Contents Page

1.0 HEADLINE FINDINGS................................................................. 3
2.0 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................... 4
3.0 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ......................................... 6
4.0 METHODOLOGY ......................................................................... 6
5.0 SAMPLE ................................................................................... 7
6.0 FINDINGS ................................................................................ 8

APPENDICES .................................................................................. 23
Appendices One  Questionnaire............................................................. 23
1.0 Headline Findings

Across all the tested possible approaches to the LCTS scheme there was a majority opinion ranging from 59% to 75% which gives a steer in terms of decision making. The largest majority opposed the inclusion of a minimum income figure for self-employed and the lowest opposition was on the possibility of no changes to the LCTS scheme maintaining the level of help available.

There are a consistent number of respondents that have answered unsure across all possible approaches to the scheme.

Almost three-quarters (71%) of respondents said that the council should change their LCTS scheme to freeze the figures used in calculating entitlement. Less than a fifth (16%) disagreed with freezing the figures and 13% said they were unsure.

Over two-thirds of respondents (69%) said that the council should change their LCTS scheme to increase non-dependent deductions, with the expectation that they contribute more than the current maximum of £10.95 per week towards their council tax. Just less than a fifth disagreed with this approach (18%) and 13% were unsure.

Two-thirds of respondents felt that the LCTS scheme should include child benefit and maintenance as incomes when calculating entitlement, however 24% said it should not and 10% were unsure.

Three quarters of respondents agreed that the LCTS scheme for 2016-17 should include a minimum income figure for the self-employed, with just 10% saying it should not and 15% that said they were unsure.

Almost a third of respondents (29%) said that the council should not change the LCTS scheme so that all claimants have to pay a fixed percentage of their bill; 61% were in agreement. A tenth said they were unsure.

The minority of all respondents (22%) said that the council should make no changes to the LCTS scheme and therefore maintain the level of help available. More than half (59%) said that the council should make changes and almost a fifth (19%) were unsure.

Almost three-quarters of respondents (70%) indicated they did not want any changes made to the LCTS scheme which would increase the level of financial support available; almost a fifth (18%) were unsure and 12% said yes to this possible change.
2.0 Introduction

Background

From April 2013 the national system of council tax benefit stopped and every council had to design and manage their own local scheme for council tax support. At the same time, the Government reduced the funding to local councils by 10%. For Guildford Borough Council this equates to £700,000 less to spend each year.

The Council had to make some difficult decisions about who gets financial support and how they can assist those in need. Looking ahead the government grant is being reduced and the council currently face a shortfall in their overall budget of £5.5 million over the next four years.

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) is a means tested financial support scheme that helps low income households pay their council tax. In calculating entitlement, the council compare an applicant’s income and capital to the amount a person in their circumstances needs to live on each week – their applicable amount.

In its first year, 2013-14, the LCTS scheme mirrored the previous council tax benefit scheme, but with the following five changes affecting working age people. We consulted widely on these changes:

- The capital limit reduced from £16,000 to £6,000.
- Backdating of support reduced from a maximum of 6 months to 3 months.
- The amount of support available to residents in properties in band E or above was restricted to the band D charge.
- Entitlement to financial support of less than £5 a week was not paid.
- Second adult rebate (alternative maximum council tax benefit) was withdrawn.

For 2014-15, after consulting again, the council made two further changes to the scheme:

- Financial support for residents in properties in band F or above was withdrawn.
- Entitlement to financial support of less than £10 a week was not paid.

Following consultation, in 2015-16 the council kept their scheme the same as for 2014-15, except that personal budget payments in relation to education, health and care plans for children with special educational needs were disregarded in full.

For the 2016-17 LCTS scheme, there are three options available to the council; they can increase, maintain or reduce the level of financial support given to residents.
In the budget of July 2015, the Government committed to reduce welfare expenditure by £12 billion by 2017-18. In addition, changes announced to tax credits will reduce the total income of some residents, resulting in an increase in the amount of LCTS that they are entitled to.

