base for the year 2024/25 shall be 60,276.5 and its constituent elements shall be:

Table 1 Taxbase 2024/25

Part of Area - Parished and Non Parished	100% Tax base	98.5% Tax base
Hemel Hempstead	32,886.6	32,393.3
Aldbury	477.0	469.8
Berkhamsted	8,715.3	8,584.6
Bovingdon	2,165.9	2,133.4
Chipperfield	911.2	897.6
Flamstead	671.5	661.5
Flaunden	182.2	179.5
Great Gaddesden	463.5	456.6
Kings Langley	2,406.1	2,370.0
Little Gaddesden	638.2	628.6
Markyate	1,346.8	1,326.6
Nash Mills	1,241.2	1,222.6
Nettleden with Potten End	815.2	803.0
Northchurch	1,415.0	1,393.8
Tring Rural	728.6	717.7
Tring Town	5,450.4	5,368.7
Wigginton	679.5	669.3
Total Taxbase	<u>61,194.4</u>	<u>60,276.5</u>

Period for post policy/project review:

The CTS scheme is subject to an annual decision by Council as to whether to make changes or not

1 Introduction:

- 1.1 Following Cabinet decision CA/75/21, the Head of Revenues & Benefits has consulted on the following proposals for amendments to the 2024 CTS scheme. This report advises on the responses to the consultation and advises on the options for Council in respect of the proposed changes.
- 1.2 Council is in addition required to set the Council Tax Base for 2024/25 so it can be used in budget preparations and formal setting of Council Tax by Full Council in February 2024. It is also necessary to approve the estimated Council Tax Collection Fund surplus or deficit as at 31 March 2024.

2 Key Issues of the report:

Revisions to Council Tax Support scheme for 2024/25

- 2.1 Following Cabinet decision CA/75/21, the Head of Revenues & Benefits has consulted on the following proposals for amendments to the 2024 CTS scheme. This report advises on the responses to the consultation and advises on the options for Council in respect of the proposed changes.
 - a. Increasing the maximum support available to all working age residents to 100% of their council tax liability. (The maximum level is currently 75% of liability for residents who are not classed as vulnerable)

- b. Removal of the cap which limits maximum support to the equivalent of a band D council tax. (Currently residents in band E to band H have their CTS limited)
- c. Increasing the backdating period for working age residents to three months. (This period is currently one month).

2.2 The proposals only impact residents of working age, as the rules for residents of pension age are set by the Government.

2.3 The consultation has taken place in two stages, first with the major council tax preceptors (HCC and the PCC), and then with the general population.

2.4 The proposed changes would be of direct benefit to low income residents, by making the CTS scheme more generous. A consequence of this is that the council tax base would be reduced, and this has an impact on the council tax income available for all preceptors.

2.5 The estimated impact of the changes consulted on is shown in table 1 below;

2.6 Table 1: Consultation Proposals and Financial Impact

Proposal	Number of households impacted	Reduction in taxbase		Reduction in total collectable council tax		
		DBC	HCC & PCC	DBC	HCC	PCC
Increasing maximum level of support to 100% of liability (removal of 25% minimum payment)	1,000	0.35%	0.05%	£50,000	£390,000	£60,000
Removal of the cap limiting CTS to a band D property	50	0.02%	0.003%	£3,000	£24,000	£4,000
Increase backdating period to three months	50	0.01%	0.002%	£2,000	£14,000	£2,000
Combined impact of all three proposals	1,000	0.38%	0.055%	£55,000	£428,000	£66,000

2.7 For each proposal, there is also information about the estimated number of households that would be affected; change to the council tax base and estimated reduction in total collectable council tax for the Council, HCC and the PCC. The reduction in collectable council tax is based on the 2023/24 council tax charges for each body.

2.8 Before making any changes to the CTS scheme, the Council is required to carry out consultation with the major preceptors and also with the wider public.

2.9 As part of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2023/24 funding was provided to reduce bills for working age and pension age CTS claimants by up to £25. The guidance also says that the Council can use the remaining allocation as it sees fit, to support vulnerable households with council tax bills.

- 2.10 The consultation asked for views on the changes as shown in the table at paragraph 2.6.
- 2.11 The full responses to the consultation made by the major preceptors are attached in appendix A.
- 2.12 In summary, both HCC and the PCC strongly object to the proposals, due to the reduction in the amount of council tax they would be able to collect, and the potential impact on the services they provide.
- 2.13 There have been 143 responses to the public consultation made available through the Let's Talk Dacorum online platform. The majority of responses have come from residents who do not receive CTS at the moment.
- 2.14 The full detail of the survey questions and responses is attached as Appendix B.

Consultation Results Summary- revisions to Council Tax Support scheme for 2024/25

- 2.15 51% of respondents agree with the statement "The lowest income residents in the borough should not have to pay any Council Tax" and 45% of respondents disagree.
- 2.16 61% of respondents agree with the statement "The Council should make changes to the council tax support scheme that help reduce the pressure on voluntary organisations, such as those that provide debt advice" and 22% of respondents disagree.
- 2.17 58% of respondents agree with the statement "No changes should be made to the council tax support scheme that reduce the amount that can be spent on services provided by Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Police and Dacorum Borough Council" and 20% of respondents disagree.
- 2.18 82% of respondents agree with the statement "Three months is a reasonable amount of time for a resident to apply for help with paying their council tax". 11% of respondents disagree.

Revisions to Council Tax Support scheme for 2024/25- Options

- 2.19 Following the consultation, a decision needs to be taken by Council as to whether or not to progress with any or all of the proposed changes.
- 2.20 There is no support for the changes from the major preceptors, and a mixed response from the public in respect of the proposed increases in maximum CTS and no clear statement of intent, from a small volume of responses.
- 2.21 In light of the consultation responses, it is recommended that Council does not proceed with the proposal to increase the maximum level of support to 100% of liability for all working age applicants, as this has the most significant impact on the total collectable council tax, and hence a material impact on preceptor income streams.
- 2.22 Proceeding with the proposal to remove the cap at Band D will not have such an impact on total council tax, and does not affect as many residents, but will have a significant positive impact on the few households affected.
- 2.23 The proposal to increase the backdating period to three months is well supported by respondents to the consultation and has the lowest financial impact, as well as bringing Dacorum policy in line with similar national benefit processes.
- 2.24 Detail of the estimated financial impact of the two recommended changes is shown in the tables below.

Table 2: Estimated Financial Impact of recommended changes

Proposal	Number of households impacted	Reduction in taxbase		Reduction in total collectable council tax		
		DBC	HCC & PCC	DBC	HCC	PCC
Removal of the cap limiting CTS to a band D property	50	0.02%	0.003%	£3,000	£24,000	£4,000
Increase backdating period to three months	50	0.01%	0.002%	£2,000	£14,000	£2,000
Combined impact of two recommended proposals	100	0.03%	0.005%	£5,000	£38,000	£6,000

Council Tax Support Fund 2023/24

- 2.25 In line with the Government guidance, an additional amount of up to £25 has been awarded to all residents receiving CTS for the 2023/24 year. (It is “up to” £25 because if a resident’s council tax liability after CTS is less than £25, a lower amount is awarded so the bill is reduced to zero).
- 2.26 The council proposes to make an additional payment of circa £45 per CTS claimant that have a remaining Council Tax liability for 2023/24. This will support those residents that would have potentially benefited from the proposed 2024 CTS changes consulted on but not taken forward at this point.
- 2.27 The report therefore seeks Cabinet agreement to carry out this exercise – the exact amount of the top-up and the number of residents who benefit will be determined by the number of live CTS accounts on the date the action is taken.

