

## **Appendix 3**

# **Revenues & Benefits**

**Report on consultation with residents of Portsmouth City Council on the proposed council tax support scheme**

November 2012

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## **Introduction**

1. The Local Government Finance Bill requires Portsmouth City Council to introduce a local council tax support scheme to replace council tax benefit when it is abolished under the Welfare Reform Act 2012.
2. The local council tax support scheme must be agreed by full Council and published by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013 to take effect from April 2013.
3. Before making a scheme, Portsmouth City Council must consult with precepting authorities and other persons considered likely to have an interest in the scheme (paragraph 3(1) of new Schedule 1A).

## **Respondents to the consultation**

There were 192 responses to the consultation of which 8 were organisations.

53.6% of the respondents are council tax benefit customers.

Also during the consultation period, 6 weekly information stands were set up across Portsmouth. Approximately 250 people attended, and were told about the change, given leaflets and made aware that the consultation was taking place.

## Methodology

1. The consultation was with:

- Residents of Portsmouth
- All working age council tax benefit customers
- Housing Partnership
- Debt Forum
- DWP – welfare reform group
- Children’s Board
- Voluntary and charitable community sector (over 600 partners)
- Disability Forum
- Portsmouth City Council staff

2. The approach taken with the consultation was:

- The draft scheme, accompanying documents and questionnaire was published on Portsmouth City Council’s website
- Media release to advertise consultation of the scheme
- Article in Flagship, Husetalk and Something for the weekend
- Article in the voluntary community sector monthly update
- Emailed stakeholders
- Weekly stands across Portsmouth to raise awareness of the consultation
- Attended various forum meetings
- Poster and flyers were issued to:
  - All housing offices (excluding Leigh Park and Wecock Farm)
  - All libraries
  - All schools
  - Portsmouth City Council departments
  - Benefit counters
- Letter sent to every working age customer in receipt of council tax benefit
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Article in Portsmouth City Council team brief
- Article on Portsmouth City Council internal website

3. Consultation with the residents of Portsmouth started on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012, when the draft local council tax support scheme was published, and finished on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

4. Before commencing consultation a communications and communities strategy was produced by the customer community and democratic service, to ensure residents were informed about how they can have their say.

## 5. Summary and outcome of consultation

There appears to be no majority view either in favour or against the proposals.

There was a split of around 50/50 of respondents who either agree or disagree with the overall proposed local council tax support scheme.

Analysis of responses shows the areas where there were more than 60% of respondents who agree or do not disagree are:

- People should be encouraged to work by increasing all earned income disregards by £10.00.
- Reducing backdating to 3 months.
- Non dependant adults should contribute more towards the council tax bill
- A minimum non- dependant deduction should be applied for those adults receiving income based job seekers allowance, income support, or income related employment support allowance.
- The remaining elements of the council tax benefit scheme will remain the same within the new proposed local council tax support scheme

Analysis of responses suggests the areas where there were less than 60% of respondents who agree or do not disagree with the proposed local council tax support scheme:

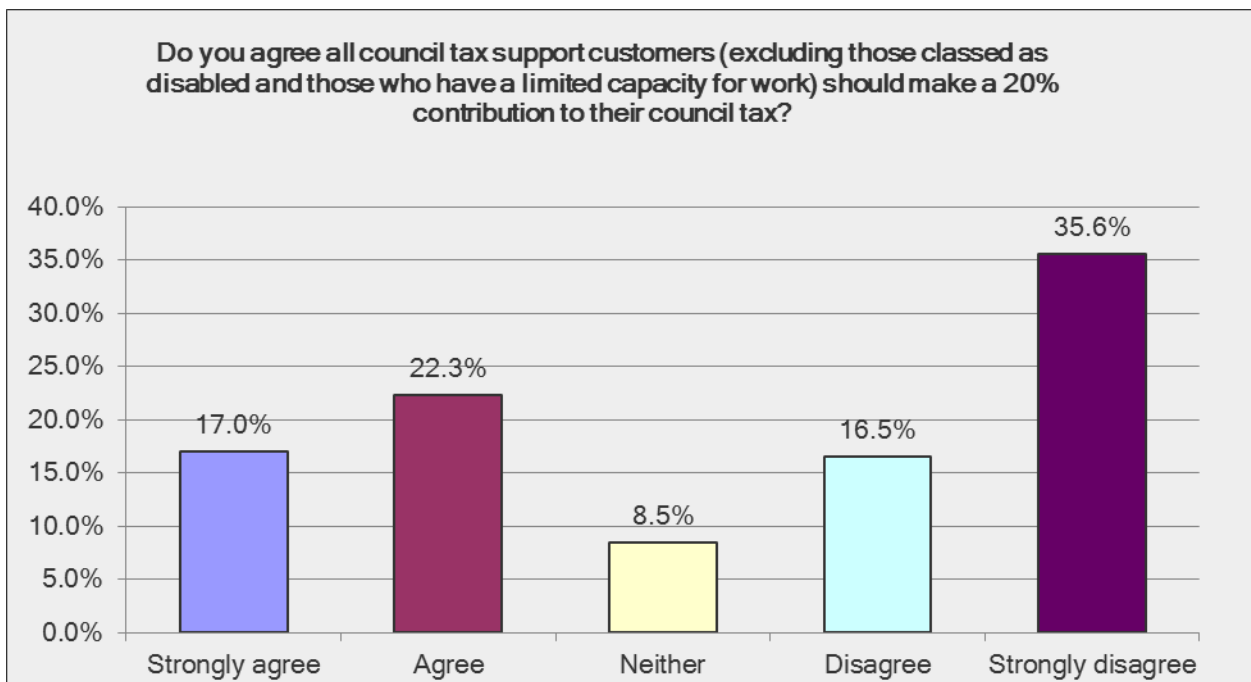
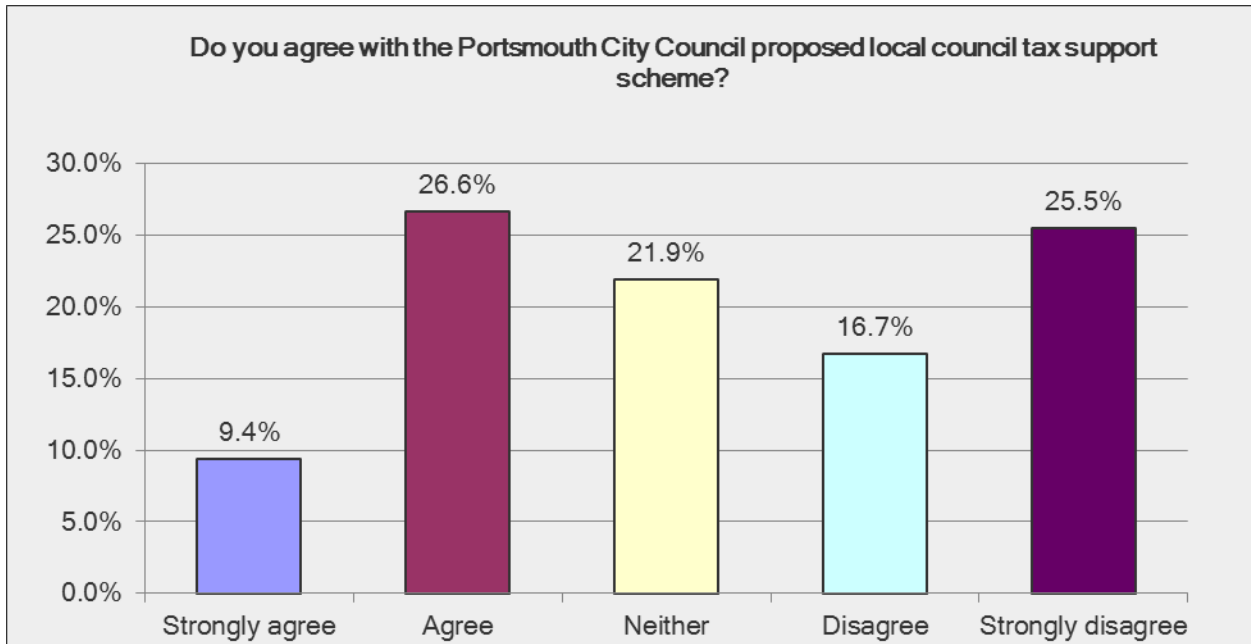
- All council tax support customers (excluding those classed as disabled and those who have a limited capacity for work) make a 20% contribution to their council tax.
- Increasing the income taper to 25% (excluding those classed as disabled and those who have a limited capacity for work).

