

## POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Tuesday, 22 November 2022**

**6.00 pm**

**Committee Rooms 1 and 2,  
City Hall, Beaumont Fee,  
Lincoln, LN1 1DD**

Membership: Councillors Jane Loffhagen (Chair), Calum Watt (Vice-Chair), Debbie Armiger, Rebecca Longbottom, Bill Mara, Mark Storer and Emily Wood

Substitute member(s): Councillors Gary Hewson and Pat Vaughan

Officers attending: Democratic Services, Legal Services and Martin Walmsley

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### A G E N D A

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1. Confirmation of Minutes - 4 October 2022	<b>3 - 6</b>
2. Declarations of Interest	
Please note that, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, when declaring interests members must disclose the existence and nature of the interest, and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) or personal and/or pecuniary.	
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**Present:** Councillor Jane Loffhagen (*in the Chair*),  
Councillor Calum Watt, Councillor Debbie Armiger,  
Councillor Rebecca Longbottom, Councillor Bill Mara,  
Councillor Mark Storer and Councillor Emily Wood

**Apologies for Absence:** None.

**17. Confirmation of Minutes - 16 August 2022**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 August 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**18. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

**19. Sincil Bank Regeneration**

Paul Carrick, Neighbourhood Working Manager:

a) gave a power point presentation on the Sincil Bank Regeneration and covered the following main points:

- Place shaping Strategy
- Early Successes – Improving the Street scene
- Our Six Priorities/ Physical Interventions
- Creating Open/ Green Spaces
- Archer Street Former Play Area
- Area Under Pelham Bridge
- Chelmsford Street
- Kesteven Street/ Tentercroft Street
- Redesign of Highways Infrastructure/ Urban Design
- Hermit Street Redevelopment
- Residents Parking
- Palmer Street Garage Site
- Cleaner Safer Streets
- Cleaner Safer Streets – CCTV
- Cleaner Safer Streets – Fly Tipping Week of Action
- Community Leadership
- Lessons Learnt

b) invited members questions and comments

Members discussed the presentation in detail and praised the work that had been undertaken in the Sincil Bank area. They asked the following questions and received relevant responses from Officers.

**Question:** Asked if the CCTV that covered most of Sincil Bank had helped to address the issue of fly tipping.

**Response:** The installation of CCTV had been very successful in addressing fly tipping.

**Question:** Referred to the area under Pelham Bridge and asked if the intention was for the area to be open to the public.

**Response:** The area would be leased to the Bridge Church, the Council would support the Church with a consultation and feasibility exercise to find out how the community would like the area to be used.

**Question:** Referred to the potential skate park at Kesteven Street and asked if the Council would support the project.

**Response:** The project was in its early stages, there was a small pot of money that was available to be used for either this project or another scheme, the decision would be subject to Executive approval.

**Question:** Referred to Chelmsford Street and asked if the Landlord was working with the Council.

**Response:** The Landlords would be working with the Council, enforcement powers could be used and also we would work with the Planning Department.

**Comment:** It was good to see that residents parking was being implemented and the rat runs were being addressed.

**Response:** : At community meetings the first thing that was asked for was to address the parking in the area. Lincolnshire County Council were currently consulting on Residents Parking with a view to a report going to their Planning and Regulation Committee Residents early next year

**Question:** Referred to Palmer Street and asked if this would be made into a green space.

**Response:** The project was in its early stages, residents had asked for green space and would also like accommodation as well.

**Question:** Referred to the Hermit Street Redevelopment and asked how the community had been involved in the project.

**Response:** We had worked closely with all of the residents on Hermit Street. Prior to the pandemic there was residents groups, which would be back up and running soon.

**Question:** Asked if students in the area were engaged with the team.

**Response:** The Student Union had been involved with the Neighbourhood Board, also lots of projects had been undertaken for example the school of architecture had helped to design the open spaces.

**Question:** Asked how many empty properties were still in the area.

**Response:** The number of empty properties was decreasing and there were no high impact empty properties in the area.

**Question:** Referred to the Hub and commented that this was an important drop-in centre to the community and asked what would happen when the funding for the Hub ended.

**Response:** Potentially LEAN (Lincoln Embracing all Nations) could take on the Hub and provide support. Also, the Bridge Church would continue to provide support in the area.

