



# COUNCIL

TUESDAY, 12TH DECEMBER, 2017

At 7.30 pm

in the

COUNCIL CHAMBER - GUILDHALL, WINDSOR,

## SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

### PART I

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE NO</u>
8.	<u>COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME</u>  To consider the above report	3 - 20

This page is intentionally left blank

Report Title:	Council Tax Support Scheme
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information?	NO - Part I
Member reporting:	Cllr S Rayner, Lead Member for Culture and Communities including Resident and Business Services
Meeting and Date:	Full Council - 12 December 2017
Responsible Officer(s):	Andy Jeffs, Executive Director
Wards affected:	All



## REPORT SUMMARY

Council Tax Support provides financial assistance to council tax payers on a low income. This report seeks to provide the results of a recent public consultation into proposed changes and to request that Council considers adopting those changes.

## 1 DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council:

- i) **Notes the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken with regard to the proposed Council Tax Support scheme.**
- ii) **Approves the proposed changes to the 2018/19 Council Tax Support scheme with effect from 1 April 2018.**

## 2 REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Since April 2013, billing authorities have been responsible for devising their own Council Tax Support (CTS) schemes to assist working age council tax payers who are on a low income.
- 2.2 Local Council Tax Support Schemes replaced the national scheme of Council Tax Benefit. While the Royal Borough was able to design its own scheme to support working age applicants, the Government's desire to protect those of state pension credit age results in centrally provided legislation covering those in this group.
- 2.3 These Prescribed Regulations introduced a Statutory Scheme, similar to the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme, for those of pensionable age which means that they may still receive up to 100% of their Council Tax paid via this scheme of assistance. These regulations maintain previous provisions with regard to limiting entitlement to those classed as Persons From Abroad and deal with minor administrative issues. These provisions are replicated for 2018/19 subject to any legislative amendments that may be imposed by Central Government.

- 2.4 The Royal Borough's CTS scheme for 2017/18 enables working age customers to receive up to 90% of their Council Tax charge through this form of assistance. **There is no proposal to change this for 2018/19.**
- 2.5 While Scotland and Wales have national CTS schemes, it is open to each English authority to design its own scheme for working age customers.
- 2.6 In 2017/18, 264 of the 326 English councils require working age customers to pay something towards their council tax charge. This "minimum charge" varies by area:
- In 45 councils it is 10% or less, as in the Royal Borough
  - In 60 councils it is 10-20%
  - In 140 councils it is 20-30%
  - In 19 councils it is 30% or more with the highest minimum payment, in 1 council, being 45%.
- 2.7 Once made, a Council Tax Support scheme may only be changed once a year and those changes proposed must be approved by full Council prior to 31 January preceding their introduction. Therefore, if changes are proposed for the financial year 2018/19, they must be approved by Council by 31 January 2018. It for this reason that this report is being brought to Council.

**Table 1: Options**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Do not amend the 2018/19 CTS scheme  <b>Not the recommended option.</b>	The Royal Borough's CTS for working age customers is a complex, means tested form of assistance which was initially closely aligned to both the CTS rules for Pensionable age customers, imposed on councils by DCLG, and the Housing Benefit scheme, operated on behalf of DWP.  Changes introduced to the latter schemes from April 2016 have not yet been incorporated into the CTS scheme due to timing issues i.e. the CTS scheme may only be amended annually. This has created confusion for both staff administering the scheme and customers.
Amend the CTS scheme for 2018/19 by including the changes proposed.  <b>The recommended option.</b>	Although the results of the public consultation do not support making 5 of the 6 proposed changes, the % of current CTS customers affected is extremely low i.e. approximately 1.7%, worst case scenario, based on the current figures. Mitigation also exists in the form of discretionary powers to remit charges on an individual basis should they suffer financial hardship.  The number of responses was extremely low. By not amending the scheme, the confusion for both staff and customers will continue and the scheme will continue to move further away from the Pensionable Age scheme and Housing Benefit in future.

