

## Council Tax Reduction Scheme - Summary of consultation feedback

### PART A - QUANTITATIVE CONSULTATION

- A postal survey of all council tax benefit claimants affected.
- A postal survey of owners of second homes/long term empty properties, who are also affected.
- A postal survey of a random sample of residents, who are not claimants or owners of second homes/long term empty properties, to obtain an impartial perspective.
- An online survey of other people/organisations who wish to provide their views.

### Overall results

| Options   | Percent In favour <sup>1</sup> |                     |           | Number in favour <sup>2</sup> |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
|   | Claimants                      | Owners <sup>3</sup> | Residents | Online                        |
| Option 1 - general cut of council tax support by 18.5%                                | 41.6%                          | Not asked           | 62.2%     | 5                             |
| Option 2 - give more protection to vulnerable groups than is provided under Option 1  | 36.6%                          | Not asked           | 27.2%     | 10                            |
| • People with disabilities  | 28.4%                          | Not asked           | 24.0%     | 6                             |
| • Families with babies (up to 1 year old)   | 12.2%                          | Not asked           | 7.7%      | 4                             |
| • Families with young children (up to 5 years old)                                    | 17.7%                          | Not asked           | 7.2%      | 4                             |
| • Other people  | 7.6%                           | Not asked           | 2.7%      | 2                             |
| Option 3 - remove council tax discount on second homes and long term empty properties | 68.3%                          | 14.7%               | 78.5%     | 13                            |
| Option 4 - cap the amount of support to the level for a Band 'D' property             | 34.3%                          | Not asked           | 54.4%     | 8                             |
| Option 5 - remove the second adult rebate   | 24.9%                          | Not asked           | 58.2%     | 9                             |
| Based on returned/completed questionnaires:   | 1,418                          | 150                 | 980       | 16                            |

#### Notes:

1. Based on total number of responses (including "Not sure", "Prefer not to say", multiple responses and blanks).
2. In view of the very low number of respondents who completed the online survey, the results are expressed in number rather than percentage of responses.
3. Owners of second homes and long term (more than six months) empty properties.

## Claimants

The following two tables show the extent to which each group of claimants supports each option. Where there is majority support, the results are shown in bold black font. These results are based on all responses.

| Options   | Groups       |              |              |              |              |              |              |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|   | Males        | Females      | Under 25s    | 25-34s       | 35-44s       | 45-54s       | 55-64s       |
| Option 1 - general cut of council tax support by 18.5%                                | 37.8%        | 42.7%        | 39.3%        | 42.2%        | 44.4%        | 39.7%        | 37.8%        |
| Option 2 - give more protection to vulnerable groups than is provided under Option 1  | 42.0%        | 35.2%        | 36.1%        | 36.0%        | 33.7%        | 38.6%        | 42.3%        |
| • People with disabilities  | 36.3%        | 27.3%        | 29.5%        | 19.0%        | 26.2%        | 34.4%        | 38.5%        |
| • Families with babies (up to 1 year old)   | 12.7%        | 10.8%        | 23.0%        | 12.8%        | 10.4%        | 11.8%        | 8.7%         |
| • Families with young children (up to 5 years old)                                    | 15.5%        | 17.0%        | 29.5%        | 24.2%        | 14.3%        | 13.4%        | 16.1%        |
| • Other people  | 6.2%         | 8.2%         | 3.3%         | 10.4%        | 7.8%         | 7.1%         | 6.6%         |
| Option 3 - remove council tax discount on second homes and long term empty properties | <b>69.0%</b> | <b>68.8%</b> | <b>57.4%</b> | <b>69.2%</b> | <b>69.7%</b> | <b>69.2%</b> | <b>69.6%</b> |
| Option 4 - cap the amount of support to the level for a Band 'D' property             | 40.3%        | 33.5%        | 24.6%        | 29.4%        | 35.0%        | 37.9%        | 40.6%        |
| Option 5 - remove the second adult rebate   | 25.9%        | 24.1%        | 24.6%        | 29.4%        | 21.8%        | 24.3%        | 25.9%        |
| Number in each group  | 471          | 947          | 61           | 211          | 412          | 448          | 286          |

