

Scarborough Borough Council

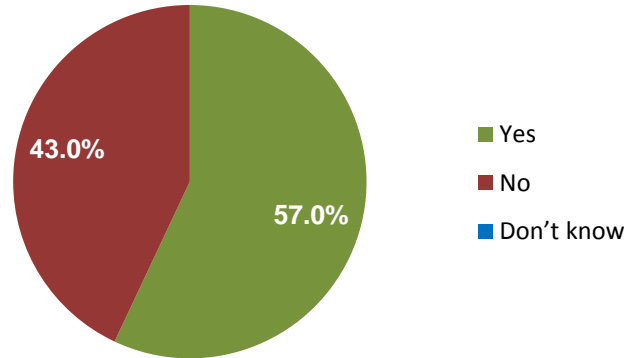
Local Support for Council Tax Scheme

Total number of responses 121

Paying for the Scheme

Should the Council keep the current Local Support for Council Tax scheme?

Yes	57	57.0%
No	43	43.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%
100		



Comments on protecting the Local Support for Council Tax Scheme from these

A sustainable option that does not effect other services needs to be found.
It is not clear after reading the information which is the most cost effective scheme. I am looking for a scheme that is fair but encourages a working ethic and is cost effective.
A lot of families in this area are on a very low income. Whilst I appreciate savings need to be made because of reduced budgets, I do not think the most vulnerable people in our community should suffer.
I have never believed that Welfare in any way helps Society but kills initiative stone dead. Why work or make an effort when the state will do it for youHowever, in fairness the SBC scheme is AOK and acceptable if I look the other way.....
No change needed
This change will affect mostly people who have children and are eligible to work, if the benefit is changed to allow payment to families with 2 children then once again those in need are going to suffer.
Others who can afford to pay a little more to protect and assist those less able to afford council tax is the right thing to do
We are retired, we receive no help at all. All my life I have paid my way and theses people should too.Otherwise they have an unfair advantage over us. We receive very little for our Council tax. The nearest bus stop is 3 miles away,so a bus pass is of no advantage. We do have our rubbish collected and that's it. No library service either, and when I complained about the tax we were paying they said "well you have a nice view !".
There are people getting Council Tax discount who could work and pay their way. While ever they are freely getting this discount there is no incentive to pay their way.

I believe that most people on low wages and/or benefits are finding it difficult enough to make ends meet, if indeed they do. A more constructive approach would be to oppose the government cuts rather than meekly implementing them.

my wife and I are both pensioners and I pay full council TAX so if an increase is necessary to maintain something I am not getting the benefit of then I don't see why I should pay more in order to keep others in the way we have made for them

Would like it to remain as it is

Everyone should have to pay something. The present levels of support are too high.

There must be questions about the Council's services ability to police this scheme

Increased council tax for all seems unfair to aid the few.

By reducing the level of support the council should encourage current recipients to return to work in some capacity

Not enough information regarding additional costs arising out of administering the scheme

People on low incomes would fall into arrears if they were made to pay any more towards this tax, and it is right that Pensioners are exempt

As a pensioner I do benefit, slightly, from the present situation. Unfortunately the government saw it wise to take away my pension credit, which gives a huge amount of benefits, not only to housing. If more households who receive pension credit were more thoroughly scrutinised, to weed out those who do not qualify, the financial savings would benefit the scheme.

I strongly believe that there should be financial support/safety net to members of this community who find themselves in times of financial hardship.

None

I believe that people who are on benefits of working age, should contribute more in line to the people who already work and pay their own council tax. I don't believe that the people who pay for council tax should have the added contribution of paying for people who are on benefits. I don't believe it is right that as a community we lose out on any services, so that the council can keep supporting the tax scheme as it currently does.

There must be protection for vulnerable people but it should take into account changes to this and other support schemes changed at Government level.

discount should still be there but at a slightly lower level

Why are there going to be additional costs in keeping the current Local Support for Council Tax Scheme?

