

Consultation - Methodology statement

The guiding principles which have been established through case-law for fair consultation are as follows:

- The consultation must be carried out at a stage when proposals are still at a formative stage;
- Sufficient information on the reasons for the decision must be provided to permit the consultees to carry out intelligent consideration of the issues and to respond;
- Adequate time must be given for consideration and responses to be made;
- The results of the consultation must be properly taken into account in finalising any decision.

Tunbridge Wells Borough will be carrying out a public consultation on the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021-22.

The public consultation is due to start on 14 August 2020 and last for 8 weeks.

The survey will be online, open access and available to anyone who has an interest in the matter and who is over 18 and a resident of Tunbridge Wells Borough.

Where we hold an email address a direct email invitation to complete the survey will be sent to claimants currently in receipt of Council Tax Reduction. This will equate to approximately 57% of households on the database.

Where email addresses are not held, the claimants currently in receipt of Council Tax Reduction will be written to with a paper copy of the consultation. This will include options for a Braille, large text or non-English version to be requested, and a pre-paid return envelope. This will minimise barriers to completion of the survey, and encourage a wide range of responses.

Where there is a joint claim or someone in the household is not on Council Tax Reduction they can also complete the survey on line or request a paper version.

Stakeholder groups such as the CAB, local debt advice agencies, registered social landlords and other organisations with a significant interest will be contacted to obtain their views. We will be asking these groups to promote as much as possible.

There is also a duty to consult with the major precept authorities (County Council, Fire and Police).

The availability of the consultation will be promoted on the Council's website, social media, and outgoing correspondence both email and postal from the Revenues and Benefits team.

Based on the number and demographics of the respondents the survey data maybe weighted to align better with the local population.