

Decision Maker: COUNCIL

Date: 8th December 2014

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT/REDUCTION – 2015/16

Contact Officer: Graham Walton, Democratic Services Manager
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Chief Officer: Mark Bowen, Director of Corporate Services

Ward: N/A

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 At its meeting on 26th November 2014 the Executive considered the attached report and recommended that Council adopts the proposed Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/16. The scheme proposed replicates the 2014/15 scheme, except where minor variations are required due to legislative changes and annual upratings. The Executive recommended that the scheme be adopted, with the Leader requesting that consideration be given to investigating the implications for increasing the percentage of council tax that claimants had to pay themselves in future years.
- 1.2 The main elements of the scheme are:
- Assessments for working-age claimants are based on 81% of the claimant's council tax liability. Therefore, working-age claimants have to pay a minimum of 19% of their council tax liability.
 - Assessments for claimants of pensionable age will have their entitlement calculated on 100% of their council tax liability.
 - A budget of £100k per annum is available for the awarding of additional assistance where exceptional hardship/circumstances are demonstrated.
- 1.3 The findings from the consultation exercise carried out between 5th September and 27th October 2014 are set out in Appendix 1 and the recommended scheme is set out in Appendix 2. It should also be noted that the scheme attached at Appendix 2 will need revising to reflect the adoption date of the 2015 scheme and where appropriate 2014 replaced with 2015 and 2014/15 replaced with 2015/16.
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2. **RECOMMENDATION**

Council is recommended to note the responses to the public consultation exercise and adopt the proposed Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2015/16.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council:
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost: £15.2m (based on 2014/15 caseload and council tax liability)
 2. Ongoing costs: Recurring Cost: The scheme has to be agreed on an annual basis
 3. Budget head/performance centre: 400002/400003
 4. Total current budget for this head: £6.9m
 5. Source of funding: Government Grant
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 1.5fte + Liberata
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement:
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable: Council decisions are not subject to call-in.
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): 19,000 households in receipt of Council Tax Support
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

Non-Applicable Sections:	See attached report
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	See attached report