Financial and value for money implications of the Council Tax Support Scheme Changes

- 2.28 The recommended CTS policy changes will provide some benefit to the lowest income residents, without significant cost, and will also enable more efficient administration. The recommendation not to proceed with the more costly change addresses the financial issues raised by the major preceptors in their consultation responses.
- 2.29 The proposed changes to the CTS policy will have a limited financial impact of: Circa £5k Dacorum, Circa £6k PCC and circa £38k HCC.
- 2.30 The proposed additional CTS payments of circa £45 per CTS claimant household will utilise the residual government funding of circa £120k remaining from the £195k provided in 23/24 to support Council Tax Support claimants.

Risk implications of the Council Tax Support Scheme Changes

- 2.31 If changes are made without following the mandatory consultation process, the amended CTS scheme could be vulnerable to being challenged by judicial review.
- 2.32 This risk should be entirely mitigated by following the process as laid down in law.

Declaration of Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus or Deficit

How does a surplus or deficit occur?

- 2.33 The income collected from Council Tax goes into the Collection Fund. Throughout the year the actual number of properties in the borough inevitably varies from the figure estimated at the start of the year, as do allowances for exemptions, discounts or appeals. This leads to a change in the amount of Council Tax collected. Despite this variation in collection, the amount paid to the preceptors remains the same as the amounts specified at the start of the year, and does not reflect in-year changes to the amount of Council Tax. It is this emergent variance which creates a surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund.
- 2.34 A key driver in respect of the surplus or deficit position is the timing of when anticipated developments are completed. If there are more than expected, or they are completed more quickly, a surplus will arise; but if there are fewer, or they take longer to complete, then a deficit will result. Any surplus or deficit is shared between the major preceptors (i.e. Hertfordshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Borough) in proportion to their precepts for relevant years.

Declaration of Surplus or Deficit

- 2.35 The actual deficit at 31 March 2023, together with an estimate of the surplus or deficit for the current year 2023/24 (the 'in- year' surplus or deficit), is required to be approved by Cabinet on behalf of the Council.
- 2.36 The actual surplus balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund at 31 March 2023 was £569,249.65. The compared to an anticipated surplus of £429,119.98 forecast during 2022/23; a difference of £140,129.67. The actual surplus is 0.483% of the 2022/23 precepts. The Council will receive its share of this surplus in 2024/25.
- 2.37 In 2023/24, the Collection Fund is estimated to achieve a total projected in- year surplus of £524,985.66. The surplus is 0.42% of the 2023/24 precepts.
- 2.38 The projected total surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund as at 31 March 2024 is £665,115.33. This is made up as follows:

Table 3 Estimated Council Tax surplus as at 31 March 2024

	£
Difference between the forecast surplus and actual surplus at 31 March 2023.	-140,129.67
The 2023/24 forecast in-year surplus.	-524,985.66
Total estimate surplus as at 31 March 2024	-665,115.33

- 2.39 The proportion and profile of this total surplus that each of the Major Preceptors and the Borough will share when calculating the 2024/25 Council Tax is all follows:

Table 4 Estimated Council Tax Surplus as at 31 March 2024- Authority Shares

Precepting or Billing Authority	£
Dacorum Borough Council	-77,517.77
Hertfordshire County Council	-511,742.74
Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire	-75,854.82
Total Surplus	-665,115.33

- 2.40 Cabinet approval of the Collection Fund surplus estimated at 31 March 2024 is sought in Recommendation 3. Approval of the surplus distribution profile at 2.40 is sought in Recommendation 5.

2.41 As part of 2024/25 budget proposals, scheduled to be presented at Cabinet in February 2024, Cabinet will be asked to recommend to Council to transfer the Council's share of the surplus to the Funding Equalisation Reserve, a reserve specifically created to manage fluctuations in the balance on the Collection Fund.

Council Tax Base 2024/25

2.42 Annually all local authorities are required to calculate a Council Tax Base which is used to set the level of Council Tax. The process is governed by the Local Authorities' (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012.

2.43 The tax base is set having regard to:

- The Valuation List;
- Current exemptions, reductions and discounts;
- Discretionary discounts;
- Anticipated developments that may occur during the year;
- Expected long term collection rate.

2.44 The basic methodology for calculating the tax base is as follows:

- Calculations are made of the 'relevant amount' for the year in respect of the valuation bands shown in the Council's Valuation List. For each band, this amount represents the estimated full year equivalent number of chargeable dwellings listed in the band after taking into account the impact of disabled band reductions and discounts (including Council Tax Support).
- The 'relevant amounts' for each band are then aggregated and expressed as an equivalent number of band D dwellings.
- The Council then multiplies this aggregate of all relevant amounts by the estimated collection rate for the year. The resulting figure is the Council Tax Base for the year.
- The rules for calculating the Council Tax Base for any part of a Council's area (e.g. a parish, or that part of its area to which a levy or special levy relates) are the same as the rules for calculating the Council Tax Base for the whole of its area for that year, and the same estimated collection rate must be used.

2.45 The estimate of the collection rate is the only area over which the Council has any discretion. For 2023/24, the collection rate was 99.4%. Based on current performance data on collection rates, in light of the on-going economic implications of the coronavirus pandemic and cost of living crisis, a reduction in the collection fund rate to 98.5% is proposed. Recommendation 3 seeks Cabinet approval for an estimated collection rate of 98.5% for 2024/25.

2.46 The tax base for 2023/24 was 59,922.3 (after adjusting for the estimated impact of Council Tax Support and a 99.4% collection rate), the proposed tax base for 2024/25 is 60,276.5. This represents an increase of 354.2 Band D equivalent, or 0.6% on the tax base. Recommendation 4 seeks approval for this proposed tax base for 2024/25.

2.47 Major Precepting Authorities, are required to request their tax base figure (and notify any changes to their tax base area), from the Council, before the end of December 2023. The Council must give notification of all requested tax base figures by the end of January 2024.

3 Options and alternative considered

3.1 For Council tax support this is contained within the report.

Setting of the Council Tax and agreement of the Council Tax surplus is a statutory requirement.

4 Consultation

4.1 See above.

5 Financial implications

5.1 Contained within the body of the report.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 The final decision about whether or not to make changes to the CTS scheme is one which is required to be made by Council.

6.2 Setting of the Council Tax and agreement of the Council Tax surplus is a statutory requirement.

7 Risk implications

7.1. Contained within the body of the report.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

8.1 For the Council Tax Support scheme, a Community Impact Assessment was carried out and annexed - there are no negative impacts expected from these proposals. No comments received during the consultation period have led to any amendment to the assessment.