The Chair thanked Paul Carrick, Neighbourhood Manager for his presentation and commented that the work had made a huge difference to the lives of people living in the area. She further commented that the Neighbourhood work in Sincil

Bank was not intended to be permanent and that other areas of the City were in need of support. She referred to the Shared Prosperity Fund and asked if this could be used in other areas of the City.

Simon Walters, Strategic Director of Communities and Environment responded with the following main points:

- Previously there had been 3 Neighbourhood Working teams spread across the City, the resources were spread too thin to make a big impact.
- It was decided to run a pilot and focus on the Sincil Bank area for approximately 5-6 years.
- Six projects would be delivered in the Sincil Bank area.
- The Council faced financial challenges and it was important to work with partners to find out what support they could bring to the area.
- Going forward a different model could be used in different areas of the City depending on the challenges and issues faced.
- The lessons learned from the work undertaken in Sincil Bank would be applied to other areas, but the model would be changed to fit the area.

The Chair commented that the Shared Prosperity Fund should be used for one project in each area of the City. She suggested that Neighbourhood Boards be facilitated so that residents could raise their concerns.

Simon Walters, Strategic Director Communities and Environment advised that the Shared Prosperity Fund was within the remit of the Strategic Director of Major Developments.

RESOLVED that the presentation on Sincil Bank Regeneration be noted with thanks.

## **20. Health Scrutiny Update**

The Chair of Policy Scrutiny Committee advised that due to the national period of mourning the Health Scrutiny Committee due to be held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022 had been postponed and would now be held on 12 October 2022. An update would be provided at the next meeting of Policy Scrutiny Committee.

## **21. Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-23 and Executive Work Programme Update**

The Chair:

- a. presented the report 'Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-23 and Executive Work Programme Update'.
- b. presented the Executive Work Programme September 2022 – August 2023.
- c. requested councillors to submit what items they wished to scrutinise from the Executive Work Programme and policies of interest.
- d. invited members questions and comments.

The Chair requested that a report on the Shared Prosperity Fund be added to the work programme for 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022. She confirmed she would ask attendance at the next meeting for an update on UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

RESOLVED that:

1. the work Policy Scrutiny work programme be noted.
2. the Executive work programme be noted.

**SUBJECT: LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2023/24**

**DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE & TOWN CLERK**

**REPORT AUTHOR: MARTIN WALMSLEY, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – SHARED REVENUES AND BENEFITS**

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide an opportunity for Policy Scrutiny Committee to discuss and comment, as part of the formal consultation period, on the proposed scheme of a 2023/24 Council Tax Support scheme, and accompanying Exceptional Hardship Payments scheme.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Council Tax Benefit system was abolished on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 and replaced by the Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme. This scheme can be determined locally by the Billing Authority having had due consultation with precepting authorities, key stakeholders and residents. As at 24<sup>th</sup> August 2022, there were 8,441 residents claiming Council Tax Support in the City of Lincoln. 2,636 are pensioners who are protected under the legislation and receive CTS as prescribed by the Government (broadly similar to the level of Council Tax Benefit). It is the 5,805 working age (including those classified as 'vulnerable' for CTS purposes) claimants where a local scheme can be determined which can change the level of support provided.

- 2.2 Unless a decision by the Council is made to apply scheme changes to vulnerable working-age customers, the localised CTS scheme would historically only be applied to non-vulnerable working age. Vulnerable working-age customers are those that have one of the following for CTS purposes:

- Disability Premium;
- Enhanced Disability Premium;
- Severe Disability Premium;
- Disabled Child Premium;
- In receipt of a war pension;
- Qualifies for disabled or long-term sick earnings disregard;
- Employment and Support Allowance (income-related, where the support or work-related component is received and has been recorded separately).

The split of the 5,805 working age CTS recipients is as follows:

- Working age – vulnerable: 3,110;
- Working age (not vulnerable): 2,695.

- 2.3 The initial City of Lincoln CTS Scheme from 2013/14 effectively 'protected' working age Council Tax payers seeking support, retaining eligible entitlement of up to 100% and not restricting other areas of entitlement calculation. However, in recent years the scheme has changed in light of increasing scheme costs and budget pressures.

