

Committee Manager: Jane Fulton (Ext. 37611)

11 November 2016

OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Overview Select Committee will be held in Committee Room 1 (the Pink Room) at the Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton BN17 5LF on **Tuesday, 22 November 2016 at 6.00 pm** and you are requested to attend.

Members: Councillors Elkins (Chairman), English (Vice-Chairman), Ballard, Mrs Bence, Blampied, Mrs Daniells, Edwards, Hitchins, Hughes, Mrs Oakley, Oliver-Redgate, Mrs Rapnik, Warren, Dr Walsh and Wheel.

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are reminded to make any declaration of personal and/or prejudicial/pecuniary interests that they may have in relation to items on this agenda.

You should declare your interest by stating:

- a) the item you have the interest in
- b) whether it is a personal interest and the nature of the interest
- c) whether it is also a prejudicial/pecuniary interest

You then need to re-declare your interest and the nature of the interest at the commencement of the item or when the interest becomes apparent.

3. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview Select Committee held on 26 July 2016 (which have been previously circulated.)

4. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

5. *LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

The Council proposes to amend the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme from April 2017. Changes to the scheme form part of the Council's overall Vision programme. The scheme will continue to provide financial assistance to council taxpayers who have low incomes but a range of options to have the scheme changed are proposed.

The Council has consulted on these options and this report provides details of the outcome of the consultation together with recommendations for changes to the scheme.

6. *VOLUNTARY ACTION ARUN & CHICHESTER

This paper introduces the work of Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester (VAAC). A representative from VAAC will deliver a presentation on the health of the local voluntary and community sector.

Members are asked to consider the benefits that VAAC provide to our Voluntary and Community Sector to help inform the recommendations for a report to Cabinet in December 2016.

7. *THE COUNCIL'S 2020 VISION UPDATE

The 2020 Vision programme has been established to provide the strategic direction required to help the Council become a more effective and sustainable one and to enable it to meet future demands. The programme includes an initiative to share services with neighbouring authorities; this report considers the current position.

8. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS AND UPDATES

(i) Cabinet Members will update the Committee on matters relevant to their Portfolio of responsibility.

(ii) Members are invited to ask Cabinet Members questions and are encouraged to submit these to the Committee Manager in advance of the meeting to allow a more substantive answer to be given.

(a) A summary/overview on what is happening following the actual closure of the Arun Medical Group will be requested by the Chairman.

9. *FEEDBACK FROM THE MEETING OF WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL'S HEALTH AND OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE (HASC) HELD ON 2 AND 29 SEPTEMBER AND 10 NOVEMBER 2016

Attached is a feedback report from Councillor Blampied following his attendance at two meetings of the West Sussex County Council's Health and Overview Select Committee (HASC) held on 2 and 29 September 2016.

The feedback report from the meeting of HASC held on 10 November 2016 will be circulated separately to the Committee.

10. FEEDBACK FROM THE MEETING OF THE SUSSEX POLICE AND CRIME PANEL HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2016

In the absence of a feedback report being provided, please use the link below to access the Minutes from the Sussex Police and Crime Panel held on 23 September 2016: <http://www2.westsussex.gov.uk/ds/cttee/pcp/pcp230916ucmins.pdf>

11. WORK PROGRAMME - 2016/2017

Any required amendments to the Committee's Work Programme will be reported by the Committee Manager at the meeting.

(Note: *Indicates report is attached for Members of the Committee only and the Press (excluding exempt items). Copies of reports can be viewed on the Council's web site at www.arun.gov.uk or can be obtained on request from the Committee Manager.)

(Note: Members are also reminded that if they have any detailed questions, would they please inform the Head of democratic Services, Cabinet Member and/or relevant Lead Officer in advance of the meeting in order that the appropriate Officer/Cabinet Member can attend the meeting.)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5ARUN DISTRICT COUNCILOVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE
22 NOVEMBER 2016

Recommendation Paper

Subject : Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Report by : Sue Priest – Benefits Manager Report date: 27 October 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council proposes to amend the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme from April 2017. Changes to the scheme form part of the Council's overall Vision programme. The scheme will continue to provide financial assistance to council taxpayers who have low incomes but a range of options to have the scheme changed are proposed.

The Council has consulted on these options and this report provides details of the outcome of the consultation together with recommendations for changes to the scheme

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee requests Cabinet to:

1. Consider recommending onto Full Council that the following Options be included in the Local Council Tax Support Scheme from April 2017:

- Option 1 - Require all working age applicants to pay at least £3.70 per week
- Option 2 - Remove the Family Premium for all new working age applicants
- Option 3 - Reduce backdating to one month
- Option 4 - Reduce the period a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks.
- Option 5 - Remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation for new Employment Support Allowance (ESA) applicants
- Option 7 - Remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carer's Element) to look after them; and

2. Defer the inclusion of Option 6 [Limiting the number of dependent children within the calculation to a maximum of two] for consideration in the 2018 scheme.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Members of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Task and Finish Working Party have considered a range of options for change within the scheme. At the meeting on 24 May 2016 they proposed a range of 7 options which were presented to the Overview Select Committee on 7 June 2016. Cabinet approval was obtained on 11 July 2016 to undertake a full public consultation on the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme to take effect from 1 April 2017. This report provides the results of the consultation together with an equalities impact assessment of the proposed changes.

2.0 The Consultation

2.1 The Council undertook a full public consultation between 27 July 2016 and 16 October 2016. Details of the consultation were available on the Arun website and at the Council's reception areas in both Littlehampton and the Bognor Regis Town Hall. All town and parish councils were made aware of the consultation and organisations representing certain groups of claimants were contacted, such as, the Royal British Legion, MIND and the local Citizen's Advice Bureau.

2.2 Customers were able to complete the consultation questionnaire either online or by a paper form. To aid understanding a background information document was produced, a copy of this document is included at Appendix 1.

2.3 There were 158 responses to the consultation. In general 61% of respondents were in favour of changing the scheme. A full analysis of the consultation is at Appendix 2.

3.0 Equalities Impact Assessment

3.1 The impact of the options on claimants has been considered and a full Equalities Impact Assessment carried out. This is included at Appendix 3. Each of the 7 Options is summarised in the following paragraphs including the result of the consultation. By offering a range of payment options, including spreading the cost over 12 months, having a discretionary hardship scheme and early intervention in case of arrears the negative impacts can be lessened.

3.2 When considering the options below Members may wish to consider the adverse effect to some groups of claimants caused by a combination of options. In particular large families will be adversely affected by a combination of options 1, 2 and 6.

4.0 Option 1. Require all working age applicants to pay at least £3.70 per week

4.1 Result of Consultation:

Agree	69%
Disagree	30%
Don't know	1%

- 4.2 This change will affect all working age claimants (currently 5722). It is seen as fair as the change affects all. Some households (2884) will have to pay for the first time. Customers will have their support reduced by £3.70 per week which is the equivalent of an increase of £192.93 on their annual bill. Customers who receive less than £3.70 support per week will lose entitlement altogether

5.0 Option 2. Removing the Family Premium for all new working age applicants

Result of Consultation:

Agree	58%
Disagree	32%
Don't know	10%

- 5.1 This change will remove the family premium for new cases only, including claims where there is a break in entitlement. This means that it will be phased in over some years. There are currently 1397 families who benefit from this premium within their assessment. Loss of this premium will cost them up to an additional £3.49 per week. This change has already been introduced for pension age applicants and those receiving Housing Benefit.

6.0 Option 3. Reducing backdating to one month

Result of Consultation:

Agree	82%
Disagree	13%
Don't know	4%

- 6.1 It is not possible to provide details of the number of claimants likely to be affected by this change although this is estimated to be small, less than 100 applicants. The change has already been implemented for Housing Benefit applicants with little evidence of additional hardship.

7.0 Option 4. Reducing the period a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks.

Result of Consultation:

Agree	88%
Disagree	10%
Don't know	2%

7.1 It is uncertain how many claimants this will affect. It is proposed that the same rules as those for Housing Benefit are applied offering a longer period of absence in certain cases.

8.0 Option 5. Remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation for new Employment Support Allowance (ESA) applicants

8.1 Result of Consultation:

Agree	74%
Disagree	14%
Don't know	12%

8.2 This is a technical change only, bringing the treatment of ESA in line with Housing Benefit.

9.0 Option 6. Limit the number of dependent children within the calculation to a maximum of two

9.1 Result of Consultation:

Agree	77%
Disagree	20%
Don't know	3%

9.2 This change was proposed to bring the local Council Tax Reduction scheme into line with proposed changes in Housing Benefit. The potential loss of benefit in respect of each third and subsequent child is £13.38. Together with the proposed minimum payment £3.70 per week (Option 1) and the removal of the family premium (Option 2) giving a weekly benefit loss per family of £3.49, a family with 3 children could face a weekly increase in their Council Tax bill of £20.57. Up to 450 families could be affected by the combined change

Although this change is still proposed for Housing Benefit the Department for Work and Pensions has not yet finalised the details including any exceptions. We would hope to be able to replicate any exceptions within our local Council Tax Reduction scheme. As these details are not yet known together with the sharp increase in payments that would be experienced by larger families it is recommended consideration is given to deferring these changes until 2018.

10.0 Option 7. Remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carer's Element) to look after them.

10.1 Result of Consultation:

Agree 72%
 Disagree 14%
 Don't know 14%

10.2 This is another technical change which will bring the scheme into line with Housing Benefit. It has no draw backs.

11.0 Additional Information

11.1 In addition to being asked to comment on the 7 options the consultation also sought views on whether alternative sources of funding should be used instead of changing the scheme.

11.2 A summary of the response is given below:

Source of Funding	Yes	No	Don't Know
Increase the level of Council Tax	30%	66%	3%
Find savings by cutting other services	25%	71%	3%
Use Council's reserves	32%	58%	10%

12.0 Other Considerations

12.1 It is estimated that the changes to the scheme will produce an annual saving in the region of £1 million. The majority of this saving will be realised by West Sussex County Council with Arun District Council benefiting by savings of approximately £100,000. As the billing authority the Council will be responsible for collecting an additional £1 million. There will be an additional administrative burden and WSCC has been asked for funding to support this extra work. To date an agreement has not been reached. Without this support it is likely that the level of savings will be reduced.

13.0 Summary

13.1 Although the level of response was low the result of the consultation was favourable. The proposed changes were all supported with a change to the scheme being the preferred option to making savings elsewhere. The Equalities Impact Assessment found that although the changes were seen as fair, there was a potential for larger families to be impacted more than some other groups of claimants. As Option 6 (the two child limit) is still being developed for Housing Benefit it is proposed that this option is deferred for consideration from April 2017. This deferral will also help to mitigate the adverse impact on larger families.

14.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider recommending to Cabinet to:

(1) Ask Full Council to approve that the following Options be included in the Local Council Tax Support Scheme from April 2017:

- Option 1 Require all working age applicants to pay at least £3.70 per week
- Option 2 Remove the Family Premium for all new working age applicants
- Option 3 Reduce backdating to one month
- Option 4 Reduce the period a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks.
- Option 5 Remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation for new Employment Support Allowance (ESA) applicants
- Option 7 Remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carer's Element) to look after them

(2) defer the inclusion of Option 6 [Limiting the number of dependent children within the calculation to a maximum of two] for consideration in the 2018 scheme.

Background Papers:

Appendix 1: Background Information Document

Appendix 2: Consultation Report

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment

Contact: Sue Priest - Benefit Manager ext 37522



Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18

Consultation

The consultation opens 25/07/2016 and closes 16/10/2016

Background

Before April 2013 Council Tax payers could apply for Council Tax Benefit (CTB) and they could receive up to 100% benefit to help them pay their bill. Changes introduced by the Government abolished Council Tax Benefit from 1 April 2013 and made local councils responsible for setting up their own Council Tax Reduction (CTR) schemes for **working age** applicants. At the same time the Government reduced the amount of funding given to councils to pay for the schemes. Any decrease in our general grant funding means that there is less money to pay for all the services we provide including Council Tax Reduction.

The scheme for Pension age applicants is set by Government and is not affected by any of the proposals set out in this consultation, although we still have to use our grant to fund this.

Why is a change to the Council Tax Reduction scheme being considered?

Decisions about changing the CTR scheme are being considered alongside wider challenges being faced due to the continued reduction in grant funding from government. Although Arun District Council collects the Council Tax we only get to keep about 10% of it, with most of the money going to West Sussex County Council, the Police and the Fire and Rescue Service. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme reduces the amount we collect so there is less for all the organisations. Currently the scheme costs just over £10 million per year a 10% saving would reduce the overall cost of the scheme by £1 million of which Arun would receive £100,000.

We also want to make the scheme easier to administer by matching some of the rules in Housing Benefit and Universal Credit calculations. This also avoids confusion for applicants who receive more than one benefit and would otherwise have entitlement calculated under different rules.

Who will this affect?

Working age households in the Arun District who currently receive or will apply for Council Tax Reduction. Pension age households will **not** be affected as their claims are dealt with under a scheme which is prescribed by Central Government.

The Proposals for Change

As explained in the background information, the Council is primarily consulting on the following options to change the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme from 1st April 2017, some of which would reduce the cost of the scheme. Your responses are a part of this consultation. Set out below are the options being considered, if you complete the questionnaire you will be asked for your views on each of these options.

Option 1 – Require all working age applicants to pay at least £3.70 per week Council Tax.

