

# Local Council Tax Scheme consultation

## Thanet District Council

Number of responses: 385

Paper	50	13.0%
Web	335	87.0%

Are you answering this survey as:

	Overall	I do not pay Council Tax	I pay Council Tax but I receive Council Tax benefits	I pay Council Tax but I do not receive any benefits to help with this	I am a Landlord	I am a second home owner	No reply
	<b>385</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>9</b>
an individual?	366	46	87	104	25	99	5
	95.1%	100.0%	97.8%	98.1%	75.8%	97.1%	55.6%
or as a representative of a local community group, business or organisation?	10	-	-	2	8	-	-
	2.6%	-	-	1.9%	24.2%	-	-
No reply	9	-	2	-	-	3	4
	2.3%	-	2.2%	-	-	2.9%	44.4%

***Please provide the name of the group, business or organisation***

**I pay Council Tax but I do not receive any benefits to help with this**

Group of three pensioners  
Thanet Citizens Advice Bureau

**I am a Landlord**

4t8 Property maintenance  
East Kent Housing, Thanet  
Elgars  
Elgars Chartered Surveyors  
Landlord (property)  
Michael Yoakley's Charity  
R.G.SCOTT FURNITURE MART

Robbie Toys limited

**Which of the following best describes your current situation regarding Council Tax?  
Please tick one box only.**

I do not pay Council Tax	46	11.9%
I pay Council Tax but I receive Council Tax benefits	89	23.1%
I pay Council Tax but I do not receive any benefits to help with this	106	27.5%
I am a Landlord	33	8.6%
I am a second home owner	102	26.5%
No reply	9	2.3%

**Q1 In summary, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the principle that the overall financial shortfall should be covered from changes to Council Tax discounts and exemptions and benefit reductions?**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>I do not pay Council Tax</b>	<b>I pay Council Tax but I receive Council Tax benefits</b>	<b>I pay Council Tax but I do not receive any benefits to help with this</b>	<b>I am a Landlord</b>	<b>I am a second home owner</b>	<b>No reply</b>
	<b>385</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>9</b>
Strongly agree	58	3	10	40	2	3	-
	15.1%	6.5%	11.2%	37.7%	6.1%	2.9%	-
Tend to agree	111	16	22	38	9	25	1
	28.8%	34.8%	24.7%	35.8%	27.3%	24.5%	11.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	25	3	6	6	5	5	-
	6.5%	6.5%	6.7%	5.7%	15.2%	4.9%	-
Tend to disagree	37	1	10	4	4	18	-
	9.6%	2.2%	11.2%	3.8%	12.1%	17.6%	-
Strongly disagree	136	17	37	18	12	50	2
	35.3%	37.0%	41.6%	17.0%	36.4%	49.0%	22.2%
Don't know	10	4	4	-	1	1	-
	2.6%	8.7%	4.5%	-	3.0%	1.0%	-
No reply	8	2	-	-	-	-	6
	2.1%	4.3%	-	-	-	-	66.7%

**Q2 To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should aim to keep the benefit reduction as low as possible to protect the vulnerable and people on the lowest incomes?**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>I do not pay Council Tax</b>	<b>I pay Council Tax but I receive Council Tax benefits</b>	<b>I pay Council Tax but I do not receive any benefits to help with this</b>	<b>I am a Landlord</b>	<b>I am a second home owner</b>	<b>No reply</b>
	<b>385</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>9</b>
Strongly agree	178	37	69	41	9	21	1
	46.2%	80.4%	77.5%	38.7%	27.3%	20.6%	11.1%
Tend to agree	95	6	11	25	10	42	1
	24.7%	13.0%	12.4%	23.6%	30.3%	41.2%	11.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	29	-	-	10	4	15	-
	7.5%	-	-	9.4%	12.1%	14.7%	-
Tend to disagree	27	-	1	13	1	12	-
	7.0%	-	1.1%	12.3%	3.0%	11.8%	-
Strongly disagree	41	-	5	17	9	10	-
	10.6%	-	5.6%	16.0%	27.3%	9.8%	-
Don't know	6	1	2	-	-	2	1
	1.6%	2.2%	2.2%	-	-	2.0%	11.1%
No reply	9	2	1	-	-	-	6
	2.3%	4.3%	1.1%	-	-	-	66.7%

**Q3 We are proposing to introduce shortened claim forms for the new local Council Tax Support scheme to make it easier for people to claim. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this?**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>I do not pay Council Tax</b>	<b>I pay Council Tax but I receive Council Tax benefits</b>	<b>I pay Council Tax but I do not receive any benefits to help with this</b>	<b>I am a Landlord</b>	<b>I am a second home owner</b>	<b>No reply</b>
	<b>385</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>9</b>
Strongly agree	129	26	42	31	12	17	1
	33.5%	56.5%	47.2%	29.2%	36.4%	16.7%	11.1%
Tend to agree	104	8	27	32	4	33	-
	27.0%	17.4%	30.3%	30.2%	12.1%	32.4%	-
Neither agree nor disagree	63	7	9	15	10	22	-
	16.4%	15.2%	10.1%	14.2%	30.3%	21.6%	-
Tend to disagree	33	1	5	15	-	12	-
	8.6%	2.2%	5.6%	14.2%	-	11.8%	-
Strongly disagree	32	1	3	11	4	13	-
	8.3%	2.2%	3.4%	10.4%	12.1%	12.7%	-
Don't know	16	2	3	2	3	5	1
	4.2%	4.3%	3.4%	1.9%	9.1%	4.9%	11.1%
No reply	8	1	-	-	-	-	7
	2.1%	2.2%	-	-	-	-	77.8%

**Q4 We are planning to introduce more visits and spot checks to make sure people are paying the right amount of Council Tax. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this?**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>I do not pay Council Tax</b>	<b>I pay Council Tax but I receive Council Tax benefits</b>	<b>I pay Council Tax but I do not receive any benefits to help with this</b>	<b>I am a Landlord</b>	<b>I am a second home owner</b>	<b>No reply</b>
	<b>385</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>9</b>
Strongly agree	199	21	35	68	22	52	1
	51.7%	45.7%	39.3%	64.2%	66.7%	51.0%	11.1%
Tend to agree	99	11	32	25	5	25	1
	25.7%	23.9%	36.0%	23.6%	15.2%	24.5%	11.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	45	7	14	5	4	15	-
	11.7%	15.2%	15.7%	4.7%	12.1%	14.7%	-
Tend to disagree	15	-	5	4	2	4	-
	3.9%	-	5.6%	3.8%	6.1%	3.9%	-
Strongly disagree	14	5	1	2	-	6	-
	3.6%	10.9%	1.1%	1.9%	-	5.9%	-
Don't know	2	-	2	-	-	-	-
	0.5%	-	2.2%	-	-	-	-
No reply	11	2	-	2	-	-	7
	2.9%	4.3%	-	1.9%	-	-	77.8%

**Q5 Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the scheme that is being proposed?**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>I do not pay Council Tax</b>	<b>I pay Council Tax but I receive Council Tax benefits</b>	<b>I pay Council Tax but I do not receive any benefits to help with this</b>	<b>I am a Landlord</b>	<b>I am a second home owner</b>	<b>No reply</b>
	<b>385</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>9</b>
Strongly agree	61	4	8	40	2	6	1
	15.8%	8.7%	9.0%	37.7%	6.1%	5.9%	11.1%
Tend to agree	101	12	22	39	7	21	-
	26.2%	26.1%	24.7%	36.8%	21.2%	20.6%	-
Neither agree nor disagree	28	5	11	3	2	7	-
	7.3%	10.9%	12.4%	2.8%	6.1%	6.9%	-
Tend to disagree	57	9	15	8	4	21	-
	14.8%	19.6%	16.9%	7.5%	12.1%	20.6%	-
Strongly disagree	122	14	27	16	18	47	-
	31.7%	30.4%	30.3%	15.1%	54.5%	46.1%	-
Don't know	8	1	6	-	-	-	1
	2.1%	2.2%	6.7%	-	-	-	11.1%
No reply	8	1	-	-	-	-	7
	2.1%	2.2%	-	-	-	-	77.8%

**Q6 Have you any general comments that you would like to make about the proposed scheme?**

*NB – Any comments that identify individuals have been removed. Additionally, no editing or correction of individual comments has taken place.*

**I do not pay Council Tax**

Anything that affects my vulnerability is of concern to me after being homeless for several months the thought of anything that would cause further hardship and perhaps financial difficulties is worrying but I can see the point of empty properties being away to ease any people suffering under these circumstances

How about Thanet council pulls their fingers out of their back sides, bands together with a much larger group of councils and tells the government they're driving this country into the ground and instead of penalizing the little people they should stop letting companies like Vodafone off from 10m tax evasion fees, collect the money from these companies, tax people who earn stupid amounts of money more and leave us little people the hell alone. These changes are pointless and forcing those in need of help to pay more is counterproductive, you have a shortfall to make up for? Get those who earn more than enough to pay for it. People are on these benefits because you lot and the government can't make enough jobs and can't afford to pay tax, so making us pay more is pointless. Get your arses out, force employers to be a lot less picky over who they employ and actually do something to HELP people instead of screw us little people over. And it's ILLEGAL to ask people their sexuality on these forms, get it removed or I will sue

How will it affect me, disabled in higher care component, wife is full time carer, and we have one child 12 years old? I'm 59, my wife 49, our benefits are already cut to the bone, everything we have to do medically and in care costs us more and more. To the point that I or my wife go without food, being disabled in this county costs a fortune, would you rather we all just locked ourselves away or died?

I agree that the younger people who can work but won't should have their council tax capped, but when you are 57 years old like me and unwell and receive ESA and are in the support group it should be considered even if you are well enough to work at 57 it would be hard to find work.

I get Income based JAS will I have to pay out of my income based JSA for the Local Council Tax Scheme?

I have a concern as such in my case; I am a full time carer for my 92 year old mother who lives with me. I receive Carers Allowance and Income Support and any additional outgoings will put more of a burden on our finances. Carers Allowance does have a limited provision for work but that would mean that I would have to provide paid care for my mother while I am at work; providing of course that I can find suitable part-time work at 58.

I have had the misfortune of becoming ill in 2011 and have been receiving employment support allowance. I am doing everything I can to get back into work and contribute my council tax. However I hope to be studying from 2012-2013 so will not receive income except from benefits. I would always be happy to contribute a small amount to the council tax but in proportion to what I receive which is just about manageable.

I purchased a holiday property in Thanet [Broadstairs] as I like the area and felt I would [in some small way] boost the local economy. Removing the 10% discount for "second homes" will make me review my decision of purchasing in Thanet and purchasing elsewhere instead. I wholeheartedly agree with the proposal to remove the "empty property" discount - as all property owners SHOULD pay something to the local authority.

I think it is very unfair. There are people out there who can work but don't, my son has severe disability through no fault of his own, but can't work and there's a big difference. The way things are going my son will have no money to live on. If you starting money short, well stop wasting it. I care for my son 27-7 and save the government lots of money a week, and if this continues to keep going, I shall give up caring for my son and just be a mum, and the government can have the bill, as I know it's stressful, worrying about what's happening next, centre closing, respite close, sold off, paying for care. If I don't give my son a life he hasn't got one. I do hope someone reads this, it's not meant to be ?? just very angry old biddy who really fed up know of fight for what I think is right for my son welfare. It's wrong to have to pay.

I think that people who are claiming additional benefits on second homes and receive Council Tax free for six months, is ridiculous, I can understand if the home is in disrepair, because it means that the building is unliveable and cannot support someone to rent it and reduces the economical and housing growth and reduces this for the whole area. If the building or property is vacant then changes have to be forced to change why it is vacant, if through advertising or local home improvement schemes and if it is a property that was bought to be rented out then it should be made this way. That should be enforced on local landlords or others which gives people out of the area and in the area chances to buy their own properties. This also provides areas of employment growth and support growth for the vulnerable and retired. Or people who can't afford to buy their own home. Yes reductions should be made of working adults as a couple that receive benefits for support of their children and to work. If they are single parents reductions should be less as for them to get employment they need to be able to fund for their children to be looked after so they can go to work. But this should be more forced and implemented so the increase of single parents doesn't increase dramatically and dependence on benefits is increased less. This should be still looked at as a time concept including adults unemployed or working part time. And reasons. The forms to receive benefits should be kept as long as the information needed to give as much factual information on an individuals background and financial circumstances and health situation. In regards to benefits for people who are, have an illness or disability protective medical rights and laws should still respected.

I think the most important things is that the most vulnerable people are protected as much as possible, the people who can afford to pay more, have too, for example people with more than 1 home, the people who can't afford to pay more aren't asked to contribute anything more than what is reasonable.

I think you need to consider each case individually. For example, not all work age recipients of council tax benefit are able to work, so I don't think it's fair to decide that everyone between the ages of - for example - 18 & 60 has to pay their property band regardless of



their circumstances. There are people in genuine need of help & it isn't just the young or pensioners.

i am a have a house private rental I don't work as have 2 disability children how does it affect my rent and council tax as don't have much money as cant afford to pay the full rent on this properly

If a property is not occupied no services are needed therefore what are the reasons for paying Council Tax. Wherever that person is living the Council Tax will already be paid! Do you intend for more than one payment per person even if no services are required?

If I have to pay even 5 to 6 percent council tax I have no idea where I will find the money.

If people who are exempt from tax now are asked to pay tax next year they won't pay. It will cost the council too much to try & get them to pay. This scheme hasn't been thought out very well at all. Although you'll only asking for a pound a week that pound has got to come from somewhere. If we don't get an extra pound benefit on our other state benefits it won't get paid full stop.

If you are proposing the changes then those with 2nd homes and landlords should NOT receive any discount whatsoever.