| Options   | Groups                            |                                      |                             |              |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
|   | Households with babies (< 1 year) | Households with children (< 5 years) | Health problems/ Disability | Carers       |
| Option 1 - general cut of council tax support by 18.5%                                | 17.1%                             | 41.7%                                | 28.2%                       | 28.2%        |
| Option 2 - give more protection to vulnerable groups than is provided under Option 1  | <b>62.9%</b>                      | 37.4%                                | <b>55.6%</b>                | <b>59.0%</b> |
| • People with disabilities  | 31.4%                             | 20.9%                                | <b>54.0%</b>                | <b>59.0%</b> |
| • Families with babies (up to 1 year old)   | 25.7%                             | 17.4%                                | 16.1%                       | 23.1%        |
| • Families with young children (up to 5 years old)                                    | <b>51.4%</b>                      | 32.3%                                | 16.9%                       | 30.8%        |
| • Other people  | 11.4%                             | 6.4%                                 | 11.3%                       | 10.3%        |
| Option 3 - remove council tax discount on second homes and long term empty properties | <b>62.9%</b>                      | <b>66.0%</b>                         | <b>74.2%</b>                | <b>61.5%</b> |
| Option 4 - cap the amount of support to the level for a Band 'D' property             | 31.4%                             | 29.4%                                | 47.6%                       | 23.1%        |
| Option 5 - remove the second adult rebate   | 25.7%                             | 28.9%                                | 26.6%                       | 10.3%        |
| Number in each group  | 35                                | 235                                  | 124                         | 39           |

The table immediately below provides an overall summary of the groups of claimants that favour each Option more than other groups within each classification. For example, within the gender classification there are two groups, males and females. However, this does not necessarily mean majority support.

| Options   | Groups particularly in favour (statistically significant) |           |                                  |                                    |                             |        |
|---|---|-----------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|
|   | Gender  | Age       | Households with babies (under 1) | Households with children (under 5) | Health problems/ Disability | Carers |
| Option 1 - general cut of council tax support by 18.5%                                | Females   |           |                                  |                                    |                             |        |
| Option 2 - give more protection to vulnerable groups than is provided under Option 1  | Males   |           | Yes                              |                                    | Yes                         | Yes    |
| • People with disabilities  | Males   | 45-64s    |                                  |                                    | Yes                         |        |
| • Families with babies (up to 1 year old)   |   | Under 25s |                                  | Yes                                |                             |        |
| • Families with young children (up to 5 years old)                                    | Females   | Under 34s | Yes                              | Yes                                |                             |        |
| • Other people  | Females   |           |                                  |                                    |                             |        |
| Option 3 - remove council tax discount on second homes and long term empty properties |   |           |                                  |                                    |                             |        |
| Option 4 - cap the amount of support to the level for a Band 'D' property             |   |           |                                  |                                    |                             |        |
| Option 5 - remove the second adult rebate   |   | 25-34s    |                                  | Yes                                |                             |        |

## Owners of second homes/long term empty properties

The following two tables show the extent to which each group of owners supports Option 3. There is no group with majority support for Option 3. These results are based on all responses.

| Options   | Groups where a majority are in favour are shown in bold black text |         |           |        |        |        |        |       |       |
|---|--|---------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
|   | Males  | Females | Under 25s | 25-34s | 35-44s | 45-54s | 55-64s | 65-74 | 75+   |
| Option 3 - remove council tax discount on second homes and long term empty properties | 17.4%  | 12.7%   | 0.0%      | 0.0%   | 25.0%  | 12.1%  | 18.2%  | 9.4%  | 30.0% |
| Number in each group  | 86   | 55      | 0         | 5      | 8      | 33     | 33     | 32    | 10    |

| Options   | Groups where a majority are in favour are shown in bold black text |               |                   |
|---|--|---------------|-------------------|
|   | Health problems/ Disability  | White British | Not White British |
| Option 3 - remove council tax discount on second homes and long term empty properties | 22.7%  | 14.5%         | 16.7%             |
| Number in each group  | 22   | 124           | 6                 |

There are no statistically significant differences between the above groups in terms of support for Option 3.

