

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET 11 JANUARY 2022 FROM THE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PANEL HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2021

CP72: Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/2023: Final Scheme

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At the invitation of the Chair, the Leader, Councillor Dark addressed the Panel and explained that Councillor Sandell, Portfolio Holder was not able to be present at the Panel, and as the Leader put the report into context and explained that Cabinet was proud to propose a 9% increase in one year to help the 2,000 lowest income residents in West Norfolk. The Leader explained that the increase would be for every year going forward. The Leader drew the Panel's attention to section 5.8 of the report and highlighted that 40% of people in this group were working and 40% had children over the age of five and the majority were in the lowest council tax bands. The Leader also drew Members' attention to section 8.2 and Appendix C which 8.2 which set out the impact of the Borough Council's decision on other local authorities in Norfolk.

In presenting the report, the Revenues and Benefits Manager explained that the council must implement a Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for its working age residents for each financial year. It was highlighted that the council must first decide on a draft CTS scheme which was open for public consultation, and then must agree a final CTS scheme, taking into account the consultation responses.

The Panel was informed that since 2017, authority had been delegated to the council Leader, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and the s151 Officer, to agree the draft CTS scheme. The draft CTS scheme was open for consultation from 19 October 2021 to 29 November 2021 and the responses were included in the report.

The Revenue and Benefits Manager advised that the final CTS scheme for 2022/2023 was a continuation of the 2021/2022 CTS scheme, with an uplift to the maximum weekly CTS that can be paid under the scheme.

It was explained that the current limit of 75% would increase to 84% for 2022/2023 onwards and this would bring the council in line with several other Norfolk authorities and the CTS scheme more generous at a time when working age people may still be financially impacted by Covid-19.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager drew the Panel's attention to the key issues set out in the report.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager responded to questions in relation to the costs both to the Borough Council (£22,000) and Norfolk County Council (£361,000) for a 100% scheme.

Councillor Morley commented that in his view the council should look to increase the scheme to 100%.

Councillor Nash drew the Panel's attention to section 5.6 of the report: Customers who were in a protected group, including those who had reached pension age, were not subject to the weekly maximum council tax limit, and could receive up to 100% CTS.

Councillor Morley asked if paragraph 5.6 could be amplified so that those in dire straits could get 100% alleviation which would not have a significant impact on Norfolk County Council and would show that the Administration did care for those in the borough. In response, the Revenues and Benefits Manager explained that Appendix D provided a breakdown of those receiving up to 100% but undertook to carry out further analysis and add the information into the report.

Councillor Morley abstained from the vote to recommend to Cabinet and Council the final CTS scheme for 2022/2023.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the consultation responses and agreed the draft CTS scheme for 2022/2023 which went to public consultation and recommended to Cabinet and Council as the final CTS scheme for 2022/2023.