If you own flat or house you make money by going up the price (like 150,000 to 250,000) but if you are a rent and you earn minimum wage that 25% discount as a single person, it is a big help. You must find who has got more than one flat or house, that adds a lot on earning. Every little helps.

It is not only pensioners that need to be protected. Working families on low incomes are also in a vulnerable position. With child poverty rates already at an all time high we need to be ensuring that more children are not placed in this bracket.

It seems particularly unfair (even discriminatory) to penalise those who have no option but to claim some sort of support. Having worked most of my adult life, I now care for my elderly Father, who also worked all of his adult life. There is no one else to care for him and it is increasingly difficult for me to manage on the shameful amount of benefits allowed to Carers, but the thought of it being reduced is filling me with horror and dread. I have tried desperately to sell my own property and release some capital, but have not been able to, therefore still have to service the shortfall on my mortgage that is not covered by the DWP. I hate being on benefits, I would far rather be back and my rewarding (and fairly well paid) career, but I have no choice, and I would guess this is the same for many in similar positions. I think it would be easier for TDC to find a few corners to cut in their budget, than for me to cut any more corners - in fact I don't have any more to cut.

It's very unfair on people on the lowest Jobseekers Allowance and Employment Support Allowance of £70 per week who can NOT afford any council tax when they have to pay increasingly exorbitant, unfair, rip off gas/electric and water rates charges. Not to mention food, cleaning materials, toiletries, clothes and EVERYTHING else that comes up. I doubt

very much if Councillor xxxxxxxxxx on £31,299 per annum, plus ALL the other TDC/KCC staff could cope with it!

landlords should pay the extra also any person who is renting from a member of their family should pay for it slightly extra as I know for a fact relatives put the rent up to rip the council off then they give it back to their son daughter to spend if they are on benefit the simple answer is anyone renting from a relative should get no help from the council!

On vacant property (due to death of sole owner/resident) why should any council tax is paid at all? None of the council services are being provided to a dead person or empty property.

Overall happy with the proposals but cannot accept any reduction to people who are struggling on benefit. Due to Government changes in pension age this has left more vulnerable people, mainly single women over the age of 55 who have been left to struggle for more years who have less chance of finding employment and using any savings to find shortfalls in their income. The proposal of reducing 5% and 6% from working age claimants could cause more distress to those outlined. More effort should be made to track benefit fraud in the Thanet area and stricter controls for those from out of the area.

People with second homes and empty homes should pay 100% council tax. All other people, retired, sick, unemployed and others should be means tested because there are those in all of these categories that can afford it.

Personally, people who are on Job Seekers Allowance should work they're 16hrs a week to earn some of they're allowance and to take the strain off TDC, this would make more sense than reducing the amount they get, introduce a community payback scheme/working scheme, as a single parent I am unable to go back to work till my children are old enough to go to school.

Taking advantage of the disabled in our society is cruel. A civilised society is judge by how it cares for the most vulnerable members. How does making them beg for money to survive acceptable.

The examples given do not include a person on incapacity benefit/disability living allowance. What are the proposals for someone of working age who cannot work due to ill health? These benefits barely cover the basics for healthy living. How are we supposed to find money for council tax? Even £1 per week (£52 per year) may be beyond some budgets.

This scheme should not be introduced due to people who are on very low incomes and cant work this is a disgrace. my mum is on a very low income and don't get no money for me anymore so she would have to find her council tax which she can not do and she cant work. So I disagree.

This is going two get hard plus the bedroom tax as well

Unfortunately when there are cutbacks from the government, the shortfall has to be found from somewhere. Though I do not pay council tax at the moment, I have previously and will do again when I find work and the proposed methods in recouping the shortfall within local government is harsh for the average, making ends meat, blue collar group that will be hit the hardest. I know what it's like, as I have been in that position previously, of being working

class parents making the minimum and finding that you do not have enough funds to support the family or just scraping by. There is no quick solution but it will hit hard working families who already struggling, the hardest. I do not look forward to the day I am in that position again being a single parent.

### **I pay Council Tax but I receive Council Tax benefits**

1. Second home owners should not get a discount of 10%. This is like giving tax reduction to the already affluent! 2. Some council tax should be charged on empty or unfurnished properties if the situation persists beyond 3 months! 10% after 3 months and 50% after 6 months. 3. Civil Servant pension schemes are out of kilter with private schemes and the global investment market situation of latter years. Why should society outside the Civil Service subsidise this when they are having to suffer high inflation, reducing pay rates and reduced pension benefits despite higher contributions themselves?

All the time folk who rip this and many other councils off, these folk will continue their practices. Vigilance will help to stop these activities. My area is rife with multiple claims, for they know that no one checks. See to it.

As a person living in Thanet for my whole life, and a council/ housing association tenant for over half of that time, I think it is wrong that we should have to pay this money. I am not yet of retirement age but am unable to work due to incapacity. I have my son living with me as he can't afford to get his own place, he is on a moderate wage, not much above the lowest hourly rate and he is penalised for the privilege of living at home. As my son is working I get the second adult rebate, if that is removed we are going to find things for everyday living very difficult. We don't own a car or have SKY TV, we can't afford to decorate our home, get new furniture or carpets, or have any other luxuries, we don't drink or smoke, so our money, the little we get, ALL goes on bills and keeping our heads above water, JUST

As a single parent working and earning minimum wage I appreciate all help I receive to support myself and my daughter. But I also think that people should not expect the council and government to support them. Maybe the council could help reclaim money by more thorough checking of claims. Help those that genuinely need it. Saying that, I cannot afford to pay much more council tax than I do so minimal changes for single parents would be appreciated!

As a vicar in xxxxxxx I live in a vicarage that is not my property, and so I class my property in Broadstairs as being my home. Because of work commitments my home in Broadstairs is used very rarely and so as a Council Taxpayer in Thanet I see the reduction that I receive completely fair as I hardly use the council services in Thanet. I suspect we only put out rubbish for collection six or eight times a year, and definitely never use the household waste site. I believe the classification that I have as being second home owner as being totally inadequate. My property in Broadstairs is not a second home, I could never afford one!

As usual with any government changes, it is only the 'poor' that suffer. In addition, if KCC didn't waste money in other areas including bad investments, better facilities would be available to all. Although there is a much higher population in London, most borough councils in London offer much better facilities than Kent. KCC, especially Thanet district council has the poorest reputation of any borough I have ever lived in.

Claimants on 100% Council Tax reductions should be made exempt similarly as pensioners will be, and not be charged 5%-6% because of the Government shortfall. These are the most vulnerable people on the minimum incomes and many are also disabled or unable to work. The proposed scheme is unfair and will just make their hardships worse. Also the cost of charging and collecting these amounts will outweigh what is actually saved. To counteract this, I believe that the 100% discount given to persons with on-going Structural repairs in properties should cease. Or, it should not be necessary for buildings to receive 100% discounts after the first year. This discount should be dropped after one year of on-going structural repair on each chargeable premises to avoid misuse and avoidance of payment by letting the repairs slowly and continually carry on year after year, or by alternate years of on and off repairs. Keep discounts for the most vulnerable persons only.

Could Pensioners be means tested like the other benefit are after all some of them are really well of and it would not make much of an impact on their lifestyles or their savings and capital. The rest of us on benefits already are means tested and we still have to go through the process every time we sign off or sign back on again

Currently I receive a second adult discount, as my son, who is on benefits, lives at home. This would stop, but I think that TDC has a responsibility to me and others like me to contact me and advise me whether my son should claim council tax benefit in his own right or whether there is any other help available. It was only by accident that I discovered previously that there was any help for people in my position, but I think it should be a duty.

Customer Reference No.: xxxxxxxxxx I wonder if your new Tax Scheme is the result of "Deposit by the Kent County Councils £50m surplus in Casino fashion deposit with the Icelandic Landsbanki" for which the diligent Ratepayer now has to stand straight for. Here in Basel I am a resident Tenant in a rented apartment, therefore my Ramsgate non-occupied property is my only ownership. With 2 to 4 weeks in Ramsgate per year, also for maintenance of property, I consume very little of Kent Council services. As a foreign worker previously and today as pensioner in Switzerland, I can have my residence permit revoked, should I become a social benefit case, resulting in a forced return to homeland. The 100% Thanet Council Tax, with previous 10% and earlier 50% discount, is becoming an increased burden on my budget, having to consider selling up. I also pay 100% Council Tax as a resident of Basel - in virtue being punished by double taxation in trying to manage own sanity, never wanting to fall back on a Social System.

Excellent idea about 100% for second homes and empty properties, about time this happens

Government is, as usual, hitting the poor, out of work and disabled. TDC is right to ensure that those with empty homes and second homes pay their full share.

I agree with all of it apart from reducing the benefit for people who are unemployed as 67.50 is hard enough to live on and eat and pay bills etc. without trying to find some more to payout for the council I would have to go without food.

I agree with some aspects and have concerns with other areas. I feel strongly that pensioners are protected from additional costs, or cuts in benefits - I agree with the proposals to not change what help pensioners receive. I also feel that it seems a good idea to include second homes and empty properties to pay council tax. However I do have concerns regarding benefit cuts for those currently receiving benefits. Housing benefit has already been cut and I feel very worried that more cuts could result in people losing their homes, especially with food and fuel costs rising too.

I am a single lady, 59 years, no husband or children, or dependant family. I had to take early retirement four years ago and I live off a private pension. I would have been able to get my state pension in 2013 when I was 60 but this coalition government changed the pension rules to 65 and now I've got to wait till I'm 65 in 2018, how this damn government expect people like myself to cope along with other people who have lost their jobs and fall into the 599 to 65 age group. I'm afraid words fail me. It's no use saying get another job, it's just impossible at my age 60 plus, companies are not interested, I applied for 400 different posts four years ago, got two responses and I've given up completely as it's a complete waste of time. I worked since 1970, that's 38 years till 2008. I have to live off £738.00 a month (£264 in benefit). Rent £475 a month, Council Tax £39 a month, that leaves me £224 a month to pay my bills, get shopping, buy clothes, etc, it's divided down to £56 a week (£224 divided by 4 = £56) to live off barely covers the cost of food. What the government says you can live off. I'd like to see them live off £738. Ok for MPs on £100,000 plus a year, you have to pay your council tax or else you end up in court or prison. I can't afford to get into that position and it's completely unfair on low income families and single persons like me to put us through this position, are we going to be means tested on this like everything else. If I fall into arrears on my rent at present I'm ok, I'd get evicted as I'm in a private flat, have the council took that into consideration as well how low income families can be made homeless through no fault of their own. How is all this going to effect the services like police, fire, rubbish collections, they all have a cut off the council tax, what's going to happen with them, how's this effecting foreign nationals coming into this area (ie Thanet), what percentage of council tax will they be liable for? This council tax needs to be considered carefully and fairly. It needs to be broken down into different categories ie home owners. Private rented accommodation (landlords should be made to pay a certain amount if they have low income residents). Single persons discount should still be made available. Second home owners pay full council tax and empty properties should pay full council tax. I'm afraid I'm like a lot of the public in the UK fed up to the teeth with this government, all they do is cut cut cut, never mind about the poor that's not their problem. When you worked 38 years, lose your job through no fault of your own I was in my last post for 20 years, this is how you're treated, I've never claimed benefit but I've got no choice. I presume a full and proper consultation will be done throughout the UK on this issue with all the public and not just shared through the government like most issues are! This is completely unfair to all those on pensions like myself and low income.

I am a single parent on a low wage and I pay council tax, I think that people that are claiming dole and benefits should have to pay something towards the council tax, as people think because you have a job that you are better off which you are not as they don't realise that you have to pay rent and council tax and they don't so they are better off than if you are working

I am disabled and on benefits, how would that affect me?

I am on jobseekers allowance and already struggle to pay household bills. If I was asked to pay part of my council tax because of reduced benefits that struggle would be made worse. As for Q4, wouldn't more visits & spot checks just increase costs to the council?

I am single and on a low shrinking income. Until my son who currently lives with me finds work that pays reasonably, losing the second adult rebate will affect me directly as this will then be an additional expense from less income. I am a single person with an adult dependent. This must be the same for many parents of young people out of work and who are ineligible for any help with housing costs whilst boarding at home, and who also may not be in Higher Education or feel that they can ever afford to take that route. Some families I know now have graduate children living back at home. This is fine if all have incomes, but

punitive if not, and unfair as some young people are rehoused if their families already benefit from social housing. More affordable rental accommodation for young single people or couples would help. Back to my point though the removal of the second adult rebate is punitive for the reasons I have described.

I Can not Believe what the Government they are making people on low income suffer even more first it was the Housing Benefit Lowered and now council Tax It really is not fair on People like me who are disabled and spend most days in Pain and suffer from mental health issues and things like this really put a massive Strain on a already Tight budget. I feel the problem is there are too many People milking the system and these people need sorting out so genuine people are not left struggling.

I cannot understand how disabled people on very low incomes will now have to pay towards council tax as you have just made us pay towards rent as well. I have such a low income and you are squeezing said income again and again. Disgraceful !!!!!

I do not know how you will make it work with so little money around and so many people in Thanet hard up

I do not think that cutting council tax benefit for people on low income or benefits will help. As a single mother on benefits I struggle with paying the bills I currently have. To have to pay another bill on top of this would leave me with no money to feed my children! You have already cut my housing benefit to such an extent that I had to move out of the house I was living in to cheaper accommodation and was nearly made homeless in the process. This is yet another unfair tax on the poorest people in our country

I don't know how the government works or how they operate.

