


Agenda Item No:	6	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	25 January 2021	
Report Title:	Council Tax Support – 2021-22 Scheme	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

To consider the outcome of the consultation process on potential changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2021-22 and to recommend to Council the final scheme for implementation with effect from 1 April 2021.

2 Key issues

- Cabinet at its meeting on 6 August 2020 decided on the following with respect to the proposed Council Tax Support Scheme for 2021-22:
 - (i) Note the comments from Overview & Scrutiny Panel of 13 July 2020 (who had proposed that no change be made to the scheme at the present time);
 - (ii) Carry out a consultation exercise on increasing the current contribution rate to 20%, 25% or 30%.
- A consultation exercise was carried out for a 12 week period from 28 September to 20 December 2020.
- The results of the consultation exercise are detailed in Appendix A. The overwhelming reaction to the proposed increases in contribution rates was negative, with the theme being that customers affected would find paying their bills considerably more difficult than now.
- Details of the potential additional income which could be raised from the proposals are detailed in Section 4 of this report.
- Any increase in contribution rates will almost certainly have an impact on the Council Tax collection rate which would require additional resources to ensure collection rates were maintained to at least current levels.
- Government has announced additional funding for 2021-22 to help authorities meet the expected increase in working age Council Tax Support costs. Authorities are encouraged to consider their LCTS schemes in 2021-22 in the light of this additional funding but this is entirely at the discretion of local authorities.

- A Customer Impact Assessment (CIA) will be required if Cabinet recommends any changes to the contribution rate for 2021-22.

3 Recommendations

- It is recommended that members consider the attached report and consultation responses and recommend to Council their preferred option for the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2021-22.

Wards Affected	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Boden, Leader & Portfolio Holder, Finance Cllr Mrs Jan French, Deputy Leader
Report Originator(s)	Sam Anthony, Head of HR & OD Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
Contact Officer(s)	Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Sam Anthony, Head of HR & OD Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
Background Paper(s)	None

Report:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Before April 2013, Council Tax Benefit (CTB) was a nationally controlled scheme administered by District and Unitary Councils that give reductions from Council Tax to people on low incomes according to set criteria specified by regulations. The maximum reduction was 100% of a person's Council Tax bill.
- 1.2 The costs of CTB were fully reimbursed to the Council by the DWP, so that if demand rose or fell, the Council did not bear the costs of these changes.
- 1.3 CTB was localised and replaced by CTS in April 2013. At the same time, Government funding was reduced and CTS was localised, coming under the control of District and Unitary Councils. Whilst pensioners were protected and regulations specified that they must still receive up to 100% CTS, this protection did not apply to working age people.
- 1.4 Unlike CTB, the costs of CTS are borne by Councils. Funding is given by the Government within the overall finance settlement, but this has reduced significantly over the years so that Councils bear the costs of an increase in demand but gain from reduced demand.
- 1.5 The implementation of CTS left Fenland with a funding gap, that potentially saw working age customers only being entitled to 80% CTS. However, Members considered the options available to help increase CTS and were able to implement a scheme in 2013-14 that saw working age customers be entitled to up to 91.5% of CTS; in two ways.
- 1.6 Members primarily met the funding shortfall by revising Council Tax exemptions on empty properties, permitted by regulations that changed in 2013. This meant that the Council would no longer give a Council Tax reduction for most empty domestic properties.
- 1.7 The funding shortfall was further closed by a one-off transitional Government grant that applied in 2013-14 only.
- 1.8 In 2014-15 this grant was not available. With demand for CTS not growing as much as was predicted for 2013-14, Members were able to revise the CTS scheme to feature a reduction of 14% CTS for working age customers.
- 1.9 Councils are required to review the operation of their CTS schemes annually. They are required to make any revisions no later than 28 February in the financial year preceding that for which the scheme will be revised (i.e. 28 February 2020 for the scheme relating to the 2020-21 financial year).
- 1.10 Further annual reviews determined that the CTS reduction remained at 14% since 2015-16, with further links to Welfare Reform and Universal Credit introduced for 2018-19. That scheme was retained for 2019-20.
- 1.11 For 2020-21 the only change was to introduce a fluctuating earnings rule to the treatment of Universal Credit (UC). A weekly tolerance level of £15 (£65 monthly) was introduced to minimise the number of reassessments imposed by monthly changes in a customer's UC payment. This was intended to reduce customer reassessments by a third.

1.12 Currently, this is working well as we are seeing reassessments reducing by approximately a third, in line with our modelling predictions. Consequently, we are proposing to continue operating the fluctuating earnings rule within the scheme for 2021-22.

1.13 We are now considering our CTS scheme for the 2021-22 financial year.

2 The 2020 review (for CTS scheme for 2021-22)

2.1 Councils are required to review operation of their CTS schemes each year. Where a change is proposed, we are required to undertake customer consultation; the results of which assist in the final decision made by the Council regarding the CTS scheme next year.

2.2 Members will be aware that this Council is one of five partners forming the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP). The other four Councils are Breckland, East Cambridgeshire, West Suffolk (formerly Forest Heath and St. Edmundsbury) and East Suffolk (formerly Waveney and Suffolk Coastal). These Councils have maintained the contribution rate in their schemes at 8.5% since 2013. They are not proposing any changes to this rate or any other aspect of the current scheme for 2021-22.

2.3 Currently, apart from a different contribution rate, all other aspects of the CTS scheme are consistent across all of the ARP partners. This aids the efficient administration of the schemes across the partnership. This does not however preclude any of the partners amending their scheme independently of the others.

2.4 Since 2018 the scheme has been harmonised to DWP welfare reforms introduced for Housing Benefit and CTS for Pensioners, and introduced closer links to Universal Credit data share to claims, most notably removing the default stipulation for customers to make a separate claim to the Council. This has been of particular help to all the new customers impacted by Covid-19 needing to make a Universal Credit claim but not needing to make a further claim to the Council for Council Tax Support.

2.5 Since April 2020 we have strengthened our use of DWP Universal Credit data share links to further assist customers.

2.6 Both these initiatives continue to work well for customers, with other Councils either now introducing these changes or looking to do so.

2.7 Customer consultation is central to the review of the CTS scheme for 2021-22 and following Cabinet's decision on 6 August 2020, a consultation exercise on increasing the contribution rate to 20%, 25% or 30% was undertaken. This took the form of a web-based consultation and was widely publicised on the Council's website and on social media outlets.

2.8 Consultation was open for 12 weeks, from 28 September 2020 to 20 December 2020.

2.9 We received 170 responses, which although low, is consistent with the normal response rate to public consultation exercises.

- 2.10 The results of the consultation exercise are detailed at Appendix A. The majority of respondents disagreed with the proposed increases in contribution rates. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents declared that they are currently in receipt of Council Tax Support.
- 2.11 The majority of respondents (66%) disagreed with the Council making cost savings by reducing the amount of Council Tax Support paid to working age people. In addition, 62% of respondents disagreed with increasing the contribution rate to 20%, 75% disagreed with increasing to 25% and 74% disagreed with increasing to 30%.
- 2.12 The survey also asked for any other thoughts or comments on the proposals. This generated 102 responses, the majority emphasising the difficulty in paying additional council tax that these proposals would result in.
- 2.13 The feedback detailed above and at Appendix A shows that the overwhelming reaction to the proposals was negative, with the theme being that customers affected would find paying their bills considerably more difficult than now.

3 The impact of CTS to date

- 3.1 CTS with its associated gap between Council Tax payable and the maximum help working age people can receive has been in operation now for seven full years and we are in the eighth year of operation.
- 3.2 The table below shows how the amount of CTS awarded and numbers of customers claiming it have changed since CTS was introduced in 2013:-

CTS cases and amount awarded			
Date	CTS awarded	Working age claims	Pensioner claims
31/3/13 (CTB)	£8.16m	4,682	4,727
31/3/14	£7.89m	4,755	4,667
31/3/15	£7.45m	4,620	4,431
31/3/16	£7.21m	4,450	4,202
31/3/17	£7.02m	4,228	3,998
31/3/18	£6.91m	4,189	3,827
31/3/19	£6.98m	4,227	3,629
31/3/20	£7.39m	4,244	3,472
Change 2013 to 2020	- £0.77m -9.44%	- 438 -9.35%	- 1,255 -26.55%

- 3.3 The amount of CTS awarded since 2013 to the end of March 2020 has reduced as a result of both the increase in contribution rate to 14% and a significant reduction in claims.

The impact of COVID-19

- 3.4 Compared with last year, since March 2020, we have seen new working age CTS claims increase by up to 500%, which is now settling at up to a 200% increase.
- 3.5 Figures for the amount of CTS awarded and numbers of customers claiming it at the end of December 2020 compared with March 2020 are detailed in the table below:

CTS cases and amount awarded: March – December 2020			
Date	CTS awarded	Working age claims	Pensioner claims
31/03/20	£7.39m	4,244	3,472
31/12/20	£7.79m	4,746	3,360
Change March to December 2020	+£0.40m +5.41%	+502 +11.83%	-112 -3.23%

- 3.6 Whilst we anticipate caseload will increase, it is too early to predict with any accuracy what the full impact will be for this year and the knock-on effect on next year.

Council Tax COVID-19 Hardship Fund 2020-21

- 3.7 To assist working age CTS claimants, the government announced the £500m COVID-19 Hardship Fund at the Budget on 11 March 2020. This Council's allocation is £907,222 and was paid on 3rd April 2020. This funding is to provide all recipients of working age local council tax support during the financial year 2020-21 with a further reduction in their annual council tax bill of up to £150, using their discretionary powers to reduce the liability of council tax payers outside of their formal CTS scheme design.
- 3.8 There is sufficient funding to apply this reduction to existing working age customers but as detailed above, we do not know what the full impact on caseload numbers will be during the remainder of this year. Consequently, there is a risk that applying this reduction to all new working age claims will exhaust the funding available before the end of this year. We are monitoring applications and awards closely to ensure our allocated funding is not exceeded.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme Grant 2021-22

- 3.9 Provisional allocations and methodology for the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) grant were published by the government on 18 December 2020.
- 3.10 The purpose of the grant is to provide funding to local authorities to help them meet the expected increase in the cost of working age LCTS in 2021-22. There is no expectation from government that local authorities will continue the Hardship Fund (detailed above) into 2021-22 or use the grant to reduce payments from LCTS claimants.