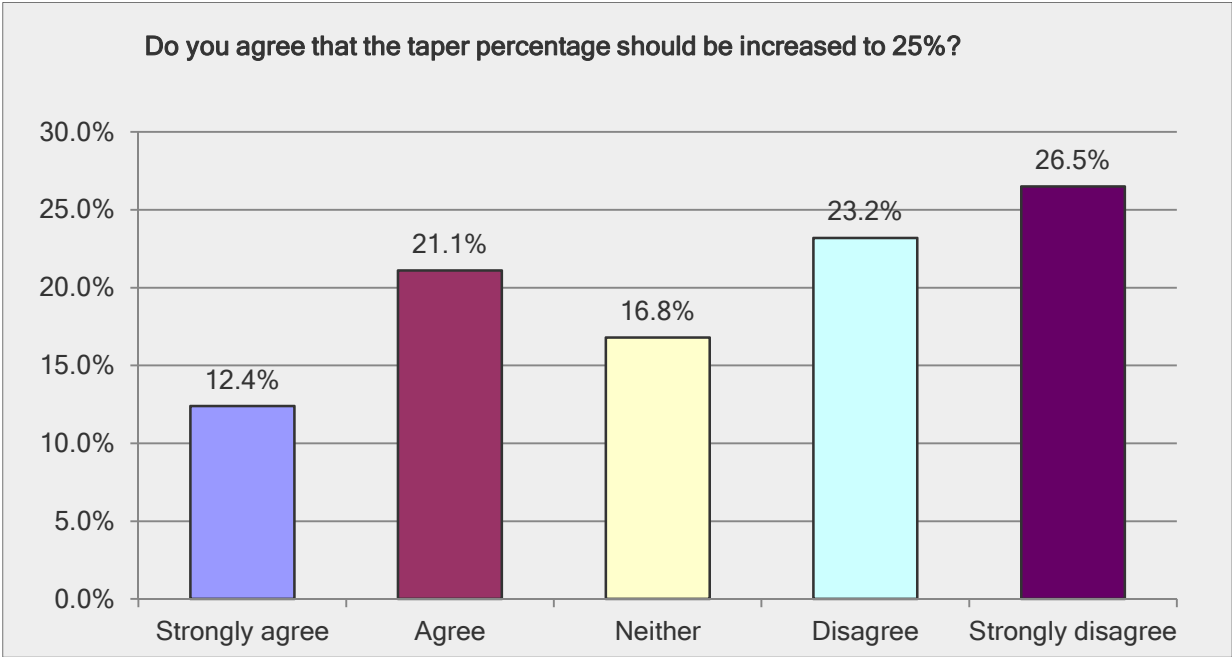
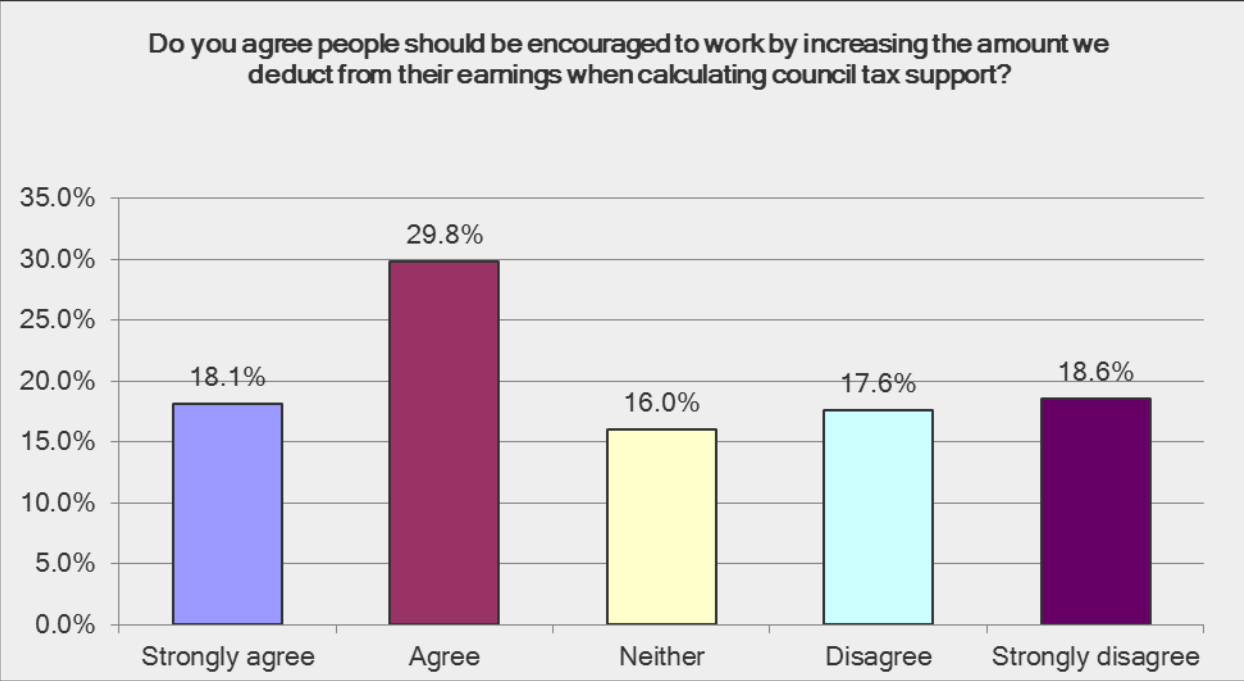
There were 8 responses made by organisations (Portsmouth City Council (PCC) money advice, a PCC officer, an unstated PCC department, an unknown charity, Portsmouth Disability forum, Portsmouth CAB, and 2 unstated organisations), and their response was broadly similar to the overall findings.

