

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL ON 31 JANUARY 2024 FROM CABINET ON 5 DECEMBER 2023

CAB74: COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT - FINAL SCHEME FOR 2024-2025

Cabinet considered a report which reminded Members that the Council operated a scheme to help working age people on low incomes with the cost of their council tax by reducing their council tax bill, known as the Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme. The report explained that there were national regulations for a CTS Scheme for customers who had reached pension age, but the council was free to decide the rules for its own CTS schemes for working age people in our area, taking into account certain government requirements. The report only refers to our CTS Scheme for working age people.

The council's CTS Scheme was reviewed annually and could only be amended from the start of a financial year. This report followed on from the Cabinet report of 1 August 2023 outlining the options for a draft CTS Scheme to go to public consultation and selecting Option 1 as the preferred scheme to consult on. The public consultation ran from 21 August 2023 to 1 October 2023 and the results were summarised at section 3 and Appendix C of the report.

Cabinet was asked to note the consultation process, the widening of the criteria in the current economic climate to match the support given to protected groups and approve Option 1 being the recommendation for the final CTS scheme for working age people for 2024/2025. The recommendation would need to be agreed by full Council by 31 January 2024 to be ready for implementation on 1 April 2024.

The report advised that a CTS Scheme formed part of the Taxbase calculation. The Taxbase must be set by 31 January 2024 so the CTS Scheme must be decided at the Council meeting of 31 January 2024.

Under standing order 34 Councillor Blunt commented that he believed the consultation was meaningless.

Under standing order 34 Councillor Dickinson asked if the consultation carried out had been compared with that by other authorities.

Councillor Moriarty commented the consultation was not worthless, but work was to be done on improving the response rate.

Councillor Parish acknowledged that work was being done on improving consultation relative to others. It was noted that the Corporate Performance Panel had supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED: That the consultation process, the widening of the criteria in the current economic climate to match the support given to protected groups be noted.

RECOMMENDED: That Option 1 being the recommendation for the final CTS scheme for working age people for 2024/2025.

(Option 1: Make the CTS Scheme more generous by using the Protected Scheme rules as the rules for the Local Scheme)

2) That it be noted that if full Council does not agree the CTS Scheme detailed in Option 1, the current CTS Scheme will continue in default.

Reason for Decision

To ensure a CTS scheme for working age people for 2024/2025 is agreed by full Council by the deadline of 31 January 2024.