The Council currently allows all working age applicants to claim up to 100% support towards their Council Tax depending on their income and circumstances. This option would require all applicants who claim Council Tax Reduction, to pay a minimum of £3.70 per week. Reducing this support would mean that some working age applicants would need to pay more than they do under the current scheme.

The Council is conscious that any minimum payment must be affordable given the household's circumstances and the Council is minded that the minimum payment of £3.70 per week is fair. This figure has been based on the standard deduction from DWP benefits for arrears of Council Tax. This change will affect all recipients of Council Tax Reduction (currently 5722 households) and will yield a saving of 9.8%

The impacts are:

- It is fair, everyone shares the increase
- It is a simple change to the scheme which is easy to understand and administer
- All working age households receiving Council Tax Reduction will be required to pay a minimum payment unlike previous years.
- Customers receiving CTR will have the amount of support reduced by £3.70 which is the equivalent to an increase of £192.93 on their annual bill.
- Customers who receive less than £3.70 per week CTR will lose entitlement altogether.

Option 2 – Removing the Family Premium for all new working age applicants

The removal of family premium from 1st April 2017 for **new** claims will bring the Council Tax Reduction scheme in line with Housing Benefit. The family premium is part of how we assess the 'needs' of any applicant which is compared with their income. Family Premium is normally given when an applicant has at least one dependent child living with them. Removing the family premium will mean that when we assess an applicant's needs it would not include the family premium (currently £17.45 per week). This change would **not** affect those on Universal Credit, Income Support, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance or Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance.

This change will be introduced slowly for new claims only, applicants who already get the Family Premium will keep it unless they stop receiving CTR and later reclaim.

This will produce a small saving, which will slowly increase as the case load changes.

The impacts are:

- It brings the working age Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with Housing Benefit changes proposed by Central Government. The change has already been introduced for pension age applicants by Central Government;

- New working age residents may see a reduction in the amount of support they receive.
- Some households with children will pay more

Option 3 - Reducing Backdating to 1 month

Currently claims for Council Tax Reduction from working age applicants can be backdated for up to 3 months. Central Government has reduced the period for Housing Benefit claims to 1 month. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme be aligned with the changes for Housing Benefit. It is estimated this will affect less than 100 applicants.

The impacts are:

- It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand when claiming Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.
- New working age residents may see a reduction in the amount of support they receive if they are unable to claim on time.

Option 4 - Reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks

Within the current scheme, applicants can be temporarily absent from their homes without it affecting the Council Tax Reduction. This replicated the rule within Housing Benefit. Housing Benefit has been changed so that if a person is absent from Great Britain for a period of more than 4 weeks, their benefit will cease. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect the changes in Housing Benefit. There will be exceptions for certain occupations.

As there is no need for applicants to tell us when they leave Great Britain for over 4 weeks we do not know how many will be affected by this change.

The impacts are:

- The treatment of temporary absence will be brought into line with Housing

Benefit

- It is seen as fair
- There are exceptions for certain occupations including the armed forces and mariners.
- If a person is absent from Great Britain for a period which is likely to exceed 4 weeks, their Council Tax Reduction will cease from when they leave the Country. They will need to re-apply on return

Option 5 - To remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of the current scheme for new Employment and Support Allowance applicants.

From April 2017, all new applicants of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) who fall within the Work Related Activity Group will no longer receive the component in either their ESA or within the calculation of Housing Benefit. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect the changes. This is a technical change only to ensure a consistent approach to the treatment of ESA

The impacts are:

- The treatment of ESA will be brought into line with Housing Benefit
- It avoids additional costs to the Council Tax Reduction scheme.
- Persons receiving ESA will not experience any reduction in Council Tax

Option 6 - To limit the number of dependant children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two

Within the current scheme, applicants who have children are awarded a dependant's addition of £66.90 per child within their applicable amounts. There is no limit to the number of dependant's additions that can be awarded. From April 2017 Central Government is proposing to limit dependant's additions in Universal Credit, Housing Benefit and Tax Credits to a maximum of two. This will only affect households who have a third or subsequent child on or after 1st April 2017. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect

the changes in Housing Benefit and Central Government Benefits. There will be exceptions where there are multiple births after 1st April 2017 (and the household is not already at their maximum of two dependants within the calculation); adopted children or where households merge. This change will not go ahead if the proposed changes to other benefits do not go ahead.

The impacts are:

- Council Tax Reduction will be brought into line with Housing Benefit, Universal Credit and Tax Credits
- It is simple and easy to administer
- Applicants who have a third or subsequent child after 1st April 2017 (and are not excepted from the rules) may receive less Council Tax reduction than an applicant who has more children born before 1st April 2017

Option 7 – To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers Element) to look after them

Currently when another person is paid Carers Allowance to look after a Council Tax Reduction applicant, then the Severe Disability Premium is not included when working out their needs (Applicable Amounts). The reason for this is that it avoids paying for the same care twice. This proposed change will align the scheme with Housing Benefit by treating persons who receive the Universal Credit (Carers Element) in the same way as anyone receiving Carers Allowance.

The impacts are:

- Council Tax Reduction will be brought into line with Housing Benefit;
- It is simple and easy to administer
- There are no drawbacks to this change as persons receiving Universal Credit (Carer's Element) will be treated in the same way as those receiving Carer's Allowance who look after any person who claims Council Tax Reduction

Are there any alternatives to changing the existing Council Tax Reduction scheme?

We have also thought about other ways to make the savings, the administration

simpler and also to replicate the changes in the benefit system generally. These have not been completely rejected and you are asked about them in the Questionnaire, but at the moment we do not think we should implement them for the reasons given.

We have considered:

1 Increase Council Tax

This would mean all council tax payers in the District paying towards the scheme. The decision to increase Council Tax may need to be made by voting in a local referendum.

2 Reduce funding to other Council services

Keeping the current Council Tax Reduction scheme will mean less money available to deliver other Council services; or

3 Use the Council's savings to keep the Council Tax Reduction scheme

Using savings would be a short-term option. Once used they will no longer be available to support and invest in other Council services.

Conclusion

The Council has to consider where savings will come from in order to meet the impact of the continued reductions in government grants and are, therefore, proposing some changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme to meet a small percentage of the those savings. No final decisions have been made yet. The questionnaire seeks your views and suggestions to help us design the scheme for 2017/18

The Next Steps.

The consultation closes on 16 October 2016.

We will listen carefully to what residents tell us and take the responses into consideration when making a final decision on the 2017/18 scheme.

Following the decision, the full results from the consultation will be available on the Council's website.

The new scheme will start on 1 April 2017. The Council will consider the impact of the scheme annually and consult again if it thinks further changes need to be made.

Survey results:

Council Tax Reduction Scheme Survey Report

October 2016



1. BACKGROUND

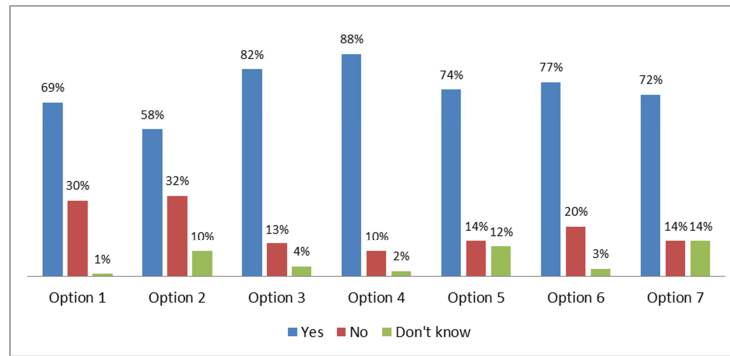
- 1.1 Each year Arun District Council decides whether to change the Council Tax Reduction scheme (CTR) for working age applicants in the district. This year the Council has decided that changes should be considered to bring the Council Tax Reduction scheme in line with the changes made by Central Government in Housing Benefit and Universal Credit and is consulting with residents on the changes proposed.
- 1.2 Over the past two years, support from the Government for the scheme has reduced and has been absorbed into the general grant the Council received. The reduction in this grant means there is less money available, not only to help towards CTR, but also towards supporting the cost of delivering other services the Council provides. To help the Council to deliver a wide range of high quality services to the public it has been identified that some savings could be made by reducing the amount of help provided via the CTR.
- 1.3 The Council is consulting on a range of options to change the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme from 1st April 2017, some of which would reduce the cost of the scheme. The survey ran from 25th July to 16th October and was available on the Arun District Council website and Facebook page. 158 responses were received¹.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Three in five respondents (61%) feel that the Council should not keep the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme (i.e. should not continue to reduce Council Tax for applicants in the way and to the extent that it does at the moment). Just one in three (34%) feels the Council should keep the current system. Hence the view, by almost two to one, is to replace the current system.
- 2.2 Reasons given for not protecting it include: everyone needs to share the problem and pay a bit more; everyone should pay something so they are aware of the bill; the contribution proposed is minimal and can be easily managed over the year.
- 2.3 Reasons given for protecting it include: the scheme means the poorest members of society have more to spend on essentials; small amounts of money are costly to collect; the burden of many of the cuts falls on the least able to pay (those with large families or the disabled); savings could be made from council wastage of money elsewhere.
- 2.4 Of the seven options put forward, option 4 (reducing the permitted absence period) receives the greatest level of support, whilst option 2 (removing the Family Premium for all new working age applicants) receives the least support. Even so, more than half of respondents support this option, with nearly three in five in favour. The figure overleaf summarises the level of support for each of the options.

¹ This is subject to a maximum standard error of +/-7.8% at the 95% confidence level on an observed statistic of 50%. Thus we can be 95% confident that if the whole population had responded the actual figure would lie between 42.2% and 57.8%.

Respondent agreement with each of the options to change the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme [Base: 158]

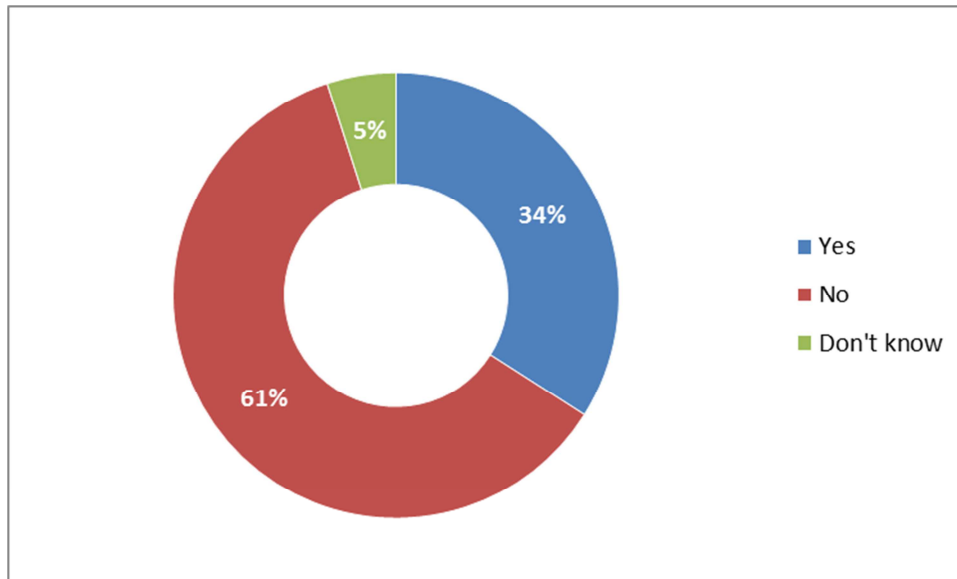


- 2.5 The following themes emerged across most options: some people genuinely would not be able to afford the extra cost; very low income households must be protected; should seek savings from council money being “wasted” elsewhere; ask all Council Tax payers to increase the amount they pay; charge larger properties more (let the well-off help the less well-off); the financial burden should be borne by everyone including pensioners; it’s too difficult to administer; do not target the disabled.
- 2.6 If the Council were to keep the current scheme, it will need to find savings from other services to help meet the expected reduction in Government grant. Three alternatives were set out for respondents to consider. There is no strong support for any of these options, however using the council’s savings is the preferred option, followed by increasing the level of council tax, closely followed by reducing funding available for other council services.
- 2.7 Respondents were given the opportunity to make any other comments on the proposals.
- Comments in favour included: the proposals seem very sensible and bring local council policy in line with government policy; looks good, some sensible suggestions; there is a need to amend the current scheme as suggested to reflect financial reality and make it fairer.
- Comments against included: punishing the less well-off is never acceptable; not a cost effective measure as in the long term it would cost the Council more in supporting those affected by it.
- 2.8 Asked if the Council should consider any other options to save money/increase income, comments included: reduce costs of staffing or office associated costs; increase income generation; cut redevelopment schemes, consultants etc; lobby government to increase the Council Tax valuation bands; target all claimants, not just the ones trying to work for a living.
- 2.9 Further comments included: it is about time this change is made to make the burden fairer for all; leave poor people alone, they have it tough enough as it is; it is a small amount that could be recouped from current Council Tax payers; pension age applicants get a far better deal than working age ones, change the scheme to amend this.

3. KEY FINDINGS

- 3.1.1 Three in five respondents (61%) feel that the Council should not keep the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme (i.e. it should not continue to reduce Council Tax for applicants in the way and to the extent that it does at the moment). Just one in three (34%) feels the Council should keep the current system and the remaining one 5% say they don't know (see figure 1). Hence the view, by almost two to one, is to replace the current system.