I feel that Central government are at fault here and should be concentrating on sorting out the tax loopholes in this country before subjecting the already poorer percent of the population to further financial difficulty & personal hardship. Since the banks self induced recession & contraction of lending holds the whole country to ransom, this slaps of conspiracy, which our government seem to be a party to, otherwise surely they would have intervened and seized the banks assets and legally dealt with those responsible for the fraud. Unemployment is drastic, there so few jobs in many areas, Thanet being one, many people on benefits would like to work, but can't. If the government didn't already side with the very well off, and look closely into how those taxes are recovered I believe that the deficit of the country could be combated, then there would not be added pressure on local authorities to cut benefits, jobs and in turn further damage the local economy, standard of living and general well being of its residents. People who just can't afford any scope in their already stretched benefits maybe unable to pay, it then becomes a vicious cycle and in the long run will cost more in resources to recover any monies owed!!! I have always worked until recently, and believe me if my circumstances were different id be better off not claiming benefits, as it stands, we have no leeway in our benefits, which just cover a meagre existence for 2 adults & 1 child. I feel that pensioners who have vast amounts of savings and non means tested benefits should also be in the running for some contribution as well.

I feel that this is yet another money saving tactic by this government that will only really affect the most vulnerable just like the changes in the benefit system which has already shown that saving money has a greater priority than the welfare of the poor and disabled and is very badly and unfairly administered. I hope that the local councils do not follow suit

and put money before the very poor sick old and disabled which would only add to there stress and misery.

I have concern regarding these changes. I am disabled and receive full council tax benefit because my income is too low to pay. How, when benefits are not going up at the same rate of inflation would I be able to afford even 5-6% of my council tax? In all of your proposals you do not mention disabled people and what these changes will mean to them.

I have to pay some council tax and I can't pay any more if I do I wont be able to feed myself

I realise that with less available money, cuts will need to be made and if this is the case, agree, that for people like myself who receive council tax benefit they should be as low as possible. Both my partner and I work as well as having three children however we are already struggling so I just worry that if cuts are made how this will affect us in the long run as I really can't afford to pay any more than I already am. I am in complete agreement that more regular spot checks should be carried out so then the money that is available can go to the right people.

I think each individual case is different. We only claim council tax benefit because my husband had to leave a full job because of ill health and now only works part time so I don't think people in that sort of situation should be penalised, where as people that own second properties should pay as if you can afford more than one property then you can afford council tax.

I think it is appalling that yet again changes are being made that will affect those of us that are struggling to survive as it is. Stop paying it to dual parents who can't be bothered to work and who are both fit and healthy and to those who are first generation immigrants.

I think it's a good idea to do this to stop people claiming who don't need to and to stop duplicate claims.

I think its a very good idea to make changes so that people who have second or empty homes still pay full council tax as they are still benefiting from all that council tax covers still and although this will mean a 5% decrease in help for myself at least something is being done to still allow us help at all.

I think that the proposal undertakes to reduce the amount of Council/Government money being used in an abusive way by persons managing to run their businesses from council/government funded benefits. Whatever can be done to minimise the impact on these funds without detriment to those really in need of help has my vote every time. You have my permission to publish these notes if, in the councils view, it helps to serve the community.

I would like to know if you could not make up the shortfall in funding by recovering monies owed by past council mistakes, such as what happened about the first Turner Centre fiasco last time I heard you were owed something like £6.6 million? This new tax scheme proposal will impact those on benefits and will not be fair. Perhaps you could also ask the leader of KKC to take a pay cut and the rest of his cronies, get rid of the office of Mayor, reduce the amount of paper you generate in unnecessary forms.

I would like to see all persons that work and do not receive benefits make a contribution to the local tax, and not just the householder or spouse

I would like to see the more valuable properties paying a higher Council Tax so that the hard working very low paid do not have to incur any charge on their council tax, as was proposed by Ian Duncan Smith MP. It might be different of course if the less well off areas were kept in good order like the better off areas i.e. Street cleaning, Removal of rubbish in a more timely manner, etc

If this proposal has to happen, I agree second homes and if they can afford 2 homes they can certainly afford council tax, landlords should not receive discounts for empty property as they can write it off against the tax man. But I believe there should be a second adult discount as this will encourage couples to stay together rather than potentially assisting to break up families as families are getting hit from all sides at the moment. I believe that unemployed people should have full assistance for 1 year but long term unemployed should begin to have assistance reduced after a set amount of time. I also believe care needs to be taken with low earners with children as the employed would end up not working as there would be no point. Plus to be careful of reductions for vulnerable low earning families as this will impact negatively on the children.

If you want to save money stop paying illegal and foreigner benefit.

It all very well asking abled bodied people of working age to more of their council tax, but what about disabled people like me! I shall be 60 by April next year, still technically of working age but unable to work! I survive, believe me it is just survival on Benefits which are now being threatened by the current government austerity measures. I indeed might not have the same amount of money coming in next year what am I going to do if you ask me for this sum of council tax money. As you mention nothing about the disabled it looks as if I'm in for a gloomy future!!

It does not take into account those of us who are under the age of 65 who do not get pension credits and are also on state benefit and disabled.

Life is difficult enough for us on income support with out you costing us more. You should be ashamed of your selves for robbing the poor. Life in Thanet just gets worse.

Money is being spent on the wrong things eg carpet for offices, chief executive high salaries etc. There needs to be more consultation before large sums are spent 'on behalf of' local residents (cf. ' The 1773 Boston Tea Party' and its causes) - in my opinion.

More time to understand and protect the most vulnerable real British people.

My household receives full council tax and housing benefit due to low income. I feel that to remove the Council Tax discounts and exemptions currently provided for second homes, unfurnished properties is the right way to go. I also feel that although it would make my household budget tighter a small reduction in my benefit would be beneficial to the system. A small deduction to all users of the system would not only create revenue for TDC but be easier for people to cope with than larger deductions to the few, as well as being a less complicated system.



Not a helpful one I am afraid, as someone who works hard for very little income (like lot of people) and the cost of inflation my husband and I are struggling like we have never done before and I can only see this getting worse, by getting less help with our Council Charge it will have to come from somewhere, you can't refuse to pay bills that only leaves less heating in the winter and cutting back on food which we already do compared to what we were spending on food. We have already stopped having holidays. Our car is a necessity or we can't work. Our grown up children are also having problems and we try and help them out (I do their washing as they cannot afford a washing machine) We still have one son still at home he is mid 20's he cannot afford his own home and does not contribute much to us and some months nothing at all.

Not Sure about the scheme.

People apply for benefits because of their low income and if you stop that there will be more problems for there financial situations.

q1, absolutely agree in , we propose to remove the Council Tax discounts and exemptions currently provided for second homes, unfurnished properties (unless they are undergoing major structural repair). However not in losing the second adult discount. As for more spot checks, this would mean more staff and wages so surely that is money better spent on giving those of us on the breadline as much financial hep with the council tax as possible. It is hard enough that benefit has been cut, that the bedroom tax is coming into place and now with the risk of potentially having to find more money for the council tax I wonder f it is ever considered how those of us unfortunate enough to be in this situation will keep finding the extra money??

Single person discount should be extended to second homes. Second homes: increase the discount to at least 30% preferably 50%. Empty and unfurnished properties: retain the current 100% tax exemption because nobody will be using the councils services so it is grossly unfair to make a charge.

Some benefits that are given because the person is currently unable to work e.g income support & disability should remain exempt from paying anything. Even asking someone on income support to pay £1 a week will push children further below the poverty line. If I am made to pay then that money will take away from food for my child. It is already very hard to afford healthy food & this will make it even more difficult. Work based benefits eg JSA I agree should pay something.

Some people are trapped in the system, due to situations beyond their control, like debt, finances, sometimes not of their own doing. Single parents, like myself struggle to keep a balance with family /work life whilst struggling to make ends meet. The proposals should be aimed at empty properties and second homes as a priority.

Taking money from the poor is robbery. We live on benefits due to ill health and we don't get much help. Taking your share from us is in my view immoral. The poor get poorer and the rich love it.

Thanet Council and Kent County Council have been wasting money for far too long. Yes, your proposal does not sound unreasonable, but yet again you are trying to save money at the expense of those who are in receipt of some sort of benefits and concessions in the first place making little or no distinction among those people. Why can't you: 1) cut wages and

salaries of your employees – a normal rate of pay in Thanet is a minimum wage, you need to wake up to reality and help our country out. 2) Use skills and experience of unemployed people and those who have fallen on hard time to find employment – all you need to do is organise such people into groups for them to perform certain jobs required by Thanet Council, they would be doing such jobs for free as volunteers to somehow justify the benefit money they receive from the government. Thanet Council must be ashamed of itself not to use the local resources – people.

Thanet Council can and should find other means to support their shortfall in what is a Tory attack on the Labour controlled councils. 1. Discontinue funding for fireworks displays which are contrary to environmental goals. 2. Impose a large movement fee per animal and vehicle at the Port of Shame - Ramsgate, thereby dissuading the practice of moving livestock. 3. Purchase local landmarks such as the Pavilion Ramsgate Harbour and lease it back to the local population who will have a vested interest in it being a paying concern. 4. Take back the Royal Sands site and provide an income based facility for local people

Thanet Council have been a big help to myself regarding council tax benefit, for which I thank you. I did call today to ask about these changes but was told it would not affect me personally as I am officially a pensioner on 6th Jan 2013. (Fills me with horror). I do, however, think working people should pay council tax on unoccupied homes and also their second homes. Sounds harsh, but if they have second homes they should be able to afford the tax. I hope this helps you.

The government said it would support vulnerable people, it worries me that this is just another way of hitting those who can poorly afford it in their pockets. People on benefits or the sick & disabled are financially stretched as it is & most will not be able to afford to spare a penny, so this will discriminate against them even further.

Think its disgusting low income families with children are being targeted. target those with second homes and larger properties who have more income to pay more.it will mean more and more people will get in to debt and have to go bankrupt not good.

This change affects people that r working and on a low income which includes me I would b better off not working and claiming benefits!!!The way council tax is worked out is also wrong as my band is the same as one of a larger family.

Throw this scheme away and try again, if you can't do better than this try employing someone who can.

Whilst I agree with the fact you are going to 'cushion' the impact of these new proposals for the elderly, I am wondering about the financial impact these changes will have on the (detested by the Conservative Government) disabled? one of which I happen to be!

Why do you assume that single adult households are suddenly going to be able to find an extra 25% whilst continuing to provide some council tax payers with a full rebate. This could be the difference between them being able to cope and not being able to cope. Surely everyone should pay something, too many people seem to get away with paying nothing. Why are pensioners fully protected; again, this burden should be shared, not borne solely by

a small group of people. What are you doing to balance the population better to ensure less people require benefit anyway rather than filling the place with claimants.

You are proposing that working age people on Income Support will have to make a contribution to Council Tax. However the amount of Income Support is supposed to be that which the law says they need to live on. It therefore does not make sense to charge any Council Tax for these people, as by definition they have no spare money, only what they need to live on. I strongly urge the council to continue to provide 100% rebate for those on Income Support, whatever their age. On the subject of spot checks, any such checks should be done without disturbing people. It is fine to review your paperwork or to view a property from the outside, but it is not fine to disturb people in their homes.

You need to make your letters easier to understand when informing people of how much c/tax and rent benefits they are being paid, but I do not agree with people getting discounts or benefits for second homes, if they can afford such luxuries then they can afford the council tax

### **I pay Council Tax but I do not receive any benefits to help with this**

1. If one can afford a second home, one can afford to pay full council tax. 2. There should not be exemption for empty property. 3. Major renovation/structural repair work should still receive some support.

All empty properties should pay full tax and no reduction for single occupants.

Am concerned as to the impact of removing empty property exemption completely. It's likely that people who inherit a property will not be able to sell it or let it out within 3 months given the time taken for probate to be granted. In a number of cases, because of their financial situation, there will be difficulty in being able to pay the CT during this period. Consideration should be given to continuing the exemption for a period even if it has to be reduced to, say 3 months.

As a pensioner receiving no benefits I hope this is not going to push my tax up to unmanageable levels. This will only lead to more vulnerable people applying for help.

As pensioners who pay full council tax I believe that those who say they cannot pay are vetted vigorously and visits made to house holds regularly. I find that persons who do little for their community can also be those who expect the most. However I do believe that more staff are necessary to vet the application forms so that those who are vulnerable are dealt with quickly.

Benefits are a luxury to be shared during times of a healthy economy. Financial austerity should therefore be equally shared amongst everyone in a community. I believe this scheme is fair and just for all residents of Thanet, both those who receive benefits and those who do not.

By taxing empty properties and second homes, it should make people pay or sell so there could be more properties available for those who need accommodation. It may smarten up the areas that at present are a disgrace because the properties are empty and neglected. If

you cannot afford to look after your property you should hand it over to those who can and everywhere would look better

Certainly think that people whose houses are empty all or most of the year should pay full council tax.

Changing council tax for holiday homes would send out a dreadful message. We are a seaside economy and should welcome second home owners. For the extremely small benefit (186k pa) this should be scrapped because it's terrible PR for TDC. I also disagree with the proposed abolition of council tax relief for landlords after tenants have left a property. To force landlords to pay money for nothing (after all the property is not occupied!) is firstly fundamentally wrong and secondly will prevent struggling landlords (and believe me there are lots because I am a letting agent) from having any money to do essential repairs to their properties. The quality of rented housing stock will spiral down as a result. Selective licensing is hard enough but this is ridiculous. Contrary to popular belief, landlords are not made of money. I understand TDC need to raise money somehow but slashing the relief totally is a dangerous way to try and achieve it. Maybe there is a sensible compromise? I think it would be sensible to give landlords 3 months to find a decent tenant and have the opportunity to refurbish their properties where necessary. For people doing major refurbishments, or buying a property which has already had some exemption used up, the 6-month cut-off should still stand - this is totally different, and to cut this will only prevent progress and refurbishments, even of private dwellings. Remember we should be trying to encourage buyers to come to Thanet rather than Whitstable or Folkestone!