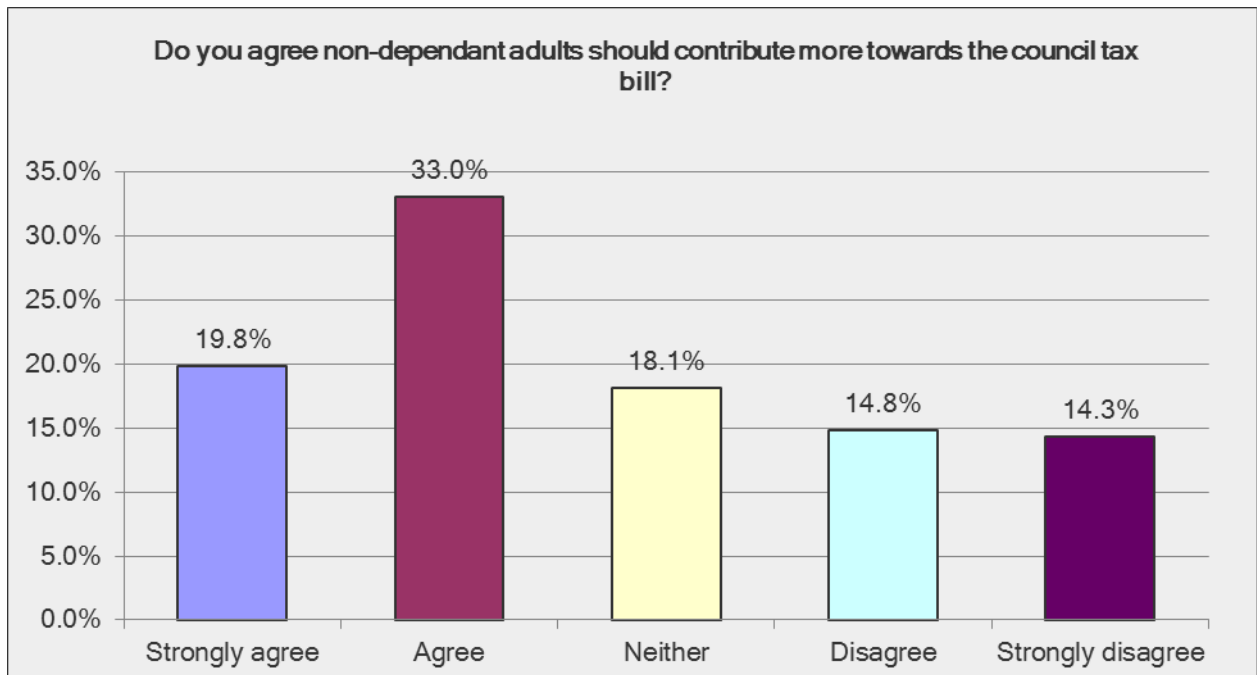
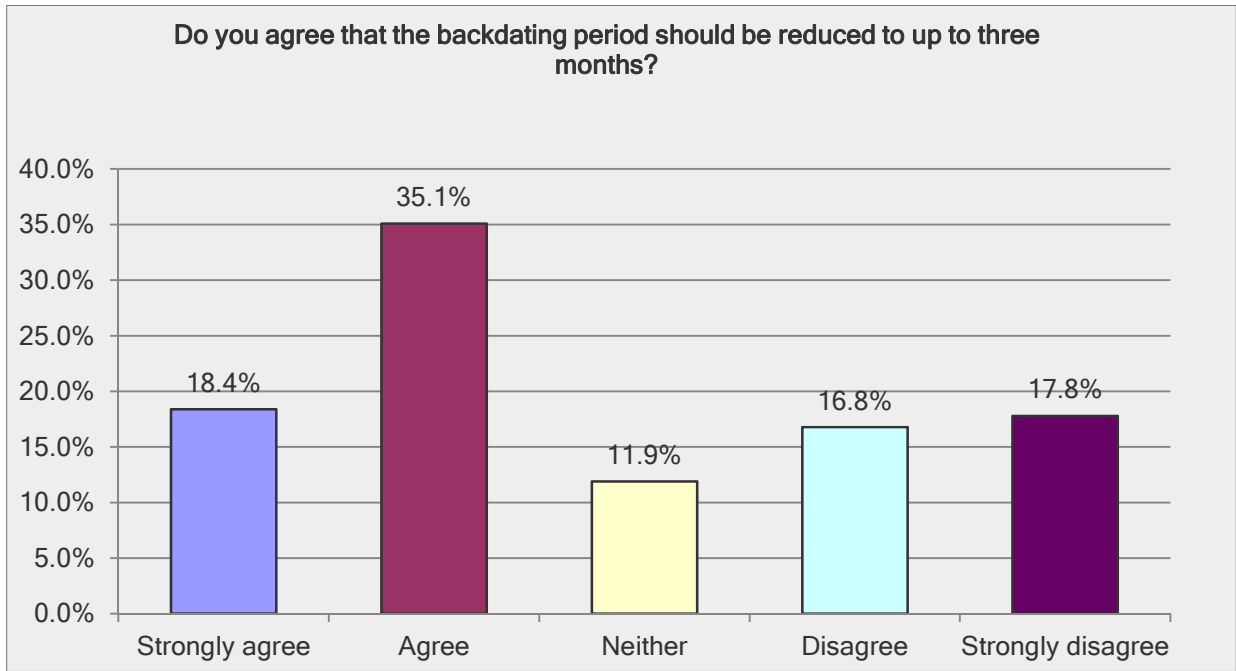
From the comments made by both residents and organisations the main area of concern is the added financial pressure for residents who are on a low income.

## Results

The following graphs highlight responses to the consultation questions.

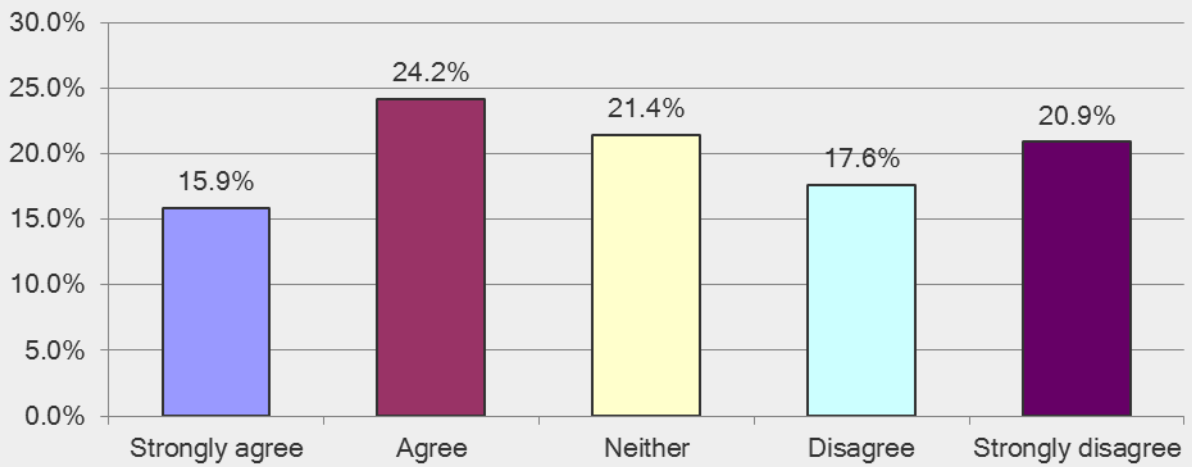




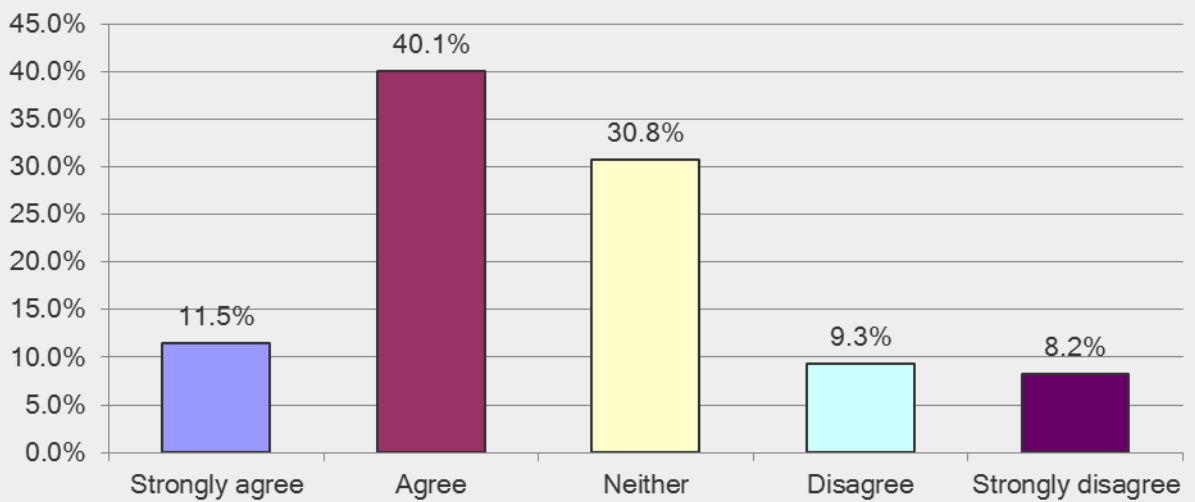




Do you agree a minimum non-dependant deduction should be introduced for those adults receiving income based job seekers allowance, income support or income related employment support allowance?