3.11 The government is however, encouraging authorities to consider their LCTS schemes in 2021-22 in the light of this additional funding but this is entirely at the discretion of local authorities.

3.12 The provisional funding for Fenland and the major preceptors is as follows:

	£
Fenland District Council	194,156
Cambridgeshire County Council	854,242
Cambridgeshire PCC	146,220
Cambridgeshire Fire	<u>45,308</u>
Total for FDC Billing Area	<u>1,239,927</u>

3.13 The total funding equates to around a 29% increase in the current cost of working age CTS. This means that an increase in working age claimant costs of up to 29% in 2021-22 would be funded from this grant and would not financially impact the authorities above.

4 Impact of potential changes to CTS for 2021-22

4.1 Members are reminded of the potential impact resulting from any changes to the scheme which affects the amounts paid by recipients (eg. contribution rate). Any savings/additional cost would be shared between the major preceptors in proportion to their Council Tax requirements in the Collection Fund. The proportions based on 2020/21 Council Tax, is detailed in the table below. This shows that any changes (to the contribution rate for example) would generate significantly more savings/more cost to the County Council, as they receives a much higher proportion of Council Tax receipts overall.

How Council Tax allocated is split	
Authority	%
Cambridgeshire County Council	68.90
Cambridgeshire Fire Authority	3.65
Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Commissioner	11.79
Fenland District Council	15.66

4.2 This contrasts to the financial impact of any changes to Peterborough City Council's CTS scheme (whose current contribution rate is 32% which is expected to rise to 33% from 1st April 2021) which is significantly different to this Council. Peterborough as a Unitary Council receives the majority of any savings realised from any changes, around 82%, whereas this Council only benefits from around 16% of any changes.

4.3 Pensioner support is set by the statutory prescribed scheme at 100% support. Local Authorities can set the contribution rate for working age customers. Billing Authorities incur the cost of administering the schemes, as well as the cost of billing and collection.

- 4.4 The table below shows the current scheme and models options at proposed 20%, 25% & 30% contribution rates. It should be noted these are quick calculations based on current expenditure with no regard to uplift in Council tax or benefit rates for next year. The economic downturn due to the pandemic is likely to see increased demand and expenditure as well as associated increases in cost of administration and recovery.

		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
	14% scheme	20% Scheme	25% Scheme	30% Scheme
	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21
Pensioner LCTRS - protected	£3,544,250	£3,544,250	£3,544,250	£3,544,250
Working age LCTRS	£4,240,960	£4,240,960	£4,240,960	£4,240,960
Estimated overall LCTRS discount	£7,785,210	£7,785,210	£7,785,210	£7,785,210
Customer contribution rate	14%	20%	25%	30%
Additional cost to working age customers	Nil	£295,624	£541,974	£788,300
Cost to Collection Fund	£7,785,210	£7,489,586	£7,243,236	£6,996,910

- 4.5 The table below shows the share of potential savings to the each of the major preceptors and recoverability of the options detailed above:

Band D average		Share					
		County		Police	Fire	Fenland	Total
		£1,359.18		£232.65	£72.09	£308.92	£1,972.84
		68.89%		11.79%	3.65%	15.66%	100%
	Savings						
Current 14.5%	£0.00						
20.0%	£295,623.74	£203,655.19		£34,854.04	£10,790.27	£46,294.68	£295,623.74
25.0%	£541,974.10	£373,365.96		£63,898.75	£19,782.05	£84,873.14	£541,974.10
30.0%	£788,300.21	£543,060.01		£92,940.59	£28,772.96	£123,447.81	£788,300.21
Recoverability		Share					
Band B average		County		Police	Fire	Fenland	Total
		£1,057.14		£180.95	£56.07	£240.27	£1,534.43
		68.89%		11.79%	3.65%	15.66%	100%
		Charge	Costs	Weekly recovery	DWP AoB	Deficit	Weeks to recover
Current 14.5%		£214.82	£75.00	£3.75	£195.00	£94.82	77
20.0%		£306.89	£75.00	£3.75	£195.00	£186.89	102
25.0%		£383.61	£75.00	£3.75	£195.00	£263.61	122
30.0%		£460.33	£75.00	£3.75	£195.00	£340.33	143

Considerations

- 4.6 The recovery of Council Tax follows a statutory path of a series of reminders and ultimately a summons to appear at The Magistrates Court at which a Liability Order is obtained. This liability order gives the Council a number of enforcement options to recover the debt: -
- Attachment of Benefit

- Attachment of Earnings
- Enforcement Agent
- Attachment of Members allowances
- Application for Committal to prison (must use Enforcement Agent first)
- Charging Order
- Insolvency

The first four of these options are considered to be the standard recovery options and are used routinely. The final three having far more consequences on the individual.

- 4.7 The amount that can be recovered through the attachment options is limited by regulation. In particular, the amount that can be recovered through an attachment to benefit is currently £3.75 per week. This equates to £195.00 per annum. It should also be noted that only one attachment of benefit can be in place at any one time and another liability order for a different period cannot be placed with an Enforcement Agent reducing options for recovery.
- 4.8 Where an individual is in receipt of Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) often the only recovery option available is an attachment to benefit as often they won't be in employment and due to the level of their income and assets, instructing an Enforcement Agent is unlikely to be any more successful.
- 4.9 As a result of this many of the accounts where the Council Tax payer is in receipt of LCTS cannot be collected within a year meaning that arrears continue to grow.
- 4.10 The above illustrates that Council Tax would not be collected within one calendar year of obtaining the liability order and due to the restrictions described above arrears will continue to grow unless the individual concerned finds employment. This may in turn encourage a culture of non-payment and the Council may need to increase its bad debt provision.
- 4.11 The table below gives an illustration of how arrears on one account will grow based on an average Band B charge and the LCTS percentage at 30% if the only option to recover is by attachment of benefit.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
B/fwd		265.33	530.66	795.99	1,061.32
Band B charge @ 30%	460.33	460.33	460.33	460.33	460.33
Deductions	195.00	195.00	195.00	195.00	195.00
Arrears @ end of Year	265.33	530.66	795.99	1,061.32	1,326.65

These arrears would realistically only be collected should the debtor find employment.

- 4.12 Furthermore, where the customer is renting their home, due to welfare reform restrictions on the maximum allowance towards their rent charge, typically customers have to meet a shortfall of £180 every month. Increasing council tax contribution rates will exacerbate financial pressures, potentially leading to falling behind with council tax payments and/or risk of homelessness and need to be rehoused by the council

Recovery Resource

- 4.13 Since the introduction of LCTS and the requirement for working age Council Tax payers to pay a proportion of their charge, the number of reminders, final notices and summonses issued each year has increased by 50% on average over pre-LCTS levels
- 4.14 If the amount a LCTS recipient is expected to pay increases, then the number of recovery actions is likely to increase further and subsequently the resource required to manage the administration and recovery of the Council Tax due. This will not only result in an increase in recovery action but also in the number of telephone calls and correspondence to the billing team as well as the recovery team.
- 4.15 The current ARP Fenland resource in these teams is 8.68 FTE. If the LCTS is increased significantly we could expect to see a rise in recovery actions.

Funding additional recovery resource

- 4.16 Any additional recovery resource required would be the responsibility of the Billing Authority (ie. Fenland).
- 4.17 As detailed above, increasing the rate of contribution for working age customers also increases the potential for additional arrears and subsequent recovery action. Additional bad debts provision would be required for non-payment and to help maintain expected collection levels, extra resources (as detailed above) would be required to undertake recovery work in respect of additional arrears that would accrue from working age customers having payment difficulties as a result of the proposed changes. This would significantly reduce the benefits to this Council of increasing the contribution rate, as we are responsible for collecting Council Tax and administering CTS. The net benefit could be reduced by up to 50%.

5 Future Years CTS Review – 2021 for 2022/23 Scheme

- 5.1 The Council Tax Support scheme is complex and includes many areas where potential changes could be made, all of which would have associated savings/cost to this Council and to CTS customers. Last year, it was proposed that several potential options for changes to the CTS scheme be modelled and considered for implementation in the 2021/22 scheme. These include but are not limited to, the following:
 - (i) Options for increasing the current contribution rate of 14% (considered in this report);
 - (iii) Introducing a minimum award level of either £1 or £2 per week;
 - (iv) A restriction to support being provided at up to Band C/D equivalent only (higher bands will be limited to the Band C/D level with their parish);
 - (v) An increase to the non-dependent deduction levels;
 - (vi) An assumed minimum earnings level for self-employed claimants;
 - (vii) Removal of second adult rebate;
 - (viii) Removal of extended payments;
 - (ix) Removing the current disregard of Child Benefit and treating it as income;
 - (x) Reducing the capital limit from £16,000 to £6,000.

- 5.2 Due to the impact of COVID-19 resulting in a significant increase in working age customers during 2020/21 and the continued uncertainty around the impact on 2020/21 and into 2021/22, it is proposed that the modelling on the above options (excluding (i) above) be deferred until next year for consideration of the 2022/23 scheme.
- 5.3 In addition, ARP are intending to embark on a project early this year to initiate a review for the 2022/23 scheme, planning to consider more widely the full year impact of COVID-19 and relevant enhancements to a future CTS scheme.

6 Customer Impact

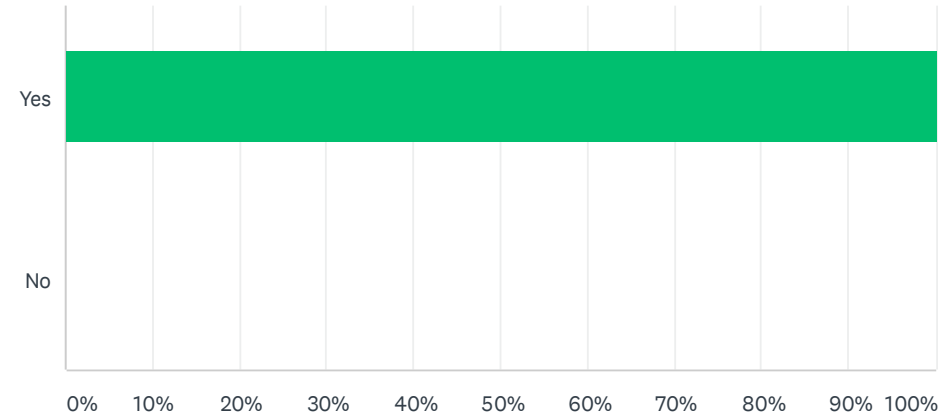
- 6.1 The Equality Act 2010 reminded all public authorities of their duty to have 'due regard' to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- 6.2 Authorities must consider the needs of "protected groups" when making policy decisions, and undertake a Customer Impact Assessment (CIA) to understand the effect of such decisions upon such groups. In doing this, we are required to take the appropriate actions when making changes that may impact negatively on these groups.
- 6.3 A CIA will be required as part of the Council report approving the final CTS scheme for 2021-22 at their meeting on 23 February 2021.