8.2 There are no other direct Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights implications arising from this report.

9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

9.1 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report

10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

10.1 The proposed changes to the Council tax support scheme can be made using software currently licensed by the Council. There are no other infrastructure implications.

10.2 Calculation of the Council Tax base is required to set Council Tax for 2024/25. This calculation has a direct impact on the income due to the Council in 2024/25.

11 Statutory Comments

Monitoring Officer:

No comments to add to the report.

S151 Officer

This is a Section 151 officer report. Comments contained within the body of the report.

12 Conclusions:

12.1 The proposed changes to Council Tax Support would reduce the future council tax burden on some of the lowest income households in the borough.

12.2 The proposed distribution of the remaining money in the Council Tax Support Fund 2023/24 will provide additional assistance to some of the lowest income residents with their council tax bills for the current year.

12.3 Agreement of the Council Tax Base 2024/25 and the Council Tax surplus estimated as at 31 March 2024 supports sound financial planning within the authority. Cabinet has delegated authority to set the Council Tax Base for 2024/25.

Response from Hertfordshire County Council, received 13 October 2023

Consultation – Dacorum Borough Council, Local Council Tax Support scheme 2024/25

Thank you for your email of 26th September 2023 outlining proposed changes to Dacorum Borough Council's Local Council Tax Support scheme from April 2024.

I write to outline Hertfordshire County Council's strong objection to the proposal. The impact will be to reduce funding for services to residents by £411,000 next year, and then every year after that. A funding reduction of this scale will inevitably impact services. Given that spending on adult social care and children's services accounts for around two thirds of the total council spend, it is likely these services would be impacted (especially given that the proposals also impact the adult social care precept).

I note that your email included a link to the report submitted to Dacorum Borough Council's Cabinet meeting on 12 September 2023. I was surprised to see that the report made no reference to the significant financial impact on the County Council as a major preceptor, even though it would have been possible to estimate this from the proposal. I consider that this is a major omission of information necessary to enable the Cabinet to make a reasonable decision on the proposal.

In light of this I would request that this is made clear in any future DBC report in this matter, and that response is similarly included within further Dacorum Borough Council reports.

Response from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, received 13 November 2023

Re: Local council tax support scheme 2024/25 consultation

I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the consultation and for your responsiveness to our initial questions.

After reviewing the Cabinet report, I must express my strong objection to the proposed increase in local council tax support and its potential impact on policing in Hertfordshire. It is disappointing to note that the consultation appears to have taken place after the proposed policy change has been presented to your Cabinet on 12 September 2023.

Like our county and district council partners, Hertfordshire Police is facing significant financial challenges in both the present and the future. Any reduction in funding, however small, will place further strain on the Constabulary's ability to maintain its current officer levels and deliver essential services to the people of Hertfordshire.

As public safety remains one of my top priorities, it is imperative that I ensure that our Constabulary has the necessary resources to protect and serve our community effectively. A decrease in funding for policing could lead to adverse consequences, including increased response times, insufficient resources to address issues like anti-social behaviour and domestic violence; and challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled and experienced police officers.

While I acknowledge the importance of responsible fiscal management, the planned reduction in police funding raises significant concerns and therefore I urge Dacorum to reconsider its proposed policy changes.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and I look forward to hearing about the actions taken to address these concerns.

Council Tax Support Consultation

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

20 September 2023 - 26 November 2023

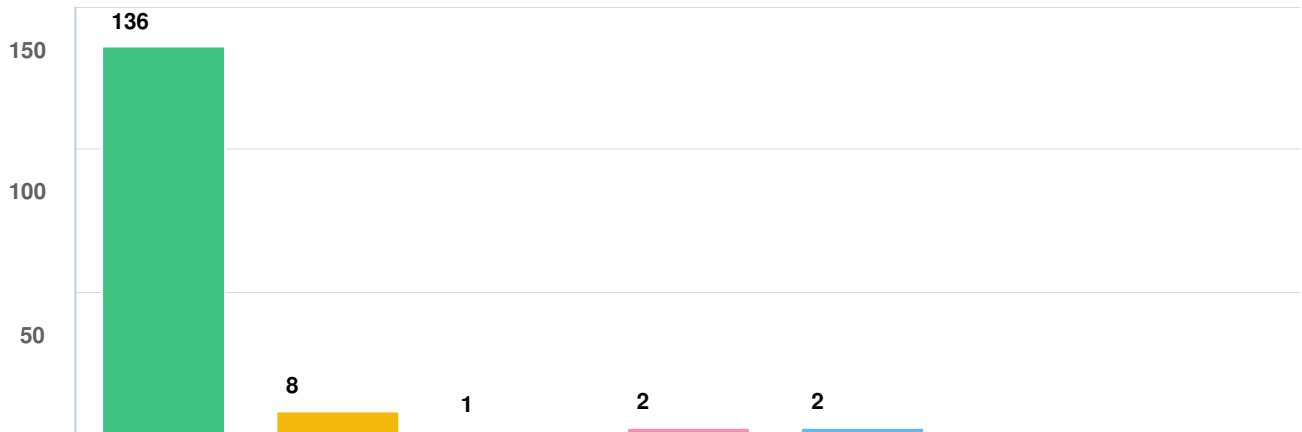
PROJECT NAME:

Council Tax Support Scheme



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 Are you responding as (please select all that apply):

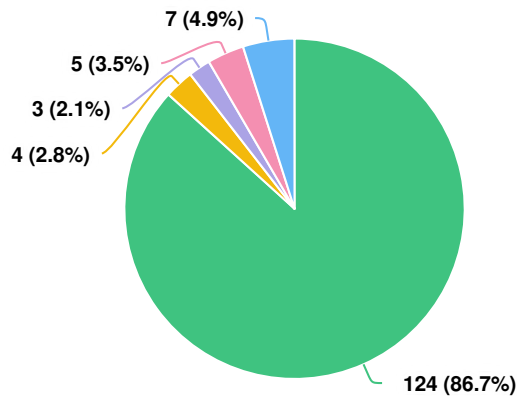


Question options

- A resident
- Work in the borough
- Councillor
- A community organisation
- Other (please specify below)
- Visitor to the borough
- Local business

Optional question (143 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Checkbox Question

Q2 Do you currently receive Council Tax Support to reduce your council tax? If you do, it will be shown on your council tax bill.