It is important for everyone to make at least a small contribution to their local area. But if you are really poor, you need support for bills like these. The Council should not dip into its savings. The problem is the ridiculously low taxation that reasonably well-off people pay in our country today. How can we expect good support for councils and decent services when we only pay 20%? I remember in the past paying more than 30%. if we want support for poor people, and facilities like libraries etc, we have to pay for them, if we are lucky enough to be earning a decent wage or have a good pension.

No comment

There appears to be a high number of residents who will suffer if they fall into debt with lack of help to pay rent to private landlords and their council tax bill.

Means test pensioners at the same rate as the rest of those able to claim

there are people within the borough getting help thru' this scheme with high levels of savings. (£10k +) I would restrict the level of savings held to reduce the burden on the scheme.

This and other schemes like it are a vital lifeline for those in receipt of them. To reduce or remove this support would directly and disproportionately affect some of the most vulnerable in our society.

A great number of residents live on minimum wage in the borough, they work hard for low wages and ever increasing costs of living. In addition to this there are many people struggling to make ends meet due to unemployment and disability. All these people survive on very little and the bottom line is can these people really be expected to pay more? In my opinion no they can't many already rely on food banks to feed their families. The burden should be directed on those at the other end of the scale that can afford an extra few pounds on their bills without ever feeling it. GIVE THOSE WHO CAN'T AFFORD THIS A BREAK!

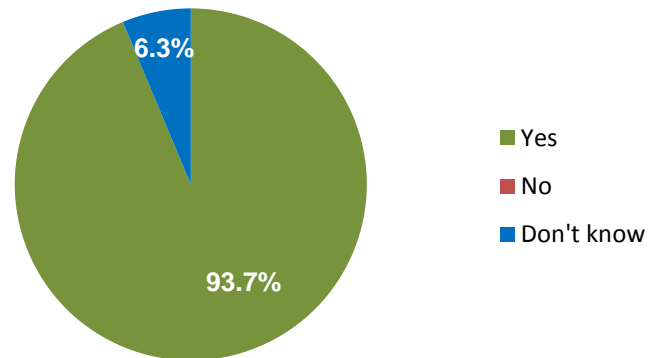
People being pushed into further poverty and hunger and evictions, its about public welfare instead of loaned ng 9mill of our money to a water park for instance

Options to change the current Local Support for Council Tax Scheme

Option 1 - Reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Briatin and still receive Local Support for Council Tax to 4 weeks

Do you agree with the change to the temporary absence rule?

Yes	104	93.7%
No	0	0.0%
Don't know	7	6.3%
111		



If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

Providing changes do not affect service personnel

What happens when people have to go into hospital or be looked after somewhere else, perhaps with relatives etc for a lengthy period. They still have their own home costs to cover. I am sure there are other circumstances where a stay away from home becomes a necessity rather than a choice and this should be taken into account.

I would not advice that having to reapply would be a good move but simply suspend the claim after the 4 week period has elapsed and reinstate on return and proofs of return being provided

This is ridiculous, and has already affected someone who I know

1. I do not understand why mariners or members of the armed forces would require local support for Council Tax as they are adequately paid. 2. In general if someone can afford to spend 4 weeks out of the country with all the associated costs surely they do not Local Support in the first instance?

Disabled people going abroad for resbite will be affected

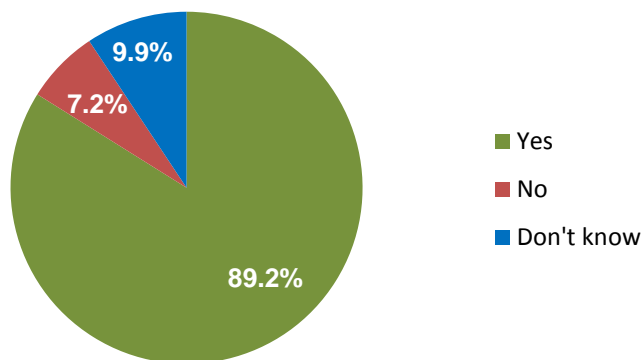
I agree with the reduction to four weeks, but not that benefit should stop from the time they leave the country. They may have a visit say, to Australia, funded by relatives there but still be in need of the support here. Having to re-apply could lead to a benefit gap that they couldn't manage and be costly in terms of Council administration.