The remaining elements of the council tax benefit scheme will remain the same within the new proposed local council tax support scheme. Do you agree with this proposal?



## Summary of Graphs:

	Agree or do not disagree	Disagree or strongly disagree
Do you agree with the Portsmouth City Council proposed local council tax support scheme?	57.8%	42.2%
Do you agree all council tax support customers (excluding those classed as disabled and those who have a limited capacity for work) should make a 20% contribution to their council tax?	47.9%	52.1%
Do you agree people should be encouraged to work by increasing the amount of support we deduct from their earnings when calculating council tax support?	63.8%	36.2%
Do you agree that the taper percentage should be increased to 25%	50.3%	49.7%
Do you agree that backdating should be reduced to up to three months?	65.4%	34.6%
Do you agree non-dependant adults should contribute more towards the council tax bill?	70.9%	29.1%
Do you agree a minimum non-dependant deduction should be introduced for those adults receiving income based job seekers allowance, income support, or income related employment support allowance?	61.5%	38.5%
The remaining elements of the council tax benefit scheme will remain the same within the new proposed local council tax support scheme. Do you agree with this proposal?	82.5%	17.5%

## **Appendix A - Comments made by residents/organisations where they strongly agreed, agreed or did not disagree with Portsmouth City Council's proposed local council tax support scheme.**

### **Fairness of scheme**

*It's difficult to answer either way, as I haven't been offered any alternatives. That said I can see a certain amount of fairness in the proposal.*

*It seems fair and the most vulnerable in society are protected.*

*It would be unfair for working people to have to pay more council tax for benefit claimants.*

*It seems clearer and fairer.*

*It appears to be fair to all concerned.*

*I don't know a great deal about Council Tax and how it is charged but the proposals seem to be fair to me.*

*Feel that as long as the right people are protected then it is fair.*

*The scheme is fair and protects the vulnerable people in the city. It would not be fair to impose higher council tax on working residents or to cut other services that are already seeing squeezed resources.*

*Because the deficit should be split fairly and encourage people to work*

*It is fair that everyone who lives in Portsmouth pays something towards the upkeep of the council provided services, even those who receive welfare benefits.*

*It seems fair, although there are people that will feel the changes we all have to tighten the belts.*

*I believe it is fair for everyone to pay a contribution.*

*I feel this is very fair to all parties and is good to keep 100% for pensioners.*

*I think it's a fair scheme.*

*Fair that most people will contribute.*

### **Support for residents**

*Disadvantaged people need to be supported by others - this support should come from central government not by individual caring local authorities.*

*On-going support for the disabled and senior citizens.*

*As long as there is support still for the right people.*

*From what I understand, disabled people where one or more person in the household is disabled will receive more support from the proposals than they currently do.*

*PCC aim to support pensioners and the disabled and protect them from the increases.*

*People in short term job loss need temporary support.*

## **Ability to pay/making a contribution to council tax**

*I can understand why, but am struggling with various increases in living as it is, just have to accept it.*

*You don't get nothing for nothing everyone should pay themselves.*

*I agree people should pay something but concerned of how it will affect me. I cope now but not sure how I will manage if I have to pay a lot.*

*Not knowing how the scheme is going to pan-out for myself, i can't really say as i heavily rely on the allowance I currently receive.*

*Everyone should pay something and pensioners and people who are less likely to be able to work are protected from change*

*Everyone should contribute to the council tax rather than continue to tax those who work. The amount needed is small and most families could afford it even on benefits. Many like myself have to go without in order to pay the bills as I receive no benefits.*

*It seems to protect the vulnerable whilst giving responsibility to those who are able to pay.*

*I am a pregnant single mum with a toddler my baby is due in March and if I would struggle without help towards council tax.*

*Although I am on long term sick and disabled, I still have to pay towards my council tax, so hopefully now I may be helped just a little more than what I am now. I have always been baffled to how I am expected to pay more for these services, but am in poverty to be able to feed myself and pay off my debts, as it is not my fault I am sick and disabled, as they say the poor will get poorer and the rich will get richer!*

*I believe that everyone should, if they are able, contribute to the upkeep of their homes and city.*

*As I could not live without help from local council.*

*I feel that people on DWP benefits should have to pay some of their council tax.*

*People on such benefits like tax credit etc. .... get more than the working normal person and should pay the same amount as a normal working person.*

## **General comments regarding the Government/Portsmouth City Council**

*I cannot change what the Government have decided, but as I am in receipt of Disability living allowance I am not sure which applies to me.*

*Wait and see, again local council has been stuffed by the government.*

*On the whole PCC do a good job, know the country is in a state but the amount of changes is going to cripple some.*

*Government has forced Portsmouth City Council to make the changes.*

*In general, I understand there are some changes need to be made but it seems that the Government has been very mean on vulnerable people.*

*We need to provide some support but need to ensure we don't exceed the government funding.*

*If the Government are telling the Council they have to take responsibility, then they have to do it.*

*I accept that you have to make changes due to how the funding is changing from central government. The more groups you protect/ringfence then the less help that can be*

*provided to everyone else. The main change I would like to see is to not protect people of pension credit change but know that you can't change this. It is why I cannot agree or disagree with the scheme, it will just cause added stress to residents and employees having to deal with the added work load chasing the new debts created. It is another way central government are cutting LA budgets and expecting more for less.*

## **Misc**

*The intent of the changes seems to be correctly focussed though I worry that the complexity of the detail may produce a few deviations from the intended outcome.*

*Sick of people on income support with numerous children being rewarded for making no effort.*

*I cannot place myself in any class as I am neither disabled or a pensioner.*

*Not knowing how the scheme is going to pan-out for myself, I can't really say as I heavily rely on the allowance I currently receive.*

*Having been an housing officer I have seen the abuse and inequality of the existing scheme.*

*Otherwise cuts would have to be made in other areas and could make more people suffer.*

*Things need to change.*

*It probably won't affect me - I'm registered disabled in receipt of ESA (unable to do any work version), DLA with middle rate care component and highest rate mobility component).*

*I am unemployed & find it hard finding a suitable job.*

*Too many people are abusing the system.*

*Will help the most vulnerable in society.*

*I don't have enough information to decide.*

*Future provision in line with existing CTB support.*

*People who live on benefits who are capable of work should be encouraged to seek work.*

*It has to be done.*

*We in Portsmouth should have a say on how the taxes we pay are spent in our local area.*

*Benefits should not pay 100% of the bills. This should help encourage people back to work.*

*Although the proposals have been outlined no meaningful explanations or details have been provided to enable individuals to have an idea how they may be affected.*

*People on benefits are on them for different reasons. For instance, I am disabled and can't work through no fault of my own. I don't live in luxury, and I would find it crippling to have an additional bill to pay. But I agree that there are a number of young fit adults that just don't want to work, and there must be something done to get them to work.*

*Pensioners and more some vulnerable people have been protected. Reduction in support has then been applied to everyone else, with further incentive with earnings disregards for working people.*

*Seems very long and complex by using the existing system the number of staff needed to administer it remains the same. If the system was simplified then the saving in admin could go towards increased benefit.*