Question options

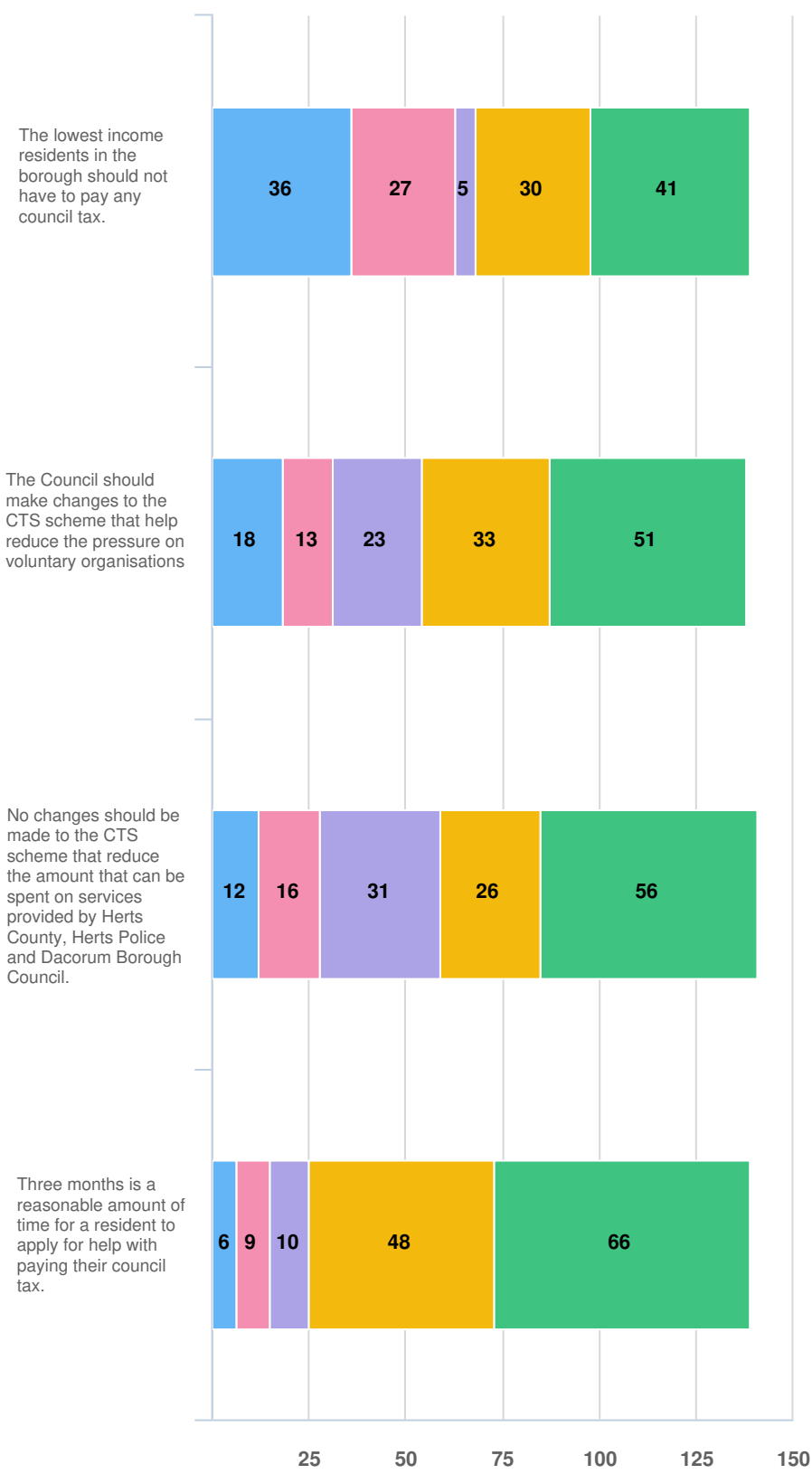
- No
- Yes: CTS – Working Age Vulnerable
- Yes: CTS – Working Age Not Vulnerable
- Yes: CTS – Pension Age
- Don't know

Mandatory Question (143 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q3 Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Question options

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

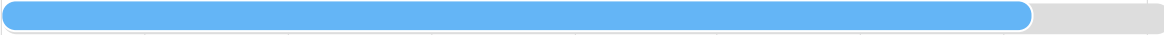


Optional question (141 response(s), 2 skipped)
Question type: Likert Question

Q3 | Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The lowest income residents in the borough should not have to pay any Council Tax.