Yes, 4 weeks maximum! How can anyone possibly claim council tax when they are out of the country and therefore by definition not requiring support with housing in this country? HOWEVER, the council should have a mechanism to ensure that exceptional circumstances apply. For example, the death of a relative overseas that required someone to be out of the country outside of this 4 week claim period. I am puzzled as to why the armed services or mariners would be an exception? Surely if they are in receipt of the same income whether they are fighting abroad or not or fishing away or not then income should be the deciding factor? Am I missing something here?

Option 2 - To remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of the current scheme for new Employment and Support Allowance

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

Yes	99	89.2%
No	8	7.2%
Don't know	11	9.9%
118		



If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

No need

This will affect me personally

It is my belief that people who claim ESA for whatever reason are unable to work. In most cases this is not a choice but a simple fact on their ability. So I don't believe there should be penalised further.

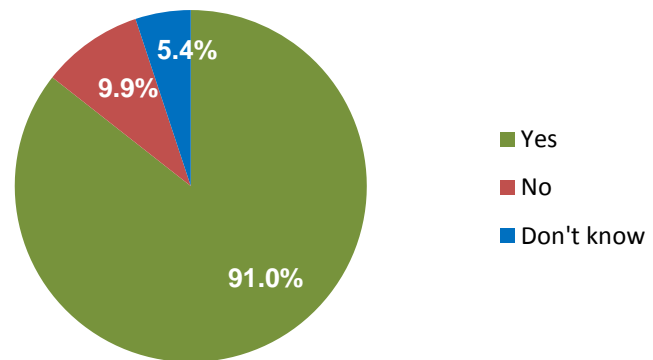
Not fully understanding the impact from different angles. Requires further research.

Cutting back on loaning our money out, council workers/parish councils etc cutting back and claiming expenses

Option 3 - To limit the number of dependent children within the calculation for Local Support for Council Tax to a maximum of two.

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

Yes	101	91.0%
No	11	9.9%
Don't know	6	5.4%
		118



If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

it either stays as it is or else it applies to all households even the ones with 5 6 or more children they would have to be reduced benefit to just apply to two children it's called victimisation

The start date for this scheme (less than 9 months) hardly gives time for publicity and awareness of the implications of a third child to be widely publicised and understood.

Leave things as they are

Unfair to those who want more children.....it sounds as if gov. is limiting choice.

Decision to have children is a personal one. State should not subsidise children that a parent would otherwise not be able to support.

I feel that the 1st April 2017 is irrelevant and should count for everybody with more than two children. Two children should be the limit local support.

Whilst I appreciate the desire to bring the LSCT rules in line with HB and UC larger families are being targeted in all directions. Many of these families will have their income reduced through tax credits, and may also have HB reduced through the benefit cap and have to dig deep to pay rent top ups etc. If they also have to pay more in CT this may plunge them further in to poverty. Much would depend on what SBC offer in terms of a hardship fund (see next question) and also what their CT arrears recovery policy will be

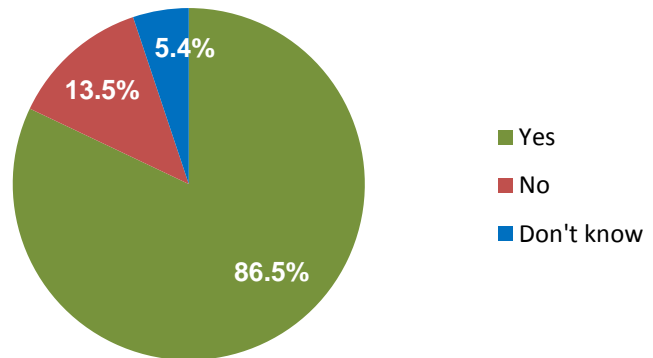
We should not base the council policy on a flawed government policy. I think it beggars belief that children who through no fault of their own happen to be born as the third child onwards should suffer through a lack of benefit in this way. Having 3 children is hardly an excessive family. Indeed, one presumes that in many cases children were planned in a family when circumstances were different. Indeed, how many families would this include, my understanding is that families of letsa say 4 or more children are an exception rather than the rule? Likewise, I think it is a naked discriminatory action to suggest that households who merge should be exempt from this charge in whereas a family who have had simply done nothing other than stay together! Means test pensioners.