7 Next steps

- 7.1 The recommendations from this meeting will be presented to Council at their meeting on 23 February 2021 who will approve the final scheme for implementation from 1 April 2021.

Q1 Are you a Fenland District Council resident?

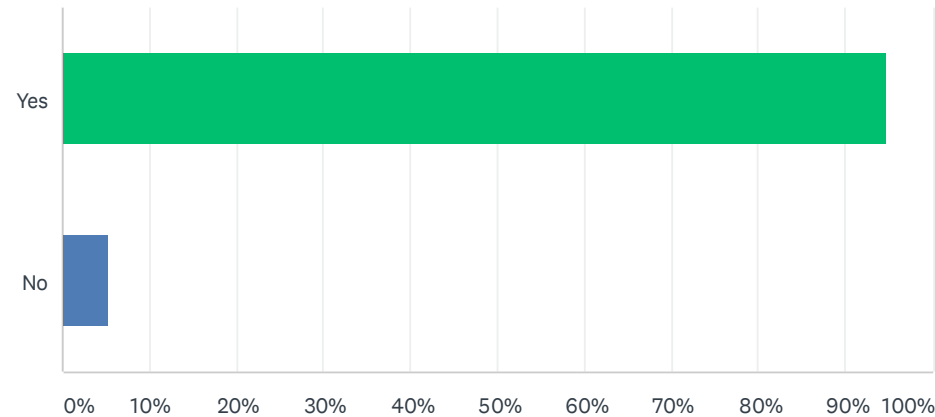
Answered: 170 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	170
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		170

Q2 Are you of working age?

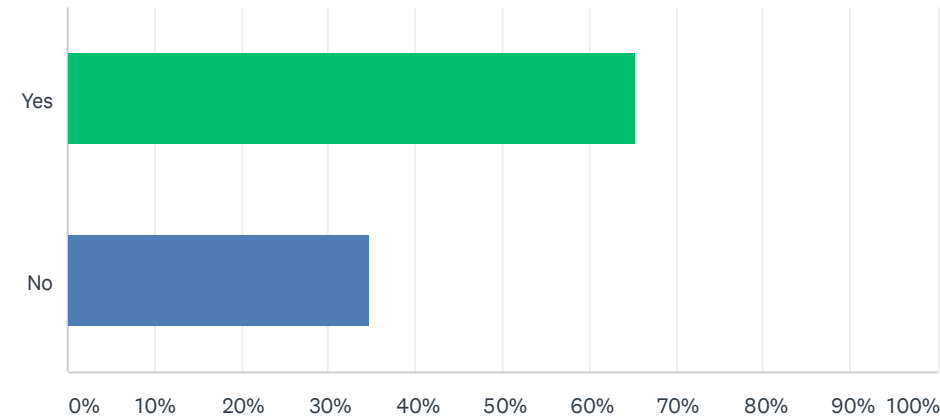
Answered: 170 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	94.71%	161
No	5.29%	9
TOTAL		170

Q3 Are you in receipt of Council Tax Reduction?

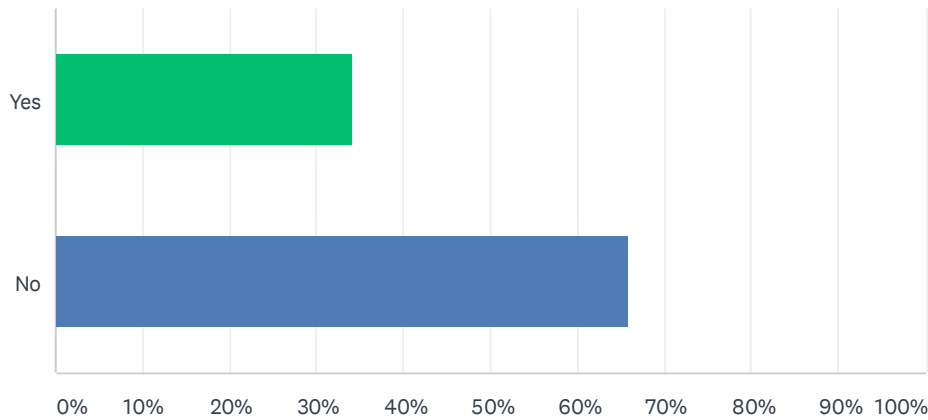
Answered: 170 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		65.29%	111
No		34.71%	59
TOTAL			170

Q4 Do you agree that the Council should make cost savings by reducing the amount of Council Tax Reduction paid to working age people?

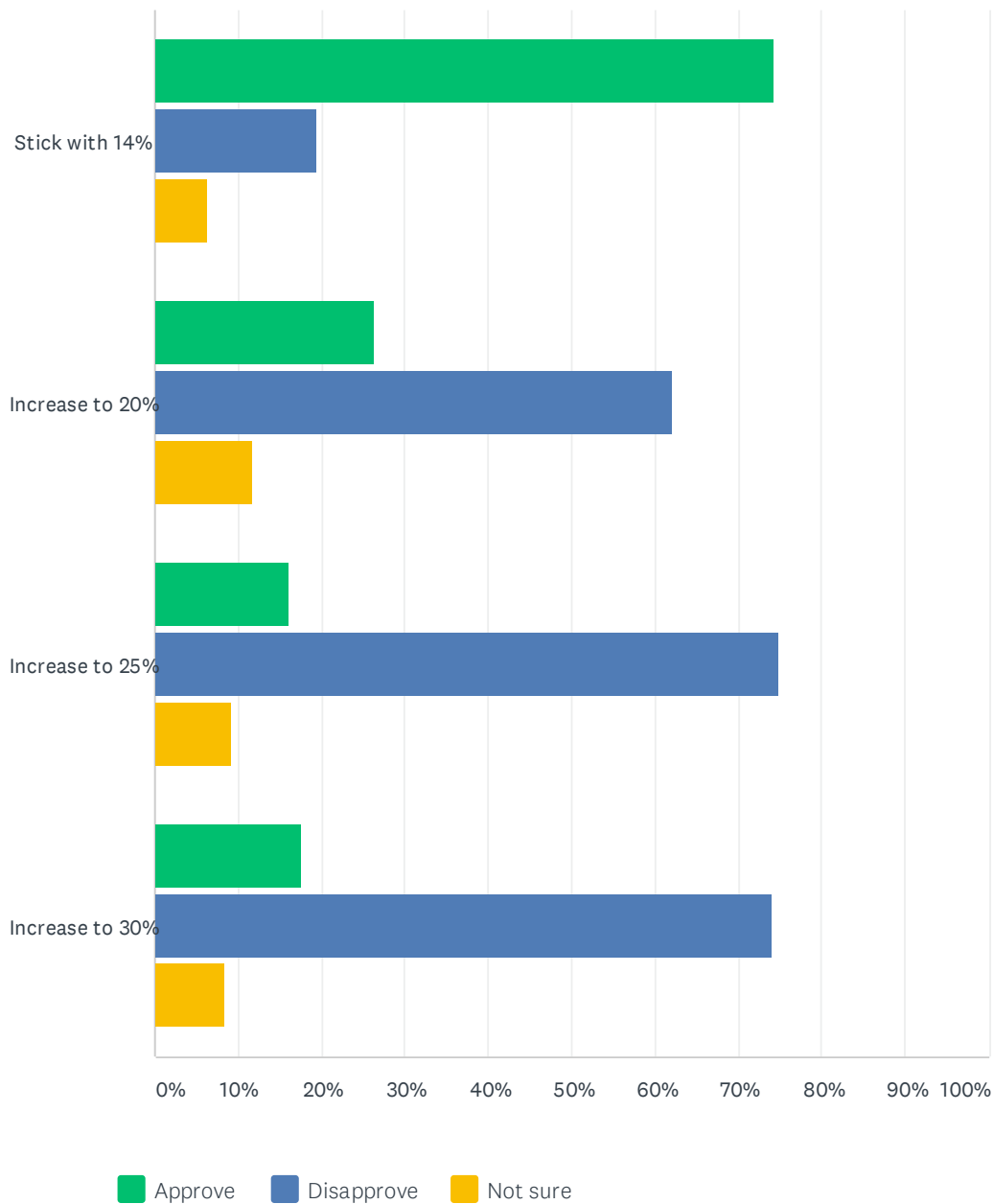
Answered: 170 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		34.12%	58
No		65.88%	112
TOTAL			170

Q5 What do you think the minimum amount of Council Tax paid by working age people in receipt of Council Tax Reduction should be?