*In my opinion and experience the system is quickly complex and sometimes the council don't follow 100 per cent the policies in the change that means I need to check online what are the news proposals in terms of payments in the current year may affect me and my status in the benefits. However theses reductions would be enhance my conditions of living and I thing is going to support my payments in another's bills which I possess.*

## **Appendix B - Comments made by residents/organisations where they strongly disagreed or disagreed with Portsmouth City Council's proposed local council tax support scheme**

### **Unfairness of scheme**

*It is not fair. It hits the poorest in society caught in the benefit trap, finding it hard to find work with no up-to-date references. They aren't all lazy!*

*The limit of 80% on Council Tax Support for persons of working age is unjust and futile. It will involve trying to collect relatively small amounts from people whose resources have been calculated to be barely enough to live on. Many people will be unable to pay and there is likely to be considerable resistance to paying. The inevitable result will be hundreds - perhaps thousands - of court cases, involving bailiffs, attachment of earnings, etc. It threatens to be a repeat of the poll tax fiasco. Please find another way of making good the Government's cuts and don't take it out on the poorest in society.*

*I have been claiming sick benefit and have had to go to tribunal. I may no longer receive this am having difficulty walking, staying awake. I am 58 soon 59. Not yet pension age and as the government have recently changed the age limit for pension for women. I think my position is unfair as I would have retired had nothing changed. I have been working since the age of 15 and my mother was on rationing when I was in home.*

*The unfair and unclear. My wife is disabled and I am in receipt of JSA. This is set at a minimum requirement to live on so any increases not taken into account are going to force people to live UNDER the poverty level ergo, it could be a choice of paying this unfair tax or starving.*

### **Financial concerns**

*The scheme will not cover full benefit for those on esa jsa or income support. This will mean for me that to pay ANY council tax will put me into more debt each month than I am already on esa.*

*As my family and I don't come under any titles which will give us full benefit for council tax although we have no income at all apart from working tax credit and child tax credit as my partner has started a business with no income coming in as yet. This will really affect us.*

*I am on employment support and the money I have is not enough to pay.*

*It's bad enough you tax people for fresh air let alone pick yet again on the people in need!*

*The reduction in Council Tax benefit will push people of working age further into poverty. There are many people who are not disabled or in receipt of ESA but who are unable to work because they have small children. I know of many families through my voluntary work with refugees who are unable to find work whether it be due to their lack of basic English language skills, their family commitments or the lack of jobs paying a decent wage. These people are already struggling to keep their heads above water and do not deserve to be further penalised. In addition there must be numerous families in Portsmouth who are in work but whose jobs are part-time and who do not earn enough to survive without Benefits.*

*because many people in vulnerable situations, of very limited income will be put at risk of debt, lack of ability to pay for necessities like food and heating, or even end up homeless / on the streets (after the lengthy process of injunctions due to inability to pay - something I have previously been exposed to).*

*Those on income levels sufficiently low to be exempt from paying council tax cannot find the money without depriving their families of food/heating. The Council will spend a fortune in taking these poor folk to court in an effort to get money they do not have.*

*People on a low income or on benefits struggle to make day to day payments on their bills etc. as it is, and are left with nothing once everything is paid out, there is no way they can afford what you will be asking them to pay its a stupid plan, we are currently on jsa and struggle to make our bills each month and have barely enough to live on afterwards, once we have to start paying you a percentage of our benefits, life will be even harder than what it is now for us.*

*Because I am a single mum and i am unwell so therefore i cannot afford to pay.*

*I have little enough to get by on as it is. £5 may not seem a lot when you've got money, but it is when the price of everything else goes up.*

*Why are we taking money from people on the poverty line? They will not have the money to be able to pay. Their Income support/Job seekers is hardly enough to be able to live on, let alone pay ctax. I suggest we look at Eastleigh Councils proposal as they are taking it from people who can afford it. i.e. People with 2 homes!!*

*Considering that benefit claimants already are struggling for their very existence on an annual CPI-based benefit payments revision (not meeting the realities of RPI and true inflation) any further will contributions from benefit holders will compound furtherer hardship and impoverishment. This is not a good starting point for those seeking work in very difficult times.*

*There is nothing left to pay it with at the end of each week.*

*Poverty levels will increase.*

*Not thought out properly, will cause untold hard ship and worry.*

*I only work 17 hours a week my wife don't have work and from next April housing benefit going to be reduced due to myself and wife are in a 2 bed flat we only get £389 every 4 weeks and this is what we have to pay out £100 month gas and electric £110 Portsmouth water southern water TV licence. £100 on food and cleaning products £30 contract phones that's a total of £340.00 and that's not including rent and council tax this leaves us with a sum of £49.00 to live on for 4 weeks so if this council tax stops please tell me how do I pay rent of 321.44 every 4 weeks and then £90 a month council tax when housing benefit is being cut in April 2013 as we have a 2 bed flat.*

*People on low income are already finding it hard to pay as it is.*

*There are a lot of poor people in this area.*

*This is Aimed at the poor.*

*I can't afford to feed myself as it is.*

*Worried about how I will cope.*

*Because I would have to move out the place I'm living now, I can't afford to live now!!*

*How is somebody in my position able to pay 20% with just jobseekers allowance? Job agencies, companies WILL NOT give me a job because of my past, they are ALLOWED to DISCRIMINATE against me and I can NOT do anything about it. I already have to pay the ever increasing water rates and utilities. SO WILL SOMEONE TELL ME HOW I CAN PAY 20% TAX (WHICH WILL GO UP EVERY YEAR MOST LIKELY) I only have £72 a week. Electricity, Gas, water rates and now tax, tell me, how can I do it.*

*You are taking more money from the poorest residents in our city.*



*When you have no other income and there are no jobs that are paying a living wage where is the money coming from to pay the liability?*

*I am a carer on carers allowance and income support, I'm just about supporting myself and I'm living on the breadline, cutting my council tax and people like me would sink us even deeper into the breadline and most if not all of people like me wouldn't be able to live...*

## **Misc**

*Why should working class people pay for the wrongs of banksters/capitalism?*

*It is an attempt to collect money from the very poorest in society, who even parliament has assessed not to be in the possession of sufficient funds to pay council tax. Therefore, the Council is potentially putting itself in a position where it will not be able to collect this money. In other words, poll tax mark 2!*

*Because it will effect many people on low incomes with only a n 80% rebate compared to the original 100%.*

*The scheme will cost too much to administer for any benefits gained.*

*Why should the poor have to support those military people earning £60k a year.*

*How should those making claims late on "good" reason have the period of claim by arrears be penalised. By definition, they have "good" reason. These will typically include people who are hesitant about claiming benefits too quickly!!! 2) How can those who receive benefits, the minimum required for a minimum standard of living, as determined by the govt, now be required to pay their council tax partially. By definition, they will be living on less that what they need to live on. 3) I agree, there should be a greater liability on those living with the main householder.*

*Once again the poorest in our community are expected to pay for the cuts.*

*I resent your words: "Do you agree people should be encouraged to work by increasing the amount we deduct from their earnings when calculating council tax support?" I wonder how you would feel if, through no fault of your own, you found yourself long-term unemployed, and, despite all your best efforts to find employment, you were still unsuccessful and facing increasing hardship and homelessness. Is it 'encouraging' to up the lower threshold, so that those who cannot afford to live, let alone pay any council tax, eg unemployed, will then be charged 20 percent, and also for those 'working poor' to also have to pay more pro rata? Presumably it will also 'encourage' people to work when you employ debt-collection bailiffs to visit and terrorise them.*

*Too complicated.*

*I disagree on the basis that some people who are genuinely unwell or unable to work have to suffer this scheme. We need the council tax exempt for people with disability or unable to work due to health issues.*

*All the shortfall should be made up from second home entitlements and those with high incomes. Trying to take money from those who do not have it will cost more to implement. People cannot give you what they haven't got.*