Disagree with 100% tax on empty properties from day property becomes empty. In the case of death this does not give the benefactors enough time to dispose of the property and deal with probate. The current 6 month period is just about acceptable. There should be exemptions where the property has become vacant due to the death of inhabitant.

Find other ways to ensure that the benefits budget can be maintained. Mors savings for Council Tax payer. Reduce Councillors allowances. Manage the cleansing budget better (bring recruitment back in house). Do not increase Council Tax. Ensure that more empty houses are used and that residents are paying their Council Tax. Reduce the number of Councillors.

Fully agree with the removal of discount for empty properties and second homes. More spot checks is a good idea providing it results in more income than the cost of the additional checks. Re: shorter forms - only if it is cheaper!

Have been a council tax payer all my life. Never hear from any Councillor unless they want my vote. How about a personal visit from one of your officers.

Hopefully this will encourage less people in the area to claim benefits and look for paid work as a proportion of people find excuse to not need to work as it's so easy for them to claim benefits. There are of course exceptions such as the elderly and those who are not well enough to work but in the great scheme of things this is probably a small minority of people who are claiming benefits just because it is so easy for them to do so.

I agree completely with the proposals put fourth in this consultation. Second property owners, in my opinion, should be paying full council tax on each of their properties. If they cannot afford to contribute in this way they should look to sell that property, this could well

help get what is a stagnant property market moving too. Property has been a way for rich people to make themselves richer for far too long. If we have to save money, these are the first people we should look to. I wholeheartedly support this scheme and admire the honourable standpoint taken.

I agree that owners of second homes, and owners of empty properties should pay 100% of the Council Tax

I am amazed to read, that at present, those who have an empty property have a 100% exemption. Also, those with a second home, have a 10% discount. Surely if they can afford a second home then they should pay the full tax.

I believe that it is only right, & fair, that even if someone is on benefit they should have to make a contribution to their Council Tax. For too long people who are in receipt of benefit have the opinion that they should automatically be exempt from paying Council Tax, why? This also applies to free bus travel for those on benefits, which is also unsustainable, but that's for another time!

I believe that people who contribute to the local funds should be helped not the people who doesn't. Perhaps people should be awarded "points" if they are payers, non payers or part-payers. If you are a local business person who deals in property and encourages local business and housing to grow and develop than I believe you should be helped up to certain degree while you in need of that help. I disagree that people who are not working and not contributing should be awarded life-time guarantee help. I know it may sound "far fetched" "Tori rant" but I can assure you it isn't as I am a-political. Thanet council could do something that may have never been done before or at least give it a go- HELP THOSE WHO HELP THE COUNCIL.

I disagree about the council to remove 100% from empty or unfurnished flats and to continue with the 6 months exemption. It also seems to be the poor old landlord who has to come up with the money, some landlords have to work full time to keep body and sole together, the general opinion of landlords is that they sit back and wait for the money to roll in. That me tell you this is not the case. I think this should be raised for the working able people to get out and get a job instead of claiming benefit for this and that, all these unemployed should be encouraged to get a job and to stop pampering to their needs.

I don't see why people who can afford a second home should get a discount and if you can afford to leave a property empty you obviously don't need the money so could afford to pay 100% council tax on it. This also might help reduce the number of empty properties as people may decide to sell up if they have to pay council tax. At present it's the usual story that hard pressed working people are the ones who don't receive any proper help and those that have money and those that can't be bothered to work do.

I feel that if a person is in a fortunate financial position that they can own a second home then they should pay council tax. My question re owners of empty properties is , if a family decide to buy a run down home to renovate and move into , I feel it fair that they have a reduced minimal period for this if it is a genuine case. I do not feel that large companies or businesses that buy properties to renovate should be given this luxury as there are many property developers in Thanet that start renovations and leave them half way, they are an eye sore.

I hope what you propose will not mean I finish up paying more because central government will not fund it.

I receive 25% single occupancy rebate and it is not clear whether this is affected. In my view the 25% rebate could easily be reduced to say 15% without much fuss. Incidentally the rebate acts as a disincentive to provide low cost accommodation - eg have a lodger.

I strongly agree 2nd homes/empty properties should be taxed fully (I was shocked they weren't). Perhaps it would provide impetus to occupy empty dwellings and urge owners to get repairs done quickly. That could improve the area. I assume those benefit claimants losing 5% discount will be picked up through other benefits - just a different source? If so they need info on how to claim.

I think greater priority should be given to reclaim the monies owed to local councils from households that don't pay but should. Could I also suggest an easy-read version of proposals for our learning disability community?

I think housing and council tax benefits granted in compliment to JSA, especially to young people, should not be money for nothing and by getting beneficiaries to do some communities work (eg: clearing fly tipping, dogs pollution, weeding on their street) they will benefit from early start to the day (reducing anti social behaviour) get a positive input on their CV and get a conscience of unsocial behaviours

Ideally, second homes should not be entitled to discounts or exemptions from council tax. If people can afford to buy a second home, they can afford to pay the same level of council tax everybody else is expected to pay - no excuses. Removing Council Tax discounts and exemptions on second homes will lessen the impact on the poorest families who claim council tax benefit when the central government cut comes into effect, so what the local council is proposing is the only away of achieving the fairest outcome possible to the majority of Thanet's local residents.

If discounts and exemptions remain then spot checks will be cost effective. But if they are to be removed there will be less of a need to carry out spot checks and I'd rather see these resources used in the form of a benefit to assist the elderly

If you are looking at ways of saving money why do we have three mayors to cover such a small area? Also why not charge for public toilets. This would help maintain them and keep them in better/cleaner condition.

In light of the government announcement that council tax charge on empty homes can be increased (should the LA wish to) up to 150% for long term empties. I was wondering if it would be possible to assess the viability of introducing a premium for properties empty for two years or more- maybe on a sliding scale to a maximum at five years plus, as you know these properties are a drain on the recourses and can cause distress for the neighbours. I also have a concerns that the standard 100% CT payment may cause owners not to even bother telling the council that no-one lives in the property and this could have an effect on tracing the owner at a later date and TDC could be missing out, not benefiting from the Governments new homes bonus initiative in bringing much needed funding to the Local Authority.

Increase 2nd homes & empty properties 150%

Investment generates growth. Growth is currently at a standstill. To impose these council tax changes will continue to stagnate growth from any investments that could be achievable from the investments that are being put in place with the foreshore improvements and the Turner Centre. Properties are not selling well and a glut of properties may flood the market if they are not able to let instantly because of the new changes. Second homers who are already feeling the pinch with increased fuel will not like a decrease in their allowance which may also create an increase in properties for sale which is not the impression that a struggling sea-side town needs to project. In my opinion (from bitter experience) tenants are the main cause of council tax avoidance and a scheme between council and landlords to liaise would be preferable with well trained and experienced staff to implement the correct procedures would be more helpful. Employing 'snoopers' will aggravate and possibly not be cost effective ,people should want to come and to stay in Thanet not sell up and go which is a situation you may create leaving just scroungers who will stay anywhere it's cheap. It's a downward spiral you risk to take!

It does not seem to me that the proposals will generate anywhere near the sums that you need Stop the inward migration which obviously causes a serious drain on council resources - surely this would be more effective in making savings than trying to teak what would appear to minor matters.

It is only right and fair that those who profit from property, whether it be through an extensive property portfolio or property development and those who are able to afford a second homes should bear the brunt of the shortfall. Feel that there is a strong moral difference between a landlord/property developers' profit margin and Thanet residents' ability to afford to live in their own home and make ends meet. Therefore the general tax payer should not have to contribute to this shortfall via a rise in their council tax as it may push those who are just about making ends meet (and are just above thresholds for benefit help) into poverty and those in receipt of council tax support should be protected as much as possible to prevent compounding their problems. The proposals seem to protect the vulnerable as much as possible while ensuring those with business interests/second home owners who can afford to contribute more, do so.

It is unfair to penalise working families, or second home owners who now only get 10% reduction. These are the people who bring money to the Isle. Those, of working age or in receipt of benefits should have a much greater reduction in benefits and these should be for a fixed time only (unless disabled). People on benefits should be expected to seek work. Collection of Council Tax should be improved with a target of 100% compliance. A reduction in the nil council tax rate to 3 months might be more acceptable. People will think twice about investing in Thanet property with these measures. These are the very people you need here!! Think again!!

It seems that those not prepared to work get all the help!

My main concern is the Council's requirement to police the scheme to ensure that everyone who is required to pay Council Tax does so. If not it is like car insurance where law abiding people's premiums continually rise because of defaulters.

My spouse has responded on their behalf and as contributor to the council tax bill I would like my comments considered also. Feel that those who can afford to have second properties or extensive property portfolios should not benefit from discounts if it is to the

detriment of the vulnerable or the general tax payer. There is a significant difference between enjoying the luxury of a holiday home/reaping the financial benefits of the rental market and a person's ability to afford to live in one's main home - therefore the vulnerable should be protected as much as possible and the general Thanet Council Tax payer should not pick up the shortfall. I would suggest that the Council could go one step further and mirror the measures used by other local authorities with significant empty/derelict property issues. Whereby long term empty properties attract an additional levy on an upward sliding scale depending on the length of time the property is empty i.e 100% in the first year, 110% in second year and so on. This would incentivise those who land bank or leave their properties to blight the area and cause misery to local residents (attracting vermin and antisocial behaviour) to do something about their declining properties that will ultimately stall the regeneration of the area, idle property can also provide much needed family home accommodation. Although leaving properties empty is not illegal the impact on the area and residents is significant as is Thanet's empty property issue. These property owners should be accountable for their actions by means of social compensation and this measure is a fair and just way of doing so. I understand this is current practice in other areas and quite successful. Top loading will also provide the council with a valuable income stream in these difficult times to support and improve local services.

Object to total removal of discount on second homes, since it does not reflect fair share of costs of council services.

Old age pensioners, those on low income and single occupancy homes should be protected from any increases. Otherwise I am in general agreement with the proposal.

Only that an end to exemptions and discounts for second home owners and owners of empty properties is long overdue.

Please look carefully at housing benefit. Many of the claims are fraudulent.

Poor, ill thought out proposals that discriminate against hard working people. The second home owners spend money here. How many will feel that this is the straw that breaks the camels back and sell up? Stupid idea.

Reductions should be in the region of 15 - 25%. Far too much public tax is wasted providing discounts and reliefs. Thanet is renowned for its drug and alcohol issues which are bolstered by too much money being delivered into the wrong hands. Full tax should be payable by all, each sharing the burden equally, this would reduce the wasted funds being channelled into drug and alcohol abuse.

Target the benefit cheats and people who abuse the system Good Luck

Thanet is a low pay high unemployment and also low rent. The Council will be only too aware of its attraction to disincentivised 'outsiders'. So the number of claimants is bound to rise and negate the 'savings' which are in themselves fair enough. You should consider giving executors a 'breathing space' to enable them to sort out an estate and have an opportunity to market the property. 6 months would seem reasonable.

The 100% exemption for empty properties should not be removed, but a time limit could be set, this would discourage landlords keeping empty properties, but not penalize landlords who are looking for new tenants.



The Council Tax needs to rise to enable the Council to provide the services the area needs making all people responsible for this.

The East Kent coast has an extremely high number of unemployed and hence a large portion of claimants. I believe that it is morally incorrect to burden, directly, those who are earners, not claiming benefits. There needs to be transparency on how benefits are funded.

The proposal regarding 2nd homes needs to be thought through carefully as many people are in the position of owning two properties when in the throes of house moving so a short period of grace would be better than an outright ban. Also many landlords have periods of lack of tenants and having to pay council tax on an empty property would cause hardship, but again a period of grace rather than an open ended non payment. I think that on the whole a tightening up on existing rules would benefit the majority of council tax payers and still be fair to those in difficult circumstances.

The reduction of council tax benefits on empty properties surely should have an exemption for the death of the owner as this could put a further burden on the grieving family at a time when things are bad enough

The scheme is inevitable given the national government stopping the handout of taxpayers' money to local authorities, but it will be interesting to see if the rate of non-payment of Council Tax increases and so increasing the cost of enforcement.

This will help to ensure that only those who 'really' need these discounts get them - i.e. the elderly and 'genuine' low income people. We had a difficult period in our lives when our children were small and my husband was made redundant. We appreciated the benefit available to us all those years ago (the papers were horrendous to complete!). There are probably many who claim, that are not maybe genuine. I am pleased my 90year old widowed mum on basic pension only will continue to get benefits

To change to another 'new scheme' will in itself cost more than the council anticipates on saving - spot checks? how many more staff need to be employed and more hours paid for Thanet will end up with the majority of their constituents working for the council - every other firm is cutting down hours and staff ? Perhaps there are spare council staff currently with nothing to do who could take on this new role? The council needs to look to its own structure to save money - but the fat cats of management will not be taking any percentage of the cuts.

To me it seems very well balanced

Totally disagree with the Government's proposal to reduce Council Tax benefits and discounts/exemptions. Also disagree with TDC's proposal to reduce people's council tax benefit entitlement as don't see how they are in a position to pay more, particularly if they currently receive 100 per cent benefit because they are on such a low income. TDC should make representation to the Government that this is a very short sighted way to save money and should be reconsidered to avoid a repeat of the community charge problems.

We are concerned about the possibility that empty properties will no longer qualify for exemption from Council Tax. We believe that there should be some allowance made when landlords change tenants and may then have to clean properties before the next moves in.

For this reason and similarly when a resident dies leaving an estate to be sorted there should be some exemption, maybe about 3months would be a reasonable time.

We are pensioners on a fairly low income and use the property to get a break from working (we assist our children with their business). We do not qualify for pension credit but our income is less than 25K (total as a couple). We feel we are being penalised and if the second home discount is removed for us (as persons renting) this could result in a new tenant being on "benefits" rather than ourselves who are paying in full, thus being detrimental to the council. We also contribute to the local economy by using the local cafes and shops (as it is a holiday home).