### 3 KEY IMPLICATIONS

**Table 2: Key implications**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Unmet</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Exceeded</b>	<b>Significantly Exceeded</b>	<b>Date of delivery</b>
Working age CTS scheme updated and aligned	Working age CTS scheme remains as is	Scheme updated by 31 march 2018	Scheme updated by 31 January 2018	N/A	1 April 2018

- 3.1 At present, there are 2,686 working age customers receiving CTS within the Royal Borough. Their average Council Tax liability is £18.07 per week and they receive, on average, £14.23 assistance against this per week.
- 3.2 Approximately 80% of the working age customers are also in receipt of Housing Benefit. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) are responsible for providing councils with regulations governing the administration of Housing Benefit and are able to change them at any point during a financial year.
- 3.3 There are several key changes which have been made to housing benefit regulations since April 2016 which the council have not mirrored within their CTS scheme. This leads to increased complication for assessment staff, who have one set of regulations for Housing Benefit and another for CTS, as well as for customers.
- 3.4 It would be preferable, for ease of administration, to align the two schemes as far as possible.

### 4 FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 The primary purpose of these changes is not to provide costs savings to the council, in terms of the value of the awards made to working age customers, but to better align the scheme to the existing rule for those of Pensionable age and to the Housing Benefit scheme. However, there may be existing customers who, if their circumstances remain unchanged, see a small decrease in the level of support available to them.
- 4.2 The proposals suggested may lead to some working age CTS customers receiving less financial assistance and therefore increase their liability. This increase may prove difficult for some customers to meet and therefore could have an impact on council tax collection however this is likely to be mitigated by the effect of awarding less support initially.
- 4.3 The council has existing powers under S13(A)(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act where an affected customer believes they have suffered financial hardship as a result of these changes. This power enables the council to reduce the amount which a council tax payer is liable to pay, as respects the dwelling and the day, to such extent as it thinks fit on an individual basis.

- 4.4 The impact on the Royal Borough's customers is outlined in the table below. These figures are subject to change as customer's circumstances alter:

**Table 3: Financial implications**

	<b>Volume of customers</b>	<b>Financial Value</b>
Total number of working age Council Tax Support Customers	2,686	
Working age customers who received backdating of over 1 months	5	£123.07 in total for all 5 claims.
Working age customers with more than 2 children who made new claims	11	Estimated range from £0 to £11.65 per week.
Working age customers who receive the Family premium who made new claims	15	Estimated range from £0 to £4.62 per week.
Working age customers who receive ESA Support Component	5	Estimated range from £0 to £14.08 per week.
Working age customers who receive the Severe Disability Premium	48 – However, not all of these would be affected. Not possible to clarify volumes as no cross reference with Universal Credit data.	Estimate – depends on individual's circumstances but range could be from £1.13 per week to £22.50 per week.

## **5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Local Government Finance Act requires an authority reducing CTS to consider the issue of whether to award such transitional protection as it sees fit to affected customers. It is proposed that, since the primary purpose of these changes is to create a more simplified system, to create a complex transitional protection scheme would not be appropriate.
- 5.2 The council has existing powers under S13(A)(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act where an affected customer believes they have suffered financial hardship as a result of these changes. This power enables the council reduce the amount which a council tax payer is liable to pay, as respects the dwelling and the day, to such extent as it thinks fit on an individual basis.
- 5.3 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (amended) places a requirement on councils to consult with anyone who may be affected i.e. recipients of Council Tax Support assistance and Council Tax Payers, should they wish to make any amendments to their scheme.