Figure 1 - Should the Council keep the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme? (Should it continue to reduce Council Tax for applicants in the way and to the extent that it does at the moment?) [Base: 158]



- 3.1.2 Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on protecting the Council Tax Reduction Scheme from cuts. Full comments are provided in appendix B (under section B.1). A selection of comments is provided below:

Reasons for protecting it:

“Protecting the current scheme means the poorest members of society have more to spend on essentials such as food, electricity and gas.”

“Small amounts of money are costly to collect.”

“The burden of many of the cuts that you have outlined seem to fall on the least able to pay (those with large families or the disabled). This is shameful and should be regarded as counter to the ethos of a District Council.”

“There are more obvious savings to be made.”

The council should bear the cost:

“Seek savings from current council wastage of money elsewhere.”

It should not be protected:

“Councils are struggling for money, and even if those on benefits have to pay £5 per year, that is still an increase in the council's income.”

“I do not agree with keeping the current scheme - everyone needs to share the problem and pay a bit more.”

“I think everyone should pay something so they are aware of the bill.”

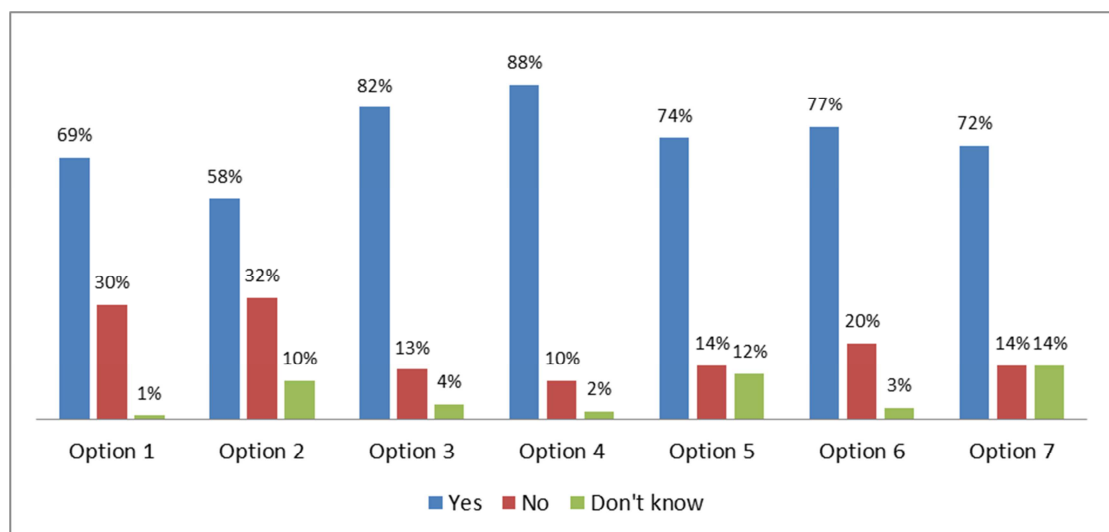
“The small amount we are asking them to contribute is minimal and can be easily managed over the year in terms of repayment for the customer.”

3.2 The survey asked for views on each of the seven options the Council is consulting on to reduce the cost of the existing Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for working age applicants from 1st April 2017. These are listed below and explained in full in appendix A (with the description and the impacts of each option):

- **Option 1** – Require all working age applicants to pay at least £3.70 per week Council Tax (currently up to 100% support)
- **Option 2** – Removing the Family Premium for all new working age applicants (currently £17.45 per week)
- **Option 3** - Reducing backdating to one month (currently three months)
- **Option 4** - Reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks
- **Option 5** - To remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of the current scheme for new Employment and Support Allowance applicants
- **Option 6** - To limit the number of dependent children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two (currently no limit)
- **Option 7** – To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers Element) to look after them.

3.3.1 Figure 2 summarises respondents' views on each of these seven options. Option 4 (reducing the permitted absence period) receives the greatest level of support, with almost nine to one in favour; whilst option 2 (removing the Family Premium for all new working age applicants) receives the least support. Even so, more than half of respondents support this option, with nearly three in five in favour.

Figure 2 – Respondent agreement with each of the options to change the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme [Base: 158]



3.3.2 Table 1 analyses these findings by respondent characteristics:

- Those in receipt of a Council Tax reduction appear less likely than those who are not to agree with options 2, 5, and 7².
- Female respondents appear more likely than male respondents to agree with all of the 7 options.
- Those with health problems are less likely than those without to agree with any of the 7 options.

Table 1 - Respondent agreement with each of the options to change the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme [Bases vary]

	Base	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7
All respondents	158	69%	58%	82%	88%	74%	77%	72%
Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?								
As an individual	155	69%	59%	82%	88%	75%	77%	73%
On behalf of organisation	3 ³	67%	0%	100%	67%	33%	67%	33%
Are you, or someone in your household, currently receiving a Council Tax Reduction?								
Yes	20	70%	50%	85%	85%	65%	75%	65%
No	133	69%	61%	82%	89%	77%	78%	74%
Are you....?								
Male	56	61%	55%	79%	86%	73%	66%	71%
Female	93	78%	63%	87%	91%	77%	86%	77%
What is your age?								
18 - 34	21	81%	43%	95%	95%	71%	76%	81%
35 - 44	26	81%	65%	88%	88%	73%	88%	69%
45 - 54	40	55%	50%	75%	88%	73%	65%	73%
55 - 64	40	73%	60%	83%	83%	75%	80%	73%
65+	23	78%	78%	78%	96%	83%	83%	78%
Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?								
Yes	9	33%	44%	67%	78%	44%	67%	44%
No	134	73%	58%	83%	90%	76%	78%	74%

² Option 2 - Removing the Family Premium for all new working age applicants; Option 5 - To remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of the current scheme for new Employment and Support Allowance applicants; Option 7 – To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers Element) to look after them)

³ Warning: low base

3.3.3 Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on each of the seven options put forward. Full comments are provided in appendix B (see sections B.2 to B.8 inclusive, sorted by theme).

3.3.4 The following themes emerge across many of the options:

“Some people genuinely would not be able to afford the extra cost.”

“Very low income households must be protected.”

“Seek savings from council money wastage elsewhere.”

“Ask all Council Tax payers to increase the amount they pay.”

“Charge larger houses more - let the well-off help the less well-off.”

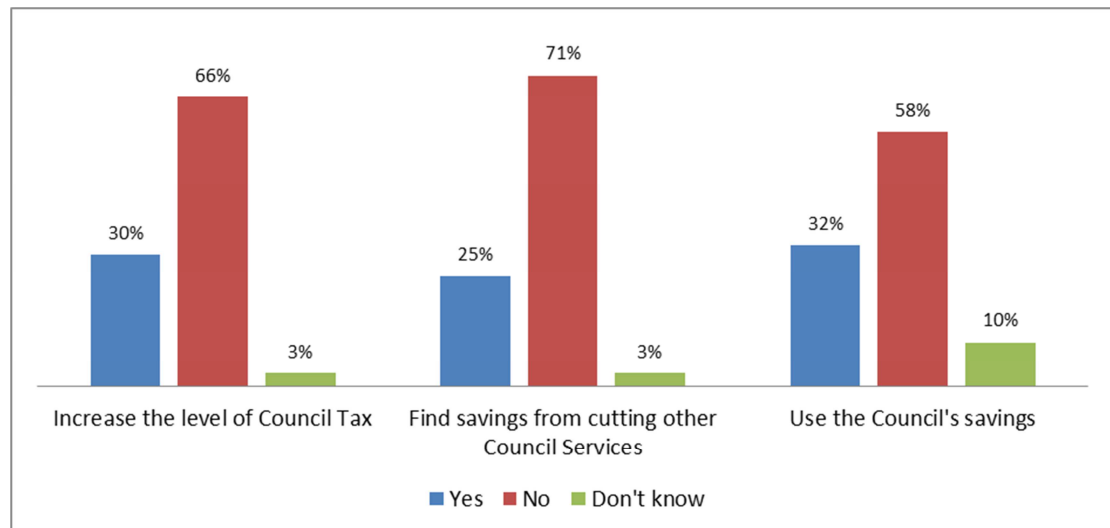
“The financial burden should be borne by everyone, including pensioners.”

“Too difficult to administer.”

“Do not target the disabled.”

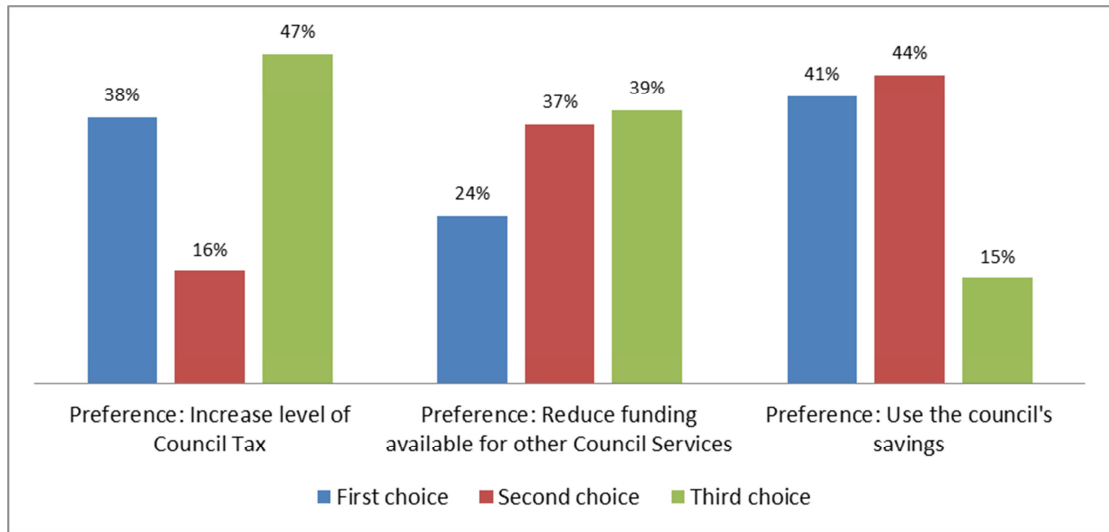
3.4 If the Council were to keep the current scheme it will need to find savings from other services to help meet the expected reduction in Government grant. Three alternatives were set out for respondents to consider. Figure 3 summarises their views on each of these. There is no strong support for any of these options, with “yeses” ranging from one in three down to just one in four.

Figure 3 – Do you think we should choose any of the following options rather than the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme? [Base: 146]



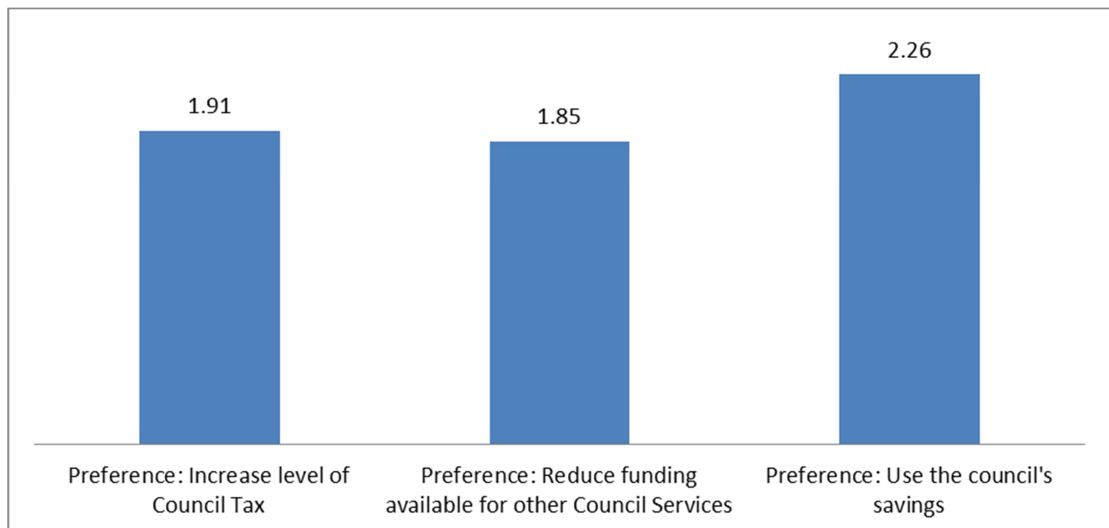
3.5.1 Respondents were asked what their order of preference would be if the Council were to decide to choose these other options to make savings. Figure 4 summarises responses (also see figure 5 overleaf).

Figure 4 – Respondent order of preference for these alternative options to save money [Base: 146]



3.5.2 As figure 4 is somewhat difficult to interpret, figure 5 has been produced to show the net preference for each option (here the results have been weighted so that a first choice scores 3, a second choice scores 2 and a third choice scores 1. This shows that using the council’s savings is the preferred option, followed by increasing the level of council tax, closely followed by reducing funding available for other council services.

Figure 5 – Respondents’ order of preference for the alternative options to save money [scale from 3 = first choice, down to 1 = third choice] [Base: 146]



3.5.3 Table 2 analyses these findings by respondent characteristics:

- Those in receipt of a Council Tax reduction appear more likely to prefer a general increase in the level of Council Tax than reducing funding available for other Council Services.
- Those whose day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability also appear more likely to prefer a general increase in the level of Council Tax than reducing funding available for other Council Services.
- Older respondents tend to prefer a general increase in the level of Council Tax than reducing funding available for other Council Services, whereas those aged 35-44 are more likely to prefer reduced funding than an increase in Council Tax.

