

**What
Really
Matters?**

Budget Option

Council Tax Over 70s Discount

Savings

2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	TOTAL
£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
1300	-	-	1300

Option summary

Wirral Council provides a Council Tax Benefit to War Widows, people in receipt of a War Pension and people disabled due to War, as well as providing a blanket 7.76% discount on Council Tax to every household where the residents are over the age of 70 – providing they are not in receipt of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support.

This option proposes that, while the Tax Benefits for war widows, people receiving war pensions and people disabled due to war should remain, in line with the principle of using resources to protect the most vulnerable, the blanket over 70s discount of 7.76% should be removed.

An option within this option would be to limit the Discount only to those properties falling in the lower Council Tax bands (A, B & C). This would fit with the principle of the broadest shoulders bearing the greatest burden and would save £616,000.

Potential impact

As with any budget option which involves increasing charges or fees, there is a potential impact that people will struggle to pay the increased amount, leading to an element of financial hardship.

There is also a further risk that a higher charge could lead to non-collection and therefore the levels of Council Tax arrears could rise.

Reducing the impact

The Council would continue to work closely with all vulnerable people, and build on the work already started which is helping thousands of local people navigate the issues generated by welfare reform. The same principles would be applied here, and the Council would work with everyone affected by this budget option to ensure they are claiming the maximum levels of benefits they are entitled to.