## 6 RISK MANAGEMENT

**Table 4: Impact of risk and mitigation**

<b>Risks</b>	<b>Uncontrolled Risk</b>	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Controlled Risk</b>
Existing customers affected by the change could suffer hardship	Medium	S13(A)(1)(c) permits cases to be considered on an individual basis	Low

## 7 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 The council has to give due regard to its Equalities Duties, in particular with respect to general duties arising pursuant to the Equality Act 2010, section 149. Having due regard to the need to advance equality involves, in particular, to the need to remove or minimize disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- 7.2 The council's tax system is programmed to identify all CTS accounts. There is no evidence to indicate that groups with protected characteristics have been disproportionately affected by the operation of the scheme previously and while the changes proposed may reduce support available individuals this would be based on the individual's circumstances rather than merely because they share a protected characteristic.
- 7.3 The powers provided within S13(A)(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act also provide further mitigation.
- 7.4 Standard questions relating to Equality and Diversity were included on the survey but it was made clear that answering these was not compulsory. While 64 responses were received, not all respondents chose to complete the questions regarding their circumstances or ethnic background.

### **Age profile**

- 7.5 Overall, 56 respondents confirmed their age with the breakdown is in table 5A.

**Table 5A: Age profile**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
18-24	1	2
25-34	17	30
35-44	6	10
45-54	16	29
55-64	11	20
65 and over	5	9

### **Ethnic background**

- 7.6 46 respondents confirmed their ethnic background with the majority of respondents, 86%, describing themselves as White/British/English, see table 5B.

**Table 5B: Ethnic background**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
White/British/English	39	85
Arab	1	2
Chinese	1	2
Eastern European	1	2
Pakistani	1	2
Polish	1	2
White/Black African	1	2
White/Irish	1	2

**Disability and Gender**

- 7.7 45 respondents were happy to confirm whether they were disabled or not and 47 to confirm their gender. The analysis is shown in table 5C and D.

**Table 5C: Disability**

<b>Disabled</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Yes	3	7
No	42	93

**Table 5D: Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Female	34	72
Male	13	28

**8 CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 A public consultation exercise was undertaken for the 2018/19 CTS during the period from 9 to 30 November 2017. The survey was available through a variety of channels:
- A link was available on the Royal Borough's website
  - All visitors to the library were made aware of both the electronic version and offered a paper copy to complete during their visit
  - All visitors to the Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support counters were offered a paper copy to complete during their visit
  - A paper flyer was enclosed with all Council Tax bills sent during this period containing CTS advising of the link on the website.
- 8.2 In total there were 64 responses received split evenly between those responding to the web based survey and the paper version.
- 8.3 Supplementary questions were asked, for monitoring purposes, to determine whether respondents were currently in receipt of Council Tax Support or were completing the consultation on behalf of a representative body.
- 8.4 Of those who chose to respond to these questions, 35% stated that they were currently in receipt of CTS.
- 8.5 The consultation exercise was based on seven questions to residents of the Royal Borough, six of which required specific responses with the remaining one



being less direct and allowing a degree of free text response. Standard Equality and Diversity questions were also asked but it was made clear that providing this information was voluntary.

- 8.6 The following changes have been made to Housing Benefit but not CTS for working age customers therefore these were the areas consulted on:

**Backdating – limiting backdating to 1 month.**

A claim for CTS normally starts from the date that it is submitted. However, the current scheme allows for backdating to be awarded for up to 6 months previously. For Housing Benefit purposes this is now limited to 1 month.

**Support for families**

- **Allowances for more than 2 children** - Allowances are provided within the CTS calculation for each dependent child within the household. For new Housing Benefit claims, allowances are no longer awarded for any children in excess of 2 with some exceptions e.g. multiple births. The proposal is for new claims for CTS to only recognise the first 2 children within a family. Existing claims would not be affected.
- **Removal of the family premium** - an additional allowance is provided within the CTS calculation for those responsible for children. “the family premium”. This is no longer awarded for new Housing Benefit claims and it is proposed that this is mirrored within CTS. DCLG have already aligned the Pensioner CTS rules with this.

**Employment Support Allowance**

Currently those who receive Employment Support allowance for over 14 weeks receive an increased allowance within their CTS calculation. For Housing Benefit purposes this is now only awarded where the customers are placed within the Support Group of Employment Support Allowance i.e. where it is recognised that their disability is most severe. It would be proposed to mirror this for new CTS claims.