Strongly disagree : 36



Somewhat disagree : 27



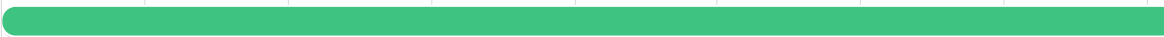
Neither agree nor disagree : 5



Somewhat agree : 30

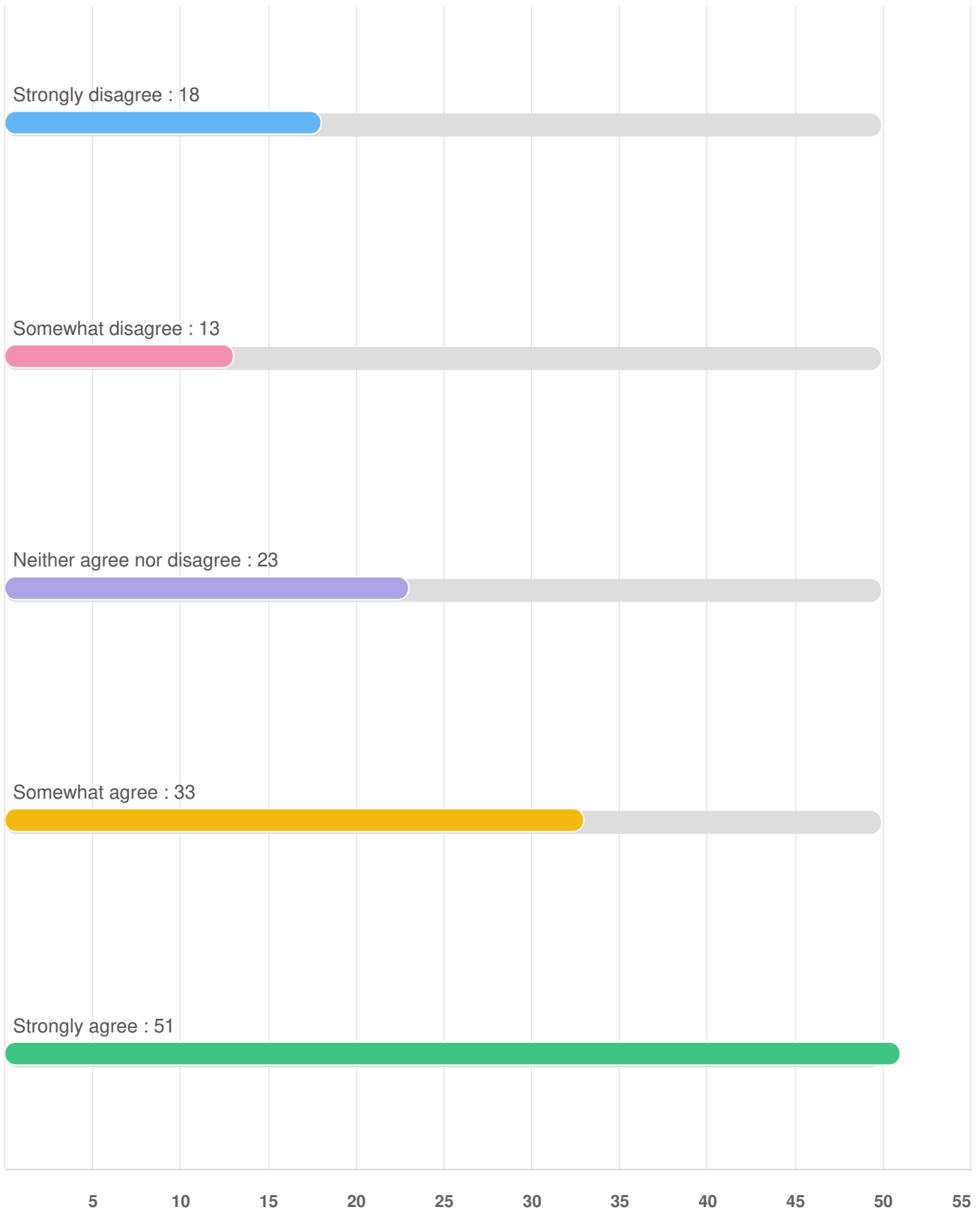


Strongly agree : 41

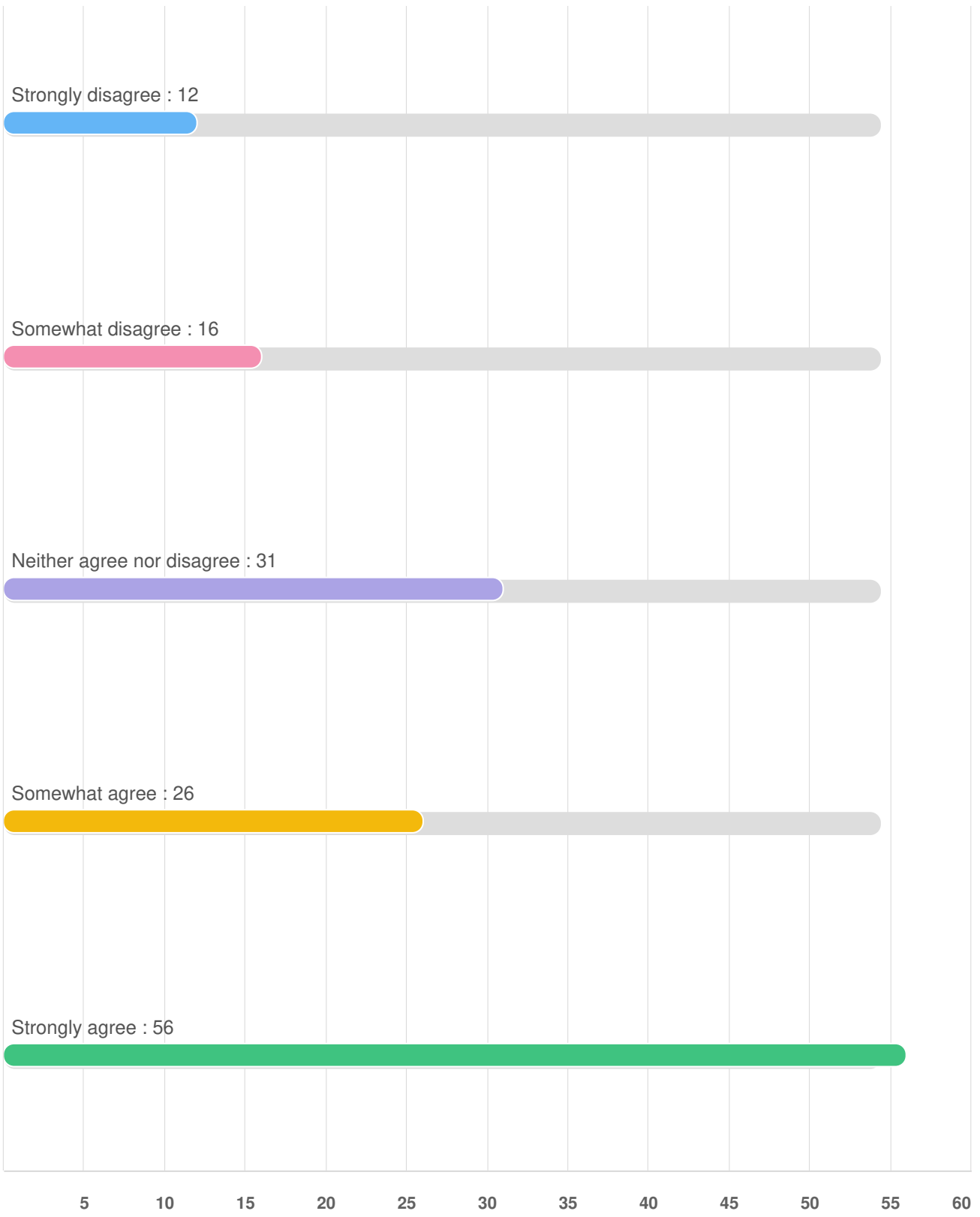


5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45

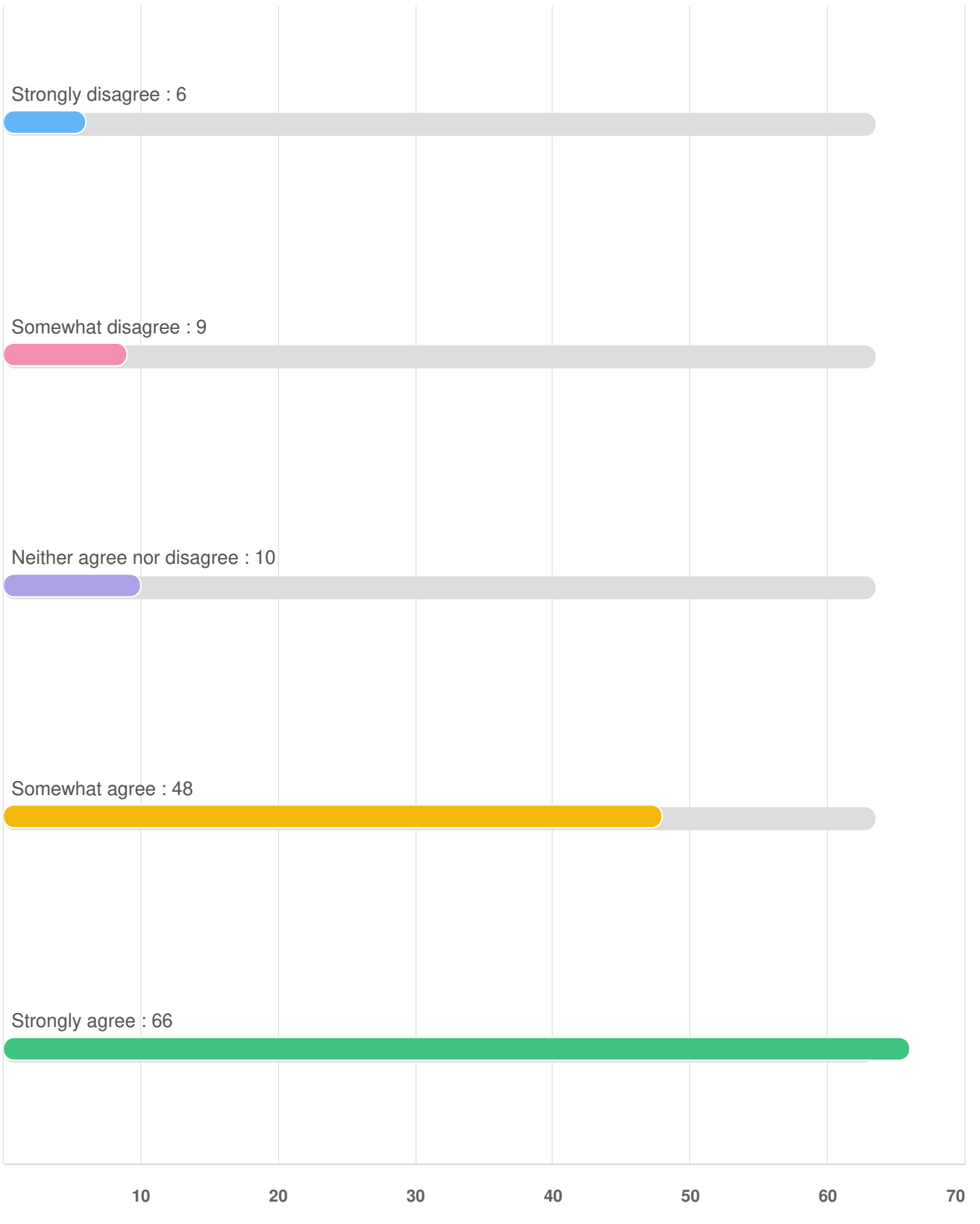
The Council should make changes to the council tax support scheme that help reduce the pressure on voluntary sector organisations, such as those that provide debt advice.