## Residents

The following two tables show the extent to which each group of residents supports each option. Where there is majority support, the results are shown in bold black font. These results are based on all responses.

| Options   | Groups where a majority are in favour are shown in bold black text |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
|---|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|   | Males  | Females      | Under 25s    | 25-34s       | 35-44s       | 45-54s       | 55-64s       | 65-74        | 75+          |
| Option 1 - general cut of council tax support by 18.5%                                | <b>62.8%</b>   | <b>59.5%</b> | 42.9%        | <b>59.5%</b> | <b>64.4%</b> | <b>66.2%</b> | <b>62.6%</b> | <b>62.3%</b> | <b>54.7%</b> |
| Option 2 - give more protection to vulnerable groups than is provided under Option 1  | 29.0%  | 27.1%        | 28.6%        | 33.3%        | 27.7%        | 25.0%        | 26.5%        | 30.2%        | 32.6%        |
| • People with disabilities  | 25.6%  | 23.5%        | 14.3%        | 28.6%        | 23.8%        | 20.6%        | 23.2%        | 27.6%        | 28.2%        |
| • Families with babies (up to 1 year old)   | 7.1%   | 6.4%         | 0.0%         | 16.7%        | 12.9%        | 5.9%         | 5.8%         | 6.5%         | 3.9%         |
| • Families with young children (up to 5 years old)                                    | 7.7%   | 7.3%         | 28.6%        | 9.5%         | 7.9%         | 4.4%         | 7.1%         | 8.5%         | 8.8%         |
| • Other people  | 3.0%   | 4.2%         | 14.3%        | 2.4%         | 2.0%         | 2.9%         | 3.2%         | 3.5%         | 6.1%         |
| Option 3 - remove council tax discount on second homes and long term empty properties | <b>82.6%</b>   | <b>74.4%</b> | <b>85.7%</b> | <b>64.3%</b> | <b>81.2%</b> | <b>77.9%</b> | <b>80.0%</b> | <b>82.9%</b> | <b>79.0%</b> |
| Option 4 - cap the amount of support to the level for a Band 'D' property             | <b>60.4%</b>   | 45.9%        | 28.6%        | <b>54.8%</b> | <b>61.4%</b> | <b>52.2%</b> | <b>51.0%</b> | <b>60.3%</b> | 48.6%        |
| Option 5 - remove the second adult rebate   | <b>61.7%</b>   | <b>52.2%</b> | 28.6%        | 47.6%        | <b>67.3%</b> | <b>61.8%</b> | <b>56.8%</b> | <b>61.8%</b> | <b>50.8%</b> |
| Number in each group  | 535  | 425          | 7            | 42           | 101          | 136          | 155          | 199          | 181          |

| Options   | Groups where a majority are in favour are shown in bold black text |                                      |                             |              |               |                   |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------|
|   | Households with babies (< 1 year)                                  | Households with children (< 5 years) | Health problems/ Disability | Carers       | White British | Not White British |
| Option 1 - general cut of council tax support by 18.5%                                | <b>57.1%</b>   | <b>59.3%</b>                         | <b>52.1%</b>                | <b>54.5%</b> | <b>62.3%</b>  | <b>51.9%</b>      |
| Option 2 - give more protection to vulnerable groups than is provided under Option 1  | 28.6%  | 32.2%                                | 33.5%                       | 38.2%        | 27.1%         | 37.0%             |
| • People with disabilities  | 28.6%  | 28.8%                                | 29.3%                       | 30.9%        | 23.9%         | 33.3%             |
| • Families with babies (up to 1 year old)   | 14.3%  | 18.6%                                | 6.4%                        | 11.8%        | 6.1%          | 18.5%             |
| • Families with young children (up to 5 years old)                                    | 7.1%   | 15.3%                                | 8.0%                        | 9.1%         | 6.9%          | 11.1%             |
| • Other people  | 0.0%   | 3.4%                                 | 5.9%                        | 4.5%         | 3.6%          | 0.0%              |
| Option 3 - remove council tax discount on second homes and long term empty properties | <b>71.4%</b>   | <b>72.9%</b>                         | <b>76.1%</b>                | <b>80.0%</b> | <b>79.2%</b>  | <b>66.7%</b>      |
| Option 4 - cap the amount of support to the level for a Band 'D' property             | <b>57.1%</b>   | <b>61.0%</b>                         | 50.0%                       | <b>53.6%</b> | <b>53.7%</b>  | <b>55.6%</b>      |
| Option 5 - remove the second adult rebate   | 42.9%  | <b>69.5%</b>                         | 49.5%                       | <b>53.6%</b> | <b>56.5%</b>  | <b>55.6%</b>      |
| Number in each group  | 14   | 59                                   | 188                         | 110          | 918           | 27                |

