

Consultation on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (also known as the Council Tax Support Scheme) for 2019/20

Have your say on our Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20

1. Before proceeding with this questionnaire, please confirm that you have read the background information ([here](#)) that accompanies this consultation.

- Yes
- No

2. Should the Council keep the current Council Tax Reduction scheme? (Should it continue to administer the scheme as it does at the moment? Our current scheme can be found [here](#))

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

3. Please use the space below to make any comments you have on protecting the Council Tax Reduction Scheme from these changes

Options to change the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

As explained in the background information, the Council is primarily consulting on the following proposals to change the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme from 1st April 2019, which will reduce the administrations cost of the scheme generally and importantly make the scheme simpler. **Please note that whilst the changes are intended to reduce the level and cost of administration, the Council is not looking to reduce the total overall level of support available.**

The options, with full details in the background information document [here](#), are set out below and we would like to know your views on these proposals.

Option 1

The introduction of an Income Grid scheme to replace the current scheme for all applicants of working age

4. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 1, please give them below.

Option 2

To limit the number of dependent children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two for all applicants

5. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 2, please give them below.

Option 3

To remove Non-Dependant Deductions from the scheme

6. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 3, please give them below.

Option 4

Removing the Second Adult Rebate provisions

7. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 4, please give them below.

Option 5

Removing the current earnings disregards and replacing them with a standard £25 disregard irrespective of a person's circumstances

8. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 5, please give them below.

Option 6

Disregarding Carer's Allowance which is currently taken into account as income

9. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20?

- Yes

- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 6, please give them below.

Option 7

Where an applicant is disabled, they have a disabled child or receive the Support Component of the Employment and Support Allowance, the amount they receive as a premium under the existing scheme will be replaced by an equivalent income disregard

10. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 7, please give them below.

Option 8

Simplifying the capital/savings rules and reducing the capital limit to £6,000

11. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 8, please give them below.

Option 9

Removing the conditions that prevent certain students from claiming Council Tax

Reduction

12. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 9, please give them below.

Option 10

Removing the Extended Payment provision

13. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 8, please give them below.

Option 11

Changing the claiming process for all applicants who receive Universal Credit

14. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 8, please give them below.

Option 12

Any change in circumstances which changes Council Tax Reduction entitlement will be made from the date on which the change occurs, (rather than on a weekly basis as at present)

15. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 8, please give them below.

Option 13

Where a request is made to backdate entitlement, the current scheme requires the applicant to prove 'good cause'. It is proposed that this will be replaced by a general discretion

16. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 8, please give them below.

Option 14

Where any entitlement to reduction is less than £1 per week, no award shall be granted

17. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20?

- Yes

- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 8, please give them below.

18. If you have any other comments to make on the proposals detailed above, please give them below.

Alternatives to changing the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

If we do not make any changes to our Council Tax Reduction Scheme, it will be administratively more complex and it will cost taxpayers more. If this happens we will need to find savings from other services to help meet the increase in costs. The proposals set out in this consultation will deliver administration savings. The alternatives are set out in the background information:

Increase the level of Council Tax to cover the additional administration costs

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Find the additional administration costs by cutting other Council services

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Use the Council's reserves (savings)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Based on your answers above, please rank your order of preference.

Increase the level of Council Tax to cover the additional administration costs

- 1
- 2
- 3

Find the additional administration costs by cutting other Council services

- 1
- 2
- 3

Use the Council's reserves (savings)

- 1
- 2
- 3

19. If you would like us to consider any other options, please give your comments below.

20. If you have any further comments to make regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme that you haven't had opportunity to raise elsewhere, please give them below.

Insert equality details/questions

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

We will listen carefully to what everyone tells us and take all responses into consideration before making a final decision on our Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20. Following the decision, the full results from this consultation will be available on our website - www.sevenoaks.gov.uk

The new scheme will start on 1 April 2019. However, we will consider the impact of the scheme on an annual basis and we will consult again if we think further changes need to be made.