*I don't agree with this at all as it is just another way of the government targeting people on benefits. This will I believe lead to more people on benefits losing their properties if they cannot afford to pay their council tax, the government is already cutting benefits how on earth are people supposed to pay part of their council tax and still manage to survive. It alright people saying that it will get people back to work but will it? There are so many cuts being made that there aren't any jobs left to apply for. What will it be next? People on benefits having to pay rent? The whole point of a benefit system is to support people out of*

*work not punish and make them homeless. This is another example of the government passing the buck, how will Local authorities cope with people turning up at their offices in droves with nowhere to live because of this. I thought rioting was wrong, but at this rate what else can people do if their right to live is so threatened.*

*Because you will be penalising people on low incomes who just cannot afford to pay.*

*The draft Council Tax Support scheme for working age persons is too generous. The capital savings limit should be set around £5000-£10000 and the percentages paid lower. If people are able to afford holidays (see page 12 'Going away') they should not be receiving support from those in full-time work, who don't receive this benefit and are unable to afford such luxuries.*

*It sounds like it will cost more to administer the change than the current system. It will have a serious effect on the less well off particularly when there are so few jobs in the local economy.*

*After Gas,, Electric,, Water,,Water TV, Food,, Personal,, there is nothing left.*

*As much as our economy needs the University, landlords should be charged council tax. One 3 bed house often is let to 5/6 people with attendant rubbish collection, highway use etc. This may free the housing market and stop big rogue.*

*Because my dad gets JSA which doesn't cover him as it is, he is always getting food from here...I AM NOT PAYING HIS COUNCIL TAX BECAUSE HE CANNOT AFFORD IT.*

*I'm a private tenant who receives JSA. HB and CTB. Given the current government's enthusiasm for making cuts in benefits, JSA will probably remain static. Any shortfall in entitlement to HB and CTB will have to come straight out of my JSA, leaving me with even less money to 'live' on. Obviously I disagree.*

*Changes to amount allowed for those out of work.*

*This will target the poor people who are working but who still don't have enough money to live on. Quote from your own wording Provision is made within the proposed scheme to protect disabled people and those who have a limited capacity for work by excluding them from specific reductions in support. Click here to read the definition of being classed as disabled or having a limited capacity for work under the proposed local council tax support scheme.*

*I am currently on appeal against a fit for work assessment, which my doctor is confident I will win. The current proposal is unfair because it will lead to me being charged when my appeal process has not run its course.*

*Why is child benefit considered an income. For a single parent this money helps a lot. It has already been frozen at £20.00 a week.*

*For people who can't afford to contribute for reasons of child care as single parents are on there own and get no help. The only help we get with childcare is when a child turns three and they get there funding for pre-school*

*Over complicated & therefore expensive. Over complicated & therefore many people will think they're not eligible.*

*We all need to pay for services, will improve environment if people take ownership. If it's free they do not care.*

*Too generous.*

*Because I am severely disabled.*

*I don't believe it is right that only working age people should have to pay a contribution- everyone should regardless of whether they are a pensioner or disabled.*

*You are targeting the least well-off.*

*I could see nothing in the papers to indicate that there has been an assessment of the saving from a reduction in the capital limit from £16k to £6k as shown in options 7 and 8 presented to Cabinet. In order to make an informed decision on a draft scheme to go out to public consultation, it would be necessary to know how many people this would lift out of eligibility and the consequent cost saving of that.*

*It would appear that the most vulnerable are being targeted. Those over 60 are except. However, people with children or on low incomes are being targeted.*

**Appendix C – Comments made on any other views on who should or shouldn't be excluded (scheme proposes to protect disabled people and those who have a limited capacity for work by excluding them from specific reductions in support).**

**We asked residents if they had any other views on who should or shouldn't be excluded as we proposed to protect disabled people and those who have a limited capacity for work by excluding them from specific reductions in support. The responses are below:**

*Pensioners who have a good income and a greater disposable income than the unemployed should not be excluded.*

*Well not the elderly for sure ...why should they be any different to the rest of us ...just because they are elderly.*

*Should be excluded: unemployment, disability, pensioners. Shouldn't be excluded MP, employment.*

*Poorer families also need to be supported, along with less well-off older people.*

*It's a fake tax in the first place no one should be made to pay council tax in the first place.*

*Pensioners on the basic state pension should be excluded from the proposed changes.*

*All those currently excluded from paying council tax should continue to do so.*

*Exclude all those on benefits and maintain the status quo.*

*Those whose genuine household income will put them on or below the understood poverty level.*

*Those on benefits should not pay. For the same reasons, nobody working, part or full time, should be worse off by working as against someone on benefits.*

*Not really, I am already 61 so of pensionable age although the government again have move the age so I get my state pension in 2013 instead.*

*I'm not sure I understand why certain groups are 'protected' as part of this scheme. I include pensioners in this statement, although I understand that the government has enforced this position. Are these groups not already protected by way of the other benefits they receive, on their personal circumstances?*

*How about excluding the very many people who live in side-roads that are made dangerous or impassable because the council can't or won't afford to salt or grit ice - could be a big problem again this winter.*

*Those with a limited capacity to work should not be excluded as they still have the ability to work.*

*I think anyone on a low income should continue to get help.*

*Disabled, unable to work, those who are genuinely looking for work but this can only be justified by the nature of the job search and job centres being supportive.*

*I agree that if a person meets the A, B or C categorisation and is unable to work due to disability then they should receive 100% exemption from Council Tax.*

*People with 1 child below school age.*

*Not at present, but if I sat and thought about it, I probably would come up with something.*

*Those who are genuinely unemployed.*

*None.*

*You need to be looking at the number of immigrants who claim benefits who should not be getting them and have no intention of ever working in this Country.*

*No-one should be excluded.*

*All with no income should not have to pay any council tax.*

*Basically I think it should stay as it is. People on benefits have it hard enough time scrimping by on them.*

*% is you wrong if are disabled you should all be classed as such not 10% Arm 20% Leg 100% Death.*

*Those on ESA in the support group who are mentally or physically disabled and who, by definition, receive the most basic of allowances per week to live on should be excluded from paying council tax. Pensioners who receive a basic pension and some element of pension credit should be excluded but pensioners who receive private pensions should be means tested for the benefit. I do not believe ALL pensioners should be excluded as many pensioners are capable of paying council tax.*

*People from another country not working should NOT receive this support.*

*People on poverty line benefits should be excluded. As they won't be able to afford to pay it and it will cause just amount of problems as the poll tax did!*

*No - agree with the exclusions.*

*No one who is in receipt of Council Tax benefit.*

*Asylum seekers/immigrants should have paid into the system before receiving benefits.*

*You should look to the age 18-40 who have NEVER worked.*

*Disabled persons are compensated via DLA and if in receipt of means tested benefit also receive a disability premium. In view of this I see no reason why they should be treated any different in the calculation ref council tax pay ability. From a "normal" able-bodied person.*

*I would like to know the income levels for a disabled household and the cut-off point where by they would no longer be entitled to any support.*

*Estate agents letting substandard housing to decent kids for their first experience of Portsmouth. A quick buck seems to be the call. As stats put plainly, Portsmouth residents cannot support anyone or anything. They struggle to live.*

*Withdraw council tax support for people who own multiple properties, whether they are occupied or not.*

*No one should be excluded as most get additional benefits and so could afford a small amount, this could mean those of benefits could pay less as more people are included in the amount that needs to be paid.*

*The unemployed should be excluded.*

*Second home owners should pay the full amount.*

*Those who are incapable of working due to illness have a hard enough life as it is.*

*I don't see why benefit should not be 100% of cost.*

*People on very low benefits or none at all as they may have had their benefit stopped FOR NO REAL REASON.*