**Severe Disability Premium**

Currently those who are recognised as being severely disabled i.e. in receipt of Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance (High Care rate) may receive an additional financial allowance within their CTS calculation provided no-one is receiving Carers Allowance for them. In light of the introduction of Universal credit, this is further limited for HB claims if anyone is receiving the Carers Element of Universal Credit. DCLG have already aligned the Pensioner CTS rules with this.

**General uprating**

Each year the DWP and DCLG alter their rates of allowances used within the Housing Benefit and CTS for pensioner calculations. It would be prudent to align the working age CTS allowances to these rates, when known.

## Consultation responses

- 8.7 Details of the full consultation question and analysis responses, both overall and broken down, are detailed in the rest of this section. The survey advised:

***Q1 The following amendments are proposed in order to align the Council Tax Support Scheme with changes made by Central Government to Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support for those of pensionable age. The proposals below would align Council Tax Support for working age people with these changes.***

- a) *Currently, customers who leave Great Britain temporarily may still get Council Tax Support for 13 weeks or, in some cases, 52 weeks. Do you agree that this should be reduced to 4 weeks ordinarily? In exceptional cases, this could be 8 or 26 weeks.*

### **Response.**

Of those who responded the overall outcome was that the majority of recipients (61%) were **in favour** of making this change.

Of these, where details were provided:

- 42% advised that they were in receipt of CTS currently;
- 65% advised that they were of working age.

- b) *Customers can currently receive backdated Council Tax Support for up to 6 months if they are able to confirm they have good cause for not being able to apply at an earlier date. Do you agree that this should be limited to a maximum of 1 month?*

### **Response.**

The overall outcome was that the majority of recipients (67%) were **not in favour** of making this change.

Of these, where details were provided:

- 31% advised that they were in receipt of CTS currently;
- 41% advised that they were of working age.

- c) *Do you agree that Council Tax Support should only cover the costs of 2 children in families rather than unlimited numbers of children? Exceptions would apply where Tax Credits are paid for more than 2 children.*

### **Response.**

The overall outcome was that the majority of recipients (59%) were **not in favour** of making this change.

Of these, where details were provided:

- 30% advised that they were in receipt of CTS currently;
- 37% advised that they were of working age.

- d) *An additional allowance is provided for those responsible for children, the “family premium”. This is no longer available to new Housing Benefit customer and it is proposed that this is removed for any new Council Tax Support customers making their claim in 2018/19. Do you agree with this proposal?*

**Response.**

The overall outcome was that only the minority of recipients (39%) were in favour of making this change.

Of those who provided details:

- 35% advised that they were in receipt of CTS currently;
- 51% advised that they were of working age.

- e) *Do you agree that customers in receipt of employment Support Allowance should only receive additional assistance if they are in the Support Group i.e. they have the most severe needs?*

**Response.**

The overall outcome was that the majority of recipients (61%) were **not in favour** of making this change.

Of these, where details were provided:

- 24% advised that they were in receipt of CTS currently;
- 38% advised that they were of working age.

- f) *Those who are most severely disabled receive an additional allowance unless someone is receiving Carers Allowance for helping them. The new benefit, Universal Credit, contains a similar Carers Element. Do you agree that the additional allowance should not be awarded if someone is receiving the Carers Allowance for looking after a disabled person?*

**Response.**

The overall outcome was that the majority of recipients (63%) were not in favour of making this change.

Of these, where details were provided:

- 30% advised that they were in receipt of CTS currently;
- 41% advised that they were of working age.

**Question 2.**

Question 2 provided the respondents with the opportunity to raise anything else which they believed should alter in respect of the CTS scheme.

**Q2 Are there any other changes you would like to see to the Council Tax Support scheme for 2018/19 or general comments regarding CTS?**

Please write your answer here:

.....

Details of all the narrative responses, to this question and others, have been included at Appendix A.

## 9 TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 If approved, the changes to the CTS scheme would have effect from 1 April 2018.