The council do not currently know what their Government grant will be for their LCTS scheme. However, with the proposed reduction in welfare expenditure their grant could reduce. With this and other welfare reforms in mind, they have identified possible changes to their scheme that would reduce the level of financial support provided. Alternatively, they could maintain or increase the level of support available by increasing council tax or reducing other services across the borough. The scheme for pensioners would not change from the current scheme unless the government makes changes.

Guildford Borough Council commissioned SMSR Ltd, an independent research company, to undertake a consultation to enable residents from across the borough to have their say on the proposed changes and additional options which could be considered in the future.

**Report Structure**

Included in the report is a set of top line findings which provides quick reference to all the questions asked throughout the survey. In addition all questions have been analysed by respondent type and demographic group and any significant differences in opinion are commented on throughout the report.

It should be noted that when the results are discussed within the report, often percentages will be rounded up or down to the nearest one per cent. Therefore occasionally figures may add up to 101% or 99%.
3.0 Research Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the survey was to ensure residents had the opportunity to give their views on potential changes in the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS); these views will then help to shape the revised LCTS.

The key objectives of the consultation were as follows:

- To assess support for a freeze on the annual increase in benefits for people of working age in line with the government’s budget announcement
- To assess support to increase non-dependent deductions above the current maximum figure of £10.95 per week towards the council tax
- To understand what income sources should be included in calculations for support
- To assess support for a contribution by all
- To gather opinion on the proposal to ask all claimants to pay a proportion of their council tax bill

4.0 Methodology

A questionnaire was designed by Guildford Borough Council, a copy of which can be found in the appendices. All versions of the questionnaire were piloted prior to the fieldwork to ensure it was easy for residents to complete and the findings would meet the aims and objectives of the consultation.

When the questionnaire was approved an online link was produced. This link was promoted to local residents in various ways, including through the issuing of a press release.

The questionnaire was also sent to the 950 members of the Guildford Borough Council citizens’ panel.

All fieldwork was conducted between Monday 14th September 2015 and Sunday 25th October 2015.
5.0 Sample

In total 186 (4 of which were online responses) residents from across the Guildford Borough took part in the consultation.

The demographic breakdown of responses was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>88</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 to 24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 to 34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 54</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 to 64</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 to 74</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 or above</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say / Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>97.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>BME</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>89.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say / Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.0 Findings

6.1 LCTS Scheme 2016-17

6.1.1 Benefits for people of working age

In the budget, the Government announced a freeze on the annual increase (or uprating) in benefits for people of working age; respondents were asked if they thought the council should reflect this in the LCTS scheme 2016-17.

Almost three-quarters (71%) of respondents said that the council should change their LCTS scheme to freeze the figures used in calculating entitlement. Less than a fifth (16%) disagreed with freezing the figures and 13% said they were unsure.

Levels of agreement for freezing the figure was higher among respondents aged 55-64 (71%) and 65-74 (78%) and those with a disability and male respondents (74%).
When asked to give reasons why the council should not change their LCTS scheme to freeze the figures used in calculating entitlement, over a quarter of those that gave an answer said it was because they felt it would be detrimental to low earning people (28%) or that the council need to take inflation and cost of living into account when making such decisions (28%).

Over a fifth said more support should be given to low earning individuals (24%) and that support should be based on circumstances and the amount people need to live (21%).

Some specific comments given included:

- “Because the cost of living is not frozen, as things get more expensive those who need help will need more help not less. Freezing figures used in calculating entitlement does not help the most vulnerable”

- “With near 0% unemployed, the burden should be felt by all fairly”

- “The poor are being squeezed and they won’t be able to afford an increase”

- “Many of those affected will be those hit by the governments changes in Welfare payments. Guildford is a prosperous town with many residents receiving well above average incomes. We can afford to be more generous to those in our community who are less well off”

- “It is important that the poorest and most vulnerable in society have an income that permits them to live at an acceptable standard, we are a wealthy borough”

- “I think reductions in benefits punish those most vulnerable in society. A freeze is an effective reduction”

- “Even with current low inflation figures the poorer members of society should not have to face what is effectively a real cut in benefits”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This will be detrimental to low earning adults / families / young people</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation / cost of living needs to be taken into account</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support should be given to low earning adults / families / young people</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support should be based on circumstances and the amount people need to live</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment / the economy / housing need to be tackled</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings should be made in other areas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1.2 Non-dependent deductions

Over two-thirds (69%) of respondents said that the council should change their LCTS scheme to increase non-dependent deductions, with the expectation that they contribute more than the current maximum of £10.95 per week towards their council tax. Just less than a fifth disagreed with this approach (18%) and 13% were unsure.