Welcomed

When dealing with the most vulnerable ensure appropriate customer service and accessibility

While I agree that people who own second homes should contribute more to council tax (because they are considered more affluent) I disagree that the more vulnerable people who are unemployed, disabled or on low income should be 'penalised'.

Why should these changes be targeted at residents on low income? There are many residents who are unemployed and have no intention or prospect of gaining affordable and liveable employment. It is as a result of taxes paid by people in work that people out of work have a reasonable standard of living. In a way I think targeting residents on low income will only add to the challenges of the unemployed finding work that pays a reasonable and sustainable standard of living. Too many people do not gain financially by being in work. Personally I think there are too many officials in high paid employment who are making decisions that end up causing those on low income or no income more financial hardship. It is the same old story. Too many officials are making other people responsible for their mistakes.

Working people pay too much tax. any reduction in central govt. subsidy should be made up from those who receive discounts but can afford second homes etc. the council should be actively seeking ways reduce the council tax burden on working people and cutting council tax generally.

Yes, I would like to protest against the removal of the six months exemption for people trying to sell an empty property. This is the time when they most need any income that they have whilst trying to sell and a lot of expenses to pay out with estate agents fees and solicitors fees etc. Most properties do sell within this time period and it would be very unfair to take away this exemption.

Yet again this government is penalising Thanet an area of the highest deprivation in Kent and the South East.

### **I am a Landlord**

1. Reduce council tax bill by reducing some of the services currently provided. Eg. ask for volunteers to mow the parks and plant flower beds - they are more likely to take care of

communal areas if they physically make a contribution or, if not physically able, to provide a donation for the purchase of flowers. Get rid of 1/3 of the current garden upkeep and you will also start saving on not having to clear up after vandals. If no one volunteers time or donations, then just let the parks be overgrown. If people really want these facilities, let them take pride and do something about it. Call it adopt a flower project or what ever. If they can't be bothered, then they are probably not using the facilities and there is no need for the council to be spending my tax money on it. Or call it, provide it or lose it, or whatever.

2. Reduce the 12 month free makeover council tax to 6 months. This will encourage builders to get the work done more quickly, and get families into the property. If the work is going to take more than 6 months, then they either need to hire more workmen which will help with employment, or then need to tear down the property and start again. Even house to flat conversions can be done in 6 months if they plan properly.

3. Reduce the 6 month free landlord empty property council tax to 3 months to give them time to find new tenants. The landlords need time to spruce up and repair damage between tenants. If you give some grace period, this will really help the individual landlord like myself (only one property). If I don't get this little bit of help, the expense of the cleaning and repairs between tenants, advertising, vetting, and now council tax etc to get new tenants will be very difficult for me to maintain since I make very little annual profit as it is. I will have to sell the property which means that there will be less rental property in the district. I think a lot of landlords will be in this position and you may be surprise and the quick reduction of rental properties as a result. Is this a good thing?

4. I agree with not changing pensioner council tax relief.

5. I agree to make working age pay £1-2 more each week to help with the bill which is your 5-6%.

6. I believe you should increase in the number of inspections to all council benefit claimants to 100% in the first year which I believe will pay for itself quickly by removing all fraudsters. I believe that this should be taken one step further to say that if an inspection is not allowed, then all benefits will stop from the following year. If they have nothing to hide, then they should allow the inspection. If they have something to hide, then they should not be claiming in the first place. Inspections should then be carried out every 2-3 years on a rotation, plus 100% of all new claimants. I believe that all initial costs for the inspections will be paid for in reduction of benefit claims and should be announced in papers and radio that we are all to expect this. After all, if you get paid for doing a job, the employer wants to ensure that you are doing the work. The council needs to see all benefits in the same way. If you are paying the benefits, then you need to ensure that they are the correct benefits to the correct people. By hiring a large number of inspectors who will also work nights and weekends to cover the times the claimants are available, you will be reducing your unemployment burden as well. Give a bonus of some sort for all frauds uncovered so that the inspectors will not be tempted to accept bribes. Anyone who loses benefits can have 60 days to appeal to a manager of the inspectors for a second inspection. If it is found that they should keep the benefits, then the original inspector will lose the bonus originally received. This will help to prevent the inspectors from reducing benefits in error. Saying all that, I know that the council, who wants to been seen as a good guy, and worried about the next votes, will not have the heart to be tough on fraudsters who always seem to scream the loudest in case it gets in the press - have you noticed? You always target the working class because you know that they will just pay up. You are so worried about being fair to the people on benefits. What about being fair for the worker's for a change. We vote too, you know.

As a Charity we provide almshouses at cheap rents for needy pension age tenants. Having to pay full council tax between tenancies (which thankfully do not occur often) is a cost the Charity can ill afford. Could there be some exemption for charities from the empty property tax?

As a landlord I believe that charging landlords council tax immediately is wrong. You will lose many independent landlords because of it. Landlords should be given the chance to renovate their premises after a tenant leaves. I agree that 6 months might be too long but 2-

3 months grace to renovate and find new tenants would be much fairer and responsible landlords could and would remain, providing accommodation to those that need it. Your present proposals are really draconian and I believe many landlords will sell up and get out of this enterprise.

As a landlord it is sometimes necessary to have a property empty between tenants so the property can be refurbished before it is reoccupied. As council tax covers services which will not be used while the property is empty how can a landlord be charged for it. As it is not always possible for a landlord to find a suitable tenant straight away they should be penalised.

As a landlord who has lowered most of my benefits tenants to your required 30th rate, I now find that when a property is left empty I will be paying about £100 per month for nothing, the police do not deal with my tenants that take drugs, or cause a noise, its all left to me. As a company we now no longer take benefit claimants, as I have 3 existing now behind with rent (Being paid direct, I feel Thanet does an excellent job in very difficult times, but pushing the active supporters away, when you should be looking for cheats and non payers of council tax and benefit cheats, this would make up the shortfall. Hit the cheats harder and stop going for the easy option of those that have stable backgrounds and are more easy to hit. Wishing you all the best, xxxxxx

As a very small Landlord, in between tenancies, it is essential to spend time and money on decorating, often repairing accommodation before one can consider marketing the available flat. Not to allow any time before rates become payable is most unfair.

As an agent for a Landlord who owns a number of properties in Thanet, with most of the tenants receiving Council Tax Benefit (and most currently in arrears) This may well be the "straw that breaks the camel's back" for him. This would result in several families in your area being made homeless if we take the properties back and re-let them only to tenants not in receipt of benefits. This would mean that the Council would almost certainly have a responsibility to house them, no doubt at far greater expense to the Council Tax payer. Therefore these proposals seem ill conceived and short-sighted, causing hardship and distress to local residents affected by the changes.

As East Kent Housing will have to pay council tax on void properties this will have a financial implication on the HRA. It will also mean more work for staff to check and process the individual council tax bills for each void property.

I agree that owners of empty properties should no longer receive exemptions BUT removing this altogether is unfair on landlords as when a tenant leaves there is invariably some work to be undertaken to return the property to a good standard. I would suggest that a one month allowance be given... If landlords have to bear more costs this will result in raising of rents.

I disagree that the empty and unfurnished exemption should be removed. More checks and visits should be enforced to reduce false claims and fraud.

I strongly disagree with paying rates on an empty rented property. Landlords have enough problems with collecting rent etc and keeping property up to a good standard.

I strongly disagree with removing the empty and unfurnished 6 month exemption. I strongly agree with reducing the benefit rates and doing more spot checks to prevent people from claiming the incorrect discounts and benefit fraud.

If a property is empty awaiting sale or tenants full amount council tax should not be paid as TDC services are not being used. I would suggest a 20% charge from immediate vacancy to recoup some funds opposed to the 6 month amnesty.

IF YOU REMOVE THE EMPTY PROPERTY EXEMPTION COMPLETELY IT DISCOURAGES LANDLORDS FROM MAINTAINING THE PROPERTY BETWEEN TENANTS. THREE MONTHS EXEMPTION SHOULD BE AMPLE INSTEAD OF THE SIX MONTHS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE. THIS WOULD HELP KEEP UP THE QUALITY OF HOUSING STOCK RATHER THAN FORCE LANDLORDS TO LET AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

It appears that once again hardworking individuals are being penalised whereas residents who have never worked are being subsidised. As a landlord who really tries to provide good quality accommodation, the exemption for 6 months allows each property to be improved for new tenants, this reduction in time will end up costing private landlords money and in future property may be sold instead, causing a further shortage.

It is grossly unfair to expect Landlords to pay Council Tax for properties that are empty.

It is very difficult to maintain good tenants and very often they change address quite frequently and it becomes a logistical nightmare to dovetail tenants as they leave with new ones coming in. The landlord should be given the grace period between tenants so they can offer new tenants the home and notice period without being penalised.

Landlords are being unfairly targeted. During this recession this is the last thing that people need.

My only comment relates to this form: I pay council tax and receive no benefit AND I am a landlord .... I could only complete one response.

Overall OK but I think the empty property discount could be at three months in place of six months.

Re "remove the 100% council tax exemption for empty and unfurnished properties" - AS A landlord I strongly disagree with this blanket attitude. Sometimes when properties become empty the it takes time to advertise, renew carpets and redecorate etc - we need 4/6 weeks before we can relet. To change from 6 months to nil does not make sense!!

Re Rates to be paid on empty properties when tenants move out. In 80% of cases flats are left needing refurbishment, new kitchens and bathrooms, carpets and complete redecoration. If rates are going to be charged for empty properties then it should only be after the necessary work has been carried out and they are put back on the market for reletting. Empty flats are inspected by the council and can be assessed whether they are ready for reletting especially if the need rewiring etc.

Reducing benefits to those that need them most could make their situation worse leading to them becoming a bigger burden on the council or state. eg homelessness. Private Landlords will be less likely to consider/support tenants needing benefits if the risk of rental payments are affected by the loss of benefit. The current concession on council tax for empty property allows landlords time to decorate, improve and modernise their property which is particularly helpful after a long letting or the end of a statutory protected tenancy following the death of the tenant. It can often take 6 months to get all the necessary work organised and completed as there is often no prior warning. These works are not structural but essential if a tenant of good financial standing is to be found, one who can not only pay the rent from employment, but also the council tax as they are not reliant on benefits which is to your long term advantage. Can the definition of major structural repair be widened? Also if no concession is given, has any thought been given to the cost of administering and collecting what may be small amounts where turnarounds at the end of lettings are quick.

Surely self reliance should be encouraged, cuts to benefit to anyone who actually works should be avoided. Whilst the current exemption for unfurnished empty property is overgenerous at 6 months, to withdraw it completely hardly encourages good practise. The council wants well maintained private sector housing the proposal only helps discourage maintenance and repair. In addition the proposal will encourage landlords to take the first available tenant rather than be selective. Allowing an exemption of 2 months would allow time for routine maintenance and tenant selection without causing disruption to outgoing tenants.

The majority of private landlords utilise the time between tenancies to clean, repaint and renew kitchens/bathrooms. This ensures that tenants have high standards of decoration. By removing the exemption, standards will reduce, as landlords will face an additional financial burden. Instead of a 6 month exemption, this should be reduced to 3 months which is adequate to continue providing high quality accommodation for those that are unable to access the housing ladder.

This is another case of we that work hard and are enterprising, and take risks, supporting the "less fortunate". Whilst I accept that there are many genuine cases of hardship, more effort should be put by councils into preventing the many forms of "council tax avoidance" which abound in all UK boroughs. As a second home owner and a landlord who has refurbished some dire, unwanted properties and made a major contribution to Thanet's regeneration, a) on a personal basis I hardly use the services provided by TDC (even waste collection) and b) as a landlord I would be severely punished should I have to pay council tax on a property which was untenanted, even for a short period. I might sell the properties, thereby returning the tenants to become a burden on TDC's resources. I am a decent and generous landlord, who cares for my tenants, the properties and Thanet. These proposals are a kick in the \*\*\*\* to a caring person. Finally, job seekers on benefit should receive council tax assistance in a similar way to student loans - to be repaid when in work. If nothing else, this would be beneficial to the "assets" page of the council's ledger.

To be honest, I never understood how you can justify Council Tax on an empty property, since it pays for services that will not be used AT ALL. So removing the 6 month exemption is REALLY taking liberties.

Will the council employ more people hence more cost to visit properties? As a landlord, when a property is vacated after being poorly treated and requires major works is it fair to pay council tax while work is being carried out?

Yet again landlords will be penalised. we need a gap and grace period between a tenant leaving and a new tenant moving in. once a tenant gives notice a month passes then they move out, then the property has to be re- decorated and sorted out, re-advertised, and when a suitable tenant has been found they then have to give a months notice to their landlord and so the circle begins. A grace period of while the property is empty is necessary to give landlords a chance to re-furb it so it is suitable for the new tenants.

### **I am a second home owner**

2nd Home owners by definition use few Council services, but pay 90% of full cost. This has got to be better for the Council financially than a resident who pays 100% and uses 100% of services.

A 10% reduction on the 2nd home discount (to zero) is disproportionately higher a contribution than a 5-6% reduction in benefit to claimants. You should not conclude that all holiday home owners are rolling in money; I earn barely more than the minimum wage. I make very little demands on local facilities – no children to educate, unlikely to use hospitals etc. But I do spend money in Thanet, thereby contributing to the economy. I cannot even have a single-person discount on a 2nd home, so proportionately I pay much more than I do on my main home, which seems absurd (and you don't even provide any doorstep recycling!). Obviously, any extra money added to my council charge will mean a matching reduction in my discretionary spending locally, which won't be good for local businesses. I agree with the proposal to remove exemptions from empty properties. On balance, I feel that claimants should have to pay more than you are proposing. FYI, in my main home borough, the shortfall is being made up ENTIRELY by reductions to working-age claimants. This is a Labour council and they consider this to be fairer and 'more manageable'.