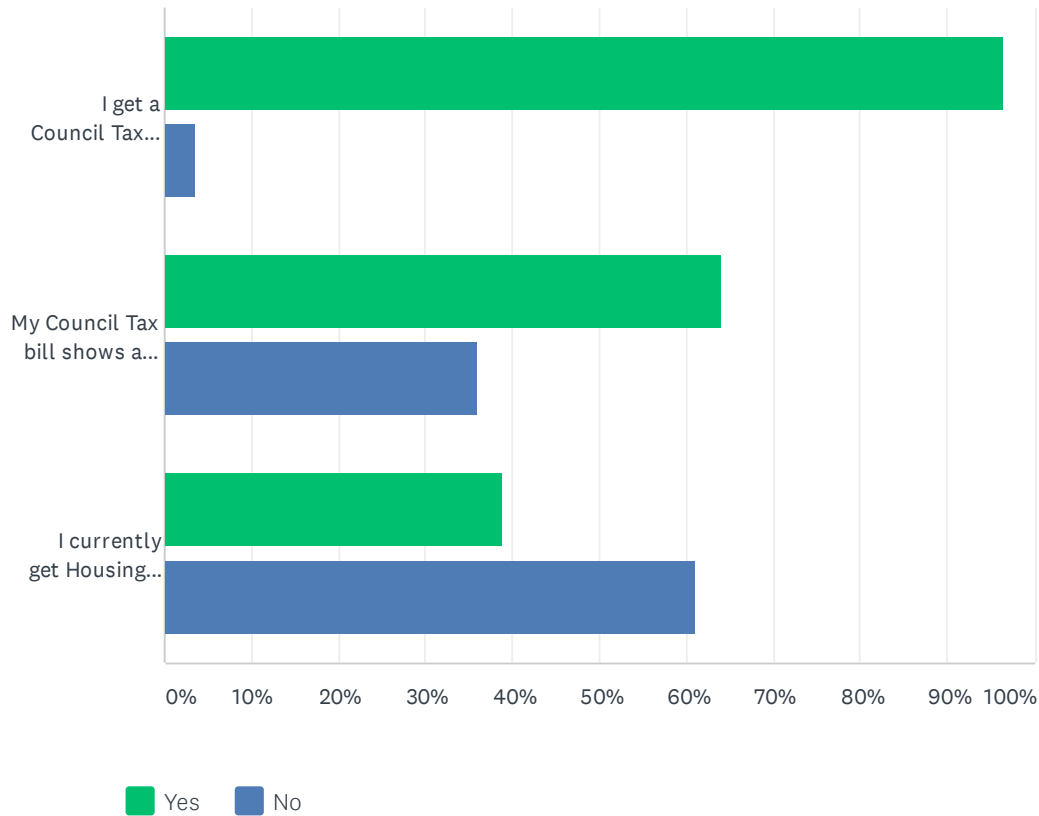
Answered: 170 Skipped: 0



	APPROVE	DISAPPROVE	NOT SURE	TOTAL
Stick with 14%	74.21% 118	19.50% 31	6.29% 10	159
Increase to 20%	26.28% 36	62.04% 85	11.68% 16	137
Increase to 25%	16.03% 21	74.81% 98	9.16% 12	131
Increase to 30%	17.56% 23	74.05% 97	8.40% 11	131

Q6 Please tick the boxes that apply to you:

Answered: 170 Skipped: 0



	YES	NO	TOTAL
I get a Council Tax bill from Fenland District Council now	96.47% 164	3.53% 6	170
My Council Tax bill shows a reduction called 'Council Tax Support'	64.12% 109	35.88% 61	170
I currently get Housing Benefit from Fenland District Council	38.82% 66	61.18% 104	170

Q7 If you have any other thoughts or comments on the proposals, please leave them here:

Answered: 102 Skipped: 68

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Proposals

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Please look to those that are in receipt of benefits to get extra money from and not people who work very hard for their money. Those who receive state aid are given this to pay their bills	12/7/2020 4:47 PM
2	Increasing the amount of council tax for those on low income to pay would be a bad move. I already struggle to pay bills as a single parent that lost my job due to covid. Asking me to pay more would not only affect my financial situation but also my mental health.	12/2/2020 8:10 PM
3	I'm living on poverty wage's minimum wage. With wife and two children struggling with debts it's hard paying high council bills	12/2/2020 6:59 PM
4	I'm living on poverty wage's minimum wage. With wife and two children struggling with debts it's hard paying high council bills	12/2/2020 6:59 PM
5	I think cuts could be made by looking at and reducing, the large salaries at the top. Hitting the very poorest people who are already struggling to pay bills is despicable. I can only assume you are hoping by pushing people further into desperation that they end their misery permanently, thus saving you even more money. I fail to see any other motive behind this. It's sickening. We already pay a high amount of council tax in Fenland. We have to pay to have our brown bins emptied. People don't apply for help to pay their council tax bill because they have a few grand in the bank and they're worried they might not have enough to cover their champagne dinners. They ask for help because they're on the bones of their arse.	12/1/2020 12:31 PM
6	I don't agree with my housing benefit keep altering when there is no changes in my circumstances I don't know why I should pay in full when we have no decent pavents of street light on street park ect	11/26/2020 11:34 AM
7	Apply for a reduction	11/26/2020 9:17 AM
8	Please do not charge more to those who can afford it least. Many are already struggling financially and get behind with their Council Tax payments as it is. As a Debt Coach I often see this. It must cost you to engage Enforcement Agents.	11/10/2020 5:58 PM
9	Can the benefit and council tax letters be easier to read?	11/9/2020 2:37 PM
10	I understand that you need to increase your budget because of government cutbacks but I have limited finances myself and increasing the percentage we have to pay especially 30% would certainly put myself in financial difficulties	11/5/2020 4:54 PM
11	On working tax credits can I claim council tax deductions	11/4/2020 1:53 PM
12	As a single working mum I rely on extra help to support me and my children if it gets increased I will find it very hard	11/1/2020 6:48 PM
13	As a single working mum I rely on extra help to support me and my children if it gets increased I will find it very hard	11/1/2020 6:48 PM
14	Why don't you save the money you have wasted on this consultation because you will not take notice of the results, like always, you would have already made the decision.	10/29/2020 6:51 PM
15	without punishing those that claim nothing by putting up charges those of us that receive help can and should contribute more to funding. Everyone should help out and i am willing to juggle money and cut back to help out	10/28/2020 10:22 AM
16	I get employment and support allowance of about £130 a week (£261) a fortnight, out of which I pay gas electric water and tv licence and normally rates at a reduced rate.	10/26/2020 11:18 AM
17	I can't afford to pay any more council tax. My universal credit barely leaves me enough money each week to pay for my food and electric. I used to be homeless. I'm frightened that if you make me pay more council tax I will get into debt and end up on the streets again. Please do not increase the council tax I have to pay.	10/25/2020 4:14 PM
18	It just takes more money away from those that need it ,who could be already struggling	10/21/2020 12:37 PM
19	I am struggling to make ends meet as it is so if you was to take more money from me I would not be able to buy food	10/20/2020 10:40 AM
20	Universal Credit for single people (as per GOV.UK): Single and under 25 £342.72 per month (£79.10 per week)* Single and 25 or over £409.89 per month (£94.59 per week)* *The above	10/19/2020 3:10 PM

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are currently increased due to the COVID-19 so may reduce when pandemic is over. Council Tax: Council tax for a single person living in a 1 bedroom flat in Wisbech - Band A = £990.97 (£1321.30 per annum – 25% Single Person Discount @ £330.33 = £990.97 per annum) Council Tax Reduction: Council tax for a single person living in a 1 bedroom flat in Wisbech – Band A – receiving full Council Tax Reduction but has to pay 14% Council Tax = £138.74 per annum or £2.67 per week (£990.97 per annum x 14% = £138.74 per annum) Average rent for 1 bed flat in Wisbech: Average Rent is £476.33 per month (£109.92 per week) based on 15 flats advertising on Right Move's website 09/10/2020. Local Housing Allowance Rate £103.56 per week, rent is £109.92 per week therefore top up housing benefit with £6.36 per week from Universal Credit money Money left-over for food, non-food, utilities & transport: Single and under 25: Universal Credit £79.10 per week Council tax to pay after Council Tax Reduction (Wisbech Band A) £2.67 per week Housing Benefit top up £6.36 per week (average rent £109.92 – Local Housing Allowance Rate £103.56) = £70.07 per week leftover for food, non-food (such as toilet rolls, toothpaste), utilities* and transport. Single and 25 or over: Universal Credit £94.59 per week Council tax to pay after Council Tax Reduction (Wisbech Band A) £2.67 per week Housing Benefit top up £6.36 per week (average rent £109.92 – Local Housing Allowance rate £103.56) = £85.56 per week leftover for food, non-food (such as toilet rolls, toothpaste), utilities* and transport. *electricity, gas, water SUMMARY: A single person under 25 years only has £70.07 per week to live on so cannot possibly afford to pay any more council tax. People under 25 years are the most likely age group to struggle to find work due to their lack of transport, their being considered too young and being inexperienced so it is unfair to penalise them for not being able to find work. To increase council tax for people under 25 years could also lead to debt and homeless at a young age - not a great way to start life. However, a single person 25 years and over has £85.56 per week to live on so you could charge them 20% (£198.19 per annum, £3.81 per week, leaving £84.42 per week to live on after housing benefit top up) or 25% (£247.74 per annum, £4.76 per week, leaving £83.47 per week to live on, after housing benefit top up). Can I suggest that you target people who are better off rather than those who are struggling already? For example, charge more for the brown bin subscription, bulky waste collection, rents on properties owned by the council, planning fees, licensing fees, etc.

21	i am a single disabled man struggling to cope on minimum money so taking council tax would make my life harder a . so no i do now agree with council tax for the disabled.	10/16/2020 2:55 PM
22	Fly tipping is getting worse and people should be billed accordingly. I think the service should be included in the CT bill so that people would take more responsibility	10/16/2020 12:22 PM
23	The DWP have increased the amount of Universal Credit for this year, due to Covid 19 but the plan is to bring this amount back down again in 2021. Therefore, I will have less money available to me to pay any of my bills and it will be a struggle to pay more towards my Council Tax bill.	10/15/2020 2:21 PM
24	I am of working age but due to my conditions I CANNOT WORK. Its not that I dont want to work. Grossly unfair to be penalised like that. I feel some people should pay more as they dont even make the effort to find work. I get enhanced rate of PIP. There should be exclusions in the price for this benefit, which i use to try and make life a little more bearable.	10/14/2020 9:52 AM
25	It will put too many people already on low incomes further into financial difficulties and increase the poverty in an already deprived area, putting children in deeper poverty and deprivation.	10/13/2020 9:38 PM
26	I receive just under £80 per week universal credit (I am a single man, living on my own in a 1 bed flat). After topping up my housing benefit as it doesn't cover all my rent and paying my council tax at 14%, I have about £70 per week leftover for food, water, gas, electricity and buses which I just manage to scrape by on. There is no way I could pay more council tax. I would have to go without food or heating. Please do not increase how much I have to pay.	10/13/2020 4:45 PM
27	Ok for those lucky enough to perhaps be working in a part time capacity to pay towards CT, but for those that are in receipt of UC cannot afford to make payments towards CT as they don't get enough to pay their rent and ongoing bills like electric and gas, let along council tax.	10/13/2020 3:34 PM
28	Increasing the amount would not benefit people on low income or those that are disabled.	10/12/2020 3:04 PM
29	It's not fair to raise -let alone double - the charge for long term sick/disabled. It's not a choice to require this kind of support and it's not a temporary situation either. You would be penalising the disabled.	10/12/2020 1:32 PM
30	I am a disabled resident receiving ESA, PIP and housing benefit. Over the last 10 years I have	10/11/2020 6:56 PM

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seen the rate of benefits reduce in real terms as increases have not kept pace with inflation. The LHR rate of £485 per month is less than is needed to rent privately and my current rent which is set to increase each year by 5% is £575 per month. I believe that in the Government's own calculations I am now within the poverty sector of the UK and have to support my 14 year old son who lives with me. Should Fenland DC decide to raise the minimum amount of Council Tax above the current level of 14% they will be putting myself and my son into greater poverty. One way around this would be to exclude all residents on PIP from future increases in council tax until the benefits that they receive keep pace with inflation. I wish that I could work as then I would have some control over my life style but unfortunately my disabilities prevent this. Whilst I appreciate that the council need to find extra money perhaps this could be achieved by say raising the cost of the garden refuse bin scheme. I believe that some local authorities charge up to £56 p.a. for this scheme. assuming there are 5,000 households within the Fenland DC region an increase of this magnitude would raise an additional £80,000 p.a. which should negate the need to increase the amount of Council Tax.