Female respondents (21%) and those aged 16-44 (23%) gave higher levels of opposition to the changes; whereas those aged 65-74 (75%) and 75+ (77%) and male respondents (77%) gave the higher levels of support for these changes.
In total 28 respondents gave a reason as to why they opposed the potential changes and again the most frequent response was that it will be detrimental to low earning residents (36%) followed by the rationale that support should be based on circumstances and the amount people need to live (21%).

Some specific comments given included:

“As many non-dependents are students or young people on low incomes struggling to save towards being able to live independently”

“For those families on other benefits an increase would be unsustainable”

“Youngsters are paid less in benefits or salary/wages, and their LCTS is therefore a larger proportion of their income, leaving them less for other living costs”

“There is nothing to be gained by increasing the poverty of the poorest especially when more people are being expected to keep children at home for longer despite the financial difficulties this will bring”

“If you are going to freeze annual increases in benefits then I believe the contribution should remain the same”
6.1.3 Inclusion of child benefit and maintenance

Two-thirds of respondents felt that the LCTS scheme should include child benefit and maintenance as incomes when calculating entitlement, however 24% said it should not and 10% were unsure.

The opinion that this change should be included in LCTS calculations tended to vary by age, with opposition for the change being highest among those aged 18-44 (31%) and 45-54 (48%). Less than a fifth of those aged 55 and over said no to the proposed change.

Male respondents expressed greater support than female respondents for the inclusion of child benefit and maintenance (+5 %) in the 2016-17 LCTS scheme.
The two main reasons for opposing the changes were that child benefit is for the benefit of the child (38%) and that any such change would be detrimental to low earning individuals be it an adult, family or young person. Just less than a fifth of those who gave a response argued that child benefit and maintenance should be treated as separate issues.

Some specific comments given included:

“Child benefit exists to support children it could make a big difference to the standard of care if used in calculations. It is there to feed and clothe. That won’t change as an amount if you use it in calculations. It could adversely impact children in need”

“Child benefit is or should be a right irrespective of income and if maintenance is paid it’s obviously necessary and shouldn’t be included”

“The government is cutting benefits; mainly less wealthy families have less income. The amount of money a family gets from benefits is so small, they shouldn’t be penalised further”

“These people are receiving child benefit and maintenance because they are already struggling”

“I am concerned that this would prevent money being used to support children and contribute to child poverty”

“People on a low income struggle enough as it is and the local council needs to support them”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child benefit is for the benefit of the child</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This will be detrimental to low earning adults / families / young people</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child benefit and maintenance should be treated separately</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support should be given to low earning adults / families / young people</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This means there will be a tax on benefits</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1.4 Minimum income for self-employed

Three quarters of respondents agreed that the LCTS scheme for 2016-17 should include a minimum income figure for the self-employed, with just 10% saying it should not and 15% that said they were unsure.

Older respondents tended to be more supportive of including a minimum income figure for the self-employed with 80% of those aged 65-74 in favour of the change and 81% of those aged 75 and over that were in favour of the change.

Male respondents were 10% less likely to support the inclusion of a minimum income figure for the self-employed (70% compared to 80%).
Although only 19 respondents gave a reason why they felt the scheme should not include a minimum income figure for the self-employed, of these 32% said that self-employed people's wage vary and that they may not earn a good enough wage.

In addition 26% of that responded said that support should be based on circumstances and the amount people need to live.

Some specific comments given included:

“How can you tell how many hours a self-employed person works a week? Too difficult to monitor”

“Self-employed, working all hours to make ends meet and don’t have an income that is regular, varying one month to another”

“It would be arbitrary and could cause real hardship”

“Why would you? Should calculation not be based on actual income?”