This seems harsh to me. I would rather limit the savings held to £10k maximum.

Option 4 - To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers Element) to look after them

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

Yes	96	86.5%
No	15	13.5%
Don't know	6	5.4%
117		



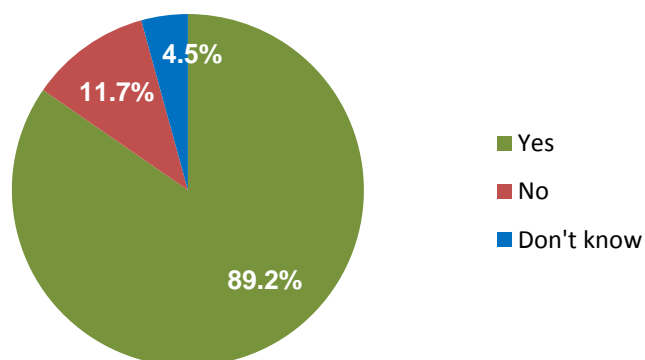
If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

I do not want to see carers or disabled to be any worse off as a result of these changes either now or in the future. In my opinion they deserve more not less and save the country billions of pounds.
I do not understand the bit WILL BE TREATED IN THE SAME WAS AS THOSE receiving carers allowance
K
I do not understand the implications of this for households. Insufficient information about these benefits is provided.
try and maintain maximum support for carers
And what if the carer does not receive carers allowance???? Continue as is.

Option 5 - To introduce a scheme, in addition to Local Support for Council Tax, to help applicants suffering exceptional hardship

Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

Yes	99	89.2%
No	13	11.7%
Don't know	5	4.5%
		117



If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

The administration cost per case of such a scheme is likely to be very high, making it an inefficient use of resources. Also, it is at variance with the theme of alignment with central government provisions which runs through this consultation. The scheme should only proceed if these issues can be satisfactorily addressed.

how can you define exceptional hardship? other benefits should cover these circumstances

I agree with this as long as it is monitored and not allowed to continue when circumstances alter.

In this day and age when we refer to people and exceptional hardships they usually only need to get their priorities right

Nice to see some flexibility in these rules

Will there be enough trained sympathetic staff to do the assessment

If by 'Exceptional Hardship' includes drug addicts, alcoholics etc, I am of the opinion that all benefits should be withheld. A self inflicted problem should not be considered the responsibility of the community.

Join discretionary housing payments with it to save money Train staff in benefits so they are knowable when working with people

If accompanied by sufficient safeguards against fraud.

But this must not take forever to look at their merit.

There are other methods of supporting people with exceptional hardship. This option would increase administration costs.

none

We should not have categories of hardship. Hardship is hardship and the support offered should already cover what is required. if it doesn't then the whole system is flawed and needs review.

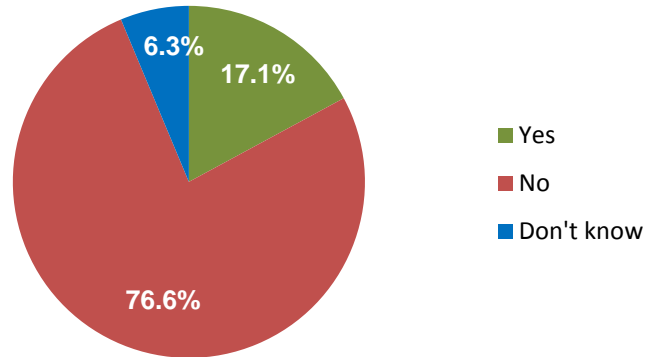
A discretionary scheme (like that in place for housing costs) would help, but I fear where the funding would come from. Is there no way to restrict pensioners more in line with working age people claiming help?

