

COUNCIL

7 JANUARY 2015

REVIEW OF LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

REPORT OF DEPUTY HEAD OF REVENUES

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RECENT REFERENCES

CAB2623: Review of Council Tax Reduction Scheme, 3 December 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At its meeting on 3 December 2014, Cabinet considered a report concerning the review of the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and agreed that the detailed local Council Tax Reduction Scheme be reported directly to Council for approval, based on the options recommended in the Cabinet Report (CAB2623).

The detailed Council Tax Reduction Scheme has been circulated electronically to all Members (a hard copy is available in the Members' Room).

It is recommended that the Deputy Head of Revenues be authorised to make minor editing amendments to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme should this be necessary.

This report updates the recommendations contained in report CAB2623.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme proposed in the Report CAB2623 be adopted as follows:
 - a. Base the local Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme for 2015/16 on the scheme adopted for 2014/15 with amendments to reflect wider legislative change to Council Tax Reduction and other related legislation;
 - b. Increase components in the CTR calculation in line with the increases the DWP & DCLG provide for in the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations 2012 for 2015/16;
 - c. Increase income disregards for working age claimants further so that single claimants have the first £30 of earned income disregarded and others have the first £60 of earned income disregarded (single claimants who are disabled or lone parents will be eligible for the £60 disregard);
 - d. Continue to disregard 100% of certain payments (for working age and pensioner age customers) made under the War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.
2. That the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme at Appendix A, circulated electronically to all Members, be approved.
3. That the Deputy Head of Revenues be authorised to make minor editing amendments to the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, as necessary, and be authorised to make amendments to reflect wider legislative changes to Council Tax Reduction and other related legislation. These changes will not affect the basic principles of the Scheme and will ensure that the CTR Scheme for working age customers continues to be aligned to the CTR scheme for pensioners and the Housing Benefit scheme.
4. That the effect of the changes outlined above, are reviewed in one year's time, with a view to considering whether any further alterations are required.
5. That for the purposes of the 100% Council Tax discount which is awarded when properties are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a period of up to one month, any one period, not exceeding six weeks, during which it was not vacant shall be disregarded in considering whether a dwelling has been vacant for a period.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

As detailed in Cabinet report (CAB2623)

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Council Tax Reduction Scheme (available through electronic link and not circulated in paper form)