*Pensioners. I don't think disabled people who are working should be excluded.*

*Some families who have both parents working but are still struggling to pay their way.*

*I think cases should be judged on merit, rather than a blanket matrix.*

*Houses with young children.*

*PCC foster carers.*

*Everyone should pay some amount.*

*Carers (informal Carers) because they do a lot for their family and friends who are severely ill or disabled.*

*No feel that what is being proposed is fair.*

*The present government are refusing disability allowance, and making the disabled find manual jobs. These are people who have trouble walking 50 yards and I know a few.*

*Single parents should receive more help.*

*No one should be excluded.*

*People in a two/three/four bedroom property when there is only one in it; and anyone who has come in from abroad who jump the queues for the more needed British people.*

*Anyone in receipt of income based benefits. ALL long term sick and disabled.*

*It should be means tested, everything.....not just those who cannot work!!!*

*I get incapacity.*

*A family that has 2 working parents even if that is a low income should pay towards it, but a lone parent family who works and on a low income should not pay towards it if they are already struggling. Provision is made within the proposed scheme to protect disabled people and those who have a limited capacity for work by excluding them from specific reductions in support. [Click here to read the definition of being classed as disabled or having a limited capacity for work under the proposed local council tax support scheme.](#) Then on the next page of this you go on to say that disabled will have to pay!!!!*

*The council should not work with the government on this scheme as taking the charge from people who already are on the breadline is immoral.*

*You will have a lot of homeless people on your hands!!*

*People with children have enough on their plate, but single people and couples have no excuse for not doing any type of work. The elderly and disabled have a valid reason for not working or contributing.*

*Up the business, and particularly the banks rates, leave the people of the city alone. Why should carers, the disabled, the sick, and the unemployed be punished further?*

*It should be fair and have a discretionary element since some disabilities are not always recognised yet are real to the suffers and limits their options of work.*

*Unemployed people and those who just don't want to work should be the ones to suffer, not the honest people like myself that look after the elderly, while trying to live on the peanuts the government gives us to do this job..*

*Where capital is above £25,000 threshold.*

*Those who do not show any attempt to find work, if they are able to.*

*People must have resided in the UK for at least the previous 10 years to be eligible.*

*I have not heard about these changes through the disability forum. How are you letting us know about these changes?*

*Disabled people should not be protected from the changes. All working age people should get the same amount of support. It is realistic to assume that they have more available income coming in to the household and therefore have more ability to pay than those out of work.*

*There should still be a 100% provision for those on limited incomes.*

*Disabled people should pay some sort of council tax, they get a good income from benefits.*

*I strongly disagree with the full reduction for disabled dependants. If they are working age they should only be entitled to the same as other working age people. All disabled people should make some sort of contribution even if its only 10% of their benefit.*

*I don't think pensioners should be excluded, they have more money to live on than most under the benefit scheme.*

*Those who are genuinely disabled and judged to be so by the government medical Inspectors should be supported.*

*People who should be excluded old people and extremely poor people. People on tax credits, working tax credits, child tax credits should pay the same amount as those who work full time.*

*I don't think you should be protecting people of pension credit age but you cannot change this. Every group you protect then increases the burden on those not protected so do not think you should be adding more groups into the protect list.*

*I think the provision made in the proposed scheme is fair.*

*I feel that only the people who cannot work should get this as everyone else is able to work and choosing not to and then receive these benefits.*

*Into my outlook need to warn all residents by letter what are news proposal as well with the new reform of bills may affect the council tax and the protection of fraud in the accounting system.*

## Appendix D - Additional comments made

*Please make it clearer as to who is entitled and who is not. If you get full benefit now - does that mean that full benefit will remain in April? The 3 month list other than the 6 month list would only give the council an excuse not to help. April 2013 is going to be a nightmare for any individual working out if and what they are entitled to and therefore the council will take longer to work it out. Remember the Poll Tax and the changeover to Council Tax - I do and it certainly did not work in the first instance.*

*In order to cover the deficit people in regular work, pensioners who earn good pensions and people who own large houses and land should be encouraged to pay more. They would not be losing as much of their disposable income to make ends meet as the unemployed, many of whom cannot find work. Very few are lazy and have enough income to take holidays. A punitive measure would not help in this case. The government exaggerates to fight its cause and the media exaggerate for publicity.*

*I am on esa due to having brittle asthma but I struggle each month as I'm a lone parent to 4 amazing children due to marriage breakdown. I am short each month as it is but being forced to pay any council tax on such a low income or facing court if I don't pay is worrying as hell. Do I just not eat to cover the added expense?? I don't smoke drink or go out ever as I'm happy being with my children so i have no added expense like some do who do the above ... You will force people onto the poverty line even further than we / they are already... how do you expect people to pay anything ... ESA JSA Or Income Support will not be increased to allow payments to be made so I'm worried sick how to make ends meet come the changes ... The government don't live in the real world ... as they will never be in the position i and 1000's of other are on benefit and know the meaning of the poverty line... At the moment I can't afford anything for christmas for any of the children so am not looking forward to December .... As it is i will have to borrow money to get odd bits for them ...this will put me into more debt again ... why does no one care and just want more and more money .....*

*Local government should not be left to bear the brunt of central government cuts in this way.*

*It's a fake tax it should be outlawed full stop ... its robbery ! I get Job seekers and it states on there that is money given for me to live on, not just to give it back to the government to you £4 a week is nothing but to those that watch every penny they have its enough to pay electricity for nearly a week not just to line some fat business man's pocket ! BAN COUNCIL TAX ITS NOTHING BUT ROBBERY!*

*I would prefer to see an open and accountable review of the entire council spending put before changing the ways that council tax benefit is calculated - having seen many stories of 'unnecessary wasteful spending throughout out city' not necessarily in the civic centre.*

*The question about whether one agrees or disagrees with people being encouraged to work by being made to pay more is highly disingenuous. Those amongst us working part time and unable to get more hours are penalised by this through no fault of their own. Typical coalition "Newspeak".*

*This is a poorly designed survey. It assumes a detailed knowledge of the benefits system. The "Do you agree" formula is discouraged by professional survey organisations since it invites the respondent to agree and thus introduces bias.*

*It would be good if all council tax was not so heavy in price on all residents, this bill is very steep and hard to pay as it is.*

*Stop wasting money developing hare-brained 'improvements' to attract business to the city - they always inconvenience those unfortunate enough to live here.*



*Work is hard to find now, the money people are supposed to live on is shrinking. Changes are happening across DWP benefits so it's very difficult to know what ones income for the future. I don't know how the council is going to find so much extra funding, I think the least well off should be the last to be affected, where ever possible.*

*I am sorry if i have entered too many "Neithers , I found some statements hard to get my head around so I entered neither on some because of this.*

*I try to economise on heating, food etc., although it is difficult & most clothes come from charity shops.*

*I'd be very glad to see those on benefits actually making a contribution to society.*

*I disagree that all disabled should receive all the as well as c' tax benefits. For example blind dependants who are perfectly fit otherwise. All should undergo assessment by a qualified person.*

*Regarding the equality act 2010 question, the following best describes it; mobility and hearing. The computer would not let me do both in the appropriate place.*

*71.00 per week from JSA, Gas £ 8.00, Electric £ 5.50, Water £ 5.50, Water £ 5.50, Tv £ 7.44, OUT £31.94 Per week, Food + personal £36.50 per week, Total = £68.44 left in the pot £2.56.*

*This questionnaire is not very clear, even after reading all info. Also your road shows are only one day a week, unfortunately for me on a day when I work 9-6 so I cannot even speak to someone. I feel As a working single parent again the main government don't care and my local government are left to pick up the pieces meaning cuts will be made elsewhere in Portsmouth. I only receive £2.50 a week so I guess I'll lose that and I will have to find another £10 a month from my food budget or something I am not happy.*

