

## APPENDIX C

### Results of the consultation on the withdrawal of the Council Tax Support Grant (CTSG) September 2019

*NOTE: The table below gives a summarised version of the results of the consultation exercise with Town and Parish Councils. Each Town and Parish Council's full response is set out in the pages following this summary table.*

<b>Not in Support of Council Tax Support Grant Withdrawal (8)</b>			
Town/Parish	CTSG amount £	CTSG as percentage of the Precept	Consultation Response
Beaworthy	36	1.92%	Disappointed to hear of the withdrawal of funding, loss of Grant will have disproportionate effect on their small Parish.
Bridestowe	297	4.14%	Strongly object to the withdrawal. Requested that WDBC retain the current method of phasing out the CTSG i.e. reduction of 8.6% per annum
Chagford	1,165	2.60%	Councillors would like to view their disappointment, especially now that the Parish has taken over the running the public conveniences
Dartmoor Forest	951	5.59%	Opposed to withdrawal, disproportionate negative effect on communities of the Parish. Requested that a special case is made for DFPC due to deprivation of the area outlined in their response.
Lifton	608	4.60%	Could not support the withdrawal of CTSG, with so many other cuts in local grants, funds & services.

Northlew	303	3.28%	Requested that WDBC retain the current method of phasing out the CTSG i.e. reduction of 8.6% per annum
Okehampton	13,782	5.52%	Wishes to relay its disappointment and would ask that consideration is given to continuing the Grant.
Sourton	189	3.22%	Strongly opposed to the withdrawal, urge WDBC to reconsider.
Tavistock	26,670	4.23%	Concern and disappointment at the adverse impact on public services and noted the cost burden of running public conveniences.

#### **In Support of Council Tax Support Grant Withdrawal (4)**

Town/Parish	CTSG amount £	CTSG as percentage of the Precept	Consultation Response
Brentor	163	1.15%	Councillors were in support of withdrawal of CTSG.
Highampton	96	2.31%	CTSG would be better spent on WDBC core services.
Okehampton Hamlets	220	1.01%	Disappointed but the rationale is understood.
North Tawton	3,562	3.19%	Appreciation that the support WDBC has been receiving from central government has been decreasing, resulting in the Support Grant stopping next April.

#### **Summary**

Of the thirteen responses received, nine Town and Parish Councils are not in support of the 100% withdrawal of the Council Tax Support Grant. Four Town and Parish Councils support the withdrawal.

## **Not in Support of Council Tax Support Grant Withdrawal**

**Beaworthy** - It was raised at our meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and the response was that it is disappointing to hear of the withdrawal of the funding, the loss of this grant will have a disproportionate effect on our small parish.

**Bridestowe** - My council strongly object to this proposal as this will require an increase of approximately 4% to Bridestowe's precept in excess of any increase necessary to allow for inflation. Whilst my council appreciate that central government funding cuts are the reason for the proposal, would it not be possible to gradually taper the cuts to the CTSG as has been happening in previous years?

**Chagford** - Chagford Parish Council would like to view their disappointment that WDBC are considering withdrawing the Council Tax Support Grant.

The Councillors are continuing to pass on their responsibilities to Parish and Town Councils which is continually placing increased pressure on the precept. For example many Parish and Town Councils have recently taken over the running of Public Conveniences.

**Dartmoor Forest** - This matter has been considered by Dartmoor Forest Parish Council at our monthly meeting and the Parish Council was unanimous in opposing the proposal.

As you are aware, the Council Tax Support Grant represents 6% of Dartmoor Forest Parish Council's precept income. The loss of this funding would necessitate cuts to community services or an unprecedented hike in the precept demand on parishioners. You will also be aware that Dartmoor Forest Parish has a high proportion of social housing; that 35% of households overall are formally classed as deprived; and it constitutes the major part of LSOA West Devon 003C, which is the most deprived neighbourhood in West Devon. Consequently, it is the contention of Dartmoor Forest Parish Council that any blanket withdrawal of the Council Tax Support Grant from 2020/21 would disproportionately negatively impact the communities of Dartmoor Forest. While the financial pressures on West Devon Borough Council are understood, the blanket withdrawal of Council Tax Support Grant would disproportionately hurt some parishes more than others.

If the Borough Council is determined to make savings in this area, it is suggested a special case be made for Dartmoor Forest Parish Council for the reasons outlined above.

**Lifton** - I have been asked to let you know that Lifton Parish Councillors agreed that with so many other cuts in local grants, funds and services, it could not support the withdrawal of the Council Tax Support Grant for 2020-21.

The decision not to support the withdrawal was unanimous. I would be grateful if this response could be considered by the Hub Committee of WDBC.

**Northlew** Northlew Parish Council's thinking on this matter is below.

- We are grateful that the council tax support grant has not been withdrawn already by West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) as it has by some other Devon District Councils
- We all appreciate, however, that WDBC is under continued financial pressure and therefore needs to make cuts somewhere
- We request that the council tax grant is still paid from 2020 onwards but continues to be reduced by 8.6% per annum as has been the practice over the last four years
- If maintaining the status quo (as outlined above) is not a viable option then rather than ceasing to pay the council tax support grant in 2020, we request that it is continued to be paid over the next four years but with an increased the rate of reduction to, for example 15% or 20% per year and with a clear cut off on at the end of the 2024/5 financial year. This would allow the increases required to the precepts to cover the loss of this grant be staggered over the next four years rather than having a relatively large increase in one hit for parishioners next year.
- Thank you for allowing us this input into the decision-making process

**Okehampton** - Okehampton Town Council wishes to relay its disappointment that WDBC is considering withdrawing this funding which will have a substantial impact on the Town Council's budget, especially being that the Council's boundary is such that new development is very constrained.

Members are aware that WDBC no longer receive funding from the Government for this, and of the difficulties and cuts being made in order to balance budgets.

It is appreciated that WDBC have been able to continue to award this grant over recent years and would ask that consideration is given to continuing to do so.

**Sourton** - Sourton Parish is strongly opposed to the withdrawal of the payment of the Council Tax Support Grant for 2020-2021. The parish council

finances have been squeezed year on year, and the result is that the precept is being raised by an ever increasing percentage each year (15% in 2019-2020) just to pay ongoing costs. At the same time parishioners receive less for their money from all the authorities. We urge West Devon to re-consider this proposal, assuming, as West Devon are consulting with us, that this decision has not already been made??

**Tavistock** - My Council has instructed that I convey to West Devon Borough Council its concern and disappointment at the adverse impact of the proposed withdrawal of the Council Tax Support Grant on public services within the Borough, and Tavistock in particular, and associated increased costs to the taxpayer.

Not least noting the additional (and substantial) cost burden already being passed to the local ratepayer by your Council's decision to withdraw from the provision of public conveniences.

### **In Support of Council Tax Support Grant Withdrawal**

**Brentor** - Your letter was discussed at the Parish Council Meeting on 16th September. Councillors were in support of your proposal to withdraw Council Tax Support Grant with effect from 1st April 2020.

**Highampton** - At its meeting on 4th September Highampton Parish Council considered the possible withdrawal of the CTSG (87.75 for this parish) from 1st April 2020 and concluded that the overall savings that would be made (£59,178) could be better spent by WDBC on core services.

**Okehampton Hamlets** - Councillors considered your attached letter at their recent meeting.

They are disappointed that West Devon funding from Central Government is reducing and will stop. The rationale to stop paying the CTSG to local councils is understood and our precept requirements would be revised accordingly.

**North Tawton** – Thank you for letter of the 16 August and we appreciate that the support you have been receiving from central government has been decreasing, resulting in the Support Grant stopping next April.