## 10 APPENDICES

10.1 There are two appendices

- Appendix A – Narrative Consultation Responses
- Appendix B – Consultation Questionnaire

## 11 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 None.

## 12 CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Commented & returned
Cllr S Rayner	Lead Member for Culture and Communities including Resident and Business Services	05/12/17	
Alison Alexander	Managing Director	05/12/17	5/12/17
Russell O'Keefe	Executive Director	05/12/17	
Andy Jeffs	Executive Director	02/12/17	04/12/17
Rob Stubbs	Section 151 Officer	05/12/17	
Terry Baldwin	Head of HR	05/12/17	06/12/17
Mary Kilner	Head of Law and Governance	05/12/17	
Louisa Dean	Communications and Marketing Manager	05/12/17	
	Other e.g. external		

## REPORT HISTORY

<b>Decision type:</b> Non-key decision	<b>Urgency item?</b> No
Report Author: Louise Freeth, Interim Head of Revenues and Benefits	

## Appendix A – Narrative Consultation Responses

Full time carers are unable to earn more than £110 per week outside their allowance and poorly recompensed considering how much the state save by not having to provide the care.
I disagree with my council short changing people
I disagree with these proposed cuts to Council Tax Support for those with children, the disabled and people who did not realise they could apply until many months later (I assume this is the main reason for backdating). This is because they are inherently unfair as they bear down most on those in the greatest need. Also if the cuts cause Council Tax arrears to increase they could well cost more than they save, both in the arrears themselves, the administration and court costs associated with recovery and a possible increase in homelessness. I note that in March 2017, RBWM Council Tax arrears for the year 2015/6 were in excess of £800m!
Stop taking support away from people that need it.
B. There could be a number of reasons why someone doesn't apply straight away for council tax support, if 6 months is too much, perhaps 3 months is a more reasonable amount of time. C. I disagree with the current tax credits system as a whole. D. Same as above. E. The government have a clear record of treating people on ESA badly, putting them in the wrong group and putting them in bad positions. To then take away money from their rent is abhorrent. They are still too sick for work, how do you expect them to cover the loss. If they have been deemed unfit to work they can't improve their position as they are UNABLE TO WORK. The hate for disabled people by conservatives is horrifying, even this suggestion.
I think that carers benefits are generally at a low level and financial support is less likely to be misused and benefits relating to the cared for are worthwhile
Damages the poorest people in our society. Haven't they suffered enough over the last 7 years?
All damaging to the most vulnerable in society
I disagree with all the questions - because we live in a civilized society
1-6 vulnerable people deserve support
Council tax support is there to help the most vulnerable members of our society. These proposals are shockingly harsh and I strongly disagree with them all.
These proposals are cruel and heartless and hurt the most vulnerable in society.
Because we are a society that cares about people. What you propose is heartless.
People in challenging circumstances often need additional support. Increased financial hardship can lead to an increase in homelessness. If RBWM cannot look after the poorest & most vulnerable in our society, it is not taking care of the WHOLE of the community. Ultimately if poor people suffer it will also impact the rich. The Council needs to consider ways to support the vulnerable so that they can be fully invoiced and contributing members of the community to the extent that they are able to. Poor and vulnerable people should not be penalised for their circumstances.
I support the existing checks and balances that are in place to ensure claims are appropriate.