“Self-employed people should provide proof of income and grant should be based on that”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed people’s wage vary and may not earn a decent wage</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support should be based on circumstances and the amount people need to live</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too complicated</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This will be detrimental to self-employed residents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employment can be unregulated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1.5 Contribution by all

Almost a third of respondents (29%) said that the council should not change the LCTS scheme so that all claimants have to pay a fixed percentage of their bill; 61% were in agreement. A tenth said they were unsure.

Opposition decreased with age as 38% of 16-44 year olds said no as did 45% of those aged 45-54, whereas around two-thirds of respondents over the age of 55 said yes to the payment of a fixed percentage of their bill.
Half of those that gave a reason as to why they opposed the change questioned how people can pay if they currently need full support to pay their council tax bill.

A further 26% said that it should be based on a needs assessment so that they can afford to live.

Some specific comments given included:

“Again presumably these people are receiving 100% of their council tax because they have not got the means to pay it”

“If someone is eligible for 100% help then they have no spare money to contribute”

“The poorest in our society struggle now by reducing income is a retrograde action”

“Those claimants receiving ESA only are not able to afford basic everyday needs. Adding another payment to their outgoings pushes them further into poverty. This particular affects the long term unemployed”

“On the assumption that a person who qualifies for help with 100% has no income or very low income a) need support or b) will prove a bad debt”

“Such a change would hit those who can least afford it - and you cannot have people putting their council tax before paying for essentials such as food, water and heating”

“With the other changes in place, reducing any support from the current level of 100% would be a double charge on the poorest members of the community”

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If residents receive 100% of the council tax, how can they pay</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support should be based on circumstances and the amount people need to live</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This will be detrimental to low earning adults / families / young people</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This means there will be a tax on benefits</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support should be given to low earning adults / families / young people</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1.6 No change at all

The minority of all respondents (22%) said that the council should make no changes to the LCTS scheme and therefore maintain the level of help available. More than half (59%) said that the council should make changes and almost a fifth (19%) were unsure.

Those aged 65-74 indicated the highest levels of opposition to this proposed change (77%) as did male respondents (62%).
The two main reasons provided by those who supported the idea of making no changes and therefore maintaining the help available said it was because they could afford to pay an increase in their council tax (21%) or that support should be given to low earning residents (21%).

Some specific comments given included:

“A society should look after the poorest and most vulnerable. A local society even more so”

“Assuming that claimants are adequately screened to prevent over payment and fraud, I would be in favour of paying more council tax if I knew this went to support those who need help”

“In a civilised society it is the duty of those better off to help those less able”

“Many of those affected will be those hit by the governments changes in Welfare payments. Guildford is a prosperous town with many residents receiving well above average incomes. We can afford to be more generous to those in our community who are less well off”

“People who need financial support should not be picked on further”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can afford to pay more</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support should be given to low earning adults / families / young people</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any reduction in benefits will be detrimental to low earning adults / families / young people</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings should be made in other areas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is societies responsibility to help the vulnerable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Almost three-quarters of respondents (70%) indicated they did not want any changes made to the LCTS scheme which would increase the level of financial support available; almost a fifth (18%) were unsure and 12% said yes to this possible change.

Male respondents were 11% more likely to say no to this change (75%) compared to females (66%) and those aged 55-64 (73%) and 65-74 (82%) indicated the highest levels of opposition to such a change.
Half of the 19 respondents that gave a reason for saying yes to increasing the level of help available said that it was because support should be given to low earning individuals.

Some specific comments given included:

“Those who can afford to pay more should share burden with those less able to afford to pay”

“People are struggling to survive because the government keep changing the definition of disabilities and low income, meaning that people previously included in either are now finding themselves grouped with people considerably more able bodied and financially better off than they are. These people need support as their conditions do not change just because the government say they do!”

“Target financial support where it is really needed; non dependents could be required to pay more to fund any increases”

“If food banks have become so prevalent over the past few years then people are not getting financial support”

“Again, Guildford is an expensive place to live, but it has lots of wealthy residents who could afford to contribute more to society. The gap between rich and poor is widening and this is to the detriment of a cohesive society”
### 6.1.7 Additional Comments

Do you have any other comments or suggestions for other savings or options that could be included in future reviews of our LCTS scheme? (Base: 49)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment / Suggestion</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All people should contribute to council tax (including pensioners)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings should be made in other areas</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support should be based on circumstances and the amount people need to live</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charge for properties that have been converted to multiple occupancy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use money more effectively</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include additional higher council tax bands</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include voluntary groups / charities to fill service gaps</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments or suggestions with regards to future reviews of the LCTS scheme. The main message which emerged from the comments made was that all people should contribute to council tax (18%). A further 14% of respondents said that savings should be made in other areas and support should be based on circumstances and on the amount people need to live.