31	As a married 66 year old disabled man my wife is my full time carer and we are in receipt of Council Tax support which we are truly grateful. At the moment I pay 14% towards my council tax bill and at times even this can be a struggle. The thought of having to pay more is very worrying when your finances are already stretched.	10/10/2020 2:29 PM
32	Don't tax the poor.	10/10/2020 10:20 AM
33	Dear Mr. Catchpole, If you make the increases to the minimum Council Tax contribution suggested in your recent letter you will be hurting some of the most vulnerable people in our community. If you increase it to 30%, you could cause people's premature demise. On your conscience be it. Kind regards [REDACTED]	10/9/2020 10:08 AM
34	The criteria for claiming Council Tax Benefit are strict already, so those claiming really need the financial support. I don't think it would be right to increase their bill by a large amount.	10/9/2020 9:40 AM
35	This is not a good idea because of people losing their jobs in these current circumstances plus the money they get from the government is less it would not help with people's mental health	10/8/2020 10:55 PM
36	you say working age well that means at the rate they keep putting up the pension age I will never become a pensioner. I have worked all my life on the bases that I would be getting my pension now. At 61 I am the youngest of 8 my sibling sisters all have there's I have 4 brothers then me my pension age as gone from 60 / 65/ 66/ now not sure if it is /67 as I understand 67 is being brought forward. I have work part time from the age of 11. 45 to 55 hours a week from the age of 16 i have worked all my life in the main doing physical work I have messed up my joints and nerve endings because of a life time of putting them under pressure in fact I have lugged lifted pushed and carried heavier things than most men I know. so when again you say pensioners are except and I am missing out again through no fault of my own I have to say it should not penalize people over 60. And if you do then no more than 20% also younger people also have larger family's and take more out the system so like mine and my parents generation had to pay all our council tax there were not all the benefit's that they get now. if you did not pay your rent no one else was going to pay it for you, work 2 or 3 jobs if you had to. If you the council have to get extra money then fare enough I will have to pay it but it should be 20% for over 60% and more for under 60.	10/8/2020 9:35 PM
37	I may get council tax reduction as im unable to work due to my health so i find it so unfair that i should be punished when i cant work as im so ill i can understand the council needs to make cuts on spending but to put a higher council tax on me seems so unfair when most of them i wont need due to the risk of covid-19	10/8/2020 1:26 PM
38	Finding things hard expect increase of single propulsion	10/8/2020 11:39 AM
39	As a carer for my husband I find it difficult enough paying for his extra needs as he ages this change would be extra stress I don't need.	10/7/2020 10:15 PM
40	important to ensure ONLY those entitled to relief can get it. I think too many people who do not need support are playing the system!	10/7/2020 7:54 PM
41	We cannot keep penalising the people that genuinely need help. I understand we need balance but while COVID-19 is around he need to support residents!	10/7/2020 7:28 PM
42	I am of working age, however, It was necessary for me to give up paid employment to become an unpaid family carer of my now adult daughter. Since she became an adult , the financial support (child benefit , child maintenance etc) stopped and finances have been hugely	10/7/2020 3:49 PM

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impacted. I don't think it's fair to hit those who are already struggling . Unpaid carers and those with disabilities already face financial hardship .

43	I am disabled and can no longer work, the law states I need x amount to live on, which you will know doesn't give me a privileged life. Now you want to take more money away!!!!!! Totally unacceptable. I have hardly been out of my bungalow since March have spent more money i can't afford on facemasks, hand sanitizer and disinfectant now this. Why don't you increase the amount of council tax to those earning over 50k a year instead of penalising the disabled.	10/7/2020 1:10 PM
44	Absolutely discusting! You can not take more from those already struggling! How about you look closer to home all those who are wealthy and have several businesses in the town!! It's not like the money gets spent in the right places anyway the hight Street is a mess!!! There is no way this can happen I'm already in debt with my council tax because its either pay that or put food in my kids mouths!!! Don't take from the poor!	10/7/2020 1:09 PM
45	This decision appears to be a knee jerk reaction to a problem that you've not explained in full and are now seeking support from the public. What are the current levels of spending? What are the projected levels of spending? What have you spent the government support money you recently received on? Why do you think people should struggle further without full explanation? In general I don't support heavy welfare support, but this comes across as heartless and without thought during a tough period.	10/7/2020 12:41 PM
46	I do not believe that those who have already been unfortunate to lose work through the pandemic should have this cost increased.	10/7/2020 11:27 AM
47	My husband and I are living on a low income but because we have saved for our retirement are penalised. We don't have mobile phones on contract, but pay as you go, we don't have Sky, Virgin or any other pay TV and we don't smoke. We have to pay full Council Tax on our low income. Instead of making those that do pay their tax pay more, charge those that don't.	10/7/2020 10:57 AM
48	Its wrong to ask those with the least to pay even more	10/7/2020 10:53 AM
49	Hitting the poor and needy to fund services that could be made more efficient is ridiculous. There are so many grants for unnecessary projects that can be stopped.	10/7/2020 9:17 AM
50	I rely very heavily on this reduction as disabled hence my being unable to work full time. But I do try. I think there should be a sliding scale. However i can see that homelessness and food bank usage will increase. So feel that potentially morel money will be needed from other budgets elsewhere to support the consequences. I have been suicidal due to money worries since covid so more pressure would not help me at all.	10/7/2020 8:52 AM
51	It's vital that those genuinely claiming council tax support continue to do so rather than put them into greater difficulty. Befoe you introduce any increases, which you will no doubt have to do if you get no further Gov't support, FDC need to beef up those currently claiming as there are people who are not genuinely entitled and making false claims.	10/7/2020 8:34 AM
52	I can barley keep my head above water now with bills food rent etc and increase would mean not eating or not paying my rent	10/6/2020 2:00 PM
53	If this proposal goes through it will result in serious hardship for people who are already on very low incomes. It is also not fair that only working age people have to be the only group that bear the brunt of these increases. Pensioners should also be expected to have to pay towards it. I also think that you will be spending money on extra admin, courts, bailiffs, etc to try and get money out of people that don't have extra money to give you. I appreciate you have to get money from somewhere but potentially doubling the percentage of council tax reduction expected to be paid by residents who are already struggling, should not be one of them.	10/6/2020 10:20 AM
54	If you need to raise money, perhaps increase charges on the sports centres, bring in paid parking, or ask the richest in the district to pay a little more. What sort of person would suggest you hit the poorest, disabled, most vulnerable people in society? Since the libraries are currently not open properly due to covid, make redundancies. The result of expecting say a single parent on £74 a week, to pay £30 a month is ridiculous and cruel as you will be driving them to desperate measures. They will get further in debt and have to cut back on essentials like telephone and broadband and transport, all vital if they want to look for work and go for interviews. Perhaps look at increasing the council tax on bands higher than band E and ask for a small 5% increase. I *do* realise that with a Tory run council, the very first thoughts will *always* be, "lets hurts the poorest, the most vulnerable, the old and the sick first". Rather than the wealthiest people in the district. I suppose I can only be thankful that nobody has	10/6/2020 9:15 AM

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considered a 'final solution' for us 'unproductive members of society' yet, although I'm sure Priti Patel has something up her sleeve. Shame on you. I'm also sure that this 'consultation' is no more than a nod at democracy and you'll do whatever you have decided to do anyway.