A. If we are to pay full council tax should we not have the right to vote in local elections (no taxation without representation as they say). B. You state that you are not going to penalise pensioners, well, I am a second home owner and a pensioner!!

Although, as a second home owner, I will be slightly worse off under the proposals I support them as I feel that they provide the fairest response to the changes demanded by central government.

As a part time dweller in Thanet and paying for Council Tax elsewhere I do not benefit more than 35% of the Council's services, if any. Most of the locals seem to have a way of avoiding paying Council Tax so I don't see why genuine Householders should subsidise these and the work shy. You will drive potential investment away from Thanet, that includes me.

As a part time dweller in Thanet and paying for Council Tax elsewhere I do not benefit more than 35% of the Council's services, if any. Most of the locals seem to have a way of avoiding paying Council Tax so I don't see why genuine Householders should subsidise these and the work shy. You will drive potential investment away from Thanet, that includes me.

As a second home owner (single owner with no family members) already paying large amounts of council tax compared to the low value of the property (based in Cliftonville) and making little use of Thanet's community services, as I already pay Council Tax in Westminster, I feel that I am already contributing more than heavily to the vulnerable in the area. My second home is not for fun but is intended to be my future retirement property so

money is tight. The current proposal smacks of a council trying to milk what they think is a cash cow (ie those who actually do pay Council tax).

As a second home owner and someone who works full time I already pay a great deal in tax. I fully expect to pay for what I have and accept the small 10% reduction in council tax on a flat I use 20% of the year. I may be in a privileged position to afford a second home but I gained it from hard work and saving for my future. I do not have a highly paid job but saved for my small flat to have a place to take my more vulnerable/disabled members of my own family to a place I have adapted for their needs out of my own pocket. It feels like those of us who help ourselves and do not rely on others are constantly penalised. It is quite soul destroying. It makes you feel it is not worth being self reliant and better to spend it all and then claim from the system when resources run out. I would be very disappointed if this very small concession for people like me are taken away. I feel I already contribute more to the system than I take out. I would be very strongly against taking this concession away, it is already a meagre one.

As a second home owner and therefore not a full user of the services provided by the Council I fail to see why I should have to pay the full amount and still not receive the Council tax 10% reduction as supported by the Government. If the Council was more efficient and ensured that all those in Thanet should all pay their Council tax there is no need to do this. The Council should sub contract more services to the private sector and also be lobbying Central Government for more money to support services given that this is one of the poorest areas in the South of East of England outside London. The 10% sum of money obtained will not go anyway in meeting the shortfall required by the Council and is therefore an attack on those who wish to spend money in Thanet and support local services and business and the tourist industry so vital for Thanet's longer term recovery.

As a second home owner I am happy to pay the full council tax and agree with the proposals for empty properties

As a second home owner I end up pay twice for the services supplied by the government (not Thanet Council) so believe I should get a discount on second homes, also as a second home owner when we are in the town we spend more in local shop and restaurants than our neighbours who live in permanently.

As a second home owner I pay £120 less for my property in Ramsgate as I do in London. If the second home discount is removed I will be paying the same amount as my permanent home and therefore will have an impact on whether I decide to keep the second property or not. As I probably only use the property a total of 3 months per year I do not lean on other services that the council provide and therefore my contribution is greater than someone living there full time.

As a second home owner I pay full council tax on my main home. The only services I use in Thanet is the refuse collection (minimal). What do I get for my money? Folkweek 2012 was not enjoyable as too much alcohol was consumed on the beach and I witnessed youths snorting drugs on the beach - during the day! The steps to the beach smelt strongly of urine and I saw a youth urinating up against my property. All year round the High St and surrounding streets are dirty with urination, vomit and chewing gum.



As a second home owner I realise I will find no sympathy in the council regarding the increase I will have to pay. However I would just like to point out that whilst I contribute significantly to the local economy and council I make almost no demands on the council. For example, I take my rubbish away with me when I leave the property, it is not collected by the council refuse service and I do not use the libraries or social services. The extra money I will have to pay will need to be found from somewhere - basically I will have less to spend when I am in Thanet. If every second home owner does the same local businesses will suffer. Although not immediately if the cost of running my second home continues to go up eventually I will have to sell it. If the buyer lives there permanently there will be extra demands on council services. Currently I am a net contributor to Thanet Council, eventually that position could be reversed.

As a second home owner I spend a lot of money in Thanet, but I have no right to vote in local elections. If I lose my second home discount, then I should be given the right to vote and therefore have a say in how local government is run, and who it is run by.

As a second home owner I strongly object to the proposals to target the council tax discount. Although I empathise with reducing the impact on the lower paid, this short-sighted proposal will only serve to dissuade second home owners from investing in the area. As a result this ultimately could impact the level of housing in the area which is currently made available for short term holiday lets. This in turn could increase holiday rental prices and reduce tourist revenue for Thanet. Unless there has been some detailed cost benefit analysis conducted, the proposal simply appears to be an easy way of penalising those who provide a valuable resource for the area. The consequences of the proposal should be seriously considered.

As a second home owner I support local jobs and tourism whilst using very little of the services provided by Council Tax. This change will be counter to you turning Ramsgate into an area which supports tourism.

As a second home owner in the Thanet area I use very little of the services, my bins are emptied no more than once per month and often less than that for instance. As is true of all councils the savings should be made within the office not by penalising the residents. Cutting down on the collection and analysis of the political correctness claptrap such as that at the end of this consultation form would help.

As a second home owner, I bring income to Thanet without being a drain on resources. For example I do not use your schools or libraries but I do make a point of buying all my food in local shops, eating in local restaurants and generally supporting Thanet in its regeneration efforts. If you remove this small discount, I believe that it will discourage people from setting up a holiday home in Thanet - this must be a valuable source of income for the Isle and I feel you are being short sighted in planning to penalise the people who bring money, publicity, PR and goodwill to an area which needs an influx of funds.

As a second home owner, I disagree with the proposal to remove the 10% council tax discount. We visit our flat in Broadstairs along with friends of ours and put money into the local economy. We are also paying for services at our home in Hackney which is one of the poorest boroughs in England.

As a second home owner, we invested in Thanet above other places. Initially for the first year we received 50% discount which we found as a great benefit, from year two it was increased to 90% and you now want to increase to 100%. As Margate is undergoing a badly needed regeneration scheme the last thing investors in property need is this increase. I

would also be grateful if you could inform me of the percentage of unpaid council tax of local residents as we have never missed a payment in over 9 years.

As a second home owner, we make use of almost none of the services that we are already paying 90% of the full Council Tax for. In fact, we bring money into Thanet through our second home ownership and visits. Removing the remaining - pitiful - discount is grossly unfair to us, as we will receive nothing in return. The Council should be encouraging us to remain net payers in Thanet.

As a widow, owner of a second home and visitor to Thanet for many years, my family spend many of our holidays here. As prices are rising and we all have to make cut backs I feel I already pay more than enough and this would be a reason to sell the holiday home and the family would then not come to Thanet as this was their incentive.

As always you seem to target the law-abiding members of society/community. If the council were to cut out the waste and inefficiency within its own remit this would not be necessary. If the people affected feel this is unjust, you will alienate a considerable percentage of your community and at some stage you will be called to account. I am aware that in other parts of Europe "class actions" are being raised against what is considered illegal action by councils in taxing individuals who receive no services from the local council.

As second home owner feel I pay disproportionately more for services that do not apply but understand the current need and in general support your proposals.

By having a "second home" in Thanet we are contributing to the area in a large way. We hardly use the services that we pay for. We are helping to support those unable to pay for those services to a huge extent. We didn't consider 10% to be a very fair discount and now we'll be paying the full amount. We shall have to now review our financial situation and decide whether it is still possible to retain our "second home".

For those like myself who have a second home I think that the discount should still apply but not for when the property is empty. If we can afford to have a second home we should be able to afford to pay the council tax whether the property is let or not

Given the under occupation reduction in HB from April plus the additional 5-6% to pay in council tax and the general reductions in Tax credits and increase in non dep deductions how is the council going to achieve the savings required while needing to increase it's bad debt provision and possible reduction in the recovery rates for Council Tax? How is the proposed scheme act as an incentive to work? I consider that full CTB notification letters should be sent as with the current scheme as without these customers will not know how their CTB is calculated and will be unable to have the correct info to appeal. In Leicester Avenue there are many houses for sale with long delays in the properties being sold. Second home owners are attracted to the area but if other coastal councils offer the reduction in CTAX and Thanet does not. Then these owners may decide to purchase in other areas.

I agree in principle with the proposal that the exemption for second home owners be removed BUT only if they are allowed to claim any other benefits/exemptions they may be eligible for. I am single but have been told that I cannot claim the exemption that this would normally incur. This means I am paying MORE council tax than I would if I lived in the property all the time - in spite of not using local services.

I agree that the second home discount should be used to make up the shortfall, but also think that Margate's regeneration benefits from second home owners coming and investing and spending money in the local area, so Margate should also find other ways of appealing to them.

I agree with the removal of 100% exemption for empty and unfurnished properties, but feel it should be replaced with maybe a 50% exemption.

I am a pensioner currently living in Medway with a flat in Palm Bay as a second home. I would be very disappointed if the 10% discount on council tax is removed next year as this has already been cut in previous years and will put considerable pressure on my very limited income as I am not entitled to any benefits. I spend about 50 days in a year at my flat, generally day visits and do not produce a lot of rubbish and therefore feel that I am not a drain on local resources. If the discount is going to be removed as proposed may I suggest that it is gradually reduced in line with CPI as my pension will be increased by the same index.

I am a second home owner in Kent. I am a pensioner and a single person. I pay 90% of Council Tax to Kent for a few days per month. I hardly use any of your services, ie I take my own rubbish home because I cannot leave the wheelie bin out. I bring money into Kent, paying for goods and services. You should not making it less attractive for second home owners to stay in Kent, we pay far more than we ever shall take. Also, your single residents will receive a discount - where is my discount? It is unfair to treat a single resident in Kent with a discount and yet a single second home owner the full 100%. Second home owners used to receive a 50% discount not so long ago. If you make it so unfair we second home owners can choose to buy in another county where Council Tax suits us better. Please remember - us second home owners bring money into Kent - use very little of your services - yet you want to charge us the full amount - not forgetting the most important point - single, pensioner paying 100% of Kent's Council Tax - just because it is a second home - totally unjustified!

I am a second home owner. Years ago, I restored a semi-derelict squatted flat, including cleaning up sick and needles, and have made it beautiful. We use it for holidays and lend it to family and friends. We are perfectly happy to contribute to the cost of local services but do not use them much which is why I think a (very modest) reduction of 10% in council tax is fair. But we are obviously an easy target given everyone else has to be protected.

I am affected by the removal of the second home allowance. I spend one or two nights during the week working in Thanet to support the Voluntary/Community Sector. I therefore cost less in terms of the Council's revenue expenditure than a full time resident. The charge should be equitable to all residents. If it is decided to remove the 10% discount, then I think that I should be entitled to claim the single person's reduction as my wife is a very occasional visitor.

I am concerned that removing any discount for second home owners will disincentivise investment in the district, at a time when such additional revenue is badly needed. Along with other second home owners, it will add to the burden, and the likelihood that I will withdraw from the local area.

I am currently paying full council tax for the property which is the property where I live in Essex. Why should I pay full council tax for a property where I do not use the services of

Refuge Collections Street Cleaning and Lighting Police etc. when the property is empty? I am Pensioner and my pension will not be increased to cover these additional costs.

I am English but we live in Switzerland. We bought our flat in Broadstairs with retirement money. I am now on a teacher's pension from Switzerland, getting half of what I used to earn. We stay in our flat in BS at the most about 8 weeks a year. When closed up, the flat costs nothing. Water and electricity are turned off. Now that I'm retired, Council tax is much more of a burden. Couldn't you still keep the reduction for retirees? Thank you for reading this. Maybe it was worth writing? Xxxx xxxxxxxx

I disagree that second home owners should pay more than 90%, personally, I use my house, and the services of TDC, less than 30 days per year (<10%) yet pay 90% which is more than enough. This will encourage second home owners to leave the area, which will have an adverse effect on property and rent prices which will result in higher habitation of people on benefits and therefore less money to TDC. I do believe that charging landlords of vacant property and second home owners a proportionate fee is fair, but you should clamp down on cheats, evasion and make support harder to receive (a reflection, unfortunately, of British taxes and politics!).

I don't see why I should pay any more tax when I already pay 90% Council Tax for a property that I inhabit rarely. I use very little resources, no schooling, healthcare or social services, although I appreciate paying a proportion for local Police, Fire and Cleaning services. I spend a lot of money locally with Thanet businesses contributing to the local economy and I already pay 100% tax in London, why should I pay more? Maybe Thanet can look at how they really spend their/our money, and sort their own backyard out, rather than going for the easy option, or indeed make sure that other UK councils stop sending their needy and vulnerable people here, taking up vital and limited financial & social resources!

I feel the council should find other means for the collection of revenue then penalising those that already pay a high duty not only on one but possibility several properties and are investing money into the area.