Some examples of the specific comments given included:

“Whatever savings/options are protected for the future everyone should pay something toward their council tax - regardless of circumstances. Otherwise there is no incentive for some to find a way out of their circumstances. Even if someone is on benefits they need to budget accordingly”

“GBC could sell off some of its assets to find any short fall in government funding”

“Council tax is already horrendously high. I understand currently it is 1/4 of the monthly income of a pensioner. How can this be fair? Instead of increasing the tax why not look at where and how the money is spent - not reducing services but making them cost effective”

“Reduce salaries of senior council employees and reduce other benefits such as pension contributions, sick days, etc”

“Charge for properties that have been changed from family homes to multi occupancy. Many properties in our area are being changed from ordinary houses and we believe no council tax is being collected”
Appendices

Appendices One  Questionnaire

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
Local Council Tax Support Scheme Survey 2015

From April 2013 the national system of council tax benefit stopped and every council had to
design and manage their own local scheme for council tax support. At the same time, the
Government reduced the funding to local councils by 10%. For the Council this means we have
about £700,000 less to spend each year.

We have had to make some difficult decisions about who gets financial support and how we
can assist those in need. Looking ahead our government grant is being reduced and we
currently face a shortfall in our overall budget of £5.5 million over the next four years.

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) is a means tested financial support scheme that helps low-
income households pay their council tax. In calculating entitlement, we compare an applicant’s
income and capital to the amount a person in their circumstances needs to live on each week
— their applicable amount.

In its first year, 2013-14, our LCTS scheme mirrored the previous council tax benefit scheme, but
with the following five changes affecting working age people. We consulted widely on these
changes.

1. The capital limit reduced from £16,000 to £6,000.
2. Backdating of support reduced from a maximum of 6 months to 3 months
3. The amount of support available to residents in properties in band E or above was
   restricted to the band D charge.
4. Entitlement to financial support of less than £5 a week was not paid.
5. Second adult rebate (alternative maximum council tax benefit) was withdrawn.

For 2014-15, after consulting again, we made two further changes to the scheme.

1. Financial support for residents in properties in band F or above was withdrawn.
2. Entitlement to financial support of less than £10 a week was not paid.

Following consultation, in 2015-16 we kept our scheme the same as for 2014-15, except that
personal budget payments in relation to education, health and care plans for children with special
educational needs were disregarded in full.

2016-17 LCTS scheme

For our 2016-17 LCTS scheme, there are three options available; we can increase, maintain or
reduce the level of financial support we give to residents.

In the budget of July 2015, the Government committed to reduce welfare expenditure by £12
billion by 2017-18. In addition, changes announced to tax credits will reduce the total income of
some residents, resulting in an increase in the amount of LCTS that they are entitled to.

We do not currently know what our Government grant will be for our LCTS scheme. However,
with the proposed reduction in welfare expenditure our grant could reduce. With this and other
welfare reforms in mind, we have identified possible changes to our scheme that would reduce the
level of financial support provided. Alternatively, we could maintain or increase the level of
support available by increasing council tax or reducing other services across the borough.

The scheme for pensioners will not change from the current scheme unless the Government
makes changes.
Revised Scheme

In the budget, the Government announced a freeze on the annual increase (or uprating) in benefits for people of working age.

Q1a  Do you think we should also change our LCTS scheme for 2016-17 to freeze the figures used in calculating entitlement?

Yes.......................................................................................................................................................... ☐
No......................................................................................................................................................... ☐
Not sure.................................................................................................................................................. ☐

Q1b  If no, please tell us why.


In 2015-16, we made only one change to our LCTS scheme. However, not making any other changes meant that some elements of our scheme, such as non-dependent deductions, remained at the previous year’s lower level.