No changes should be made to the council tax support scheme that reduce the amount that can be spent on services provided by Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Police and Dacorum Borough Council.



Three months is a reasonable amount of time for a resident to apply for help with paying their council tax.



Q4 Please use this space to provide feedback on the below proposals as outlined in the Cabinet Report, and/or suggest any changes to the statements in Question 3 above. Proposals: Increase the maximum help for all residents of working age to 100% of their council tax bill, by removing the 25% minimum payment, and the cap at band D. Extend the time limit for working age residents to apply for CTS to three months, in line with the time limit for residents of pension age.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 03:58 PM

All this will do is add pressure to other, paying residents. No one wants to see their bills rise any further & no one wants to see money taken away from already stretched services. Everyone should have the pay the same regardless, hardworking people should not have to foot the bill for the "less fortunate". There are plenty of jobs available across the county.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 03:58 PM

What that jargon yo trying to state

Anonymous

10/31/2023 04:28 PM

Those of working age are always the most hard hit, and they are often parents, children cost more as they age. Make the time limit fair for all.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 04:32 PM

I'm fully supportive of the extension to the CTS application process. I'm not sure I agree with the complete removal of the amount of council tax to be paid maybe 10% minimum. People should pay something for the service's provided by the council.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 04:40 PM

Agree

Anonymous

10/31/2023 04:52 PM

If the council believe it is possible to reduce the amount of tax spent on "services" it's only fair that those who are paying the most now should see a reduction.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 05:11 PM

There was not an option to state that I disagree with the rule mentioned which gives three months for those wishing to claim council tax reduction. I strongly believe this is not enough time. It may be the case people are vulnerable due to numerous issues or may not have had the support or advice to make the claim for support. In these circumstance's people end up with a debt which may put them into severe financial hardship. If claims are able to be back-dated for

at least a six months this may prevent people from starting a journey of debt which may be with them for several years.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 05:16 PM

Ensure relevant residents are informed as quickly as possible re any changes.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 05:26 PM

I work 4 jobs, I am 64 years old and like a lot of people I am and have saved for my retirement by paying into a Pension, I do not smoke, drink or go on holidays, neither do I buy takeaway food or go out for meals. I do receive 25% off my Council Tax as a single occupant. Rent is always taken into account with benefits but not so Mortgages. I work in a school (Support Staff), there are needy children whose family is not on benefits because they are not entitled, they need to pay a mortgage and not rent to keep a roof over their family's head.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 05:44 PM

I think it's useful if resident pay even a nominal/peppercorn fee for council tax to enable them to feel connected to and part of their local community.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 06:19 PM

Sensible proposal

Anonymous

10/31/2023 06:25 PM

Seems sensible

Anonymous

10/31/2023 07:05 PM

Limiting the amount of support residents of working age can receive is unfair.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 07:07 PM

We all know us that pay full will have ours increased. Just because we are paying full we are struggling as well

Anonymous

10/31/2023 08:31 PM

I think the current levels are adequate

Anonymous

10/31/2023 09:09 PM

I agree

Anonymous

10/31/2023 09:33 PM

No extension is nessacary, education and clear comms is what is needed

Anonymous

10/31/2023 09:44 PM

Everyone should pay at least some council tax as they benefit from all the facilities

Anonymous

11/01/2023 01:24 AM

Increasing the maximum help for working residents to 100% will definitely be a great idea, so many people work and struggle to make the council tax bills. Also what will be of importance is what will be the cap wages of the residents who will benefit from this proposal?

Anonymous

11/01/2023 05:01 AM

The changes seem reasonable,

Anonymous

11/01/2023 06:50 AM

Any help to a reduction in council tax bills if there is an adult (18+) in the household who isn't working would be much appreciated

Anonymous

11/01/2023 08:59 AM

Everyone should pay at least a minimum amount

Anonymous

11/01/2023 09:30 AM

I think this is a positive change, and it mitigates the negative impact created by widespread inequality in our community.

Anonymous

11/01/2023 10:04 AM

As the pension age keeps increasing a fixed age would be more useful

Anonymous

11/01/2023 10:07 AM

Excellent idea to extend the application process to three months, however my concern would be how they apply? Support needs to be in place for those that are venerable and perhaps do not have access to the internet or have no capacity for being able to use!

Anonymous

11/01/2023 10:49 AM

I agree with the proposals. Also, new Universal Credit applicants should all be told they have to apply separately for CTS (if relevant)

Anonymous

11/01/2023 11:23 AM

No worries

Anonymous

11/01/2023 01:31 PM

All residents should pay council tax so that they understand the value of the services that they receive.

Anonymous

11/01/2023 01:45 PM

I receive the 25% discount as I am a widow of working age. I am hoping my benefit will not be stopped because of this. My neighbours

both work with 2 children. Why should I pay the same as them when I live on my own and receive no other benefits.

Anonymous

11/01/2023 02:05 PM

The police get excessive funding for the level of "service" they "provide".

Anonymous

11/01/2023 02:20 PM

There should be no time limit. People ask for help when they're desperate and may not be aware of the scheme.

Anonymous

11/01/2023 03:04 PM

Test

Anonymous

11/01/2023 03:32 PM

Gain to claimants far outweighs losses to LA finances.?

Anonymous

11/01/2023 05:38 PM

In principle I feel that every citizen of the UK should pay something towards the services they receive such as schools, refuse collection etc.