**I FEEL THIS WILL MAKE ME SELL MY SECOND HOME AND MOVE TO A DIFFERENT AREA**

I have a holiday home (bungalow) and contribute a lot to the local economy from food shopping/ entertainment and local contractors when requiring work done. I have a 10% reduction yet all those mobile homes (Holiday homes) are not paying any council tax at all. Some are living in them all year then having to vacate for 2/3 months to sunny Spain in the winter months and yet they are using the facilities of Thanet. They pay no council tax to anybody. I might have to move in a caravan and do the same. I know of people that live in them all year and claim they are not living in them so as not to pay council tax. I hope you are on their cases as well. I know a lot of friends that have bought a second property in Thanet with a view to retirement from Medway and we will be interested in the outcome with a view to taking this to the European courts if need be as we will be discriminated against when taking the caravans/mobile homes into account. My research tells me that no all councils will be doing this. You should be cutting waste and unnecessary expenditure. It seems to me you want to increase council Tax so all these people living in caravans/mobile homes can use the service of Thanet at other people's expense including the full time residents. Please keep me informed of any public meeting related to this issue

I have made my views known to the Council, Councillors and DCLG in the past about this. I believe it is grossly unfair to charge more than 50% Council Tax to 2nd home owners who can never use their homes even close to 50% of the time. I cannot possibly make use of the Council services in a way that could justify a 100% charge. The Government proposals allow Councils to keep Business Rate Income to compensate for the loss of Central Government revenue. I propose that, if necessary, the Council Tax rate should be increased for all homeowners and the 50% reduction for 2nd home owners should be restored, in the interests of fairness.

I have worked hard for my holiday flat in Broadstairs. I have been given 10% tax benefit on my property, which I only seldom visit and which consequently means I don't benefit from services that are offered all the year round. I am angry and resentful that so many people get full council tax exemption and do no work while I and other people who work seem to be subsidising these categories. I already pay almost two full council tax payments in the UK. Why should my 10% reduction be stopped? Target the appropriate people and make them pay their share.

I think it is very unfair to remove the reduction for second home owners we do not call on local services in the main but bring income into the area and for myself I am already paying top rate council tax for Tonbridge council

I think it is very unfair to stop the second home discount as a second home owner I pay council tax for services I rarely use

I think second home owners should be fully responsible for their privileged situations.

I think that me paying 90% of the council tax for approximately 12 weeks use of my flat is a very good return of income for the council. This used to be up to 20 weeks but with my service charges doubling and fuel prices continually rising my planned visits for next year will be approximately 10 weeks. This is becoming unviable. The local shops/pubs/takeaways and restaurants will be the losers as I and lots of other holiday owners have to cut back even more. Perhaps I should sell up or I could rent it out to someone on benefits that way at least my mortgage and council tax would be paid for me while I wait for property prices to rise. This was how the demise of Cliftonville happened does the council want Westgate to go the same way. The council should be encouraging companies to invest in Thanet instead of blocking their progress ie Manston airport. Every job created is one less person claiming benefit. At the airport I work at since leaving Thanet 42years ago because of minimal job opportunities aircraft land after 5am and take off up to 11.30 pm unemployment is minimal within a 20mile radius. The council needs to look outside of Thanet come to my borough Hounslow to see how they work ie taking recycling seriously and still having a weekly collection which saves the council a fortune and encouraging companies to invest in the area. Perhaps you should start charging for parking at Westwood this would generate a large amount of income as it's the only shopping centre I know of that has free parking. Demolish the property on Fort hill and sell it with planning permission that would save approx 110,000 pounds in security charges per year. Unfortunatley you will not look at any alternatives but just blunder ahead as you have already decided the outcome.

I think the extra 100% increase in second home owners is unfair as we use very little of the councils facilities. We also make a lot of contribution in our own boroughs (Southwark) which are lower than Thanet, We do not even use rubbish (domestic) collection as this takes place when we are not there. I would be willing to make more of a contribution if

there's a communal rubbish collection outside of the scheduled time. At the moment we take our rubbish home.

I think you should find another area like over administration of the highly paid so called managers and to cut bonuses in all sectors as lower paid people do not get them.

I want to see a fairer tax system. Everyone needs council services at some time. Thus, you should lobby government for a local income tax, so council tax is based on ability to pay and charged on all people in work. Easily done by Revenue & Customs. In the meantime, your suggestions seem OK. Thanks for the chance to comment!

I was born in Broadstairs. I helped to look after my parent until they died in 2000, they lived in Broadstairs. I have a disabled daughter whose only holiday is in Broadstairs. I can not move to Broadstairs because my daughter's facilities are in Hertfordshire. My maisonette in Broadstairs which I visit regularly is my one only relaxation. I am 70 years old, my only income is my state pension.

I would like to see these changes reviewed again once the current financial crisis has passed.

If as a homeowner in Thanet paying the proposed 100% council tax on a 2nd property I will be able to vote in the local elections to choose councillors to represent me.

If the council is looking to make up a shortfall of £2.2 million, it could take the following measures before reducing support to residents on low income and increasing council tax charges to others: 1. Limit pay for statutory officers to £100,000 per annum. Other senior officers' pay to be capped at £50,000. Do not try and claim that you cannot recruit good staff at this level as you have never tried. 2. Cap councillor allowances to £15,000 for the Leader, £10,000 for other cabinet members and £5,000 for the rest. Given that councillors merely rubber stamp decisions taken by officers, it is hard to establish what they do for the money anyway. 3. Close the council's press & PR department. Residents have no choice as to who their council is and we have no need of taxpayer funded propaganda. 4. Scrap all vanity projects which serve no useful function.

If you are removing the second home discount will home owners be able to claim other discounts for example single occupier?

Increase rents for council homes to generate more income.

It is disproportionate and grossly unfair to require people who hardly use their property to pay the full amount of Council tax, essentially to subsidise others. My 'second home' is my late parents' home where I grew up as a child, and I do not wish to part with it or let it. I visit occasionally but over a full year probably use less than 5% of the facilities for which council tax is charged. Stinging people like me in this way will encourage sales of second homes in the area, in an already depressed market. Those properties will be bought by people who will use the facilities far more heavily than second home owners, which will in turn increase the overall cost to the public purse. This is the opposite of what the council intends to achieve by these proposals and short-sighted. Far better to ensure that money is not

wasted and that processes are tightened to ensure that everyone receives the right benefit, and pays the right amount of tax, so that fairness applies across the board. The present discount of 10% is a goodwill gesture towards second home owners and the balance of 90% paid already constitutes a significant chunk of money which acts essentially as a subsidy to the council. Please be fair and proportionate to everyone.

It is presumed that the second home discount favours wealthy residents. My wife and I are not wealthy but wish to retire in Broadstairs where I grew up. The second home discount assisted us to establish a home ahead of retirement and reflected the fact that we only use local services when we visit Thanet. Withdrawal of the second home discount is likely to have a further affect on the local property market and this will further depress the local property values.

It sounds rather grand to have a "second home" but due to the severe drop in value of our main home in West Wickham we are delaying our final move to Minnis Bay in the hope property prices may recover somewhat. The reduction in rates has been appreciated and, bearing in mind we use very few council services at the moment- very few times the recycling and rubbish bins are out, never use libraries or other council services, no need for travel pass etc.- it has been appropriate. However we realise we are fortunate to have our home in Thanet and government cuts have to be made up somehow so we are hoping that we will be moving in fully before too long. My wife and I are both pensioners so of course the loss of the reduction will impact on us as income is very tight. I guess some "second home owners" may be in a better financial position.

Loss of second home discount a bit unfair given the level of council services actually used eg no schooling or social services, as against the level of extra spending in the local community on food, entertainment, tourist attractions, local tradesmen etc, etc.

My flat is a second home used exclusively by my wife and I and on rare occasions by my daughter and her family for short holiday breaks. It is financed 100 percent by me. We feel that a small discount as at present only just compensates for all the facilities that we are not being able to take advantage of and is a long way from the 50 percent that we were obtaining when we first owned a property in Thanet. Please give this situation due consideration.

My main objection is that I will not be given the 10% reduction in council tax for my property in Broadstairs which is a holiday home. I am a sole occupier at my main residence in Dartford and as such get a 25% discount but this doesn't apply to a holiday home. I have several friends in Dartford who also have holiday homes in Broadstairs. We do not object to paying some council tax but I would be interested to know what element of the council tax goes to Kent County Council. As we have two properties in the same county we are paying twice for the same services which I do not think is fair. We can't be in both places at the same time and double council tax is as bad as us having to pay for two TV licences although we are only viewing in one location. I would strongly urge you to reconsider and grant us some sort of reduction in recognition of our allegiance to the Garden of England. I am also a widowed senior citizen living on a pension.

My only concern is the removal of second home discount. Council Tax is a system of local taxation to partly fund services provided by local government and there should be a relationship between amount paid and services used. I think that it is unfair for part-time users to pay the same as full-time users.

My wife and I are owners of our property in Broadstairs, which we use as a second home. We feel strongly that the financial shortfall that the Council is facing should be met by further savings in the Council's spending, not by the proposed changes to the current charging schedule, which we regard as unfair. We specifically object to the proposed removal of the current 10% discount on second homes. We already pay more than double the Council Tax per annum on our holiday home in Broadstairs than is payable on our main London residence, despite the fact that the only Council service upon which we directly call in Thanet is waste collection - 2 small bins that need emptying for approximately 6 months of the year. As such we already contribute to and subsidise disproportionately all the more costly public services that we do not use, such as education, health, social care, housing, libraries etc. We feel strongly that second home owners receive unfair bad press in Thanet and elsewhere and that for this reason this group is seen as an easy target for additional revenue raising. However in reality, because much of our discretionary spending is made at weekends and holiday times when we are in Broadstairs, we (and many second home owners like us) generate significant direct and indirect income for the Thanet economy, at very little cost to the Council. To single out second home owners for the proposed further 10% tax increase would, for the above reasons be both short-sighted and inequitable.

Nobody should receive relief from Council Tax unless they are incapacitated due to illness/disability. Just because a person is on the dole does not mean they are unable to contribute to the Council Tax, either financially or by working for the Council to pay off their debt. Too much is just given away to people who have never worked. Just because you do not want to work, does not mean all other parts of life are free. Everybody must pay their dues.

Not knowing what number of homes claim a second home discount in Thanet, there is a possibility that such home owners or prospective owners may, in the future, consider to remove to another area where discounts are still available. Sight should not be lost that second home owners still make a substantial contribution without calling upon the full resources of the Council. However, in our case this will have no disadvantage as in the near future we hope to move permanently to Birchington.

Once again you want to hit the people with second homes. The attitude is they can afford it. That is very wrong. It's the people who dodge council tax that you should be looking at. You say in your letter that there would be no change to council tax benefit for pensioners. I am a pensioner, but you still want to take away the 10% reduction on my second home in Ramsgate. That is totally unfair.

Q1 Unfurnished / Empty property should get no benefits. People like me with a second / holiday home brings extra wealth into the area and should be encouraged.

Second home owners are being perceived to be wealthy when this is not always the case. It's just how they spend their money. They have no vote and make very small demands upon the council services. They should not therefore be penalised.

Second home owners such as myself make significantly reduced demands upon council provided facilities. This is not a holiday home but my sole UK residence. My use of refuse disposal and collection facilities is minimal, my contribution to wear and tear of council-maintained fabric is minimal. The current discount that I receive, although small, reflects this in principle. The fact that council income from other sources is reduced does not change this principle and is not an excuse to use me as a soft target.



TDC should encourage not penalise second home owners who bring and spend money in this run down area in shops, restaurants etc. While using fewer council services than permanent residents. We also own three business premises - two rented out and one soon to be a museum adding to services, jobs and regeneration of Ramsgate. We need a house to live in while managing our business here and feel that we are financial stakeholders in the area. You should check individual circumstances of second home owners perhaps when they register for council tax. If like us they run businesses or contribute to the local economy and need a local base to live in you should not withdraw the discount. Or is this just the 'politics of envy' at work? TDC making the assumption that every second home owner is a millionaire. We are pensioners!

Thanet is very reliant on its tourist business. There are many houses in the area such as ours where we provide self catering holiday accommodation - We just have the one holiday house, we struggle against the seasonal aspect of the tourist trade and business is difficult, especially this year with all the poor weather. To add to this, we have recently had to deal with all the tax changes for holiday lets, and the higher cost of utility bills. Your plans will increase our costs still further. With the economy as it is at present, we can not raise our prices. We employ local labour and services to clean the house etc, and to repair and replace items so again further contribute to the local economy. Yet we are lumped together with everyone else as a "second home". It seems silly for the local council to spend money to promote tourism on the one hand and then penalise those of us at the very bottom of this sector.

The council should be looking for cost reductions with in the organisation and cut fringe services.

The home owners are already paying very high Council Tax in the area they are living in. If the second home is not let out it does not produce any income. Charging the full Council Tax on second home will cause severe financial problems to the owner thus he may fall into arrears resulting in a court action costing the Council a lot of money without any benefit for the owner could be unemployed or on low income and may be able to afford only a small monthly payment to satisfy the court order therefore the council tax should be 50% for second homes.

The level of council tax payable on a property should reflect the level of services used, and recognise the benefit to the local economy. The reduction of second home discount has already been cut from 50% to 10% but I believe that a fair charge should equate to single person discount (currently 25%). I would suggest that these discounts be matched at say 24% but I leave it to you to do the maths. With the current situation in the housing market it is not easy for owners of empty property to sell and the cost of refurbishment may exceed any benefit derived. Council Tax should not be charged where it can be shown that the owner is taking all reasonable steps to sell or bring the property back into the housing market. If the empty property is tenanted the landlord already suffers the loss of rent and probably has to enact repairs before offering a new tenancy. To charge council tax for this period is adding insult to injury and can only result in a rise in rent levels. I assume that the charge would also apply to social landlords so a rise in rents, and housing benefits, is unavoidable.

The new scheme has not been thought through, as you are already collecting 90% of the monies due so the amount of money you are chasing is comparatively negligible. As the process is changing you will prompt creative minds to counter claim, I already pay rates in Kent on my main home and cannot possibly double up on my usage of services. I also bring money into Thanet, which you will lose if this tax increase is the straw that breaks the

camel's back in these financially challenging times for folks with a second home in Thanet, and they decide to sell up. That will adversely impact local tradesmen, shops and other like businesses. It is right and proper that some people that the Council are responsible for need financial help, but that has to be sensibly done, and some people receive too much, so that should be scaled back.