2.4 The proposed CTS scheme must go through certain steps to comply with the provisions stated in the Local Government Finance Act 2012, before it can be adopted by this Council as a Billing Authority:-

- *Before making a scheme, the authority must (in the following order):-*
  - *Consult any major precepting authority which has power to issue a precept to it,*
  - *Publish a draft scheme in such manner as it thinks fit, and*
  - *Consult such other persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.*

### 3. Changes in Caseload

3.1 Whilst for a period of time claimant levels remained stable, Covid-19 had an impact on the amount of CTS awarded, with significant increases in caseload and cost of the scheme.

3.2 The table below shows how Lincoln's CTS caseload has changed over the last three years.

	Working age	Pension age	Total
September 2019	5,639	2,903	8,542
October 2019	5,626	2,878	8,504
November 2019	5,578	2,881	8,459
December 2019	5,578	2,881	8,459
January 2020	5,601	2,865	8,466
February 2020	5,586	2,865	8,451
March 2020	5,638	2,853	8,491
April 2020	5,684	2,840	8,524
May 2020	5,972	2,835	8,807
June 2020	6,197	2,842	9,039
July 2020	6,159	2,832	8,991
August 2020	6,177	2,814	9,021
September 2020	6,225	2,806	9,031
October 2020	6,163	2,797	8,969
November 2020	6,193	2,786	8,979
December 2020	6,182	2,773	8,955
January 2021	6,227	2,754	8,981
February 2021	6,227	2,754	8,981
March 2021	6,227	2,747	8,974
April 2021	6,253	2,726	8,979
May 2021	6,250	2,726	8,976
June 2021	6,220	2,720	8,940
July 2021	6,191	2,718	8,909
August 2021	6,166	2,704	8,870
September 2021	6,120	2,679	8,799
October 2021	6,081	2,664	8,745
November 2021	6,042	2,653	8,695



December 2021	5,993	2,649	8,642
January 2022	5,924	2,642	8,566
February 2022	5,901	2,638	8,539
March 2022	5,898	2,645	8,543
April 2022	5,912	2,640	8,552
May 2022	5,882	2,636	8,518
June 2022	5,891	2,618	8,509
July 2022	5,846	2,626	8,472
August 2022	5,805	2,636	8,441

- 3.3 The level of CTS caseload is an important factor when considering the potential cost of a local CTS scheme – as effectively an increase in caseload increases the cost of the scheme, and vice versa the cost decreases when the CTS caseload reduces. Understandably, the Covid-19 pandemic had a direct impact on the number of residents claiming CTS. It can be seen that caseloads rose sharply in 2020 and 2021 as an outcome of the impact of Covid-19 on the economy and residents' incomes. The caseload then plateaued somewhat before falling and returning back to pre-pandemic levels. However, with the ongoing cost of living pressures on residents there is the potential that the number of claimants may begin to increase again.

#### **4. City of Lincoln Council 2022/23 CTS Scheme**

- 4.1 The current, 2022/23 scheme has the following restrictions for working age customers: -
- Capital limit £6,000;
  - Minimum entitlement of £2 per week;
  - Property banding capped at Band B e.g. a customer in Band C (and above) property, will only have their CTS calculated on Band B liability;
  - Backdating restricted to 1 month; and
  - Temporary absence from home in line with Housing Benefit regulations.

#### **5. Council Tax Support Scheme options for 2023/24**

- 5.1 In this Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the budgeted cost of the 2023/24 CTS scheme is £1,277,300 (i.e. City of Lincoln Council's share 14.5%, - (with the estimated total scheme cost of c£8.8m dependent on increases in the main preceptors levels of Council Tax).

If the Council wishes to continue protecting vulnerable working age CTS recipients, then any changes to the CTS scheme will only apply to 2,695 customers or 34.92% of the caseload. Changes to the CTS scheme may be made for vulnerable working age customers too, however pension age residents are 'protected' and the 'default' government scheme effectively applies.

City of Lincoln's CTS caseload as at 24<sup>th</sup> August 2022, can be broken down as follows:

Caseload breakdown	Caseload	% of total caseload
Total caseload	8,441	
Pensioner	2,636	31.23%
Working age vulnerable	3,110	36.84%
Working age non-vulnerable	2,695	34.92%

5.2 Based on the current core elements of the existing scheme, caseload increases of 0% and 5% have been modelled, along with Council Tax increases of 1.9% and 2.5%. These are summarised in **Appendix 1**, giving an indication of the potential cost and savings to City of Lincoln Council. Also included is the potential value for non-collection, based on the collection figure currently included in the MTFS (98.75%).