Table 2 – Respondents' order of preference for the alternative options to save money [scale from 3 = first choice, down to 1 = third choice] [Bases vary]

	Base	Preference: Increase level of Council Tax	Preference: Reduce funding available for other Council Services	Preference: Use the council's savings
All respondents	144	1.91	1.85	2.26
Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?				
As an individual	142	1.92	1.84	2.25
On behalf of an organisation	2 ⁴	1.00	2.50	2.50
Are you, or someone in your household, currently receiving a Council Tax Reduction?				
Yes	20	2.10	1.70	2.20
No	120	1.91	1.85	2.26
Are you....?				
Male	50	1.98	1.78	2.25
Female	87	1.87	1.87	2.25
What is your age?				
18 - 34	20	1.95	1.95	2.20
35 - 44	26	1.58	2.08	2.35
45 - 54	34	1.91	1.91	2.15
55 - 64	36	2.11	1.64	2.24
65+	22	1.91	1.68	2.41
Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?				
Yes	7	2.43	1.14	2.50
No	123	1.86	1.90	2.25

⁴ Warning: low base

- 3.6 Respondents were given the opportunity to make any other comments on the Proposals. Full comments are provided in appendix B (see section B.9). A selection of comments is provided below:

Positive comments:

"I agree with all the proposals, they seem very sensible and bring in local council policy in line with government policy."

"Looks good, some sensible suggestions."

"Need to amend the current scheme as suggested to reflect financial reality and make it fairer."

Support for retaining CTRS for working age applicants:

"As much as I agree that the changes are required I do feel that it is unfair that the people who are most affected are the ones trying to work. It seems to me that the main people that should be targeted are the people we need to encourage to get back to work and by reducing their 'free ride' might spur them in the right direction."

"I am appalled that you are considering penalising the poorest members of the community but not increasing Council Tax. What about revaluing all the properties at the same time?"

"Punishing the less well-off to is never acceptable."

"This is not a cost effective measure as in the long term it would cost the Council more in supporting those affected by it."

Should not be just aimed at working age claimants:

"I do not think this should solely be targeted to working age claimants. Many claimants who do not come under this category have more money each month than people who actually work, so why can't we ask them to pay!!"

"Perhaps pensioners should pay a portion also and the Government should review this."

- 3.7 The next question asked if respondents would like the Council to consider any other options to save money. Full comments are provided in appendix B (see section B.10). A selection of comments is provided below:

The Council should bear the cost:

"Council should consider joint working with other District councils where this might reduce costs of staffing or office associated costs - rents, heating, lighting etc."

"Income generation."

"You have wasted £millions on stupid redevelopment schemes, consultants etc, plus getting into areas councils shouldn't be in. Make big cuts in all that."

Others should bear the cost:

“Increase the Council Tax for all.”

“We should be lobbying the government to increase the Council Tax valuation bands so that the upper limit is increased. It seems unfair in a system based on property values that the maximum band is so low - meaning that there is no differentiation between the wealthy and the super-rich.”

“Yes, target all claimants, not just the ones trying to work for a living!”

- 3.8 Respondents were invited to provide any further comments or questions to make regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Full comments are provided in appendix B (see section B.11). A selection of comments is provided below:

Broadly agree with the proposals:

“I am in no doubt that people who are receiving CTR, use more council services than the likes of people who are working and paying full council tax. Also, people on benefits, especially if they have children or a disability, receive more money than the likes of myself, on minimum wage. I'm fed up with it, like many others I'm sure.”

“It is about time this change is made, to make the burden fairer for all.”

Disagree:

“Leave poor people alone - they have it tough enough as it is.”

Others should bear the cost:

“Still believe it is a small amount that could be recouped from current Council Tax payers.”

Include pensioners:

“Pension age applicants get a far better deal than working age ones. Change the scheme to amend this, or if you can't then lobby central government about it.”

APPENDIX A

A.1 Option 1 – Require all working age applicants to pay at least £3.70 per week Council Tax

- The Council currently allows all working age applicants to claim up to 100% support towards their Council Tax depending on their income and circumstances. This option would require all applicants who claim Council Tax Reduction, to pay a minimum of £3.70 per week. Reducing this support would mean that some working age applicants would need to pay more than they do under the current scheme.
- The Council is conscious that any minimum payment must be affordable given the household's circumstances and the Council is minded that the minimum payment of £3.70 per week is fair.
- The impacts are:
 - It is fair, everyone shares the increase
 - It is a simple change to the scheme which is easy to understand and administer
 - All working age households receiving Council Tax Reduction will be required to pay a minimum payment unlike previous years.

A.2 Option 2 – Removing the Family Premium for all new working age applicants

- The removal of Family Premium from 1st April 2017 for new claims will bring the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with Housing Benefit. The family premium is part of how we assess the 'needs' of any applicant, which is compared with their income. Family Premium is normally given when an applicant has at least one dependent child living with them. Removing the Family Premium will mean that when we assess an applicant's needs it would not include the Family Premium (currently £17.45 per week). This change would not affect those on Universal Credit, Income Support, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance or Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance.
- The impacts are:
 - It brings the working age Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with Housing Benefit changes proposed by Central Government. The change has already been introduced for pension age applicants by Central Government
 - New working age residents may see a reduction in the amount of support they receive
 - Some households with children will pay more.

A.3 Option 3 - Reducing backdating to one month

- Currently claims for Council Tax Reduction from working age applicants can be backdated for up to three months. Central Government has reduced the period for Housing Benefit claims to one month. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme be aligned with the changes for Housing Benefit.
- The impacts are:
 - It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand when claiming Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction
 - New working age residents may see a reduction in the amount of support they receive if they are unable to claim on time.

A.4 Option 4 - Reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks

- Within the current scheme, applicants can be temporarily absent from their homes without it affecting the Council Tax Reduction. This replicated the rule within Housing Benefit. Housing Benefit has been changed so that if a person is absent from Great Britain for a period of more than 4 weeks, their benefit will cease. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme is amended to reflect the changes in Housing Benefit. There will be exceptions for certain occupations.
- The impacts are:
 - The treatment of temporary absence will be brought into line with Housing Benefit - It is seen as fair
 - There are exceptions for certain occupations including the armed forces and mariners

- If a person is absent from Great Britain for a period which is likely to exceed 4 weeks, their Council Tax Reduction will cease from when they leave the Country. They will need to re-apply on return.

A.5 Option 5 - To remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of the current scheme for new Employment and Support Allowance applicants

- From April 2017, all new applicants of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) who fall within the Work Related Activity Group will no longer receive the component in either their ESA or within the calculation of Housing Benefit. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme is amended to reflect the changes.
- The impacts are:
 - The treatment of ESA will be brought into line with Housing Benefit
 - It avoids additional costs to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme
 - Persons receiving ESA will not experience any decrease in Council Tax Reduction due to this change.

A.6 Option 6 - To limit the number of dependant children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two

- Within the current scheme, applicants who have children are awarded a dependant's addition of £66.90 per child within their applicable amounts. There is no limit to the number of dependant's additions that can be awarded. From April 2017 Central Government will be limiting dependant's additions in Universal Credit, Housing Benefit and Tax Credits to a maximum of two. This will only affect households who have a third or subsequent child on or after 1st April 2017. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme is amended to reflect the changes in Housing Benefit and Central Government Benefits. There will be exceptions where there are multiple births after 1st April 2017 (and the household is not already at their maximum of two dependants within the calculation); adopted children or where households merge.
- The impacts are:
 - Council Tax Reduction will be brought into line with Housing Benefit, Universal Credit and Tax Credits
 - It is simple and easy to administer
 - Applicants who have a third or subsequent child after 1st April 2017 (and are not excepted from the rules) may receive less Council Tax reduction than an applicant who has more children born before 1st April 2017.

A.7 Option 7 – To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers Element) to look after them

- Currently when another person is paid Carers Allowance to look after a Council Tax Reduction applicant, then the Severe Disability Premium is not included when working out their needs (Applicable Amounts). The reason for this is that it avoids paying for the same care twice. This proposed change will align the scheme with Housing Benefit by treating persons who receive the Universal Credit (Carers Element) in the same way as anyone receiving Carers Allowance.
- The impacts are:
 - Council Tax Reduction will be brought into line with Housing Benefit
 - It is simple and easy to administer
 - There are no drawbacks to this change as persons receiving Universal Credit (Carers Element) will be treated in the same way as those receiving Carers Allowance who look after any person who claims Council Tax Reduction.

APPENDIX B

B.1 Please use the space below to make any comments you have on protecting the Council Tax Reduction Scheme from cuts.**Reasons for protecting it:**

“Because of the serious impact on some of our most vulnerable families if it is removed.”

“Council tax is a big percentage of people's monthly expenditure and as residents we support our area in lots of different ways, so anything the council can do to support its residents has to be a good thing.”

“CTR is for the poorest and most vulnerable in society and needs protecting.”

“However the weekly amount of £3.80 will be very difficult for clients with no earned income and means tested benefits which will not increase for the next 4 years.”

“It is the most vulnerable that need the scheme and any change will affect them.”

“People can find themselves redundant at the employer's whim in an area with virtually no other employment. Council tax is already high and help is needed to pay this high charge.”

“People could be put into debt if the discount is reduced.”

“People on the scheme are already poor.”

“Protecting the current scheme means the poorest members of society have more to spend on essentials such as food, electricity and gas.”

“Recovery of the amount due will be costly. It is inevitable that these people who are likely to have very little spare income will default. For the sake of £200 per year, the costs and efforts to recover debt will be higher.”

“Small amounts of money are costly to collect.”

“The burden of many of the cuts that you have outlined seem to fall on the least able to pay (those with large families or the disabled). This is shameful and should be regarded as counter to the ethos of a District Council.”

“The CTRS is there to help individuals/families (working and non-working) to keep their finances afloat. To scrap it would mean that it would cost the Council more as they in some cases would need to resort to other publicly funded support, for example housing benefit, if it means losing their home.”

“The idea that £3.70 is somehow automatically affordable for everybody is a fallacy. I would agree that taking £3.70 from somebody's benefits when they have no other deductions ought to be acceptable, but what if they already have deductions from their Housing Benefit and from their income related benefits? The proposal to remove the 100% rate from the people who are, by definition, the very poorest in society is manifestly unfair.”

“There are more obvious savings to be made.”

“These people have no money and even £3.70 a week is a lot to them.”

“We need to protect the less well-off where possible.”

“We should do whatever we can to protect those in our community that cannot afford to pay.”

The council should bear the cost:

“Cuts should be made internally within the council's top bracket wages and on money wasted by council officials, before taking money from people on low incomes.”

“Cuts to benefits cause hardship to the vulnerable. This will compound cuts made by Central Government. Arun has an increased housing stock, therefore an increased council tax.”

“Seek savings from current council wastage of money elsewhere.”

Others should bear the cost:

“HMO and residential properties that use part of their premises for commercial purposes, inflicting higher social planning issues and vehicle parking issues, should be made to incur higher charges. People are fed up subsidising these types.”

“I cannot afford one penny more for rented accommodation. Owners should pay the Council Tax, not renters.”

CTRS should not be protected:

“Councils are struggling for money, and even if those on benefits have to pay £5 per year, that is still an increase in the council's income.”

“CTRS should not be protected from the cuts. Everyone needs to pay in regardless.”

“Happy with the small minimum weekly charge.”

“I believe everyone should pay something.”

“I can see no valid reason to protect this service over others, particularly when other households pay a full contribution and receive lesser service.”

“I do not agree with keeping the current scheme - everyone needs to share the problem and pay a bit more.”

“I think everyone should pay something so they are aware of the bill.”

“It should be changed, not protected.”

“Pension age CTR recipients are over protected from these proposed reductions. Where possible the council should look to correct this imbalance.”

“Should be fair and ensure that those who possibly "play the system" make a small contribution, whether it be those with two properties or those who currently do not pay anything.”

“The council must be fair to all payers and as such must make cuts where they can.”

“The small amount we are asking them to contribute is minimal and can be easily managed over the year in terms of repayment for the customer.”

“This would help towards providing services which are vital.”

Other comments:

“I am only using a small proportion of the services as I live by myself.”

“I feel the only reduction given should be for single residency occupancy.”

“It could be spread across all the normal households. It would be a small amount.”

“It needs to change fairly.”

“It should also reflect on those people who are working in holiday camps in the area, who are not on many hours of work from October to April of the following year.”

“It works.”

“It would be nice to protect it but not sure it can be afforded”

“More transparency and equity is needed.”

“Raising the Council Tax rate would be a fairer solution (my family would be happy to pay more towards preventing these cuts). How about looking into adding additional Council Tax bands?”

“There are plenty of people who are struggling to pay their council tax, both working age and those retired.”

“With the extra health appointments and associated public transport costs, I do not agree to the options penalising those with health problems claiming ESA in Work Related Group.”

B.2 What alternative would you propose to Option 1 – Require all working age applicants to pay at least £3.70 per week Council Tax?

Disagree:

“Everyone sharing the amount needed rather than just those who are in need of assistance through CTR.”

“Everyone sharing the increase does not make it fair as some are less able to pay than others.”

“Leave the scheme at 100% support.”