55	It is hard enough at the moment trying to pay bills and putting food on the table our benefits are not going to increase with the amount you want to increase council tax. We do not receive a weekly amount inline with what pensioners receive but it is always the lowest paid people on benefits you want to make life even harder for. The majority of people on benefits are mainly willing to work if they can find work, but a lot of people are sick or disabled and you want to penalise the lowest paid people yet again disgraceful	10/6/2020 6:35 AM
56	Help the work force instead of helping those who pay nothing from the crown pocket	10/5/2020 10:27 PM
57	Why is it always the poorest people who have to foot the bill ? We are the least able to afford this increase! Our income does not go up each year by pounds it goes up by pence ! Perhaps we could all see the councils financial records ? Then we could advise on where savings can be made ! No one will allow us to do it as we are classed as second rate citizens! Some of us are disabled through hard work and do not choose to be this way ! If you tax the people who are able to afford it you may loose your votes. This Country is run by greed and money ! I would love to come to a Council meeting and bring up ways to save money ! Bet I don't get the chance ? Start thinking about lower income people and stop robbing us blind !!	10/5/2020 6:31 PM
58	As a disabled person, I am living on so little money that having to pay more towards council tax will seriously affect my life. I don't understand why we were given money from the government this year to help because of the effects of covid and you now want to take it back in raising what we pay.	10/5/2020 6:25 PM
59	People on support (mostly disabled or genuinely in need of help) are/have been already severely struggling in this world that only cares about the rich. Many struggle to even eat with today's food costs. I think it is completely horrible and disgusting that you even contemplate possibly doubling the poorest's tax fees. A slight rise may mean we eat less and struggle more but is perhaps inevitable. I myself already barely live or have any desire to carry on even. I feel many will simply end their lives if we are made to struggle much more than we already are. Just watch and see... Or is that the plan to get rid of the poor or disabled?	10/5/2020 4:27 PM
60	The best way to reduce local government cost would be to abolish District councils altogether. Why do we need three tiers of local government?	10/5/2020 4:02 PM
61	i think putting the percentage to pay towards council tax shouldnt go up for people who are on full benefits . we struggle now to pay bills and keep our families fed . putting the price up will put the people who struggle already in more poverty . it should stay as it is and charge the people who pay full council tax more	10/5/2020 3:53 PM
62	As I live on benefits but own my own house so have to pay for any problems arising With house I need as much money as I can get. When I reach state pension age I will go back to paying full council tax. So for now the reduction scheme helps me immensely....	10/5/2020 3:22 PM
63	I am on universal credit due to ill health. If you increase the reduction from 14% this would greatly affect my circumstances. I am having problems now paying all my bills, I have nothing left. It would help not having to pay bedroom tax, it's a disgrace we have to pay this. My financial circumstances would be much better if I stopped paying this.	10/5/2020 2:53 PM
64	I am a disabled person living on esa & pip benefits. I cannot afford to pay more towards my council tax.	10/5/2020 2:52 PM
65	The people benefiting from this reduction are people being forced into claiming benefits to survive. These people are not working for good reasons, either from medical conditions, mental health conditions, or family difficulties. I find it very disturbing that the council is considering charging these vulnerable people even more money, on top of the difficulties arising from the covid-19 situation, their income being limited due to the implementation of the horrible new benefits system greatly having reduced their income, and already struggling with crippling medical and mental health conditions. The people benefitting from these reductions used to get a 100% reduction and have already had their benefits reduced in a way that forces them to pay some of the money towards their council tax. They are already dealing on a daily basis with difficulties regarding finances, limited income, cost of living greatly increasing with the covid-19 situation but the benefits not following suit, increasing cost of rented accommodation with the housing benefits threshold not changing accordingly, and majorly increasing costs of energy bills and water bills. Should this new rule be accepted, This will cause a lot of distress	10/5/2020 2:33 PM

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to many families that are already experiencing very stark difficulties and will cause I am sure, further levels of debts for families already struggling with their daily lives.

66	Many people, like me, who rely on benefit are struggling to make ends meet now to double increase or double the amount of council tax they have to pay will force them into financial difficulty. The knock on effect to other council and public services is there fore likely to out way the savings that are hoped to be saved by this.	10/5/2020 2:30 PM
67	I'm definitely NOT able to PAY Council Tax as I'm on UNIVERSAL CREDIT plus I'm UNFIT TO WORK.	10/5/2020 1:56 PM
68	I am now widowed and disabled from work so the support the council give me is very important for me to stay independent and manage my bills and I am 64 years young	10/5/2020 1:54 PM
69	it does seem a shame that it will be the vulnerable people that will be paying the cost of the saving targets. Those people that are receiving the reduction are the ones already on a low wage or, like myself with a disability. we already struggle to pay the council tax and the bedroom tax. I feel making us pay extra is just another low blow.	10/5/2020 1:53 PM
70	It's very clear term "working age" is completely irreverent and a stupid label to give someone who's income is solely from benefits only. It's obviously idiotic to assume someone who isn't working can afford another 14% or even more from a fixed sum. Utterly ridiculous bordering sadistic and totally uncaring and heartless but of course it's from the Fenland District Council so business as usual.	10/5/2020 1:53 PM
71	I'm disabled, live alone and live off ESA (support group). Increasing the minimum contribution will significantly effect my already stretched budget. It's not like I can just try harder, find a job and then have the money to pay more council tax. Until I became ill I worked and paid tax, I never had benefits. This feels like punishing me for not being able to magically heal my damaged body, get a job and contribute more to society!	10/5/2020 1:32 PM
72	I'm disabled, live alone and live off ESA (support group). Increasing the minimum contribution will significantly effect my already stretched budget. It's not like I can just try harder, find a job and then have the money to pay more council tax. Until I became ill I worked and paid tax, I never had benefits. This feels like punishing me for not being able to magically heal my damaged body, get a job and contribute more to society!	10/5/2020 1:32 PM
73	If the council employs cowboys then you are going to get cowboy work. The council don't do nothing.	10/5/2020 1:08 PM
74	It's a reduction to support those who are disabled and unable to work Better ways to cut spending than targeting those who are in need of support	10/5/2020 12:57 PM
75	i am a carer for my wife so all i get is carers allowance and my wife is on long term benefit,therefore we are on very low income so an increase would really be a struggle for ourselves	10/5/2020 12:46 PM
76	People who work should have to pay a bit more than the people who dont work, if you rely on benefits it shouldnt change, if you have pip or disability then i think the council tax bill should be less to pay. I can only afford to pay the £19 at the moment i cant pay anymore than that. People who have mansions should pay more for a start if they can afford a house like that thrn they can pay more towards the bill. People who are on a low income shouldnt have to pay the increased amount it should stay the same. People of pension age shouldnt have to pay it either	10/5/2020 12:31 PM
77	I'm registered dissabled my children are all dissabled we shouldn't have to pay poll tax at all so change it . If your on disability benefits u don't pay if your just loving life on the doll increase it to maximum bill	10/5/2020 12:26 PM
78	Why does it not apply to pensioners. This is really unfair. Disabled have a hard enough time as it is without having to worry about finding more money for council tax	10/5/2020 12:25 PM
79	COVID has effected the poorest in the community the worst. Why this financial attack? Every penny to a low income family matters more than those with disposable income. May I suggest the council looks for savings from those who perhaps can afford it more or cut other services as their increased council tax may mean the difference to something having their hair done or visiting the barber to someone missing a few meals!	10/5/2020 12:23 PM
80	Whilst I can see the thinking behind this proposal can I point out that this would hit again those	10/5/2020 12:23 PM

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within Fenland that are already hit by the austerity measures of central Govt which have been implemented without mercy for over 10 years. Almost all benefits barring state pension have not been raised ,or if raised by only a few pence and I honestly cannot see how increasing council tax payments for this group can possibly work. I think many within certain groups will just fall ever more into debt. Those within the disabled groups have been hit especially hard by central Govt policies both economically and also by the closures of many centres. The only group that appear to have been left alone are the very group you intend not to raise the CT for..those with pensions are perhaps the only group that can afford the increase. I would also like to point out the recent increase in pension age for women to 66..and that coupled with a huge increase in unemployment will mean those women will be doubly hit both by the increase of state pension and by an ever decreasing employment market that will no doubt view women of 50+ to be "unemployable". I think fenland council might need to look elsewhere in order to raise revenue. Perhaps it seemed a good idea to increase CT revenue from those with the least money but I should imagine you will have huge expenditure occurring in trying to recoup money via courts etc .Please rethink this before people spiral into debt through no fault of theirs.

81	An increase to 20% may be possible to some but those with autism and other disabilities should be exempt from any rises as finding work is near impossible for these groups! You could also increase council tax for earners by 1% as minimum wage has increased significantly	10/5/2020 11:56 AM
82	People are already living in poverty finding it hard to pay all there bills while feeding there family. Uping council tax by 25 or 30 % is going to be to much to a lot of familys who are already struggling i think if there is an increase it should only be 20 percent. Familys have also been affected by covid.	10/5/2020 11:47 AM
83	Consider a massive reduction in benefits to new universal credit and explain where they are to find the extra money when I here so many already attend food banks. This has been a massive learning curve for me and I fear the response from joe public to raise it also have no understanding of how poor new people are to this system. Perhaps reducing the amount of council tax letters you continuously send out would greatly reduce your cost and making sure rubbish collections are done according to route instead of sending out again for roads missed out. Money spent on fixing pot holes and bumpy roads done properly in the first place instead of redoing all the time. Cut down on red tape and reduce your own workforce.	10/5/2020 11:22 AM
84	Stop targeting the poor and vulnerable.If extra revenue is needed, take it from those who can afford it.Many ddisabled people don't have the option to work, so should be exempt.	10/5/2020 11:13 AM
85	I don't agree with benefit recipients being made to pay any money. It is totally unfair. Other councils eg huntingdonshire Council do not make benefit recipients pay any. Why should working age people on benefits pay when pensioners do not have to. If one group has to pay so should the other. It is ageism.	10/5/2020 11:02 AM
86	We are paying council tax but also paying bedroom tax even though we are all disabled. Our 30 yr old son is registered disabled but we have to pay full price for him. We will struggle to pay any extra.	10/5/2020 10:43 AM
87	I feel that in my area that is well known for a lot of people on benefits that need to use food banks at the moment to help survive week by week. By increasing the amount of council tax that needs to be paid by people on low income in increases the risk to child poverty and shortages of basic essentials. Also just because someone is of working age does not mean that they are work capable, as the current DWP medical system is broken and this forces a lot of people with disabilities to be classed as capable to work. With the added stress of more council tax added to the pressure to apply for unsuitable work, this could lead to an adverse affect to already vulnerable peoples mental welfare.	10/5/2020 10:15 AM
88	Sadly covid has hit everyone hard and money needs to be recouped to keep afloat, There are hard times ahead, But agree cut backs need to be implemented, We certainly don't need the current mayor if Wisbech as he's so far to date Proved he not a good example to be holding the position, the expenses paid to him could be better spent else we're	10/5/2020 10:10 AM
89	Council taxes are high enough for those of that have worked and paid our way without assistance from anybody. 14per cent is adequate	10/4/2020 1:05 PM
90	Council Tax is weighted against the poor and therefore should be abolished and incorporated in Income Tax. Funnily enough, the rich and the Conservatives don't like this idea very much.	10/3/2020 5:52 PM
91	I am worried that with so many people facing unemployment through no fault of their own, this	10/3/2020 4:58 PM