Anonymous

11/01/2023 06:01 PM

100% is excessive. It is important that people contribute in some way so I would support a lower maximum. Separately I am unclear from this how DBC supports care leavers within its discount scheme for council tax. On this I believe care leavers should be offered a 100% discount (if not employed above minimum wage and who are living independently) to recognise that unlike most people of this age they are unlikely to be living with parents who pay the council tax.

Anonymous

11/01/2023 06:52 PM

I think it's important that everyone should contribute, however small an amount, for the public services that we all receive. This is because it's very much in the wider public interest that all residents are "in it together", and that each person feels they have a stake in the services that their Council tax payment helps fund. I also find it interesting that the majority of other borough and district Councils across Hertfordshire do not provide maximum help up to 100%. So I am not in favour of Dacorum increasing the maximum help for residents of working age to 100% of their council tax bill. I have no view about the proposal to remove the cap at band D. And I think extending the time limit to apply for CTS to three months is reasonable.

Anonymous

This is a loaded survey. Where is the totally disagree option?

11/01/2023 07:01 PM

Anonymous

11/01/2023 08:35 PM

All residents whatever their financial circumstances use Council services so should pay something. Also the council needs to balance its finances too.

Anonymous

11/01/2023 09:44 PM

I believe that everyone should be entitled to reduction in their council tax not only people on low income. It is mainly working class people, who don't receive benefits that are actually struggling and as a taxpayer i don't believe I should be paying for people who are on low income. My family needs support too but because we don't qualify for any benefits we receive no support whatsoever. Why should I pay for someone else's council tax for the dacorum council to increase the payments even more every year for my family. No, thank you, I don't agree with this. It's absolutely disgusting.

Anonymous

11/02/2023 11:40 AM

I do not agree with reducing Council Tax for anyone . Why should the rest of us pay the full amount and subsidise others to 100% ?

Anonymous

11/02/2023 05:51 PM

This seems fair.

Anonymous

11/02/2023 05:54 PM

People of working age don't earn enough to play the minimum council tax. They should be helped.

Anonymous

11/02/2023 05:56 PM

It would be great if you could show what efficiency savings you could make with this easier-to-administer approach. It should be funded by efficiencies at the council, not by reducing services

Anonymous

11/02/2023 06:03 PM

I agree with both the proposals

Anonymous

11/02/2023 06:49 PM

neutral

Anonymous

11/02/2023 06:55 PM

By lowest incomes not paying towards costs encourages bills being increased for all. There are so many families just above the rate and really can't afford further increases. By keeping payments as they are keeps funding coming into the council to pay for vital services

Anonymous

A small contribution is an important step supporting our very valuable

11/02/2023 09:10 PM

services. With an already heavily subsidised contribution, it's an unnecessary 'plan' to remove it completely, when collectively the services are being used. It also devalues a person & sends the wrong message.

Anonymous

11/02/2023 09:30 PM

Extending the time limit is fair and just

Anonymous

11/02/2023 11:27 PM

I support these proposals as I believe in supporting the most vulnerable in our community and this includes those on low incomes I would be prepared to see my council tax increase by the small percentages quoted above in order to pay for these measures I do not want to see any reduction in council expenditure in order to pay for these measures

Anonymous

11/03/2023 08:17 AM

I think we give enough to help people out. There is always something people can do to help themselves. The more you give, the more they take. Help should be given to those that need help and who have given all their lives. I'm fed up with having to work at my age to give to people who don't bother to get of their backsides and put any effort in to improve their lives.

Anonymous

11/03/2023 11:48 AM

Do not agree with changing rules as they currently stand.

Anonymous

11/03/2023 11:55 AM

I ask myself this question everyday when facing lots of situations. What is the right thing to do? And in this instance the right thing is to help the poorest people.

Anonymous

11/03/2023 03:59 PM

Perhaps reduce to 10%.

Anonymous

11/04/2023 08:38 AM

Support should be income based too

Anonymous

11/04/2023 09:52 AM

1) All should contribute something to the cost of managing local services. All of us want an input on deciding how the scarce resources should be allocated and the level of services, but that is difficult if an increasing small part of the community is contributing to the costs. 2) There is a risk that this scheme could create a real disincentive for individuals to maximise their income and "trap" people in unfavourable circumstances. This contributes negatively to social

mobility.

Anonymous

11/04/2023 02:36 PM

More should be done to reduce fraudulent claims.

Anonymous

11/04/2023 03:32 PM

Unfortunately some of these are loaded questions. Surely there should have been a 'disagree' box to mark. If more benefits are given then they have to be paid by others who may be struggling themselves. As i believe most councils are finding it difficult to finance basic services this seems inappropriate at this time. Will there be a guarantee that Council Tax will NOT be increased in April?

Anonymous

11/06/2023 07:55 AM

Extending the time limit adds more flexibility

Anonymous

11/07/2023 05:49 PM

Those people who are vulnerable or on low incomes should get help with their Council Tax. I feel that everyone should pay some amount however.

Anonymous

11/08/2023 10:43 AM

You say the proposals will have a small impact on council tax take. Any reduction in council tax take will inevitably lead to cuts in services and/or higher council tax for those who are paying, including many who are only just managing to keep their finances afloat.

Anonymous

11/08/2023 03:50 PM

I try and support people who are in temporary accommodation and they struggle to pay the council tax, especially in the cost of living crisis. I end up giving them food parcels to help support them and referring them to other agencies. They end up staying in temporary accommodation for such a long time as need to stick to a 6 month payment plan. This then means that there is less temporary accommodation and the council end up paying huge amounts on hotel bills.

Anonymous

11/08/2023 05:33 PM

Given the council stated it was necessary to implement a green bin collection cost, this additional drain on resources is unacceptable which will mean the council will look at other revenue streams to hit other residents with. The level that's in place is acceptable and appropriate but the application period should be extended.

Anonymous

11/08/2023 06:14 PM

I agree with the second comment, 3 months is adequate time for someone to apply for CTS. Many do not apply even though they are

sent multiple application forms and are according to records receiving UC

Anonymous

11/08/2023 10:35 PM

Who going paid there 25% everyone else

Anonymous

11/10/2023 09:05 AM

These proposals will really help those most vulnerable and on the poverty line in Dacorum. It will reduce the debt owed to the council and alleviate the collection of council tax debt, which has a drain on resources for DBC.

Anonymous

11/14/2023 10:47 AM

I agree with this proposal. However, the questions above are not as clear as they could be and I question how they can be used to indicate support or opposition to this proposal.

Anonymous

11/15/2023 08:21 AM

Do not agree that everyone should be getting this unless there is a reason they are unable to find work to pay - why get another handout that everyone else has to pay for?

Anonymous

11/15/2023 08:43 AM

I think the increase to 100% help for low income families will make a huge difference to our residents, for that reason alone I would be behind this.

Anonymous

11/16/2023 08:17 AM

Suggest the costs directly associated with this proposal are offset by increasing the council tax for the top band properties. There are a considerable number of properties over £2m in this borough owned by residents who will be able to pay the increase without difficulty.