“Some people genuinely would not be able to afford the extra cost.”

“The full amount should be able to be claimed, especially if over 50 when employers won't look at you but you pension is a distant dream.”

“There are families who have no spare income at the moment, so will be pushed further into poverty.”

“Very low income households must be protected.”

To pay an amount – but lower than £3.70 per week:

“£2.50 per week.”

“A slightly less amount, for example £10 per month.”

The Council should bear the cost:

“Cut executive salaries.”

“Deduct the shortfall from the councillors' pension fund.”

“Reduce Arun's spending on consultants. In an internet age there is little need for local authorities to restamp health education and all the rest of the 'literature' that gets produced every year, rehased under an Arun banner.”

“Seek savings from council money wastage elsewhere.”

“The scheme stays the same and the councils meet the shortfall.”

“Without seeing exactly what the council wastes money on this is difficult. But perhaps reduce wage bill paid out by council to top bracket earners.”

Others should bear the cost:

“A Council Tax increase across the District made by every household to support those in need.”

“Asking all CT payers to increase the amount they pay.”

“Charge larger houses more - let the well-off help the less well-off.”

“Charging people who can afford it more.”

“For the cost to be spread out across all households in the Arun area, not just those in receipt of CTR.”

“HMO, flats and non-business rated property should pay a larger proportionate share.”

“I agree with some of the other proposals. Working age applicants are less able to contribute towards the increase as central government freezes on welfare benefits rates including applicable amounts in HB & CTR are effectively a reduction in income. Pension age applicants should contribute more.”

“Increase council tax for all, do not target the poor.”

“Increase Council Tax for the very richest, rather than increasing it for the very poorest. It is disingenuous to say that this option "is fair, everyone shares the increase" because (a) only people who are poor enough to get CTR will pay, and (b) only working age people will pay.”

“Increase council tax for those who can pay.”

“Increase Council Tax.”

“Keeping it as it is and considering an increase in Council tax to cover loss of central government funding.”

“Owners should pay not renters.”

“Raise council tax for others who can afford it.”

“Spread cost across all CT payers.”

“That the financial burden is borne by everyone including pensioners.”

Other comments:

“If the council would publish its criteria on how it assesses income and expenditure coupled with this proposal, I would be able to make a fully informed decision. As it stands, I have concerns that individuals with a high level of non-priority debts would be forced into dire financial status. Would the assessment of affordability be fair for those individuals?”

“Proportional payment based on household income.”

B.3 What alternative would you propose to Option 2 – Removing the Family Premium for all new working age applicants?

Agree:

“Families with children have more to spend already.”

Disagree:

“Do not remove it.”

“I don't know but when you work and have to find childcare costs for all year not just the 32 weeks you get, how would people with kids find the extra money?”

“I would be against this if it meant further administration on behalf of the Council to enforce. These changes affect poor households the worst.”

“Leave it as it is.”

“One of the other options. This would significantly impact low wage/part time working families.”

“Support for working families on a low income. Council tax based on income!”

“That houses with children should be given the family premium.”

“The reasoning is nothing more than yet another financial cut to the vulnerable and low paid. There is much more that Arun can do to cut their expenditure.”

“The removal of the Family Premium will already reduce the household income for families - you are proposing we increase the impact of that change. If you take money away from households with children, you will reduce the life prospects for the children.”

“This particular option I find unfair on families. Options 1, 3, and 4, could work at the same time.”

The Council should bear the cost:

“Again, the councils should meet any shortfall.”

“Seek savings from council money wastage elsewhere -- such as excessive use of consultants.”

Others should bear the cost:

“Again get the better off to help. Start telling the government that these cuts are not fair, we will all support and back you.”

“Charge people who can afford it more.”

“Increase council tax for all, do not target the poor.”

“Increase Council Tax.”

“Keeping it as it is and considering an increase in Council tax to cover loss of central government funding.”

“No-one has any spare money. Owners should pay not renters. Owners benefit from good services by charging more rent and increased property values with taxes paid by renters.”

“Raise council tax for the better off.”

“Raise Council Tax.”

Other comments:

“A Full and Fair declaration needs to be carried out.”

“Again, insufficient data has been provided. I fear this may make a lone parent who works, out of pocket.”

“Again, it needs to be looked at from a personal point of view. Housing benefit is way out of line compared to rent. As council housing is virtually non-existent, private rental figures should be taken into account.”

B.4 What alternative would you propose to Option 3 - Reducing backdating to one month?**Disagree:**

“Keep it as it is.”

“Keep limit to 3 months but only if there is a legitimate and reasonable excuse why claim was not submitted earlier.”

“Keep to 3 months.”

The Council should bear the cost:

“Seek savings from council money wastage elsewhere -- such as excessive use of consultants.”

Others should bear the cost:

“Again get the better off to help. Start telling the government that these cuts are not fair, we will all support and back you.”

“Consider an increase in Council tax to cover loss of central government funding.”

“Increase council tax for all, do not target the poor.”

“Increase Council Tax.”

Speed up the process:

“Making the whole system easier and better known about so that people can claim it more quickly and do not need it back dating.”

“Only if claims can be processed quickly.”

“The applications have taken so long to process in the past this creates hardships. Payments need to be granted from the day of application.”

“The speed and efficiency of HB claims is at an all time low. Your ability to claw back 'overpayment' far exceeds the claimants ability to back date any change in circumstances. Putting the onus on young inexperienced claimants is a disgraceful way of abdicating government assistance.”

Other comments:

“Yes I agree with this change but could there be an appeal for some circumstances e.g. hospitalisation? (over 1 month)”

B.5 What alternative would you propose to Option 4 - Reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks?

Agree:

“If they can afford a holiday they should pay.”

Disagree:

“Keep it as it is.”

“Keep the current arrangement. Why should the poor be penalised for a one off event?”

Other time period:

“A 3 months absence. It would not be unreasonable for a person to visit an overseas relative for more than a month, maybe paid for by the relative.”

“That the absent period be longer, about 6 weeks.”

Difficulty in administering/monitoring this:

“Ensure that they are in the UK.”

“How can you accomplish this without incurring more costs (officers' time checking, disputes etc). If this is a HB 'rule' it is also questionable as to how this can be accomplished also as a 'cost saving' exercise.”

“I cannot see how it will be established that they are absent without much cost.”

“I wonder also how this will be policed; will the onus be on the claimant to prove they were not out of the country for longer than 4 weeks?”

“There's no point if you can't monitor it...”

“Too difficult to administer.”

Others should bear the cost:

“Consider an increase in Council tax to cover loss of central government funding.”

Other comments:

“Leave the situation as it is, if they are not in the country they are not using services. If they have rented their property, tax is being paid.”

“This is effectively a right wing, racist policy. It is purely made to impact on people from other countries or poor people who "we" deem are undeserving of long term holidays. The alternative is to

fund it for 4 weeks each time and any continued absence where they are not resident it should then be cancelled.”

B.6 What alternative would you propose to Option 5 - To remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of the current scheme for new Employment and Support Allowance applicants?

Disagree:

“Keep it as it is.”

“Not that.”

“This is unfair on disabled people.”

The Council should bear the cost:

“Pay a proper full benefit to those in need, cut excess council expenditure such as the chief executive's wages and stop penalising the poor!”

“Seek savings from council money wastage elsewhere -- such as excessive use of consultants.”

Others should bear the cost:

“Again get the better off to help. Start telling the government that these cuts are not fair, we will all support and back you.”

“Consider an increase in Council tax to cover loss of central government funding.”

“Increase Council Tax.”

“Raise council tax.”

“Stop penalising disabled people and charge people who can afford to pay.”

Other comments:

“Options 1, 3, and 4, could work at the same time.”

“Your statement "will not experience any decrease in 'council tax reduction' due to this change" is different from your consultation document which says "will not experience any decrease in 'council tax' due to this change" - so which is correct?”

B.7 What alternative would you propose to Option 6 - To limit the number of dependent children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two?

Disagree:

“I would be against this if it meant further administration on behalf of the Council to enforce. These changes affect poor households the worst.”

“Leave as is.”

“Ridiculous! This would push poorer families deeper into poverty. In line with the government's most ill thought out policy, but surely unethical and immoral. Other options are more suitable.”

“This is going to kill split families and CMS.”

“This will increase child poverty. Arun already has areas of nationally high child poverty. This does nothing to alleviate an already acknowledged situation. In fact local government is going to pay dearly for central government's penny pinching.”

“Will increase child poverty and is not likely to be a factor in family planning, if indeed any takes place.”

Other limit/formula:

“A formula involving numbers in the house ÷ income. Old people can be added to a family too.”

“A reduction per child but with a cap on the total amount any household is able to claim.”

“I think 3 kids is fairer than 2.”

“If people have 4 kids. Not just 2.”

“That the limit be increased to 3 children in the calculation.”

The Council should bear the cost:

“Seek savings from council money wastage elsewhere -- such as excessive use of consultants.”

Others should bear the cost:

“Increase Council Tax for everybody. The idea of punishing people for having children is absurd. When you take money away from a household with children, it is the children whose standard of living is hardest hit, and with it, their life chances.”

“Increase Council Tax.”

“Increase the charges for second and empty homes in the district.”

“Keeping it as it is and considering an increase in Council tax to cover loss of central government funding.”

“Owners should pay Council tax increases not our poorest residents.”

“Raise Council Tax.”

“The previous options are ask all payers to increase.”

Other comments:

“Government should not interfere with family rights to have children.”

“Options 1, 3, and 4, could work at the same time.”

B.8 What alternative would you propose to Option 7 – To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers Element) to look after them?

Disagree:

“Do not target the disabled.”

“Give them the full benefit of relief.”

“Keep it as it is.”

“Leave it as is.”

“Leaving disabled people alone.”

“None, carers and people with severe disabilities should be exempt from any cuts.”

“Unfair on disabled people.”

Others should bear the cost:

“Consider an increase in Council tax to cover loss of central government funding.”

Other comments:

“Options 1, 3, and 4, could work at the same time.”

“Paying the carers a decent wage for their hours of work.”

B.9 Please use this space to make any other comments on the scheme:**Positive comments:**

“Council tax takes ten per cent of our income, it's only fair that everyone pays something so we don't have to have more increases.”

“I agree with all the proposals, they seem very sensible and bring in local council policy in line with government policy.”

“I think that all households should pay towards council tax. I would like to see everyone paying at least 50%, regardless of benefits received.”

“Looks good, some sensible suggestions.”

“Need to amend the current scheme as suggested to reflect financial reality and make it fairer.”

“Seeing as those on a low income can afford the full SKY package, the latest smartphones, nice cars, tattoos and to go out drinking they can pay £3.70.”

Negative comments (support for retaining CTRS for working age applicants):

“50% discount for single occupancy, NOT 25% which is unjust.”

“Affordability is an issue.”

“Aligning benefits is nonsense as the criteria of any benefit is judged on 'personal circumstances'.”

“All of my household are in full time employment and claim no benefits, and yet I still feel those who are already living in poverty should not be targeted.”

“As much as I agree that the changes are required I do feel that it is unfair that the people who are most affected are the ones trying to work. It seems to me that the main people that should be targeted are the people we need to encourage to get back to work and by reducing their 'free ride' might spur them in the right direction.”

“Council Tax has been artificially depressed for several years for some reason. If we are having difficulties now then it is a direct result of that profligacy. It is really not fair that the people who can afford it have effectively been given a discount for those years, and we are now talking about asking the people who can't afford it to pay for that discount.”

“I am appalled that you are considering penalising the poorest members of the community but not increasing Council Tax. What about revaluing all the properties at the same time?”

“I do not think it would be fair to increase council tax or reduce services in other areas, when this option is available.”

“I feel that those who are on ESA and JSA should still not have to pay council tax. The burden should be spread across all paying householders.”

“I have had to take advantage of full council tax benefit in the past due to my circumstances, and because my housing benefit never came anywhere near to covering my rent, the fact that I didn't have to worry about council tax as well meant that I managed to stay clear of any debts.”

“If you squeeze the poor too much, they end up with nothing to live for, then they rebel or commit suicide!”

“Punishing the less well-off to is never acceptable.”

“Rethink as the people in dire need will be worse off.”

“The Councillors have made the decision not to raise our Council Tax for a number of years, presumably for political reasons. Residents of Arun are used to gradual increases in the cost of living and I would not have objected to increases each year. I do object to punishing poor residents now that circumstances relating to funding have changed. The other benefit changes referenced are all about making work pay. There are fewer opportunities for work in the Arun district than in other areas of the country and I do not think we should replicate the government's policy changes here.”

“There are other fairer ways to raise council tax.”

“This is not a cost effective measure as in the long term it would cost the Council more in supporting those affected by it.”

Should not be just aimed at working age claimants:

“I do not think this should solely be targeted to working age claimants. Many claimants who do not come under this category have more money each month than people who actually work, so why can't we ask them to pay!!”

“Perhaps pensioners should pay a portion also and the Government should review this.”

Other comments:

“Any changes should be individually communicated to current claimants so they can plan/budget for April 17 onwards. We are eligible but didn't know about the proposals or this consultation.”

“How has this consultation been publicised? Only found out by accident.”

“It would depend on what other areas of the council spending would be cut to fund the council tax as to whether I would agree with it or not.”

“Put up Council Tax, everything is getting more expensive, people should expect to pay more. Stop cutting services, we're just digging a hole for ourselves.”