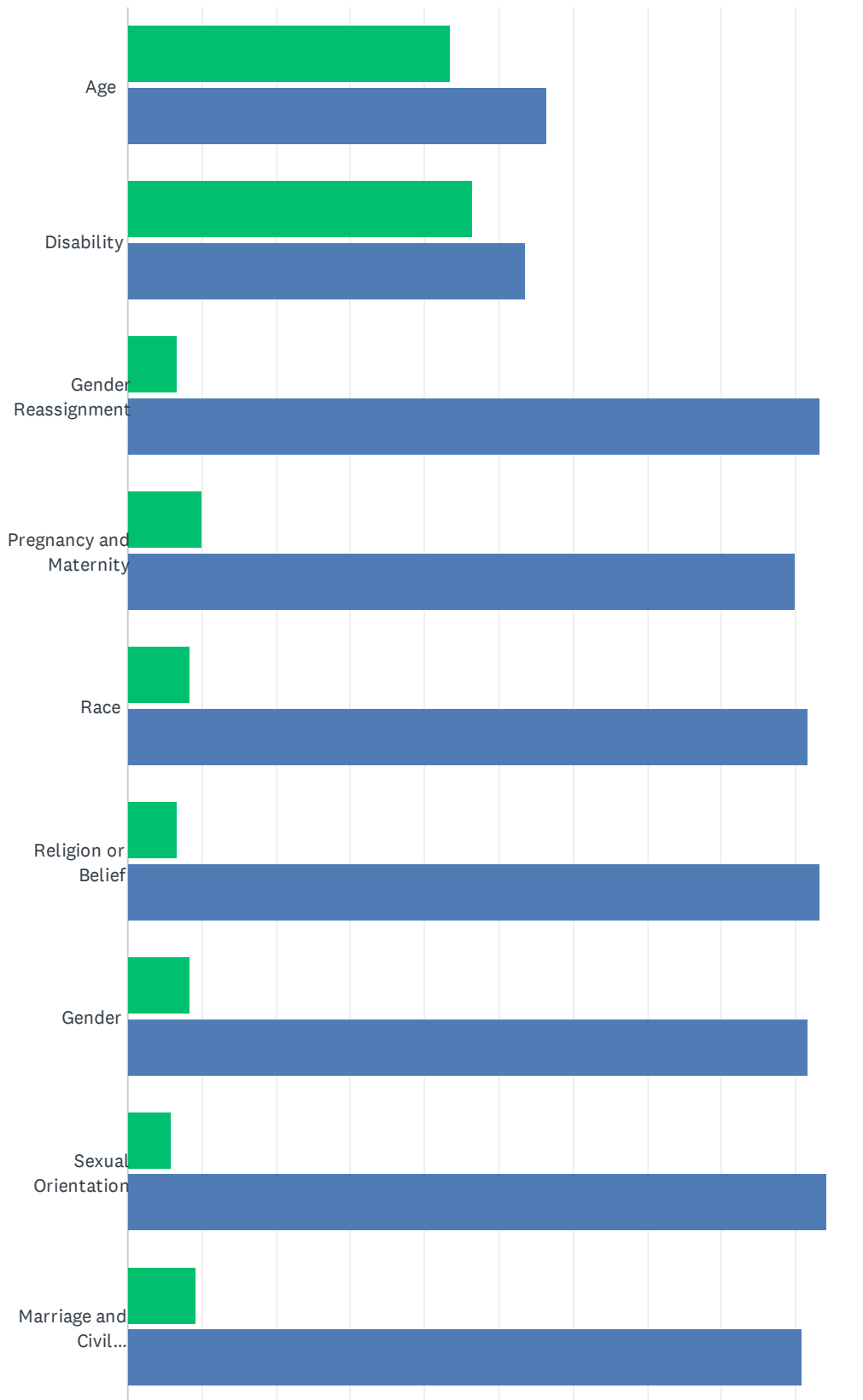
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will further penalise people. I work full-time at the moment and pay council tax myself but am facing possible redundancy . Council tax support is paid to people that need it and should continue as it is at no more than 14%

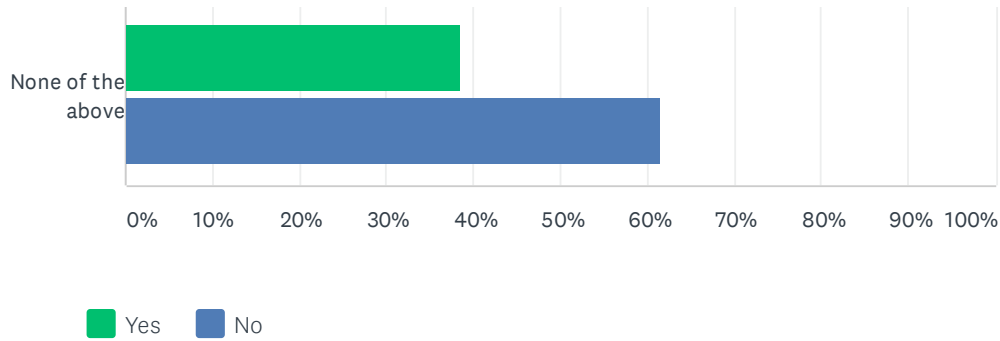
92	It has been suggested that there will be a benefit freeze by the government in the next budget. If this goes ahead, an increase in CT reduction will in real terms mean a cut in money for those on benefits. If it doesn't go ahead then any benefit increase will be swallowed up by paying for CT. Any increase over 20% would again mean a real terms cut in benefits.	10/3/2020 10:43 AM
93	Our bill is nearly 2k a month why shouldn't people pay they get help and £10 a month isn't bad in comparison to our bill.	10/3/2020 9:01 AM
94	if you go to high some people may get into debt cause they cant afford the increase as benefits dont go up enough to cover increase	10/3/2020 8:44 AM
95	In times of need, 10 years of austerity, more people losing their jobs, those on low incomes who already can not afford to live and with more children in poverty I think it's a disgrace to increase tax on low income families. It's a pressure they don't need and don't deserve. It may seem like a fiver increase but when people have not much a fiver a month is a lot. So I absolutely believe council tax contributions should NOT be increased	10/2/2020 10:53 PM
96	how do you expect people to live if the tax rises? people are struggling as it is and all you can think about is putting tax up.	10/2/2020 9:09 PM
97	.	10/2/2020 8:37 PM
98	Cut the ridiculous salaries paid to your top bods!	10/2/2020 7:18 PM
99	This is a terrible idea, just because more people are in need of support given the unprecedented circumstances, doesn't mean they are any more able to pay council tax due to their circumstances. This proposed increase would put more stress and pressure on these people at the time of most need of support. I cannot believe this is even being proposed. Benefits are meant to be safety nets for those in need and in unfortunate circumstances. I hope to never ever need support from either local or central government, but would hope if I was in need, then the proper support and safety net is in place.	10/2/2020 6:45 PM
100	Cut some of the obscene salaries and pensions paid to senior council officials before increasing hardship on low earners.	10/2/2020 6:09 PM
101	To apply a change to people of working age is age discrimination and would easily be challengeable in a appeal on that basis. Further more using the fact there is an increase in demand for the service as a reason to make people pay more is not a valid justification for such an increase. Especially when you are proposing one option as doubling the amount. This is actually going to push more people who need this service further into hardship and debt at a time they really are probably already struggling beyond their means, with many of them requiring food banks already. Instead you should apply better logic here. The needs of these few should be met by those that can afford it. Those that pay the full council tax. I would happily pay more if it means that the needy don't. Further more you should look for more efficiency improvements that can be made in other areas or ways of working smarter. That will actually result in cost savings.	10/2/2020 6:09 PM
102	Lower the support the elderly get, they get 100% while we are not working so they stay safe during covid. It's the fact people can't work properly that is increasing the amount of claims.	10/2/2020 5:52 PM

Q8 Do you feel any of the following have been a factor in the issues you have raised?

Answered: 162 Skipped: 8



Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Proposals



	YES	NO	TOTAL
Age	43.61% 58	56.39% 75	133
Disability	46.38% 64	53.62% 74	138
Gender Reassignment	6.61% 8	93.39% 113	121
Pregnancy and Maternity	10.00% 12	90.00% 108	120
Race	8.33% 10	91.67% 110	120
Religion or Belief	6.67% 8	93.33% 112	120
Gender	8.40% 10	91.60% 109	119
Sexual Orientation	5.88% 7	94.12% 112	119
Marriage and Civil Partnerships	9.17% 11	90.83% 109	120
None of the above	38.53% 42	61.47% 67	109

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#	IF YOU'VE TICKED ANY OF THE BOXES, PLEASE TELL US WHY. THIS WILL HELP US UNDERSTAND HOW OUR PROPOSALS AFFECT THESE PARTS OF THE COMMUNITY.	DATE
1	My wife and I are in our 30's with 2 children. We both went to university and have professional jobs that pay well which allow us to afford a nice home a contribute to the local economy of March where we chose to live and raise our children. It seems apparent though that with each year that passes our financial obligations to our local authority are becoming evermore increased with little apparent service for our contributions such. I am glad that we live in a country that supports those in need of financial help, but saddened when we are expected to fill any gaps in finances, such as to pay for adult social care, simply because we work very hard. If financial punishment on the hard working and 'wealthy' of March continues it will drive these people out	12/7/2020 4:47 PM
2	Being a line parent is hard enough without the fear you may have to pay more. How about increasing the amount people with massive houses or those on a larger income have to pay rather than stealing off the poorer people!	12/2/2020 8:10 PM
3	Make the pavement safer to walk on for the elderly and disabled and children and mum with prams and wheelchair	11/26/2020 11:34 AM
4	Those with severe disabilities have less chance of having a well paid job, or in many cases, being able to do any job.	11/10/2020 5:58 PM
5	cant believe single person had to pay so much more than single parent, make it fair	10/28/2020 10:22 AM
6	does not cover mental health problems, I needed a lot of help to complete this survey, but hopefully it will be of help	10/26/2020 11:18 AM
7	I'm in my 20s and I get less money because of my age. It is hard to get a job because of my age and because I'm black.	10/25/2020 4:14 PM
8	Disability can come in many forms ,and with extra expenses as it is.	10/21/2020 12:37 PM
9	As explained above, under 25 year olds are often unemployed through no fault of their own and the amount of Universal Credit they are paid is minimal and to pay more council tax would cause immense pressure on them financially, mentally and they could end up in debt and homeless. Please do not charge them more. Just for the record. I am not under 25 years old, nor am I on Council Tax Reduction, so this does not affect me. I just feel strongly that you are putting our young people in danger if you charge them more council tax.	10/19/2020 3:10 PM
10	i am disabled, live on my own.money is tight. i do not agree with the disabled paying council tax.	10/16/2020 2:55 PM
11	N/A	10/15/2020 2:21 PM
12	Disability comes in all shapes and forms including severe mental health issues, i feel the anxiety finding this extra money may tip the balance and cause severe hardship in an already cost rising time.	10/14/2020 9:52 AM
13	I have ticked the age box because this question directly refers to those within a certain age bracket. (Working age), which actually represents people from age 16 to age 65+.	10/13/2020 3:34 PM
14	regardless of age or lifestyle disability an increase would be more harmful and that fenland Council should look to reducing costs over increasing charges for residents. Especially in a covid world where money is so precious to citizens on low income or in need of extra help due to disability	10/12/2020 3:04 PM
15	It's not fair to raise -let alone double - the charge for long term sick/disabled. It's not a choice to require this kind of support and it's not a temporary situation either. You would be penalising the disabled.	10/12/2020 1:32 PM
16	People with disabilities are often on means tested benefits and fall within the poverty sector as defined by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation et.al. Any increase in this proposal will severely impact people with disabilities who claim means tested benefits pushing them deeper into poverty. As commercial rents continue to outstrip LHR we find ourselves having to use the money we require for food being used to support rent and other bills. The consequence of this is that we eat more poorly than thos better off which relates to increased illnesses, higher medical and healthcare costs and ultimately increased death rates as can be seen all over the country and is amplified by the current Covid19 epidemic. With your proposed increases you	10/11/2020 6:56 PM

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will either be pushing costs onto the NHS or worse still be directly responsible for increased mortality rates. Is this what Fenland DC wishes to be remembered for?