People pay tax for a reason! Public protection

Alternatives to reducing the amount of help provided by the Local Support for Council Tax Scheme

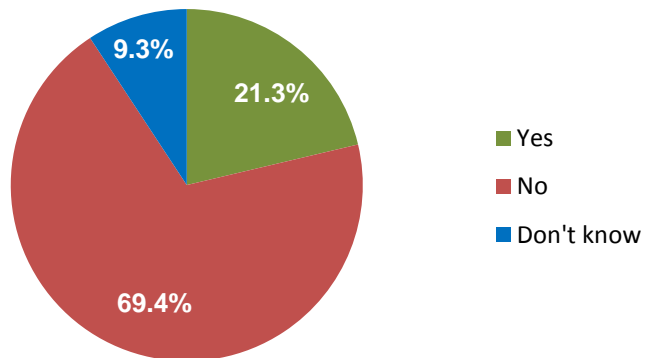
Increase the level of Council Tax

Yes	19	17.1%
No	85	76.6%
Don't know	7	6.3%
	111	



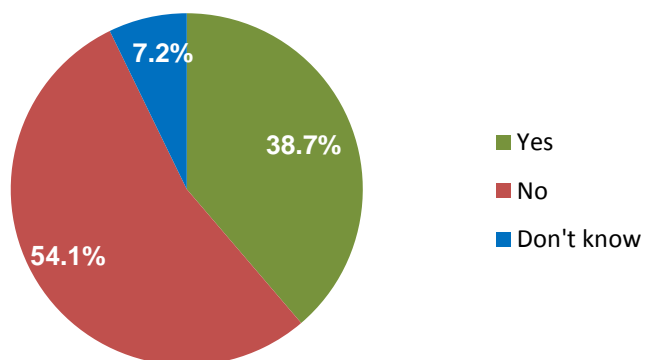
Find savings from cutting other Council Services

Yes	23	21.3%
No	75	69.4%
Don't know	10	9.3%
	108	



Use the Council's savings

Yes	43	38.7%
No	60	54.1%
Don't know	8	7.2%
	111	



If the Council were to choose these other options to make savings, what would be your order of preference?

	1		2		3		Average score
Increase the level of Council Tax	35	32.7%	13	12.1%	59	55.1%	2.2
Reduce funding available for other Council Services	20	19.0%	50	47.6%	35	33.3%	2.1
Use the Council's savings	52	48.6%	39	36.4%	16	15.0%	1.7

Any other comments on the scheme

None
No further comment as this unpleasant change is necessary to balance finances
i would prefer a modest increase of council tax rather than make further cuts to services. using savings should be the last resort.
none
I actually ticked for cutting services as that was the only option near to what I would prefer, that is to reduce funding for all these council wagons vans and cars the amount of council owned vehicles on the road in Scarborough is HORRENDOUS cuts should not be made on services just look at where the largest amount of expenses are and start there
Council should look to making savings by streamlining processes to reduce administrative costs, without penalising tax payers or reducing other council services.
My concern is policing any system that is adopted. How can you sort out the genuine cases from those trying it on.?
The scheme appears to be working well but would benefit greatly from a hardship fund such as the DHP pot.
These new schemes are (in my opinion) aimed at people who are already on low incomes, and the people who are least able to afford to pay any more. This Habitual resident (thing) is also causing real problems to people who know nothing about it. They go away to work, come back after a couple of months to be told that they are not entitled to Job seekers, then they are liable for Council tax, but not entitled to Housing benefit. (Even though they have been born and bred in this town.) Ridiculous!. But after saying that, the council did provide descretionary payments for the person that I know who this affected, after intervention from a Cllr friend of mine. Otherwise he would have ended up homeless.
I do not think I am equipped to answer the majority of your questions on this matter. I feel that the information you have provided is inadequate to produce a meaningful response. Therefore in all honesty I have been unable to answer yes or no

As the major bone of contention in any council proposals are the amount people pay for council tax, always has been and always will be. Therefore to raise council tax would be difficult to do, without a backlash from the voting public. But hard decisions have to be made, and as we enter the 'silly season' for referendums it seems that it may benefit the council to hold one on whether to raise council tax a few %ge points.