“See how much savings can be made by bringing it into line with Housing Benefit.”

“Seek savings from council money wastage elsewhere -- such as excessive use of consultants.”

“Stop fraud. Campaign against it. Stop illegal HMO and residential properties waiving paying business rates. Multiple vehicles and waste households should pay more.”

“The Council should petition DCLG that pensioners cannot be touched. This is purely done for votes.”

“The level of Council tax for those not claiming reductions should be as low as possible.”

“Universal council tax increases or reduction in services for people already paying a full contribution to fund any shortfall in the CTR scheme should be considered completely unacceptable.”

B.10 Please use the space below if you would like the Council to consider any other options:

The Council should bear the cost:

“Bring ADC HR policies in line with WSCC - if staff used their own leave over the Christmas holiday (between Christmas Day and New Year's Day), more staff will be in during normal working time, meaning that you may not need to employ further staff, saving salary costs!”

“Council should consider joint working with other District councils where this might reduce costs of staffing or office associated costs - rents, heating, lighting etc.”

“Cut the pay of top councillors, relocate all Arun offices into one.”

“Cut the wages of those at the top, cut the useless posts, the diversity officers etc and save money that way. Reduce expenses claimed on jollies and ' meetings'.”

“Income generation.”

“You have wasted £millions on stupid redevelopment schemes, consultants etc, plus getting into areas councils shouldn't be in. Make big cuts in all that.”

Others should bear the cost:

“A small yearly increase to all households would be more appropriate, with an element of empowerment to those on benefit income. Perhaps a token payment of £1 per week would be more affordable. It would also mean that a debt will remain small if this occurs.”

“Charge buy to let owners of properties not renters. Charge vacant and second homes a penalty rate. Tax wealth not poverty.”

“Charge people who can afford to pay and stop penalising people for being old / disabled which they cannot help.”

“Consider a referendum to raise the Council Tax, or be able to take voluntary contributions towards Council work.”

“Increase charges for second and empty homes. Lobby government to create council tax bands greater in value than H.”

“Increase the Council Tax for all.”

“Perhaps council tax could be raised at the rate of around 5% of net household income?”

“Put up the council tax and stop penalising the poor and disadvantaged for Conservative austerity cuts.”

“We should be lobbying the government to increase the Council Tax valuation bands so that the upper limit is increased. It seems unfair in a system based on property values that the maximum band is so low - meaning that there is no differentiation between the wealthy and the super-rich.”

“Yes, target all claimants, not just the ones trying to work for a living!”

Other comments:

“1. Not award any CTR if less than £5.00 weekly. Remove 2nd adult rebate . Any claimant/ partner /child in receipt of DLA care PIP care and ESA support component should be excluded from the £3.70 restriction as well as pensioners”

“Campaign for more funding from central government to cover essential services.”

“Instead of wasting time with collection through the bailiffs, the council should focus on accessing the earnings to get Council Tax liabilities paid, when these are missed.”

“Make those out of work volunteer to cover cost their council tax, by carrying out work related activity to benefit the district.”

“More checks if people are single occupants.”

“Usually most households pay over 10 months (I believe from memory). Why not ask for smaller contributions over those remaining 2 months?”

“What % of the increased households within Arun (ie extra council tax) has been spent increasing services? Exactly what 'shortfall' can there be?”

“What options are other Councils in the UK looking at?”

B.11 If you have any further comments or questions to make regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme that you haven't had opportunity to raise elsewhere please use the space below:

Broadly agree with proposals:

“Everyone should pay something towards their council tax.”

“I am in no doubt that people who are receiving CTR, use more council services than the likes people who are working and paying full council tax. Also, people on benefits, especially if they have children or a disability, receive more money than the likes of myself, on minimum wage, I'm fed up with it, like many others I'm sure.”

“It is about time this change is made, to make the burden fairer for all.”

“Make all claimants pay!!!!”

“Why should ordinary working people who don't get any reductions have the council tax increased to make up for the loss of council tax from people who claim benefits? Should apply to everyone to make a contribution.”

Disagree:

“Leave poor people alone - they have it tough enough as it is.”

The Council should bear the cost:

“Do not use council tax to pay pensions, those of us in private employment do not have taxpayers paying huge amounts into our pension pots.”

“Perhaps we should stop making town centres pretty at great expense. Stop spending hundreds of thousands of pounds on consultants when we employ so called experts in their field at great expense. Perhaps after over 20 years of being asked, told and financially motivated to reduce costs, ADC SHOULD start cutting them.”

Others should bear the cost:

“Savings should not come from raising Council Tax, this is unfair on everyone in the district who work hard but still don't have a lot of money. So many people earn 'too much' to claim any kind of benefit, but still are on the breadline. Raising their costs is unfair when so many benefit claimants get loads already. The saving should come from them.”

“Still believe it is a small amount that could be recouped from current CT payers.”

Include pensioners:

“It's a shame pensioners cannot be affected by changes.”

“Pension age applicants get a far better deal than working age ones. Change the scheme to amend this, or if you can't then lobby central government about it.”

Other comments:

“As a single/widowed parent of a child travelling who is therefore unable to provide an address I have had to argue with the Council about getting my single person's reduction. I think this is discriminatory against single parents whose adult children go travelling as they are encouraged to do to broaden their horizons and therefore do not have a specific address to go to.”

“Difficult to consider these changes in isolation to the overall scheme. No changes are said to be planned for those of 'pension age' but what is 'pension age'? It varies! Also if one isn't of pension age how does one know that that aspect remains fair and balanced with the new proposals?”

“I agree with most of the changes but I think the disabled should be left alone, they have enough to deal with and so do there carers.”

“There is no mention in this consultation about the cost of trying to recover £3.70 per week from the very poorest in society.”

“Think about the administrative, recovery and legal costs of this scheme. This would mean leaving the CTR largely as is, would be cheaper.”

“Where there is a possibility of beneficiaries of CTR that are able to work, the option of doing community work could be offered along or instead of payment.”

“Why do you not have any fraud investigators who can properly deal with CTRS fraud and SPD fraud? Real investigators are required.”

“Will it affect the 25% discount for single occupancy?”

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of activity:	Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Date Completed:	October 2016
Department responsible for activity:	Revenues and Benefits	Lead Officer:	Sue Priest
Existing Activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	New / Proposed Activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Changing / Updated Activity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

What are the aims / main purposes of the activity?

The Council proposes to amend the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme from April 2017.

The scheme continues to provide financial assistance to council taxpayers who have low incomes.

However the Council needs to make savings in order to balance its budget due to large reductions in government grant and changing funding regimes. The Council's budget cannot cover a further shortfall in government funding without using reserves, increasing the council tax or reducing services.

The Council has consulted on a range of options. Changes to the CTR scheme form part of the Council's overall strategy in balancing the budget.

Persons who are of state pension age (currently a minimum 60 years or greater) are protected under the scheme in that the calculation of the support they are to receive has been set by Central Government.

For working age applicants however the support they receive is to be determined by the local authority.

This equality impact assessment looks at the options being considered by the Council.

The proposals for 2017/18 are to:

- Require all working age applicants to pay an extra £3.70 per week council tax (Option 1)
- Removing the Family Premium for all new working age applicants to bring the CTR scheme in line with housing benefit (Option 2)
- Reducing backdating to one month from date of application (Option 3)

- Reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive CTR to four weeks (Option 4)
- To remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of the current scheme for new ESA applicants (Option5)
- To limit the number of dependent children within the calculation for CTR to a maximum of two (Option 6)
- Remove the entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (carers element) to look after them (Option 7)

These changes will apply from 1st April 2017.

Central Government has not been prescriptive in how an authority should protect vulnerable groups, but points to the Council's existing responsibilities including the Child Poverty Act 2010, the Disabled Person Act 1986 and the Housing Act 1996 as well as the public sector equality duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

The Council will continue to protect and enhance the support received by all persons in receipt of war pensions and war disablement pensions.

What are the main actions and processes involved?

The operation of the scheme, notwithstanding the changes outlined above, will involve identical processes and procedures as currently in place. All persons within the Council's area who have a low income may apply for support and assistance with their Council Tax.

The proposed changes to the existing CTR scheme fits with the Corporate objectives in that it meets, as far as possible, equality and sustainability.

The reduction scheme will still assist the local economy and also ensure, as far as possible within the constraints on a reduced budget, that persons on a low income will be able to meet their Council Tax liability.

Who is intended to benefit & who are the main stakeholders?

The main beneficiaries of the scheme are both pension age and working age applicants who have a low income and who are liable to pay Council Tax to the District Council.

The main outcomes for each stakeholder group are as follows;

Pension Age Applicants

- That all pensioners receive the level of support required by regulations set by Central Government (Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations 2012);

- That all pensioner applicants or existing working age applicants who rise to pension age are able to receive CTR in line with the regulations; and
- That all pensioner applicants continue to receive the correct level of support at all times.

Working Age Applicants

- That all working age applicants are still able to receive CTR but they would be assessed under the new rules; and
- That all working age applicants continue to receive the correct level of reduction at all times.

Have you already consulted on / researched the activity?

Evidence for this assessment has been gathered from the following sources;

- Computer modeling based on the current Council Tax Benefit caseload;
- Consultation with the major precepting authority; and
- Consultation with the public.

A full consultation with the public has been undertaken as required by the legislation (Local Government Finance Act 2012). Whilst pension age applicants are protected, the authority still, as part of the consultation process, looked to pension age applicants and pensioners generally to respond to the consultation itself.

In respect of working age applicants, it was essential to consult with the group as they will be directly affected by any changes decided by the Council.

The consultation process was comprehensive and encouraged a full response to the proposed changes to the scheme.

Interest groups were also directly consulted as part of the process.

Public consultation took place during the period 25/07/2016 until 16/10/2016.

The consultation took regard of the **158** responses.

Impact on people with a protected characteristic (What is the potential impact of the activity? Are the impacts high, medium or low?)		
Protected characteristics / groups	Is there an impact (Yes / No)	If Yes, what is it and identify whether it is positive or negative
Age (older / younger people, children)	Yes	<p><u>Negative</u></p> <p>The proposed changes will impact negatively on working age CTR claimants, as all working age applicants will have to pay more.</p> <p>Option 1 which proposes an extra £3.70 charge for all working age applicants is seen as fair as all share the increase.</p> <p>Families and also those with more than 2 children will experience a higher negative impact with families losing up to £3.49 per week more and those with more than 2 children losing a further £13.38 for the third and subsequent children. (Options 2 and 6).</p> <p>The proposed change to the temporary absence rules (Option 4) will have a negative impact on those who wish to travel outside Great Britain; however, this can be mitigated by claimants taking trips of shorter duration of factoring in the cost of the additional council tax to their trip. There will be exceptions in place to help mitigate the effect where the trip is unavoidable, for example for armed forces personnel, those undergoing medical treatment and those fleeing domestic violence.</p> <p>Within the scope of the scheme there is a Council Tax Discretionary policy to enable us to consider cases of exceptional hardship which will help mitigate negative impacts.</p> <p>Pensioners will not see any reduction in the support paid</p>
Disability (people with physical / sensory impairment or mental disability)	Yes	<p><u>Neutral</u></p> <p>The proposed changes regarding ESA AND SDA (Options 5 and 7) are technical changes that will not result in a reduction of CTR award. The CTR scheme continues to have in-built protections for</p>

		<p>disability in the form of;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the award of additional premiums for disablement; disregarding higher levels of income where an applicant is in remunerative work and is disabled; and <p>there is still no requirement to have non dependant deductions where an applicant is disabled.</p>
Gender reassignment (the process of transitioning from one gender to another.)	No	The reduction scheme changes have no affect on the support received by persons who have undergone gender reassignment
Marriage & civil partnership (Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Civil partnerships are legally recognized for same-sex couples)	No	The reduction scheme changes have no affect on the support received by persons who are married or in a civil partnership.
Pregnancy & maternity (Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant & maternity refers to the period after the birth)	No	The reduction scheme changes have no affect on the support received by persons who are pregnant or on maternity
Race (ethnicity, colour, nationality or national origins & including gypsies, travellers, refugees & asylum seekers)	No	The reduction scheme changes have no affect on the support received by persons due to their race or ethnicity
Religion & belief (religious faith or other group with a recognised belief system)	No	The reduction scheme changes have no affect on the support received by persons due to their religion or belief system
Sex (male / female)	No	The reduction scheme changes have no affect on the support received by persons due to their gender.
Sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual)	No	The reduction scheme changes have no affect on the support received by persons, irrespective of their sexual orientation.
Whilst Socio economic disadvantage that people may face is not a	Yes	Council Tax Support is a means tested scheme available to households on low incomes. Therefore all recipients would be considered to be at a socio-economic disadvantage, however

protected characteristic; the potential impact on this group should be also considered		within the scope of the scheme there is a Council Tax Discretionary policy to enable us to consider cases of hardship which will help mitigate negative impacts.
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What evidence has been used to assess the likely impacts?
Evidence has been gathered from the following sources; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer modelling; • Consultation with the major precepting authority; • Consultation with the public; and • Consultation with interested parties

Decision following initial assessment			
Continue with existing or introduce new / planned activity	Yes	Amend activity based on identified actions	Yes

Action Plan			
Impact identified	Action required	Lead Officer	Deadline
Option 1 Negative impact to all working claimants	Proceed with proposed changes to the reduction scheme. Ensure all working age applicants are informed of proposed changes prior to receiving a bill. Offer a range of payment plans and ability to spread payments over the whole year.	Sue Priest	1/4/2017
Options 2, 3,4,5 and 7 None or minimal	Proceed with proposed changes to the reduction scheme	Sue Priest	1/4/2017

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APPENDIX 3 to ITEM 5

Appendix 3

Option 6	Recommend that this change is deferred to allow the impact of option 1 to be assessed. If introduced identify the families affected and take early action to prevent arrears	Sue Priest	1/4/2017
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Monitoring & Review

Date of last review or Impact Assessment:	Not Applicable
Date of next 12 month review:	24 October 2017
Date of next 3 year Impact Assessment (from the date of this EIA):	24 October 2019

Date EIA completed:	24 October 2016
Signed by Person Completing:	

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6ARUN DISTRICT COUNCILOVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE
18 NOVEMBER 2016

Recommendation Paper

Subject : Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester

Report by : Robin Wickham
Leisure and Voluntary Sector Manager

Report date: October 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper introduces the work of Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester (VAAC). A representative from VAAC will deliver a presentation on the health of the local voluntary and community sector.

