

Lower Morden Team

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If you need help, we're only a phone call away

Less Council Tax means less money for Council services
"Merton are very proud they have frozen Council Tax for years. **Why should they be proud of cutting services?"**
quote from Healthwatch Merton report 'The Voice of Those Affected'

Dear Resident,

Urgent: Consultation on Council Tax

This is a very important letter about how much council tax you will pay in the future. Please make every effort to read it and let us know what you think. Whilst we are your local councillors in your local area, and the Leader of Merton Council, we are also your neighbours and care passionately about this community. It's where we live

When Labour was elected here in Merton in 2010 we made a promise to freeze your council tax. We have kept our promise and your council tax has been exactly the same now as it was 6 years ago, which is £1,102 per year on a Band 'D' property (most of us live in Band 'D' properties).

Council tax is perhaps the only big item you have not seen rise over the last 6 years, when all other prices have risen. It is not affordable for you through difficult times, especially as the Government have hit us so hard. Between 2010 and 2015 Merton gets from central Government, forcing us to make cuts.

Why is there no mention of disabled people in this list?
Are we invisible? **Are we less important than rubbish collection?**

really matters because most money spent locally – for rubbish collection, street sweeping, schools, looking after the elderly, child protection, roads and libraries – comes from central Government, with only a fraction coming from the Council Tax.

we've managed to keep freezing Council Tax every year. In the way we operate, something we promised to do, and looked at every penny we spend and things are getting much worse. The new Government and now led by Prime Minister Theresa May has told us we will have to make a further £35 million cuts by 2020. That means £1,375 for each home. It's a big problem.

Austerity is costing the average home £1,375, but **costing disabled people £6,354 per person.**

and now led by Prime Minister Theresa May, has told us we will have to make a further £35 million cuts by 2020. That will mean £110m in cuts since 2010 – or £1,375 for each home. It's a big problem.

Some say the easy option is to raise council tax to fund it, but if it was increased by 2% it would only earn us another £100,000. Remember, the council has faced cuts of £110 million in the last year. It is a fantasy to believe the council can eliminate all cuts.

Many local families are struggling to get by

- children having free school meals increase by 100%
- Local families who rent spend an average of £600 on housing, with only £4 left to cover food, bills, and uniforms. Only a minority have had significant increases in income.
- Food banks have trebled and last Christmas made 1000 requests to distribute food to 750 local families who could not afford to buy food.

It is hard for everyone, but disabled people are more likely to live in poverty than non-disabled people. A **small council tax increase would help protect services for the people who need it most**, including local families

One consequence of putting up the council tax is that when people can't afford to pay, they can get pushed into debt and have to face the courts. Families and the local community suffer and, often, council tax receipts actually go down. It becomes a lose-lose situation.

We are therefore strongly minded not to raise council tax in the next two years, especially whilst Brexit is being negotiated. However, as the UK gets through these difficult negotiations, there is always the potential that the UK could be asked to leave the EU. We think it's important to be prepared for the exit from the EU. We think it's important to be prepared in Merton.

We are writing to you to see if we are doing enough to support you. Please answer our consultation by letting us know what you think about your council tax.

If there is anything you want to discuss in person, please pop in to see us. We will be holding a public meeting on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 7pm – so that is Tuesday 18th October.

The Council can set its own criteria for Council Tax Relief. The Council can raise Council Tax, but also make sure that **the people who can't afford it, don't have to pay it.**

Yours Sincerely,

Stephen Alambritis

Cllr Stephen Alambritis

Mary Curtin

Cllr Mary Curtin

Stan Anderson

Cllr Stan Anderson

Sally Kenny

Cllr Sally Kenny

URGENT: Have Your Say – Council Tax

This is an important consultation on council tax on behalf of your local councillors.

Merton Council has kept its promise to freeze council tax since 2010, meaning you pay the same as you did last year. **agreed with this promise, and make sure that you also understand that if we keep council tax frozen, this will mean we have to make some very difficult decisions for this community**

Council tax, for
and please

community, so please complete this form today
on the lines shown.

1.

Merton
you think

Freezing Council Tax means cutting services. It means not enough support for disabled people to live independent lives. **"I will end up in my flat like a hermit, self-harming again"** (quote from Healthwatch Merton report)

any other councils are raising theirs. Do
choice for Merton?

☐☐

2.

☐☐

WHY? Overall council tax?

No, keep it at the same level it is now

YES to an increase of 1.99% of in my council tax
(this would be an extra £44.21 over the next two years on a Band D property)

**YES to an increase of 2% of in my council tax (to be spent on Adult Social Care only)
(this would be an extra £44.53 over the next two years on a Band D property)**

☐

YES to an increase of 3.99% of in my council tax
(this would be an extra £89.71 over the next two years on a Band D property)

3. If you voted YES you must answer the following questions

☐

I understand that even if Merton vote YES, our
councillors will still need to make further cuts to
balance the books. Please tick here to confirm you

That means an extra £22.27 a year for the average home, or **an extra 6p (six pence!) a day.**

Your details:

For your voice to be heard you **MUST** complete the following details will not be able to be included:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____