17	Financial strain on an already limited budget.	10/10/2020 2:29 PM
18	It's a free world, be who you are.	10/10/2020 10:20 AM
19	This is only aimed at the working age & not everyone & people who have a disability have enough struggles without having to pay more	10/10/2020 1:00 AM
20	My age is a factor only in as far as my experience of life.	10/9/2020 9:40 AM
21	you say working age well that means at the rate they keep putting up the pension age I will never become a pensioner. I have worked all my life on the bases that I would be getting my pension now. At 61 I am the youngest of 8 my sibling sisters all have there's I have 4 brothers then me my pension age as gone from 60 / 65/ 66/ now not sure if it is /67 as I understand 67 is being brought forward. I have work part time from the age of 11. 45 to 55 hours a week from the age of 16 i have worked all my life in the main doing physical work I have messed up my joints and nerve endings because of a life time of putting them under pressure in fact I have lugged lifted pushed and carried heavier things then most men I know. so when again you say pensioners are except and I am missing out again through no fault of my own I have to say it should not penalize people over 60. And if you do then no more than 20% also younger people also have larger family's and take more out the system so like mine and my parents generation had to pay all our council tax there were not all the benefit's that they get now. if you did not pay your rent no one else was going to pay it for you, work 2 or 3 jobs if you had to. If you the council have to get extra money then fare enough I will have to pay it but it should be 20% for over 60% and more for under 60.	10/8/2020 9:38 PM
22	you say working age well that means at the rate they keep putting up the pension age I will never become a pensioner. I have worked all my life on the bases that I would be getting my pension now. At 61 I am the youngest of 8 my sibling sisters all have there's I have 4 brothers then me my pension age as gone from 60 / 65/ 66/ now not sure if it is /67 as I understand 67 is being brought forward. I have work part time from the age of 11. 45 to 55 hours a week from the age of 16 i have worked all my life in the main doing physical work I have messed up my joints and nerve endings because of a life time of putting them under pressure in fact I have lugged lifted pushed and carried heavier things then most men I know. so when again you say pensioners are except and I am missing out again through no fault of my own I have to say it should not penalize people over 60. And if you do then no more than 20% also younger people also have larger family's and take more out the system so like mine and my parents generation had to pay all our council tax there were not all the benefit's that they get now. if you did not pay your rent no one else was going to pay it for you, work 2 or 3 jobs if you had to. If you the council have to get extra money then fare enough I will have to pay it but it should be 20% for over 60% and more for under 60.	10/8/2020 9:38 PM
23	as above	10/8/2020 9:35 PM
24	As both myself and my husband age our needs change and we require more support which increases our costs. My husband is severely disabled and I am only just managing now. This possible change would add more stress to myself and my husband.	10/7/2020 10:15 PM
25	Unpaid family carer (working age) , resigned from paid employment to look after disabled family memberalso working age.	10/7/2020 3:49 PM
26	Disability....we are poorer	10/7/2020 1:10 PM
27	Younger people tend to get more discriminated then the older because some people abuse the systems.	10/7/2020 9:23 AM
28	I'm currently unable to work due to having Cancer. This increase would hit those affected with disabilities and illnesses the most. We rely on the support we are given and the reduction in the council tax. Increasing this would have an immense impact on our finances. Covid shouldnt have to affect our present as well as our future. As per usual the council/government pick on those needing the support more than ever. Perhaps look at the ways within house to cut costs first and foremost before you pick on the little people that are already finding it hard to get by with the little they already have!	10/7/2020 9:22 AM
29	Feel that elderly and disabled are at risk from this change.	10/7/2020 8:52 AM
30	Those on minimum wage who are receiving fewer hours because of Covid will be struggling	10/7/2020 8:34 AM

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even more.

31	We barely keep going month by month as it is an increase of any kind anywhere would mean not paying a bill or not eating	10/6/2020 2:00 PM
32	Many 'working age' people are unable to work because of disability and cannot find a job because of their age. Currently the state retirement age is 67. Not many employers are going to give a 65 year old a full time job, paying enough to keep them out of poverty. Pregnant women or mothers with small children, will also be less likely to be working full time. So women, mothers, old people and disabled people will be more likely to be hurt by an increase of the contribution required.	10/6/2020 9:15 AM
33	It will effect people from all walks of life many of whom have no other choice but to claim benefits due to there curcumstances	10/6/2020 6:35 AM
34	Please see my comments above , then see I I get the invite!	10/5/2020 6:31 PM
35	As I said above, My disability means I can't work and I don't have much money to survive. Because I am of working age (56) has no relation to my ability to pay more.	10/5/2020 6:25 PM
36	people who have disabilities or should not have to pay more than they do now . to be honest they shouldnt have to pay anything towards council tax . it also shouldnt matter what age you are . people on benefits barely get enough to live on as it is . getting them to pay more towards the council tax would put them into more financial poverty .	10/5/2020 3:53 PM
37	Being	10/5/2020 3:22 PM
38	I am working age but not able to work due to my disabilities.	10/5/2020 2:52 PM
39	People already struggling with disabilities, mental health conditions and medical conditions barely get enough to get by as it is. This new rule would cause their income to get further reduced and they already struggle as it is now.	10/5/2020 2:33 PM
40	The above groups are more likely to be struggling financially.	10/5/2020 2:30 PM
41	Every person should be assessed	10/5/2020 1:56 PM
42	Yes my age as I am 64 years old and I am disabled from work and also suffer from anxiety and depression since I lost my wife two years ago and I am struggling to cope so these issues should be taken into consideration for my council tax because I try to be independent as much as I can and with the amounts you are talking of raising it by my benefits done go up that much each year and I really appreciate the help I get from fenland Council	10/5/2020 1:54 PM
43	you have assumed that all working age people are able to work. you have not taken into account people with a disability such as myself.	10/5/2020 1:53 PM
44	Working age has no relevance whereas income has this includes people where personal disability is not considered too.	10/5/2020 1:53 PM
45	I'm disabled, live alone and live off ESA (support group). Increasing the minimum contribution will significantly effect my already stretched budget. It's not like I can just try harder, find a job and then have the money to pay more council tax. Until I became ill I worked and paid tax, I never had benefits. This feels like punishing me for not being able to magically heal my damaged body and contribute more to society!	10/5/2020 1:32 PM
46	I'm disabled, live alone and live off ESA (support group). Increasing the minimum contribution will significantly effect my already stretched budget. It's not like I can just try harder, find a job and then have the money to pay more council tax. Until I became ill I worked and paid tax, I never had benefits. This feels like punishing me for not being able to magically heal my damaged body and contribute more to society!	10/5/2020 1:32 PM
47	With a disability money is scarce when not working or only working a few hours.	10/5/2020 1:07 PM
48	Changes affect support for disabled.	10/5/2020 12:57 PM
49	I said it all in the last comment box	10/5/2020 12:31 PM
50	This is a direct attack on a certain age group with a minimum income. Both agist and classist.	10/5/2020 12:23 PM
51	The disabled and women have borne the brunt of both austerity and of pension age increase.	10/5/2020 12:23 PM

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52	Those who are autistic and/or have other disabilities should not be forced to shell out even more money as they are seriously disadvantaged in the employment market.	10/5/2020 11:56 AM
53	Working age disabled people and their carers ,who are unable to work,are ,once again being targeted.	10/5/2020 11:13 AM
54	You are penalising working age benefit recipients. Just because people of working age are on benefit doesnt mean they don't deserve the same treatment as older people	10/5/2020 11:02 AM
55	I feel due to the pressures already applied against disabled people by the DWP in getting recognised as disabled, having the added stress of trying to provide the basics for dependants which would come from an increase in council tax, would severely impact on peoples mental welfare	10/5/2020 10:15 AM
56	No	10/5/2020 10:10 AM
57	We receive council tax support due to disability and feel that the proposals have not been looked at for people in this category. I do know that COVID19 has caused a massive debt all round and these funds need to be recouped	10/5/2020 9:26 AM
58	because I am a sensible person and made my decisions based on the information available, and common sense	10/3/2020 1:24 PM
59	Anybody claiming any benefits would be effected as described above	10/3/2020 10:43 AM
60	we all use services so shouldnt have anything to do with what we are	10/3/2020 8:44 AM
61	So it will effect people who may be on disability allowance It may affect these from a minority ethic group It may effect woman and these on maternity The reason for this is these groups are disproportionately associated with low incomes. Therefore in increasing the amount of council tax you are discriminating if against the to medium groups as they are most likely to fall in this bracket.	10/2/2020 10:53 PM
62	This is nothing to do with equality or other areas noted above. This is just about being decent human beings with empathy to others in distressing circumstances.	10/2/2020 6:45 PM
63	What you are proposing is discriminating against those of working age. Its pushing more working age people and people with disabilities who cannot work more into hardship. This also has a negative affect on single parent families who already struggle to provide for their children.	10/2/2020 6:09 PM
64	The help the elderly are getting when you are thinking of asking us to pay more.	10/2/2020 5:52 PM