Members are asked to consider the benefits that VAAC provide to our Voluntary and Community Sector to help inform the recommendations for a report to Cabinet in December 2016.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- i. note this report; and
- ii. consider recommending to Cabinet one of the following options:
 - a) to continue funding at the current level; or
 - b) to reduce the funding by 20% in line with West Sussex County Council; or
 - c) to reduce funding by an alternative sum

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The voluntary and community sector is made up of a large and diverse range of organisations. Arun District Council recognises the importance of a vibrant and successful voluntary and community sector and provides support to ensure that the

organisational and development needs of the sector are met. This is achieved by commissioning a local voluntary and community sector support and development service.

- 1.2 The service in Arun is provided by Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester (VAAC), a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. Hilary Spencer, Chief Executive of VAAC will attend the meeting to present a report on the health of sector entitled 'Flourishing or Floundering' (see link in background papers) and inform members as to how VAAC is responding to the challenges, including cuts to its own funding.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 VAAC was formed in April 2012 following a merger of the voluntary and community service (VCS) organisations that served the districts of Arun and Chichester. This resulted in a period of reorganisation to streamline the service.
- 2.2 In September 2013 Cabinet agreed to a joint commissioning exercise with Chichester District Council for a Local Voluntary and Community Sector Support and Development Service. As the incumbent service provider VAAC had developed a unique, specialised service and it was engaged under a new service level agreement for two years (2014/15, 2015/16) and up to three further years subject to the availability of funding. This aligned both District Councils funding with the other funding partner West Sussex County Council.
- 2.3 The service level agreement incorporates a specification for the delivery of Voluntary and Community Services (Appendix 1). This specification is mirrored by both District Councils and this assists all parties in the in the measurement of performance. VAAC presents an annual review to the funding partners in addition to quarterly Board meetings which are attended by an appointed Member.

3.0 SERVICES PROVIDED BY VAAC

- 3.1 The core activities provided by VAAC are to assist the third sector with support, development, liaison, representation and strategic partnership work. These are summarised in VAAC's strategic business objectives:

a) Ensure vibrant and sustainable voluntary and community organisations

- to assist in the development of locally led voluntary and community organisations
- to ensure that voluntary and community organisations have the advice and the support that they need to run a high quality organisation
- to better equip voluntary and community organisations, in a challenging economic environment, to access funding and income generating opportunities
- to develop new services meeting the needs of local people

b) Community engagement and action

- to broaden and expand the pool of volunteers from which local voluntary and community organisations can draw
- to encourage and enable voluntary and community organisations to make the most of volunteer activity

c) Networking, representation and promotion

- to ensure that strategic partners understand the needs and unique contribution of the local voluntary and community sector and take them in to account in decision making
- to support local voluntary organisations to work collaboratively to meet the needs of local residents
- to work with all sectors to promote, action and uphold the principles of the West Sussex Compact

d) Maximise the potential of organisations within the context of the current economic environment and VAAC investment of reserves

- to ensure that VAAC develops its profile as an organisation and to fulfil the requirements of existing and potential funders
- for VAAC to be financially viable and accountable for its use of public, private and other funding
- for VAAC to be engaged with and accountable for its member organisations and stakeholders in the development and delivery of its services
- for VAAC to be an effective and equitable employer

3.2 VAAC also provides senior level support for strategic partnership work which includes:

- Arun Wellbeing & Health Partnership (Chair)
- Safer Arun Partnership / Joint Arun Chichester Community Safety Partnership – promoting Voluntary sector engagement and support for the priorities
- Arun Think Family Neighbourhood Steering Group
- West Sussex Social Enterprise Network
- Coastal West Sussex CCG Patient Engagement Committee
- Administration and delivery of Arun Housing /Homeless Forum which acts as reference group for Arun’s Homeless Strategy

3.3 Arun District Council has also benefitted from the support VAAC provides in the following areas:

- Economic Regeneration – bid writing (paid service)
- The delivery of Connecting Communities team and services (supporting Think Family in Arun plus frontline services including reception staff, Revenues & Benefits and Housing) – **now withdrawn**
- Fund Raising Network (monthly), Funding Focus bulletin (monthly), Volunteer Coordinators Network.(3 sessions a year)), Volunteer Now! service, Neighbourhood Network events.

3.4 To ensure the quality of the services provided, VAAC has achieved the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO), a recognised performance evaluation system and quality mark for charitable organisations.

4.0 THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

4.1 In 2016 VAAC has undertaken a survey of its members to consider the state of the Sector. The findings of this survey are available in the report 'Flourishing or Floundering'. The key findings of the report are that the sector is relatively buoyant, but organisations are struggling to recruit trustees and that core funding remains a challenge.

5.0 FINANCIAL POSITION

5.1 Arun District Council contributes £60,950 per annum as core funding for this service. In addition, West Sussex County Council provides a funding contribution to Arun District Council to commission the service. West Sussex County Council has recently restructured its funding and the sum has fallen from £48,788 in 2015/16 to £44,722 in the current year and will be £39,030 in 2017/18. This is a reduction of 20% over the period.

5.2 Arun's Cabinet approval in 2013 (C/038/160913) set the funding term for a period up to 31 March 2019, subject to satisfactory reviews and the availability of WSCC and Arun District Council funding. In the short term VAAC has reported that it can maintain the current level of service despite the reduction in funding from WSCC, but this will deplete its reserves.

5.3 VAAC is looking to new sources of funding and more project work. However, some project work has already succumbed to funding cuts. The much valued Connecting Communities Team was disbanded last year when partnership funding was reduced or withdrawn.

5.4 In the meantime, West Sussex County Council has drafted a commissioning and funding agreement which will be for a period of two years (2016/17, 2017/18) with annual extensions for up to three additional years (to 2020/21). At the current time, West Sussex County Council is unable to confirm the level of funding that will be available for the annual extensions.

5.5 A recommendation will be made to Cabinet in December 2016 in regard to entering in to the agreement with WSCC to commission a Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure service. This will include the associated funding provided by Arun District Council.

6.0 OPTIONS

- 6.1 In line with the Council's adopted 2020 Vision, Members of this Committee may wish to consider recommending to Cabinet a change in the funding for the voluntary and community sector support service.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 VAAC has a proven record of providing voluntary and community sector support in Arun. The relationship that officers of the Council have with VAAC is good and both parties are working together to improve both the range of services and the means of delivery to the community. Members are asked to consider the benefits that VAAC provide to our Voluntary and Community Sector to help inform the recommendations to Cabinet in December 2016.

Background Papers: Report and decision of Cabinet: [C/038/160913 – September 2013 VAAC Annual Report 2014 -15](#)
[Flourishing or Floundering Report](#) (VAAC document)

Contact: Robin Wickham (ext. 37835)
Leisure & Voluntary Sector Manager

Appendix 1: Specification for the Delivery of Voluntary and Community Services in Arun District

1. Introduction and Overview

Arun District Council recognises the value to all the community of a vibrant and successful voluntary sector. The Council recognises that the voluntary sector is composed of a large number of organisations, who are providing important services and are committed to ensuring that the servicing of the organisational and development needs of the local voluntary sector is adequately resourced. In particular they recognise their needs in relation to:

- Development and capacity building
- Recruitment of, and support for, volunteers
- Training and development of staff and volunteers
- Finding funding, increasing their sustainability and diversification of income
- Management, leadership and strategic planning
- Communications and the provision of Information
- Advocacy and advice

2. Aims and Objectives of the Specification

The Council expects that the provider will subscribe to the aims of the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA), delivering the standard core service functions to organisations that include:

1. Support
2. Development
3. Liaison
4. Representation
5. Strategic Partnership Work

2.1 The specification aims to:

- Provide effective management, leadership and strategic planning for the community and voluntary sector
- Offer an outreach service that maximises the skills and capacities, commitment and experience of community organisations in the District
- Ensure the provision of quality information and advice for local organisations and where appropriate an ability to advocate on their behalf
- Ensure that members and non-members are regularly consulted with to identify their training needs, and provides quality training that matches those needs
- Achieves an increase in volunteering in the district by developing placement opportunities, recruiting volunteers and ensuring good volunteering practices

3. Service Specification

3.1 Advice and Enablement

To provide support, training and advice to member and non-member groups and organisations that have the potential to succeed and grow. To strengthen voluntary and community representation in the district and to promote other formal and informal relationships:

Outcome	Minimum requirements	Performance measure
Recruit new, start up and established groups and organisations as members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of non-members and underrepresented areas ▪ Marketing strategy developed to increase the number of members ▪ Feedback sought from members and non-members and levels of satisfaction recorded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The number of initiatives b) The number of new members c) Membership by borough
Deliver 1:1 support to organisations in line with their action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver a programme of 1:1 outreach support as part of each action plan, for members and non-members including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Business development and planning advice ○ Access to financial advice ○ Personal development and mentoring ▪ Monitor and review the planning and delivery of 1:1 support by requesting feedback ▪ Provide one-off ad hoc support for members and non-members in response to immediate needs and maintain records of one-off support provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) The number of organisations supported e) The number of positive outcomes f) The number of types of support g) The number of hours of support
Increase the amount of support offered to voluntary organisations and groups in the District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tailored events/courses to meet relevant local requirements ▪ Provision of networking and partnership opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> h) The range of types of support i) The number of hours of support j) Positive testimonials
Ensure diversity of members and target membership from underrepresented groups/area/locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring and evaluation of members in terms of size of organisation and area of delivery to ensure membership reflects the voluntary, community and faith sectors in the District 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> k) The number of sectors represented l) The number of members from underrepresented areas

3.2 Information and Communication

To provide better mechanisms for user involvement in planning services and improved awareness to policy makers of gaps in services:

Outcome	Minimum requirements	Performance measure
To support and promote the growth of the wider community sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To facilitate community forums and networks and to encourage partnerships and co-operation within the sector ▪ To stimulate community involvement and activity ▪ Providing focused support to start up, existing and established groups and organisations 	a) Providing feedback (number or example) b) Providing regular (through e-bulletin) c) The types of support d) The number of hours
The maintenance of database of local organisations and groups and the services they provide within the District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creation and maintenance of database of members and non-members ▪ Development of a directory of local organisations with clear categories of each organisation/service to be used as a key resource for the sector, which is regularly reviewed and maintained ▪ Record of support and type of support given is recorded for members and non-members 	e) The types of support f) The number of hours g) Database created (and refreshment)
To support other community sector organisations and operate as a platform for community activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain an up to date list of key strategic partnerships boards and sub-groups and ensure these are attended ▪ Increase communication and working with other CVS' within West Sussex 	h) Providing feedback (number or example) i) Providing regular (information and feedback) and newsletters
Develop representation of the sector at key strategic partnership boards and sub-groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify opportunities to build relationships with additional strategic bodies to ensure broad representation of the sector, e.g Jobcentre Plus, National Charities and Housing associations 	j) The number of new

3.3 Training

To provide, broker and signpost appropriate training and development opportunities to member and non-member organisations:

Outcome	Minimum requirements	Performance measure
To increase skills, knowledge and qualifications within the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tailored events/courses to meet relevant local requirements ▪ Provision of quality training opportunities delivered 	a) The number of trainees b) The level of attendance
To measure the impact of training on organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consult with attendees to measure what has been learned and the impact on them/ their organisation 	c) Analysis of feedback d) Distance travelled

3.4 Volunteering

To coordinate volunteering opportunities matching opportunities with those looking to volunteer:

Outcomes	Minimum requirements	Performance measure
Volunteering opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunities advertised 	a) The number of volunteers

¹ The progress made as a result of attending the training/activity by the individual or organisation

are increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help and support for volunteers to find/access opportunities ▪ Support to organisations with opportunities to fill them 	<p>available</p> <p>b) The number of volu</p> <p>c) Increase each year c</p> <p>d) Estimated value (m</p> <p>quarter</p>
The profile of volunteering is raised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote volunteering and its benefits to organisations and groups ▪ Ensure a regular outreach presence available ▪ Link to local education providers to promote and encourage volunteering for students and pupils ▪ The development of pathways for potential volunteers into employment and/or training 	<p>e) The number of volu</p> <p>year</p> <p>f) The number of volu</p> <p>delivered per year</p>