The table immediately below provides an overall summary of the groups of residents that favour each Option more than other groups within each classification. For example, within the gender classification there are two groups, males and females. However, this does not necessarily mean majority support.

| Options   | Groups more in favour than other groups within each classification<br>(statistically significant) |     |                                   |                                      |                             |        |           |
|---|---|-----|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|-----------|
|   | Gender  | Age | Households with babies (< 1 year) | Households with children (< 5 years) | Health problems/ Disability | Carers | Ethnicity |
| Option 1 - general cut of council tax support by 18.5%                                |   |     |                                   |                                      |                             |        |           |
| Option 2 - give more protection to vulnerable groups than is provided under Option 1  |   |     |                                   |                                      | Yes                         | Yes    |           |
| • People with disabilities  |   |     |                                   |                                      |                             |        |           |
| • Families with babies (up to 1 year old)   |   |     |                                   |                                      |                             |        |           |
| • Families with young children (up to 5 years old)                                    |   |     |                                   | Yes                                  |                             |        |           |
| • Other people  |   |     |                                   |                                      |                             |        |           |
| Option 3 - remove council tax discount on second homes and long term empty properties | Males   |     |                                   |                                      |                             |        |           |
| Option 4 - cap the amount of support to the level for a Band 'D' property             | Males   |     |                                   |                                      |                             |        |           |
| Option 5 - remove the second adult rebate   |   |     |                                   |                                      |                             |        |           |

## PART B - QUALITATIVE CONSULTATION

Apart from the postal and online surveys, we were also anxious to garner the views of advocacy groups and organisations (such as social landlords). The information finally captured from the exercise comes from a good range of stakeholders, including all those with the highest levels of interest and day to day contact with the current service, such as the Tonbridge CAB, West Kent Debt Advice Service, Russet Homes and Porchlight.

### Summary of Responses

- 1) Q1. Do you prefer Option 1 (a general cut of council tax support by 18.5%) or Option 2 (give more protection to vulnerable groups than is provided under Option 1)?

There is support for Option 1 from internal stakeholders and the National Landlord Association but it is not the favoured option of other external stakeholders.

- 2) Q2. Which vulnerable groups do you think should receive more protection than is provided under Option 1? Please remember that the groups not selected will have their award cut by more than 18.5% to make up the difference.

Suggestions made for protected vulnerable groups being people

- with severe disabilities
- unable to work
- leaving care, prison or hostel accommodation
- with 'floating support'

There is also opinion that vulnerability should not be classified in this way but assessed on an individual basis. Financial assistance, where necessary, should then be applied through the use of a discretionary fund.

- 3) Q3. Do you agree with Option 3 – removing council tax discount on second homes and long term empty properties?

There is complete support to reduce or remove the Council Tax 10% discount for second homes and long term empty properties (The National Landlord Association goes as far to say it supports the levy of additional charges for long term empty homes).

- 4) Q4. Do you agree with Option 4 – cap the amount of support to the level for a Band D property ?

The response was mixed but comments raised were that there should be provision of a discretionary fund for those families facing genuine financial

hardship and the suggestion that the cap could be applied after six months or a year of support at the full level.

5) Q5. Do you agree with Option 5 – removing the second adult rebate ?

All agreed

6) Q6. Other Comments

- Families with children have a greater potential to manage their budgets due to combinations of child benefit, child tax credits and child maintenance payments.
- Often, people with disabilities have reasonable incomes from benefits compared to those who do not have disabilities.
- Many vulnerable people single, under 25 year olds.