All of the above because it looks like an attack on the most vulnerable people in our society. Perhaps if the council hadn't frozen council tax for so many years, they wouldn't feel the need to squeeze the town's poorest residents.
I disagree with all of them. This question has survey bias, as it is asymmetric.
All. This is a money saving exercise we should and can support those less well off if we reform local and national tax systems. I've answered below I'm of working age because there is no upper limited on working age
Why do I need to explain only if I disagree? Surely everyone should explain or is this a biased survey?
1,2,4,5,6 Council tax support is there for those in need and should continue to be made available
It seems to be punishing those who are already in need
Questions are leading, encourages people to tick "yes". Windsor is an expensive area to live in and to make CTS stricter almost indicates that the council is cleansing the area of "poor people"
Some cases are different and require additional time and help
New housing benefit customers will need support at least in the first few months. Carers deserve to be helped where possible
If they leave temporarily why do they get that help
We should be helping the people who need support, not taking it away from them
Council tax support should be max of 3. Always difficult to comment as so many have different needs and circumstances.
Council tax support helps families that need it, and helps them to be able to afford other bills etc.
I disagree with some of those statements because some people need more help with their council payments etc
F – The disabled person should get an allowance, the carer should also get an allowance in their own right as they are not employed.
Council Tax support is very important to those on limited income and should be available where needed.
Would like to see council tax abolished
Hey Workers should get Council Tax Support or something similar.
The current system is fine.
CTS should link to some of the priorities we are developing across health and social care as part of the sustainability and transformation partnership
No leave as is
I would like to see this consultation survey shared widely with the residents of the borough.
There should be 100% discount for those claiming universal credit
This survey shows you are not serious about creating a society that works for everyone.
The 90% limit targets those who already have virtually nothing.

## Appendix B – Consultation Questionnaire

### Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support

Louise Freeth  
Interim Head of Revenues and Benefits  
Communities Directorate  
Royal Borough Windsor & Maidenhead  
PO Box 3464, Town Hall  
Maidenhead  
SL6 1XP

www.rbwm.gov.uk



Royal Borough  
of Windsor &  
Maidenhead

### **Have Your Say - Consultation on Council Tax Support Scheme : Consultation Closes 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017.**

#### Section A – Possible Council Tax Support Scheme adaptations.

Following the introduction of Council Tax Support in 2013, the Council decided that everyone of working age should be expected to pay something towards their Council Tax bill. However, in order to introduce this change for residents as gradually as possible, the Council initially set the maximum level of help available at 91.5% for 2013/14 and then at 90% for 2014/15 which is where it currently remains.

This scheme does not apply to retirement age pensioners who continue to receive the same level of assistance they would have received had the national Council Tax Benefit scheme continued.

The Council is proposing to maintain the current level of assistance for 2018/19 for working-age people. This would mean retaining help at 90% of Council Tax liability after any other discounts or exemptions.

If support levels were to be increased for 2018/19, there would be a financial cost to the Council which would have to be met elsewhere and could mean:

- Raising Council Tax \*; or
- reducing Council services and using compensatory savings to fund Council Tax Support; or
- using the Council's one-off reserves which does not resolve the underlying funding requirement; or
- a combination of the three.

\* In recent years the Government has restricted the level by which Local Authorities can increase Council Tax without holding a referendum.

However, the Council is seeking resident's views with regard to other changes to the scheme which would bring it in line with rules operating in other forms of assistance such as Housing Benefit. This may reduce the assistance provided to individuals but would be based solely upon their circumstances rather than a further blanket reduction in support.

The Council will continue to uprate benefit levels in line with those adopted in respect of Housing Benefit, this includes the level of non-dependent deductions. It should be noted that the scheme is subject to revision in order to comply with any legislative changes introduced by Central Government in relation to Council Tax Support.

**Q1 The following amendments are proposed in order to align the Council Tax Support Scheme with changes made by Central Government to Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support for those of pensionable age. The proposals below would align Council Tax Support for working age people with these changes.**

	Yes	No
a. Currently, customers who leave Great Britain temporarily may still get Council Tax Support for 13 weeks or, in some cases, 52 weeks. Do you agree that this should be reduced to 4 weeks ordinarily? In exceptional cases this could be 8 or 26 weeks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. Customers can currently receive backdated Council Tax Support for up to 6 months if they are able to confirm they have good cause for not being apply to apply at an earlier date. Do you agree that this should be limited to a maximum of 1 month?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Do you agree that Council Tax Support should only cover the costs of 2 children in families rather than unlimited numbers of children? Exceptions would apply where Tax Credits are paid for more than 2 children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. An additional allowance is provided for those responsible for children, the "family premium". This is no longer available to new Housing Benefit customers and it is proposed that this is removed for any new Council Tax Support Customers making their claim in 2018/19. Do you agree with this proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Do you agree that customers in receipt of Employment Support Allowance should only receive additional assistance if they are in the Support Group i.e. they have most severe needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Those who are most severely disabled receive an additional allowance unless someone is receiving Carers Allowance for helping them. The new benefit, Universal Credit, contains a similar Carers Element. Do you agree that the additional allowance should not be awarded if someone is receiving the Carers Allowance for looking after a disabled person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you disagree please write your answer here:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



