



Leader opposes precept capping for town and parish councils

Government proposals forcing town and parish councils to hold costly referendums over increases in tax have been opposed by Buckinghamshire County Council. Currently only principal authorities such as district and county councils must hold a referendum if they want to raise tax by more than two per cent.

However, the government held a consultation on introducing the same rules for town and parish councils with budgets of more than £500,000, and also that 'consideration is given' to extending the policy to all local councils.

In his consultation response, County Council leader Martin Tett said that it would be particularly unfair to extend the two per cent cap to smaller parish councils with very low budgets.

He said: "This is absolutely not a blank cheque for parish or town councils to make big council tax increases. It does however recognise that they carry out vital work in their local communities, at very little cost to the taxpayer.

"A key principle of localism should be that local people determine what needs to be spent and have to justify that to their own communities. If they judge local needs correctly then the community will support them. If they get it wrong then they can be thrown out of office at the next election.

"There is no need for costly referenda which can often cost local people more than the value of the proposed increase."