A non-dependent is someone over 18 who normally lives with an LCTS applicant on a non-commercial basis such as an adult son, daughter, relative or friend. At present, the maximum amount that a non-dependent is expected to pay towards council tax is £10.95 per week.

Q2a  Do you think we should change our LCTS scheme for 2016-17 to increase non-dependent deductions, expecting them to contribute more than the current maximum of £10.95 per week towards the council tax?

Yes.......................................................................................................................................................... ☐
No......................................................................................................................................................... ☐
Not sure.................................................................................................................................................. ☐
Q2b If no, please tell us why.

We would now like to ask for your feedback on revisions to the scheme which we have consulted on previously. In light of the current challenges which the Council faces we feel it is important that these options are considered alongside those on the previous page.

Child Benefit and maintenance

Previously we have consulted on including Child Benefit and maintenance as forms of income when calculating entitlement to LCTS. However, at present we do not include either Child Benefit or maintenance as income in any calculation for support.

Q3a Do you think we should change our LCTS scheme for 2016-17 to include Child Benefit and maintenance as incomes when calculating entitlement?

Yes .......................................................................................................................... □
No ............................................................................................................................. □
Not sure .................................................................................................................... □

Q3b If no, please tell us why.
Minimum Income for Self-Employed

Previously we have consulted on using a minimum income figure for LCTS recipients that are self-employed. However, at present there is no minimum wage applied to the self-employed in any calculation for support.

Q4a  Do you think we should change our LCTS scheme for 2016-17 to include a minimum income figure for the self-employed?

Yes .................................................................................................................................................. □

No .................................................................................................................................................. □

Not sure .......................................................................................................................................... □

Q4b  If no, please tell us why.


Contribution by All

Currently a person can receive help with 100% of their council tax, so they do not pay anything. However, previously we have consulted on whether all claimants should have to pay at least a certain fixed percentage of their council tax bill.

Q5a  Do you think we should change our LCTS scheme for 2016-17 so that all claimants have to pay a fixed percentage of their bill?

Yes .................................................................................................................................................. □

No .................................................................................................................................................. □

Not sure .......................................................................................................................................... □
Other Options

Instead of making changes to our LCTS scheme that reduce the level of financial support available to residents, we could choose to keep the 2016-17 scheme the same as it is now, maintaining the level of financial support available. This could mean an increase in council tax to compensate for the financial impact on applicants, reducing service expenditure elsewhere, raising fees and charges or a mix of these options.

Q6a  Do you think we should make no changes to our LCTS scheme for 2016-17, maintaining the level of help available?

  Yes ........................................................................................................... □
  No.......................................................................................................... □
  Not sure .................................................................................................. □

Q6b  If yes, please tell us why.
As an alternative to making changes to our LCTS scheme that maintains or reduces the level of financial support available to residents, we could choose to increase the level of financial support available. This could mean an increase in council tax to compensate for the financial impact on applicants, reducing service expenditure elsewhere, raising fees and charges or a mix of these options.

Q7a Do you think we should make changes to our LCTS scheme for 2016-17, increasing the level of help available?

Yes .................................................................................................
No ...............................................................................................  
Not sure ..............................................................................................

Q7b If yes, please tell us why.
Additional Comments

Q8 Do you have any comments or suggestions for other savings or options that could be included in future reviews of our LCTS scheme?
About You

Q9 In what capacity are you responding to this consultation? (Tick one box only)

- Individual ....................................................................................................................................................
- Carer ............................................................................................................................................................
- Housing association ...................................................................................................................................
- Landlord ....................................................................................................................................................... 
- Voluntary organisation ................................................................................................................................
- Other (please specify) .................................................................................................................................

Q10 Does your household currently receive local council tax support from Guildford Borough Council? (Tick one box only)

- Yes ...............................................................................................................................................................
- No ..............................................................................................................................................................

Q11 Does your household currently pay council tax to Guildford Borough Council? (Tick one box only)

- Yes ...............................................................................................................................................................
- No ..............................................................................................................................................................

Thank you for helping us to develop this important update to the scheme.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the FREEPOST envelope provided by Friday 23 October 2015.