

West Northamptonshire Council Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) Consultation 2021-22

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about the proposed changes to the council tax support schemes across West Northamptonshire can be found below.

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Who will this affect?

Council tax payers who are of working age and currently receive support with their council tax bills in West Northamptonshire (currently receiving support from Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough and South Northants Councils).

Pensioners are not affected by these changes.

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What is Local Council Tax Reduction?

Council tax payers who have a low income can apply for Local Council Tax Reduction, which, if they are eligible will give them a discount on their council tax bill. How much support people get is based on their situation and income.

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Who pays for the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme?

The scheme is funded by the current district and borough councils and will be funded by the new West Northamptonshire Council from April 2021.

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Who currently gets help with their council tax bill?

Support is currently awarded to low income households. This includes people of working age, pensioners and vulnerable people. The proposed changes do not affect pensioners, who are protected by law.

The amount of support varies, depending on the claimant's financial circumstances and the district/borough council area they currently live in. The maximum amount of council tax support that a working age claimant can currently be awarded towards their council tax liability is shown below by district/borough council area.

	Daventry	Northampton Borough	South Northants
Maximum amount of support for working age people	80%	69%	91.5%

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How have we developed the proposals for the new West Northamptonshire Council's scheme to help people pay their council tax?

We have used the following principles to develop the proposals for this change.

The new Local Council Tax Reduction scheme will:

- be fair and apply to all working age residents in West Northamptonshire
- be developed by bringing together the current three schemes and continue to include elements that apply to the majority of the current district/borough councils where possible
- be broadly cost neutral
- be administered using the current software systems
- require all council tax payers to make a contribution towards their Council Tax Bill

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What other options were considered?

We looked at a number of options for how to create one scheme for West Northamptonshire.

We reviewed the three current schemes in line with the principles listed above. The following options were also considered as part of this work and have been discounted at this stage.

- **Continuing with the three current schemes after April 2021.** This was considered but at present is not legally feasible, discussions are taking place with MHCLG regarding the ability to either defer the implementation of a single LCTRS or for harmonisation to take place over a period of time. Even if MHCLG allowed either option, it is worth noting that residents would not be treated the same across the new West Northants Council area. This would potentially lead to confusion and result in differing levels of support for residents based on where you live. To ensure that people with the same circumstances get the same level of help we need to bring the current schemes together to make the best new scheme for the whole of West Northants.

- **Setting the level of contribution for working age customers to a lower than breakeven level.** This option was considered but would mean the scheme is more expensive and this would impact on wider service delivery for all residents and the finances of the new Council.
- **Introduction of a new banded scheme.** This would be based on levels of income grouped into bands. With the wider roll out of Universal Credit having taken place, this scheme could be seen as a simpler way to support people on low income. This has been discounted at this stage but maybe reconsidered at a later date.
- **Setting the level of council tax contribution for working customers to a higher level.** This option was considered but would mean the level of support to claimants would be less on average than the level of support that is currently offered although it would reduce the costs of the Council.

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Where can I find out further information about how this might affect me?

Further information is below:

- [West Northamptonshire Shadow Executive meeting paper 27th October 2020.](#)
- Explanatory information of the proposals is provided within the [online questionnaire](#)
- Further information is available on request

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How can I give you my views?

You can give us your views by completing our [online questionnaire](#). Or by typing <https://futurenorthants.citizenspace.com/lctrs-west/2021-22> into your browser.

Please contact us if you have any queries about this consultation or require it in another format or another language. Our contact details are as follows:

- **Email:** futurenorthants@northamptonshire.gov.uk
- **Telephone:** 01604 837355

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When is the deadline for giving my views?

- The consultation started on 2nd November 2020 and will close at midnight on 13^h December 2020.

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What will happen with my response?

Once the consultation closes, we will collate all the feedback received and present this information to the West Northamptonshire Shadow Executive to consider when making their decision on how to harmonise the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for West Northamptonshire. We will then publish full details of the new scheme in early 2021, with the changes coming into effect in April 2021.

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