3.5 Financial Matters

To provide organisations with advice and support on financial management, procedures and increasing their financial sustainability, by providing support and advice on good governance, business planning and fundraising:

Outcome	Minimum requirements	Performance measure
Providing organisations with access to training and guidance so that they can demonstrate improved financial systems and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivery of one to one support and advice ▪ Sharing of knowledge and best practice ▪ Training delivered and attended 	a) The number of hours b) The number of training sessions/briefings/
Providing advice and support on fundraising and resources that will support organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proactively identifying funding opportunities and matching them to individual organisations and encouraging partnerships and consortia as appropriate 	c) The value of increased funding secured as packages of support
Development of stronger business links to encourage potential joint working, sponsorship of community initiatives and local projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence of support to develop innovation on external funding, looking at new commissioning models and Social investment 	d) The value of increased funding secured as packages of support
Promotion of utilising resources and sharing of resources in particular sharing of back office functions and expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence of supported organisations making more efficient use of available local resources and partnership working to include ways of adopting ways of sharing resources 	e) The number of hours f) The number of training sessions/briefings/

3.6 The Compact

To play an active part in the development and operation of local working agreements in particular the promotion and awareness raising of the West Sussex Compact:

Outcome	Minimum requirements	Performance measure
Local groups and organisations benefit from working agreements and protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in membership of the Compact ▪ Members and non-members understand the purpose of the Compact and its anticipated benefits 	a) The number of org Compact b) The number of aw sessions/campaigr

3.7 Quality and Good practice

To develop, implement, and evidence good practice models on a range of issues including equalities, quality assurance and service models and business practices which could be promoted and shared across the sector:

Outcome	Minimum requirements	Performance measure
Organisations are supported to evaluate and measure their work through relevant Quality Assurance systems and outcome models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence of support given to organisations to demonstrate they have an improved ability to assess, monitor and evaluate their work to demonstrate the difference they are making 	a) The number of aw sessions/campaigr b) The number of org

3.8 Additional Services to Arun District Council

In addition to the above, Arun District Council requires the service provider to:

Outcome	Minimum requirements	Performance measure
Under-resourced and isolated groups are helped to start, develop and thrive – particularly groups which previously looked for funding from Arun District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence of support given to organisations to demonstrate they have an improved ability to access funding and opportunities to develop 	a) The number of un groups identified b) The number of grc funding achieved
Representation for the Voluntary and Community Sector in key local partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attendance at key meetings ▪ Representing the views of the Voluntary and Community Sector in consultation documents 	a) The number of me b) Examples of positi
A successful community learning centre at Bersted Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence that the Centre is being advertised and used for training, workshops and/or office space 	a) Number of activiti service provider b) Number of bookin external groups ar

4. Performance Measures and Monitoring

Quarterly meetings with contract representatives will be held and the production of Quarterly reports on progress towards outcomes and monitoring data submitted one week in advance of scheduled

meetings. At each Quarterly meeting, contract representatives will provide X case studies (group, organisation or illustrate good practice/innovative work). An end of year report to be submitted annually including progress to targets.

5. Contract Period and Payment Terms

The contract shall be for an initial period of two years commencing on 1st April 2014 with the option for Arun District Council, to extend the contract period for an additional period or periods subject to annual reviews and to the availability of funding.

6. Quality Assurance

There is an expectation that the provider will be working towards a Quality Assurance framework such as PQASSO² or the Matrix quality standard³ and within an equal opportunities and safeguarding framework.

Effective monitoring of the nature and quality of services will be provided by keeping electronic and where appropriate paper records of work undertaken. Consultation with service users including feedback surveys/evaluations from members and non-members, partners and stakeholders will be undertaken to measure effectiveness and impact.

The provider will ensure a quality approach to its delivery, operation and service provision to include:

- Health and Safety. Will comply at all times with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and will consult with staff and volunteers to provide a safe working environment and systems, with regard to the needs of people with disabilities. Will ensure that any vehicles used to convey passengers satisfy legal safety standards.
- Data Protection. Co-operation with the Council's Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures to ensure that systems exist at all times to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of all information held or known in respect of its past or present service users and of any other information which can be supplied if requested and it shall fully implement those systems to ensure that such integrity and confidentiality is maintained.
- Equal Opportunities. Operating an equal opportunities policy in the recruitment, retention, training and development of staff and regularly review this and measure performance.
- Personnel Management. To have in place policies on personnel matters for both staff and volunteers including appropriate arrangements for recruitment, checks (DBS) for suitability and are open to inspection by the Council. To provide the District council with details of all relevant staff vacancies and changes. To ensure that all staff/volunteers working with vulnerable people (i.e. the

² Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations is a performance evaluation system and [quality mark](#) for charitable organisations in the UK. Evaluations use a system of peer review between small charities

³ Quality standard for organisations to assess and measure their advice and support service

elderly, children) have been DBS checked and ensure that "child protection" procedures are adopted in all recruitment processes.

- **Financial Management.** Pursue a sustainable financial strategy and model good governance. Ensure the necessary arrangements exist for the effective management of all revenue finance. Submit Annual Reports of profit and loss, balance sheets and Audited Accounts to the Council within 6 months of the end of each financial year. Allow reasonable inspection of financial records and minute books by officers of the Council if requested, with adequate notice in writing. Acknowledge the Council's financial support in the Annual Accounts. Avoid incurring financial or other obligations that are unable to be met by it. Ensure that all necessary accounting arrangements exist to distinguish between the providers own funds and any funds held for, or behalf of service users if the need arises.
- **Complaints Procedures.** The provider will have an established Complaints Policy and Procedure, and shall promote the procedure to all service users, members and non-members and in default thereof shall accept the Council's Complaint Procedure. The provider will record the nature of complaints received, how complaints were investigated and outcomes of investigations.

The provider and the Council acknowledge that:

- The Council is obliged to comply with the provisions of Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 1 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the "Information Acts"), meaning that any person has a right to request information (in any form) including information relating to the provisions of this Agreement (the "Information"); from the Council.
- The provider shall co-operate with the Council in complying with its obligations under the Information Acts, but shall not disclose any Information to any individual under the provisions of the Information Acts or otherwise upon a request for such information without first obtaining the prior written consent of the Council.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7ARUN DISTRICT COUNCILOVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE
22 NOVEMBER 2016

Recommendation Paper

Subject : The Council's 2020 Vision – Working together for a better future
Progress with Shared Services

Report by : Nigel Lynn – Chief Executive Officer Report date: October 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2020 Vision programme has been established to provide the strategic direction required to help the Council become a more effective and sustainable one and to enable it to meet future demands. The programme includes an initiative to share services with neighbouring authorities; this report considers the current position.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to

1. Note progress on the shared services project;
2. Identify any risks to services that shared services may bring; and
3. Recommend to Cabinet that the views of the Committee be considered when deciding on the Shared Services Programme.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The shared services programme is looking at the opportunities and business cases for sharing services with neighbouring authorities. These business cases relate to the sharing of (1) ICT, (2) Internal Audit, (3) HR/Payroll, (4) Legal, (5) Revenues and Benefits, and (6) Customer Services.
- 1.2 Following approval of the outline business case by Cabinet on 11 July 2016, the shared services programme has been working on the next phase of programme, this being the development of detailed business cases.

- 1.3 Work is progressing well, with the programme being overseen by a Programme Manager reporting to a Steering Group (including Chief Executives and Members from the three authorities). The final business cases are anticipated to be presented to Cabinet in early February 2017. They will be considered by the Overview Select Committee in January. However, the report itself may not be available at this time and a verbal report might be necessary.
- 1.4 In September, the Steering Group made a number of important decisions in relation to how shared services should operate, what options should be looked at, and where the services should be located.
- 1.5 The new services will look different for some services, for example Legal & HR will provide a remote service to officers and Members, and will provide self-service support wherever possible, providing face to face support only for the most complex matters. Customer Services will actively promote self-service channels and use technology to manage call volumes and queue management, they will still aim to resolve as many calls as possible that are answered at first point of contact.
- 1.6 The options that are being explored are shared services between authorities (Horsham are only looking at sharing HR/Payroll, Internal Audit and Legal) and, in some cases, also looking at established external partnership sharing. Each authority also has the option to provide an in-house enhanced service model; these will only be developed once the shared services business cases have been developed.
- 1.7 In terms of location, the current thinking is that Arun will be the host authority for ICT, Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services and HR/Payroll; Chichester will host Internal Audit and Horsham will host Legal.
- 1.8 The programme has tried wherever possible to keep staff informed of how the programme is progressing and how this might affect them. It also meets regularly with Unison.

Background Papers:

Full Council Agenda - 30 April 2014 (item 26 - Local Government Association - Corporate Peer Challenge Review – March 2014)

Full Council Agenda - 18 June 2014 (item 9 - Local Government Association - Corporate Peer Challenge Review – March 2014 – Customer Services)

Full Council Agenda - 5 November 2014 (item 17 – Working Towards a Council Vision for 2015 to 2020)

Cabinet Agenda - 16 November 2015 (item 7 – Financial Prospects 2015/16 to 2020/21)

Full Council – 13 January 2016 (Item 29 - 2020 Vision – working together for a better future)

Overview Select Committee 7 June 2016 - (item 32 – The Council's 2020 Vision)

Full Council 20 July 2016 – (item 36 – The Council's 2020 Vision)

Cabinet Agenda – 17 October 2016 – (item 15 – Update on the Council's 2020 Vision)

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**ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL
COUNCILLOR FEEDBACK REPORT FROM OUTSIDE BODIES**

Report to Overview Select Committee – 22 November 2016

Name of Meeting:	West Sussex County Council's Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC)
Date of Meetings:	2 and 29 September 2016
Report by:	Cllr George Blampied
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Cllr Paul Wotherspoon
Feedback:	
<p><u>2 September 2016 Meeting</u></p> <p>Firstly, regarding the Central Sussex Stroke Services Review. The option to integrate the stroke service into a single site at the Royal County Hospital, Brighton was strongly supported and favoured by the South East SCN expert clinical review group. This would mean patients at the Princess Royal, Haywards Head, would be taken to Brighton. Members were concerned over the distance to Brighton and the time involved for ambulances transporting patients. However, there had not been any complaints from relatives and carers and in fact a number of plaudits had been received. A further report would come to the next meeting of HASC.</p> <p>Secondly, a report on the inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust was received. Both Brighton and Haywards Heath hospitals were inspected in April 2016 and the overall rating of "inadequate" was issued. There were a number of urgent concerns raised by the CQC which led to the "Warning Notice" being issued that needed urgent attention.</p> <p>A plan for improvement which could mean monthly inspections of the areas that need considerable improvement was to be submitted by 16 September 2016. Since the inspection, significant improvements have been made to all the services including the appointment of a number of new senior staff.</p> <p><u>29 September 2016 Meeting</u></p> <p>Central Sussex Stroke Services – further to the meeting on 2 September, a final proposal for the provision of stroke services in Central Sussex was put to the Committee. There would be no change of stroke services to Brighton at present but maybe within 5 years it will move to a single unit.</p> <p>Sussex Patient Transport Services – much has been reported in the press about the poor service from Coperforma since the Contract commenced in April 2016. The Committee was anxious to know if the service had improved over the past few months. Mr Ian Thomson from Coperforma was present to</p>	

**ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL
COUNCILLOR FEEDBACK REPORT FROM OUTSIDE BODIES**

Report to Overview Select Committee – 22 November 2016

answer questions. There is still much to be done and further scrutiny will be required.

Adult Services – a new vision is being developed which includes a community based operating model and the establishment of a number of innovation sites. This model will be subject to a Cabinet Member Decision next Autumn 2017. The Government has stated that every part of the country must have a plan to integrate health and social in 2017 to be implemented by 2020. This is being led by West Sussex County Council (WSCC) who has concluded from the review of national best practices to identify the elements for the operating model that will achieve improved lives and financial sustainability. For adult social care the elements are:

- Reduce isolation and loneliness
- Develop and maintain skills to maximise their independence
- Responsive when people are in crises
- Reducing bureaucracy
- Listening to families and carers
- To help people live independent lives

The proposed locations within West Sussex would be within an urban area of Adur District, a rural area of Chichester District and a part of Crawley and East Grinstead.

There is much work to be done to deliver this new commitment which has been discussed by adult social care people and with Unison. This work will be subject to future HASC examinations and discussions.

The Members of HASC were invited to attend a meeting of the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board held on 13 October 2016 at WSCC. This is the main Committee that oversees all the various bodies within the health service in West Sussex. I found this very useful to understand the complexities that make up the overall health strategies within the County. One of the points discussed was the Local Health System Sustainability and Transformation Plans which were reports from Coastal Care and Central Sussex and East Surrey alliance. This subject will be discussed at further HASC meetings in the future. The various Members gave verbal reports in which they indicated that additional resources would be required. There has been an increase in the number of people over 85 and they were anticipating a difficult winter period. When this is discussed further at HASC I will be able to give a more precise report. I felt it was well worth attending this meeting.

Finally, HASC Members have been advised that the South Central Ambulance Service NHS foundation Trust (SCAS) has agreed to take over the contract for the Sussex Patient Transport Service. In order to minimise

Agenda Item No. 9**ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL
COUNCILLOR FEEDBACK REPORT FROM OUTSIDE BODIES****Report to Overview Select Committee – 22 November 2016**

disruption to patients who use the services, the transfer will be phased over the next few months with SCAS taking complete responsibility from April 2017.