*Look at Eastleigh council's proposal it is a much fairer way of implementing the scheme.*

*It is about time that Local Authorities started standing up for their local citizens (notably voters for your members!) and challenge central government on their grossly unrealistic remedies for austerity/deficit reductions. ALSO - if this unworkable scheme (i.e. the collection of new contributory revenues) goes ahead then I believe ALL benefit recipients could/should DEMAND a RE-EVALUATION (as at 2012/13) of their homes marketable value regarding correct the "BANDING": How long and how much would this legally challenging assessment cost!*

*I get jobseekers allowance. I get paid to look for a job. I do not at the moment pay any council tax. I am surviving on my savings approx 3X my monthly income is going out - depleting any savings I might have, but that is all I claim. I do voluntary work one day a week.*

*Take into to account how much we pay in bill's food, and then see how much is left over and help the gov stop sending other countries money and the uk will be richer for it !*

*I think this will cause mayhem.*

*Council budget should not be used to support the big increase in migrant population in Portsmouth, at the expense of the local needy people. Housing benefit cuts should be looked at.*

*I think all adults except the disabled and some pensioners should make some contribution.*

*This proposal penalizes the unemployed when there are few jobs available.*

*The 20% is too much for people on a very low income, HOW ARE THEY GOING TO EAT, NEVER MIND PAY ANY BILLS.*

*I think the way council tax is calculated as a whole needs to be looked at and should depend on the amount of people living in a property and not on the value of the property.*

*Nondependent deductions should not apply to people receiving carers allowance for caring for the person they live with e.g. adult son or daughter living in family home and caring for mum or dad.*

*As usual this is not a fair way of doing things. Some people should be made to pay everything in part as they have no intention of working. But there are others who will suffer this hardship through no fault of their own or are receiving low wages.*

*As a foster carer i have provided a valuable service, as have many others, for Portsmouth city council in a voluntary capacity with expenses paid. Where do carers of all situations (LAC, old people disabled people, etc) stand in all this change.*

*Please make any changes fairly.*

*There are people i know who only get a pension. But are still expected to look for work. There is no work for them. How do you expect them to pay council tax on £50.00 per week.*

*Yet another tax increase on those least able to afford it.*

*All these changes will only effect the poor and the sick in this city, PCC should do everything they can to help them live on the money they have not start thinking of ways to take more from them, The richer well off residents of this city should be paying more as they can afford to the sick and disabled cant, and to ask people on JSA/ ESA to pay towards it is shocking.*

*Do you plan to increase resources for the homeless and policing (due to the rise in crime rate) as a result of this policy. As a council you can go against this scheme in many ways I see no option in the consultation for this view to be put forward. As Portsmouth will be hit particularly hard by this proposal it is disappointing that you seem to have acquiesced without a fight. This is very weak local governance and I hope will be rewarded by the voting in the next local elections.*

*You will have a lot more people living on the street.*

*What is the point, the government, councils have already made up their minds and even if 100% of the survey, Has put what I have put, they would still do this stupid reform.*

*I strongly think if you found and sent home anyone who's not meant to be hear, stop giving them the homes most of us have been waiting for years and can't get, its them draining this country of all its money, and now we the British will have to pay for them all to live here again.. send them all home and Briton will have more then enough money to keep our own people who need help!!! and stop putting them all first .. if they got nothing and had to pay they would all take themself home..*

*How do you expect people to cope when Housing Benefit is being reduced and once all the other bills are paid, people will have no money.*

*Appears to be ill thought out and a bit of a knee jerk reaction. It is accepted that if you can pay you should but there will inevitably be those that can't, and who will be forced to reduce an already low standard of living even further because of this. Cliche as it may seem, Why aren't those with the most contributing more?*

*The council is supposed to represent and work for us, the people. If your funding is being cut then you should sack staff, sell (more) buildings, reduce expenses etc. But no, you are forcing the most vulnerable to pay even more. How about all your staff take a 20% pay cut,*

*then you could reduce everyone's council tax burden? I and many other already struggle to pay for gas, electricity and food, I can't afford an extra £5 a week to pay you, to pay a private company, to collect my bin.*

*Without income relying on benefit due to no work there cannot be any extra payment to be made. The council needs to raise the rates on higher rated houses rather than penalise those less fortunate.*

*I cannot believe the government are taking so much money away from people how are we meant to live I'm in private rent but will now soon be on to the council for a house but how can you supply houses form the thousands of people renting private ? going back few years I was told by Paulsgrove council that there was no houses and we was told to rent private and claim under the lhs as we would get are rent paid and get a house more suited to us which we done and have lived in same private rented house for 8 years we now are at the point where are rent has been cut and we have to find the rest and at £1100 pcm we are having to find over £200 a month then we get told there gona be a cap of £500 on benefits now this cut tell me how can we live this way how can the government get away with making all these people homeless and live with no money and no roof over their head if we done that it be illegal they do it and we do nothing about it are they trying to cause riots on the street as in my opinion I can see it coming very soon we need to stand up to the government before it's too late and the country is destroyed and millions of people are left with nothing.*

*IDS & GO have come up with another way, yet again, to punish the poor.*

*All of society needs to take responsibility for the services they receive.*

*Whilst I agree the contribution levels need raising, the levels you propose are generally too generous so I have to disagree with them. You also appear unable to spell 'deduction' (you spell it 'deduction'), and your question about the minimum contribution for working age people seems to suggest everyone should pay 20%, rather than 20% as a minimum. Whoever designed this questionnaire need training.*

*There are a huge number of households letting rooms to students, many of these people are also claiming to live alone. get the money from them rather than the disabled and old!*

*Funding shortfall should be recovered from increasing the council tax liability on empty properties and second homes.*

*Everyone should pay contribute to council tax regardless of the size of that contribution.*

*We doubt whether the general public and in particular, those who will have to make payment towards their CTax liability will have sufficient understanding of the proposed scheme to enable them to contribute to this consultation.*

*Council tax should be as low as possible. Council officers pay and allowances are far too high, these should be drastically reduced before any increase is made in council tax.*

*The system is basically the same as the old so there is no saving in admin which could have been used to provide increased benefit. Also why have limits on the benefit paid for people with capital over £16k this is difficult to prove and not really a large sum of money when considering someone's life savings.*

*I feel this is great as full ctax benefit should only be given in cases like disabilities and pensioners and that the people who are not at work should pay 25% of the bill. I also feel 3 months is more than enough time to backdate as 6 months is making people lazy and not bother.*

*Just warn for all residents about news proposals of Council Benefits which is affect the rent as well the tax council for to make sure don't breach regulations because sometimes have some irregulations with is not shared in all.*

## **Appendix E - Summarised feedback from weekly the stands around Portsmouth**

**03/10/2012 – Paulsgrove**

**10/10/2012 – Stamshaw**

**17/10/2012 – Buckland**

**24/10/2012 – The Hard**

**31/10/2012 – Somerstown**

**07/11/2012 - Southsea**

The majority of the time was spent giving out flyers to make people aware there was a consultation underway and what the consultation was about. There was not much specific feedback as majority of residents took flyer and said they would need to read the scheme on the website to be able to give feedback.

For those residents that did want to discuss the proposed change, the main comments received were:

- From people not currently receiving CTB
  - thought it was a good idea that people not working should still make a contribution towards their council tax charge
  - agreed that everyone in household should contribute
- From people currently receiving CTB
  - Unhappy said they don't pay anything now and would not be able to afford to pay anything in the future
- Spoke to a few pensioners who were happy they would not be affected by the changes
- Spoke to residents who would be classed as having a disability under the proposed scheme. All were positive about the change and their proposed protection under the scheme.