

1.1 A consultation exercise was conducted over the period 6th November 2023 to 3rd December 2023. An on-line survey form was placed on the Council’s website and consultation forms were available at the Contact Centre, Area Housing Offices and libraries. Information was also sent to members and precepting authorities and a press release was issued.

1.2 **Summary of Responses**

- a) A total of 53 responses were received. 44 were completed online and 9 written responses received.
- b) 50 responses were completed by individuals and 3 responses were completed by the following organisations: -
 - Mental Health and Money Advice.
 - Swansea Young Families, Action for Children.
 - Swansea Young Families.

1.3 **Responses to the Three Discretionary Areas**

i. **The ability to Increase the statutory Extended Payment Period of 4 weeks.**

Question 1 on the consultation form:		
Discretionary element	Proposal	Responses
The ability to increase the statutory extended payment period of 4 weeks given to people after they return to work when they have been in receipt of a relevant qualifying benefit for at least 26 weeks.	The Council currently restricts extended payment periods to 4 weeks. Do you think this is reasonable?	52 responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 said it was reasonable. • 22 said it was not. • 7 said “don’t know”.
	If you indicated no to the above, please outline what you consider the period should be?	Of the 22 who thought it was not reasonable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 opted for no extended payment. • 1 for 2 weeks. • 13 for 6 weeks. • 7 stated other. There were 6 ‘please specify’ responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends on income. • 2 or 3 months for anyone on benefit. • 8 weeks. • 8 weeks. • Indefinitely. • 2 months seems fairer.

- ii. **The discretion to increase the amount of War Disablement and War Widows Pensions which will be disregarded when calculating income.**

Question 2 on the consultation form:		
Discretionary element	Proposal	Responses
Discretion to disregard part or the whole amount of War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions when calculating income.	The Council currently disregards all income from war pensions and war widows' pensions. Do you think this is reasonable?	51 responses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 said it was reasonable. • 9 said it was not. • 12 answered "don't know"

- iii. **The ability to backdate the application of Council Tax Reduction Awards for more than the statutory period of 3 months prior to the claim.**

Question 3 on the consultation form:		
Discretionary element	Proposal	Responses
The ability to back date the application of Council Tax Reduction awards for customers for more than the statutory period of 3 months prior to the claim.	The Council currently restricts backdates to 3 months. Do you think this is reasonable?	52 responses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 said it was reasonable. • 23 said it was not. • 5 answered "don't know".
	If no, what period do you think is reasonable?	Of the 23 who thought it was not reasonable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 opted for a period of 6 months. • 15 opted for a period of 12 months. • 2 did not express a preference. <p><i>There were also 5 'please specify' responses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Month. • Minimum of 12 months but longer for claimants in arrears as they had not claimed. • At least 12 months. • Between 6 and 12 depending on individual circumstances. • 6 months.