None

There is an awful lot of additional housing and flats being built in and around Scarborough thousands of new home's. Mostly each new home is going to be paying council tax. What is going to happen to all the new funding this building work is going to bring in. I understand that with new housing other services are needed such as doctors, dentist, schools etc. Scarborough is expanding at quite an alarming rate with housing developments going up in lots of different locations. It's getting that there is no distinction between the outer areas of Scarborough and Scarborough in itself.

I believe we are at the limit of what we can ask recipients of LSCT to pay.

It is difficult to answer the last question - eg increase CT, cut services or use savings without knowing what might be cut etc. Peoples budgets are already under pressure so no one want to see an increase in CT, utilising savings cannot be a long term option - but if someone suggests cutting services would this be genuine savings or essential front line services?

What else will the council's savings be used for? I'm not sure where else the council can make savings but this maybe worthy of considetation

Aim for introducing a scheme which is cost effective, but always allow for helping in individual cases of hardship.

N/A

Changes have to happen yes although what is the underlying philosophy ? To to the greatest good for the majority of people or is it another ethic ?

The only group that has seen their income not only remain the same but actually increase over recent years is the over 60s (pensioners). Therefore, can we just ensure that ALL applicants for benefit are treated the same in respect of need regardless of; age, sex, gender or religion. Whilst some in the older generation have worked hard all their lives many have not. ALL applicants especially those with children should be treated equally. I am expecially concerned by the suggestion the children with larger families could potentially feel the sharpest edge of these cuts and be discriminated against.

Some of these changes smack of the general central govt attitude of hurting the poor.

Other options for the Council to consider

No

none

Its about time that people with holiday homes,second homes etc started to pay their due share. If they can afford to own two homes they can afford to pay more. A cottage near me is owned by some Belgians and they visit 3 times a year for a couple of days and it is totally wrong. These holiday homes should be paying double the rate. They inflate the price of houses to such an extent that young people cant afford them and they have to move away to live and work which is wrong too. My children have all had to move away. Because these holiday homes are under used, the area around ,the gardens etc, are neglected, the local services , shops, suffer from lack of customers and whole communities are destroyed by this practice of buying houses just for an occasional visit. Make them pay then they will think twice about it.

my suggestion is in the previous space

Sto, and use any savings that the Council have. What happened to all the money from the sale of it's housing stock?p paying so many expences to Cllrs

See above.

Exampand the dhp scheme to include ctax help Train council tax and benefits staff in what support is avaiable The debt collection department / accounts are very knowable but I had already seen loads of staff by then

None

I believe that the people who are on benefits and are able to work, need to be brought in line with the national government in accordance to paying their level of council tax. Equally like I said in question 16 will there be any funds available from all the new housing.

STOP GIVING MONEY OUT TO UNDESERVING CAUSES LIKE NEW SWIMMING POOLS...AND LOOK AFTER THE PEOPLE IN THE BOROUGH.

I appreciate the need to bring the LSCT in line with HB and UC, but I think SBC should also be looking carefully at its arrears recovery procedure and it heavy use of bailiffs to recover arrears. Citizens Advice have recently produced a report looking at local authorities reliance on bailiffs and have stated that there would be better options available . Hopefully hyperlink attached!
<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/Debt%20and%20Money%20Publications/Catching%20up%20improving%20council%20tax%20arrears.pdf> The bailiffs are ruthless, and take no account of anyone's vulnerabilities etc when trying to recover money. The charging structure used - whereby a CT debt can be more than doubled by a bailiff's visit is horrific. A bailiffs debt is probably one of the greatest causes of stress and anxiety for people with debt issues and inapproachable nature of the bailiffs does not promote engagement. It is also one of the most important factor s which makes people consider DRO's which has the counter productive effect of writing off any CT arrears. I appreciate the need for CT arrears to be repaid but surely something less draconian which would promote residents to engage and keep in contact and at least pay something towards their arrears would be better for all concerned. This could be something that is considered in tandem with any hardship fund that is devised. Identifying a residents vulnerabilities (from their LSCT application) would also be beneficial in dealing with them

Rather raise Council Tax than cur services any more. They have already been pared back to the

N/A

to rise funds, start to use 'Admin Penalties' for customers who fail to report changes or report them late

Yes, an increase of between 3%-5% in council tax and a likewise reduction of between 3-5% in council services.