The proposed scheme needs to have considered all aspects of funding and costs to the council. I would hope that following comments below have been taken into account: I also think revisiting some areas of contention re "Checking on the validity of free "disabled parking permits"; Checking on whether certain people are actually entitled to what they claim more vigorously; Looking at the cost/remuneration/expenses of Councils/Mayors and making sure they are within acceptable levels and are not abused.

The reduced tax on second homes reflects the fact that occupants make less demand on council services and have no vote in council elections. The latter would need to change BEFORE the discount is abolished. There can be no justification in a democracy for a family paying full council tax being treated as second-class citizens and denied a vote.

These proposals ignore the fact that people spent their disposable income in different ways and fails to acknowledge that 'second home' owners make little, if any demand on council services, especially the costly ones such as education and social services, whilst contributing financially to the local economy. It is arguable that the existing discount is totally inadequate and that at present 'second home' owners receive very poor value for their money from the council. Pandering to the current fashion for stigmatising 'second home' owners on the incorrect presumption that they are all wealthy is crude stereotyping driven by envy. It must be presumed that paying full council tax will give 'second home' owners full and equal access to all council services and benefits eg the right to vote, free bus passes etc to avoid discrimination.

Unfair scheme to expect people to pay full council tax on second properties when they would not benefit from the services provided of tenants and home owners who reside in the area!

We are second home owners in Ramsgate, and spend as much time as possible there, not just weekends!! As I now work part time I spend all school holidays there and long weekends, and myself and my Husband wish to retire there, but unfortunately am now not sure if this is an option due to the Council Tax charges. We have spent many hours refurbishing a probate property which hadn't been sold for some time, due to its 'poor' condition. There are lots of beautiful properties in Ramsgate, that would be unsightly, if it weren't for second home owners and developers. I feel that the Council tax in Thanet is already unrealistic! We live in 2 bed detached bungalow in Essex and if it were not for the 10% discount, the Council tax that we pay at Albion Court for a two bed terraced, would be exactly the same as our bungalow!. If the new proposals are introduced to allow second home owners no discount, we will most likely have to sell the property, as lots of other Councils have more discount and financially, we will be forced to look at other areas, although my childhood was in Kent and love to take my Granddaughter there. Please look at other options other than removing the 10% discount, as I feel that this will affect lots of people, and although people moan about second home owners, lots of shops and restaurants, and trades, ie Carpenters, carpet fitters, Builders, would lose trade without us. We come from a working class background and have worked hard for our retirement years, please do not take that wish away. Many thanks xxxx xxxxxx

We own a second property in the area which is grade 2 listed. We have restored it to a great standard employing local builders and purchasing goods from local shops. Our property is used only for a small part of the year so we use very little of the local public services that we pay for so even at 90%, we feel that we are subsidising local services. Even the refuse collection is not something that we can make use of as no wheelie bins are provided in Guildford Lawn. We are usually not there to put the rubbish out on the exact day so we tend to take our rubbish and recycling home with us in the back of our car! By penalising people like us, you make the area less attractive and this could stop second home buyers to the area. I strongly feel that the Thanet economy cannot afford to do this. I also feel that removing the empty property allowance will prevent people from developing run down properties as paying community charge on such projects will result in them not being financially viable. DO NOT PENALISE THE HARDWORKING WHO BRING GREAT ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO THE AREA.

While I have no strong views about the loss of council tax relief for 2nd home owners I do have concerns that I will be taxed at the full rate without the right of representation. I should, therefore, welcome the Council's proposals on how 2nd home owners who pay full council tax will also have the right to participate in determining the make up of elected officials who decide how to spend our tax. I look forward to receiving your email reply to xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx

Why penalise second home owners? If it wasn't for this group of people investing in Thanet then the economy would greatly suffer. It is easy to take the spending power elsewhere. It is already costing us twice as much in petrol costs to visit our holiday home and now you want to increase our council tax. Beware as people have a simple choice to vote with their feet.

Why should one person in a house pay the same amount as four people living in the same house who will use four times the facilities? If you have to save money make cuts in the council high wages expenses.

Would be a good idea if you offered a discount to people who paid quickly/on time. Not happy with the small 10% discount for a second home being withdrawn as we don't use your services very often.

Your proposed removal of the Second Home Owners Discount is discriminatory and short sighted because: my property is occupied for at least 32 weeks per year by visitors who are financially contributing to local leisure businesses/services in the area which more than makes up for the Second Home Owners Discount. Also, to paraphrase Magna Carta 'No taxation without representation' - if I am to pay full council tax, what about getting the right to vote for members of Thanet Council?

**Comments from respondents who did not answer 'Which of the following best describes your current situation regarding Council Tax?'**

(1) Our small house in Ramsgate is a 'holiday home' that we strictly use for ourselves, max. 6 weeks/year (we rent a small flat here in Switzerland where we live & work), so what we have in RG isn't a 'second home'. (2) Basically we are fortunate to be able to pay the full council tax, which we pay in one lump sum and always before the deadline. - We receive an 'early payment rebate' here, but how many local taxpayers mess you around all the time? (3) In our case, considering the time we spend and like spending in Thanet and the amount we pay is so obviously out of proportion for the services we use. (4) Band C property (currently ca. £ 1,200 with 10% discount, which is still enough but okay in our present situation) is high

considering the only TDC/KCC services we believe we need & use for 6 weeks are wheelie-bin men & road sweepers. We do however use e.g. uneven pavements, pot-holed roads (by bus) and dangerous zebra crossings (i.e. worth a small fraction of the amount we pay tax-wise) and always use public transport (we're non-car drivers) in Thanet and otherwise. (5) The 'Loop' is good, but surprisingly we have noticed only a small fraction of the passengers need pay anything – why, and who pays for them? (TDC subsidised?) - And to be able to travel the whole country by bus is an absolute luxury! (6) I do believe, unfortunately, too much public/TDC money is thrown out (and could be saved) for all varieties of e.g. local crafty old & young lazy, work-shy, smoking/drinking-addicted 'TDC spongers' who have more offspring at home than in most other underdeveloped countries. There seem to be benefits for anyone, anything, everything, everywhere and every occasion – just ask the local authority for assistance and some department 'softy' will organise pocket money any time for anybody & everyone, wherever they come from. It has all become far too easy and seems to be a national sport! Immigrants have also caught on! (7) Surely it won't be that difficult making up the missing £2.2 million, after all that's all it costs every day to run British military operations in Afghanistan). - There are 2.2 million ways of spending money, but almost everyone seems to have forgotten how to save! I hope you are successful!

1. REDUCE COUNCIL TAX BILL BY REDUCING SOME OF THE SERVICES CURRENTLY PROVIDED. Eg. ask for volunteers to mow the parks and plant flower beds - they are more likely to take care of communal areas if they physically make a contribution or, if not physically able, to provide a donation for the purchase of flowers. Get rid of 1/3 of the current garden upkeep and you will also start saving on not having to clear up after vandals. If no one volunteers time or donations, then just let the parks be overgrown. If people really want these facilities, let them take pride and do something about it. Call it adopt a flower project or what ever. If they can't be bothered, then they are probably not using the facilities and there is no need for the council to be spending my tax money on it. Or call it, provide it or lose it, or whatever. 2. Reduce the 12 month free makeover council tax to 6 months. This will encourage builders to get the work done more quickly, and get families into the property. If the work is going to take more than 6 months, then they either need to hire more workmen which will help with employment, or then need to tear down the property and start again. Even house to flat conversions can be done in 6 months if they plan properly. 3.Reduce the 6 month free landlord empty property council tax to 3 months to give them time to find new tenants. The landlords need time to spruce up and repair damage between tenants. If you give some grace period, this will really help the individual landlord like myself (only one property). If I don't get this little bit of help, the expense of the cleaning and repairs between tenants, advertising, vetting, and now council tax etc to get new tenants will be very difficult for me to maintain since I make very little annual profit as it is. I will have to sell the property which means that there will be less rental property in the district. I think a lot of landlords will be in this position and you may be surprise and the quick reduction of rental properties as a result. Is this a good thing? 4. I agree with not changing pensioner council tax relief. 5. I agree to make working age pay £1-2 more each week to help with the bill which is your 5-6%. 6. I believe you should increase in the number of inspections to all council benefit claimants to 100% in the first year which I believe will pay for itself quickly by removing all fraudsters. I believe that this should be taken one step further to say that if an inspection is not allowed, then all benefits will stop from the following year. If they have nothing to hide, then they should allow the inspection. If they have something to hide, then they should not be claiming in the first place. Inspections should then be carried out every 2-3 years on a rotation, plus 100% of all new claimants. I believe that all initial costs for the inspections will be paid for in reduction of benefit claims and should be announced in papers and radio that we are all to expect this. After all, if you get paid for doing a job, the employer wants to ensure that you are doing the work. The council needs to see all benefits in the same way. If you are paying the benefits, then you need to ensure that they are the correct benefits to the correct people. By hiring a large number of inspectors who will also work nights and

weekends to cover the times the claimants are available, you will be reducing your unemployment burden as well. Give a bonus of some sort for all frauds uncovered so that the inspectors will not be tempted to accept bribes. Anyone who loses benefits can have 60 days to appeal to a manager of the inspectors for a second inspection. If it is found that they should keep the benefits, then the original inspector will lose the bonus originally received. This will help to prevent the inspectors from reducing benefits in error. Saying all that, I know that the council, who wants to be seen as a good guy, and worried about the next votes, will not have the heart to be tough on fraudsters who always seem to scream the loudest in case it gets in the press - have you noticed? You always target the working class because you know that they will just pay up. You are so worried about being fair to the people on benefits. What about being fair for the worker's for a change. We vote too, you know.

I am a full time carer who lives on benefits and I know there are a few of us here in Thanet. I am a bit confused as to whether this will effect the payments that I receive as this is not made very clear in the information that I have received.

I strongly disagree with the removal of the 10% discount on second homes in my case a holiday home.

It is grossly unfair to expect Landlords to pay Council Tax for properties that are empty.

She is not happy with the proposal as she does not want any increase in her outgoings and as she is on benefits this will give her less to live on.

The letter about this scheme was found in an alley off Boundary Road Ramsgate today. Reference xxxxxxxx addressed to xxxxxxxxxx. For data protection reasons it has been shredded and recycled by the male occupant at xxxxxxxxxx.

Why as an 88 year old and providing my sister in law with a home and I have been retired 23 years do I not get a reduction in my council tax?

You recently sent me a letter proposing to remove certain discounts on certain categories of council tax payments. At the present time I do own a very small holiday flat in Broadstairs which I very occasionally visit as (your terminology) a second home. As you are aware I qualify for a 10% discount at the present time and I was incensed that you intend to remove this. My reasons are as follows: I pay a large slice of my council tax towards the local services which to be fair I do not completely benefit from owing to my long absences and that seems to be more than a fair amount to contribute especially at the other end of the scale you are cutting back on services. I was shocked for example that you should take away flowering baskets for the summer this year. I'm incredulous and sickened at the way the Government and councils attack the average hard working person. The whole reason for the excuse of councils to make cuts is because of widespread mismanagement and in addition you want to increase council tax payments above inflation and at the same time shut Broadstairs Police Station, cut back on library services, a few presentation flower baskets etc. This is not to mention the European migrants that are housed, clothed and fed by the likes of me with my council tax. I have filled my survey form in and put strong words in that too. I repeat you give me a paltry 10% discount while giving out generous amounts in pension credits and other credits to the unemployed so they can have an easy and well paid for life at council tax payers expense. NO emphatically to taking my 10% benefit away.

## About You

### Q7 What was your age on your last birthday?

0 to 25	5	1.3%
26 to 34	24	6.2%
35 to 44	41	10.6%
45 to 54	65	16.9%
55 to 64	121	31.4%
65 and over	49	12.7%
Prefer not to say	47	12.2%
No reply	33	8.6%

### Q8 Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

Yes	98	25.5%
No	228	59.2%
Prefer not to say	25	6.5%
No reply	34	8.8%

### Q9 What is your ethnic group?

*Ethnic groups totalling zero have been excluded.*

English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	310	80.5%
Irish	6	1.6%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1	0.3%
Any other White background	9	2.3%
White and Black Caribbean	1	0.3%
White and Asian	2	0.5%
Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background	1	0.3%
Indian	2	0.5%
Chinese	1	0.3%
Any other Asian background	2	0.5%
African	1	0.3%
Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	1	0.3%
Any other ethnic group	2	0.5%
Prefer not to say	11	2.9%
No reply	35	9.1%

***Any other White background***

White European  
GREEK-CYPRriot  
Lancastrian  
Latvian  
Mixed European  
Switzerland  
This should not be requested

***Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background***

White and south American

***Any other Asian background***

Sri Lankan  
Persian-English

***Any other Black/African/Caribbean background***

Black Irish

***Any other ethnic group***

Being an owner of a holiday home  
Turkish

**Q10 What is your religion?**

No religion	88	22.9%
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant, and all other Christian denominations)	199	51.7%
Buddhist	1	0.3%
Hindu	1	0.3%
Jewish	2	0.5%
Muslim	2	0.5%
Sikh	2	0.5%
Any other religion	7	1.8%
Prefer not to say	39	10.1%
No reply	44	11.4%

***Any other religion***

Agnostic  
Jedi  
Jedi  
Jedi

Pagan  
Unitarian

**Q11 What is your sex?**

Male	183	47.5%
Female	146	37.9%
Prefer not to say	21	5.5%
No reply	35	9.1%

**Q12 What is your sexual orientation?**

Bisexual	7	1.8%
Gay man	5	1.3%
Gay woman/lesbian	1	0.3%
Heterosexual/straight	260	67.5%
Prefer not to say	64	16.6%
No reply	48	12.5%