

# WHAT DO THEY REALLY MEAN?

London Borough of Merton is asking residents about council tax and council spending. But are they giving residents the full story? We have looked at their survey and added our very own, Merton CIL perspective!



Have your say on **council tax and council spending**

This is the front page of the consultation. Supporting disabled people is a key duty for Merton. Why aren't there any photos of disabled people?



**council tax and council spending**

Nope, no pictures of disabled people on the inside either. Raising Council Tax would support services for disabled people. **Why are we invisible?**

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Let's have a look at how Merton Council explains the issues.  
Are the issues being presented in a balanced way?

## Have your say on council tax

Merton Council has frozen your council tax since 2010 and has promised to do so until March 2019. However, increasing financial pressure. The funding we receive from the government to provide local services has been cut significantly, while demand has increased.

This means that on top of the savings we've been forced to make so far, we are now facing an additional £70m of cuts over the next few years.

The local NHS also has a number of funding issues and have told us they will not be able to sustain the funding they give us if we do not raise council tax. Although we would still need to make cuts,

estimated £20m of cuts to around £18m, for example.

Up until now, the council has ensured that adult social care and children's services have received less of a share of the cuts than other areas.

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Not everyone agrees that social care has been protected. Merton CIL think older and disabled people have been **unfairly targeted for cuts**

Did you know, when they say "demand has increased" what they actually mean is "more people need support". Does that sound different now?

This year the local **NHS put in more than they have to** into social care. Should they pay more, if the council won't?

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We want to know what you think. Would you be willing to pay extra council tax in 2017/18 and 2018/19? If so, how much extra? Would you

cuts to just one council service (adult social care), or all areas?

These are all questions we want answers to from you.

We hope as many residents as possible will fill in and return the survey overleaf by the deadline of November 4. We want to hear what council taxpayers think so that the decisions we make about your council tax and your services are based on what you think.

You can also fill in the survey online at [www.merton.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.merton.gov.uk/consultation).

Paying "extra" Council Tax can sound worrying. An extra 2% is just **6p a day** for the average household and people on low incomes can get council tax relief

## Living within our means

Since 2010 the government funding received by councils has reduced by more than 40%. In Merton we have tightened our belts and reduced our spending in all service areas so that we can live within our means. We have also raised charges where we can, and will continue to use our reserves where available to slow down some of the impact of the cuts.

Last year the government allowed councils to increase council tax by up to 1.00% without a referendum of for adults. Increasing council tax by 2% would raise an additional £1.5million, so it would not remove the need for cuts, but it would mean fewer cuts than the £20million we

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We have frozen council tax since 2010, and promise to do so until March 2019. However by 2020 we will need to make

what you think about the... face

Hang on, how can they "promise" to freeze Council Tax when they are supposed to be asking people's views on what to do?

This is so confusing. Earlier on the page, the 2% was worth £2million, now it is worth £1.5million. Well, which is it?

# Have your say on council tax and council spending!

**At Merton CIL we want to see spending increased on critical services that help Disabled People live full Independent Lives.**

The council are now holding a consultation on whether or not to increase council tax in order to lessen the impact of cuts.

The deadline to get responses to the council is 4<sup>th</sup> November.

We think it's really important that the voice of those using services are heard very loudly as part of this consultation.

It is our local community who are impacted by cuts to services and who end up with poorer health & well being, isolation, and lack of inclusion. We will all need these services at some point, even if we don't use them now.

An increase in Council Tax will not totally stop the cuts we are experiencing in Adult Social Care, but a small increase in council tax, just a few pounds a month for each of us, is a step in the right direction and means that Merton Council will be taking a step forward in supporting Disabled People to live Independent Lives.

**We encourage all disabled people and users to respond to this consultation.** Our story is not being told, so please, have your say, respond to the consultation, and be heard.

You can respond online here: <https://news.merton.gov.uk/2016/09/06/have-your-say-on-council-tax-and-council-spending/>

**Need a hand to fill it in?** Whatever you want to say, we can help you do that at our November members meeting which is 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1-4pm at Merton CIL. Contact [info@mertoncil.org.uk](mailto:info@mertoncil.org.uk) or call 0203 397 3119 if you want to come along.