As stated, you could look at restricting pensioners more or reducing the capital limit. I appreciate this in itself may be more administratively awkward

Any further comments or questions regarding the Local Support for Council Tax Scheme

No

If the council reduce services further there will be consequences that the directors have already failed to consider in previous rounds of cuts. These being front line staff working extra undeclared hours to complete their increased workloads, managers taking work home and impacting on the homelife / worklife balance and further dependency on 'voluntary' support from already committed community activists. I doubt this comment will have any impact on the decision makers but must be said. There is a complete lack of understanding of what it takes to work and deliver the services to the Borough from the directors to the political Leader.

none

I would like to know what services the council would cut in order to pay for the Local Support for Council Tax. There are some services that could safely be cut but these would not include reduction in benefits. The council has a problem, as does the government, with trust, or rather lack of it. I am viewing all the changes proposed with suspicion and how they will, in fact, affect people, not only now but in the future.

ditto

I am led to believe that SBC has a huge 'reserve fund'. Does it need to be so large and could some of this money be used before more cuts to services are introduced?

Aha a golden opportunity to vent my spleen regarding sea gulls. Instead of spending £10,000 on gull proof bags council tax money would be more beneficially spent on reducing the amount of sea gulls in the vicinity. My apologies for raising this issue here but something drastic has to be done.

None

I understand that housing is at an all time shortage. But I also believe that we don't want to make our town into a city. It's quite alarming over the past couple of years how much new housing has been built and also will be going up in the near future. I think the council needs to remember the charm of Scarborough, why people choose to live here in the first place. We don't want to live in a CITY.

Comments on the Survey The information in this survey is inadequate for those who, like me, are unfamiliar with the various benefit entitlements. Also, the language of the document is not user-friendly (e.g. complex sentences). I am not convinced that, with the leading questions/information, that my answers are valid.

Uui the money paid by McAins to the council to dump their waste in the bay, back to the locals

There are to many benefits that are taken into account when calculating amount of relief.

It is time that a halt was called to council cuts. The cuts have encouraged more efficient working, and that lesson needs to be learned and efficiencies maintained. But now is the time to provide decent services and benefits for a decent society, even if the well-off have to pay more.. We are now living in a country of public squalor and neglect of basic services and amenities which is a disgrace.

N/A

increase the amount pensioners have to contribute towards their Council Tax

Yes, we should make sure that council policy fits the needs of the locality and that we don't let the government tail wag the dog.

The benefit & council tax people at the council do perform a hard job, and making their jobs/lives harder might not be a good idea.

Scarborough Borough Council

Local Support for Council Tax Scheme

Equalities

Household receiving Local Support for Council Tax at this time

Yes	12	10.4%
No	103	89.6%
Don't know	0	0.0%
	115	

Gender

Male	70	59.8%
Female	45	38.5%
Prefer not to say	2	1.7%
	117	

Age Group

Under 18	0	0.0%
18 - 24	1	0.9%
25 - 34	7	6.2%
35 - 44	14	12.4%
45 - 54	13	11.5%
55 - 64	26	23.0%
65 - 74	30	26.5%
75 - 84	20	17.7%
85+	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	2	1.8%
	113	

Disability

Yes	19	16.4%
No	89	76.7%
Don't know/not sure	3	2.6%
Prefer not to say	5	4.3%
	116	

Ethnicity

White	113	99.1%
Polish / Eastern European	0	0.0%
Mixed	0	0.0%
Asian	0	0.0%
Black	1	0.9%
Chinese	0	0.0%
Other	0	0.0%
	114	