Anonymous

11/17/2023 10:25 AM

Agree with above

Anonymous

11/23/2023 12:12 PM

I don't believe there's a justification for removing the band cap - those living in larger houses should be expected to contribute more. Moving isn't necessarily simple, but the vast majority of people have to live where they can afford and make moving choices accordingly. I don't support the councils plan to voluntarily reduce its own income - it already appears to struggle for cash as can be seen in the deteriorating state of the public parks and spaces. Since central government doesn't allow for sensible tax rises the council should do everything else in its power to maintain income as high as possible. I feel that a time limit is reasonable, and three months seems like more

than enough time. There are shorter limits for a lot of other council and government things - for example, the schools application window, or the period central government gives for reverification of tax-free childcare status.

Anonymous

11/24/2023 11:53 AM

How will the shortfall in income be balanced? Will it mean that those who currently pay will have to pay even more to fill the gap?

Anonymous

11/24/2023 12:49 PM

My view is that if something of value i.e. Council services, are given for free i.e. what is proposed here, many people would not value what they are receiving and for which others have had to pay for.

Anonymous

11/24/2023 06:39 PM

If people in a high band house can't afford to pay then they should move somewhere cheaper like everyone else has to. It's unfair ri everyone else

Anonymous

11/24/2023 07:12 PM

Increase help to 100% of lower INCOME EARNERS (benefits are not income). Some of us are having to work overtime to make ends meet so will probably never get any help. Any amount of benefits should not be counted as income. We should share the burden fairly. Ok to help pensioners and people on full-time employment getting low pay. Alternatively cancel council tax for everyone

Anonymous

11/24/2023 08:17 PM

We don't agree to anything that will impact us directly. We are in band E and we struggle like everyone else. We never get anything back and always end up paying for others which is not fair

Optional question (76 response(s), 67 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q5 | Please use this space if you would like to provide feedback on the draft Community Impact Assessment.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 03:58 PM

What draft

Anonymous

10/31/2023 04:32 PM

No comments

Anonymous

I also think the council need to remember that many of the new build

10/31/2023 05:11 PM

one bed flats are in council tax band C ,which means that the liability for those who are currently receiving the maximum discount is higher than other people in a lower council tax band,if they are in receipt of full universal credit due to not working, they will have less money to live on as there liability for council tax will be more. The current system of not offering a full 100% discount, St Albans does, is causing extreme poverty in this current economic climate.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 05:26 PM

I do not agree this proposed change should go through. How much more can you squeeze out of people.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 05:28 PM

I think there should be a time limit as to when these changes should end. Maybe gradually increasing as and when circumstances change for the better.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 05:44 PM

It's more important than ever before LA are able to provide effective and meaningful support to the most vulnerable in our communities as this sector of community also find it difficult to engage with services. Disengagement and disenfranchisement make the most vulnerable almost invisible.

Anonymous

10/31/2023 06:46 PM

More money needs to be spent on adult social care and reducing the council tax bill for everyone .

Anonymous

10/31/2023 09:44 PM

People should downsize to release money from their property I live in a one bedroom flat and my savings would prevent me from any council tax allowance

Anonymous

11/01/2023 01:24 AM

It will be good to give feedback on the CIA draft

Anonymous

11/01/2023 08:59 AM

At the moment the tax in Dacorum is too high especially for the services we get

Anonymous

11/01/2023 09:30 AM

I'm delighted to see the Council taking action on this issue. No further comment.

Anonymous

11/01/2023 10:04 AM

Need to promote who can receive these more as not everyone applies for benefits even though they might be entitled to them

Anonymous 11/01/2023 10:07 AM	How will you communicate this proposed scheme to the community?
Anonymous 11/01/2023 10:49 AM	It doesn't say enough for me to feed back anything. Seems it will not have a negative effect on Council's spending on other things?
Anonymous 11/01/2023 11:23 AM	No comment
Anonymous 11/01/2023 02:20 PM	Your CIA includes the word 'Template' in the heading - this should be deleted. It does not take any account of the fact that women are more likely to be living alone and/or have caring responsibilities.
Anonymous 11/01/2023 03:04 PM	Test
Anonymous 11/01/2023 06:01 PM	No separate comments
Anonymous 11/01/2023 06:52 PM	No comments.
Anonymous 11/01/2023 08:35 PM	All residents whatever their financial circumstances use Council services so should pay something. Also the council needs to balance its finances too.
Anonymous 11/02/2023 06:03 PM	No further comment
Anonymous 11/02/2023 06:04 PM	Anything that helps to reduce for low pay would help them
Anonymous 11/02/2023 06:49 PM	N/A
Anonymous 11/02/2023 09:13 PM	It would help if councils didn't waste 000s. The first traffic calming scheme in Bridgwater Road, Berkhamsted being one. The residents pay a lot of money for very little in Dacorum There isn't a visible police presence in Berkhamsted There was in the 60s.Hemel Pavilion bulldozed so no where to see live theatre, why? Yet 000s are spend

on the minority, not the majority. Plus, Hemel needs a big hospital to help Tring and Berkhamsted and surrounding villages.

Anonymous

11/03/2023 08:17 AM

By giving more and more to those that don't bother to help themselves, because we constantly give them more and more, everyone else suffers by not having the services we ALL need.

Anonymous

11/03/2023 11:48 AM

No comment

Anonymous

11/04/2023 09:52 AM

The community impact statement looks to fulfil legal requirements but is very narrow. I did not see a financial assessment of the cost to the council in terms of income. Information to put this into relative importance would be useful. There looked to be no feedback from other government agencies. Cost to households not receiving this support was not considered. Negative effects on creating disincentives were not considered and effects on consequently social mobility. Data on the length of time this support is received would be useful and would provide useful context. There looks to be insufficient information to develop an informed opinion.

Anonymous

11/08/2023 05:33 PM

This will impact other residents in the Borough as the loss of revenue WILL be passed on and need to be made up, as in the money grab green bins fee. Maybe this should be looked at to benefit the majority rather than the minority.

Anonymous

11/08/2023 10:35 PM

Who going paid there 25% everyone else By put up everyone cc

Anonymous

11/15/2023 08:21 AM

Are you seriously expecting people who work hard to pay their bills, now have to pay more to keep lazy people who don't want to work at all, to pay even more to keep others?? Seems like I will be better off not working - !!!

Anonymous

11/23/2023 12:12 PM

The CIA declares that it has "no impact" based on age, but I don't think this is correct. Reducing the council's funding it affects its ability to fund services for various protected groups. For example, it reduces the council's ability to fund repairs to playgrounds for children, such as our local one which had a broken roundabout taken away and not replaced for almost a year. In general the CIA appears to have been a "box ticking exercise" without much thought given to the impact on residents as a whole.

Anonymous

11/24/2023 11:53 AM

One may not qualify for a reduction but that does not necessarily mean that one can afford to pay even more to make up the inevitable shortfall in income for the council

Anonymous

11/24/2023 06:39 PM

The assessment misses out the negative impact on those who have to pay for it, they will suffer worse services elsewhere because a favoured fee get free money to live in housing they can't afford.

Optional question (33 response(s), 110 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question