**Q2 Are there any other changes you would like to see to the Council Tax Support scheme 2018/19 or general comments regarding CTS?**

Please write your answer here:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Q3	Please choose any of these that apply:	Yes	No
a.	Are you currently in receipt of Council Tax Support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you answered yes to (6a) please tick one of the following:			
bi.	Are you a pensioner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
bii.	Are you of working age?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q4 Are you completing this on behalf of a representative body such as the Citizen Advice Bureau or Age Concern?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Which group in the community do you represent?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Section B – equality and diversity

The Council is committed to equality and diversity in service delivery. To enable us to ensure that all our residents are receiving fair treatment and equality of opportunity we aim to collect monitoring data that informs us about the accessibility of our services (that is, who uses them and who doesn't).

**Providing this information is voluntary and if you do not want to answer any of the questions you do not have to.**

Any information you provide will be treated confidentially and used only for monitoring purposes. The data will be held securely on the Council's information systems in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and will not be published on an individual basis.

Please choose one of the following:

### Age

Please select your age group

- |                          |                   |                          |       |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prefer not to say | <input type="checkbox"/> | 40-44 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Under 18          | <input type="checkbox"/> | 45-49 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 18-24             | <input type="checkbox"/> | 50-54 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 25-29             | <input type="checkbox"/> | 55-59 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 30-34             | <input type="checkbox"/> | 60-64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 35-39             | <input type="checkbox"/> | 65+   |

Please choose one of the following:

### Race/Ethnicity

What is your ethnic group?

White

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prefer not to say                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Irish   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Gypsy or Irish Traveller                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Any other White background - please specify below     |

.....

Mixed / multiple ethnic groups

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | White and Black Caribbean   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | White and Black African   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | White and Asian   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Any other mixed / multiple ethnic background - please specify below |

.....

Asian / Asian British

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Indian  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Pakistani   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bangladeshi                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Chinese   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Any other Asian background - please specify below |

.....

Black / African / ☐ African  
 Caribbean / ☐ Caribbean  
 Black British ☐ Any other Black / African / Caribbean background -  
 please specify below

.....

Other ethnic ☐ Arab  
 group ☐ Any other ethnic group (write in)

.....

### Disability

Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is considered to have a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Since 2005 this also includes people with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis (MS).

**Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?** ☐ Prefer not to say  
☐ Yes  
☐ No

*Please state the type of impairment that applies to you. Please indicate as many that may apply. If none of the categories apply, please mark 'Other' and specify the type of impairment.*

- ☐ Physical impairment, such as difficulty using your arms or mobility issues which means using a wheelchair or crutches
- ☐ Sensory impairment, such as being blind/ having a serious visual impairment or being deaf/ having a serious hearing impairment
- ☐ Mental health condition, such as depression or schizophrenia
- ☐ Learning disability/difficulty, such as Down's Syndrome or dyslexia or cognitive impairment, such as autistic spectrum disorder
- ☐ Long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy
- ☐ Other (please specify)

.....

**Gender** ☐ Prefer not to say  
 Are you: ☐ Female  
☐ Male  
☐ Transgender

Thank you for completing this survey. The information you provide will be treated confidentially and will be collated and fed back to the Council as part of their decision process.

If you want any further information on the Council Tax Support Scheme please visit [https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200123/benefits/342/housing\\_benefit\\_and\\_council\\_tax\\_support](https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200123/benefits/342/housing_benefit_and_council_tax_support)

Any questions on this consultation can be sent to [benefits@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@rbwm.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank