



Dear Councillor Perry

We enclose a petition from over 500 local residents against Harrow's Council Tax Reduction Scheme and especially the proposals to reduce support further for disabled people and low-paid part-time workers. Many of the signatories are directly affected by the scheme.

As you know, Harrow's 30 per cent Minimum Payment for working age claimants is already the highest in London. This Minimum Payment is currently based on flawed assumptions of the number of claimants expected to be supported by the scheme, which has resulted in Harrow's Council Tax Reduction Scheme being under-spent by around £1 million last year and probably even more than that in 2014/15.

Given this situation, you will understand that Z2K and CPAG are disappointed to note that Harrow is now looking to make a further £2 million cut in the support available to the borough's poorest residents. We are concerned also that the current consultation only offers options on how, not whether, money should be taken from the pockets of disabled people and part-time workers. The impact on residents now required to pay up to £10 a week from £72 a week Jobseekers Allowance has not been mentioned in consultation or related discussions.

We found our meeting with Cllr Sachin Shah helpful and we appreciate that Harrow faces a very challenging budget as a result of the Coalition Government's cuts to local authority funding and that it is being forced to make tough choices. But the simple truth is that Harrow's scheme already leaves many unemployed people facing a choice between heating and eating.

We urge you not to disproportionately tax your poorest residents nor to exacerbate already unaffordable arrears by penalising those too poor to pay with high added costs for late-payment and premature use of bailiffs to recover monies owed.

We believe this petition illustrates the strength of feeling against your existing scheme and any further cuts to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss our concerns in more detail. If you are able to meet up, please call us on 0208 962 9475 or email us at joannakennedy@z2k.org

Yours sincerely

Joanna Kennedy
Chief Executive, Z2K

Imran Hussain
Director of Policy, Rights and Advocacy, CPAG

Cc Cllr Sachin Shah