5.3 As a billing authority the Council can decide whether or not to amend core elements of its scheme each year. Proposed options for consultation that were considered by Executive on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022, are included at Appendix 1 to this report.

There will be some technical changes that will still need to be applied to ensure that the Council's scheme complies with the Prescribed Scheme Regulations (for example, covering Universal Credit, premiums and discounts). These details are awaited from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Technical amendments to the scheme in relation to uprating incomes, applicable amounts, disregards and allowances are to be collated once statutory details have been released by the Secretary of State.

5.4 In developing the modelling for each of the CTS scheme options a number of assumptions have been made, as follows:

- **No uprating of benefits figures** - although the national benefits uprating figure is 3.1% for 2022/23 and there could be an assumption made that this may be the same for 2023/24, by applying this uprating % but not applicable amounts would put modelled calculations 'out of sync'.
- As the Council and major preceptors are likely to set differing levels of Council Tax increases, this creates a variety of modelling scenarios. **Council Tax increases of 1.9% and 2.5%** have therefore been assumed for modelling purposes. The final costs of the scheme will though be increased by the actual level of Council Tax increases applied. The modelling does not though take into consideration that the Council's percentage share of the overall cost of the scheme would slightly reduce if other preceptors increase their Band D by a greater percentage than the Council, this would in effect reduce the cost of the scheme to the Council.
- **No increase in caseload for 2023/24, also a 5% caseload increase.** These caseload projections would effectively allow for the currently-slightly decreasing CTS caseload to continue, then potentially rise due to forecast

increased cost of living pressures. Of course, officers can only predict the economy and subsequent impacts on CTS caseload, particularly in the current climate this cannot be an 'exact science'.

- **Collection rate of 98.75%.** The MTFS assumes a collection rate of 98.75% for 2023/24 (this is same as the 2022/23 figure, as the MTFS includes reference to 'maintaining current base'). Given the cost of living crisis, the collection rate will be reviewed as part of the development of the updated MTFS.

Another key factor to be considered is to ensure our software supplier, NEC, can accommodate the changes being proposed. Normally, NEC would need to know about any potential significant changes required to the software system by the end of September preceding the new year a CTS scheme is being proposed – i.e. by the end of September 2022, for the 2023/24 scheme.

5.5 The options considered for consultation by Executive on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022, are as follows, (both options are modelled including the factors as set out in paragraph 5.4 (above)):

- **Option 1: No change to the current scheme;**
- **Option 2: Introduction of a 'banded scheme' for Universal Credit recipients based on earnings income** - \*see paragraph 5.6 (below) for further information.

## 5.6 **Universal Credit Banded Scheme based on earnings income**

For 2023/24, an option which was put forward for consideration is to make a fundamental change to the way CTS is calculated for customers who are in receipt of Universal Credit (UC).

Due to the way UC is re-assessed on a monthly basis by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) – this means some Council Taxpayers have their UC entitlement altered each month – for example, where they have a fluctuating wage. If the UC recipient is also receiving CTS, this subsequently means that they then have a re-assessment of their CTS entitlement – meaning that it is possible to keep having a new bill sent each month, with instalments for repayment being 're-set' – which can be confusing for customers, as well as administratively inefficient for officers – and preventing recovery progressing where there is non-payment of Council Tax. This is a particular issue with customers who have opted to pay by direct debit, as month after month the instalment resets and the direct debit is never taken. This moves their whole debt to the end of the year where potentially they are asked to pay more than they can afford, when they may have made every effort to pay this during the year.

Therefore, an option which could be considered is to adopt an income-banded local CTS scheme for UC recipients based on claimant and partners earnings. Above this, an option could also be to have fixed non-dependant deductions for these claims. Key objectives would be to move towards a scheme that is more adaptable to UC regulations, - and to provide clarity to UC claimants as to what their entitlement to CTS will be.

This scheme looks purely at whether a Universal Credit claimant (and partner, if applicable) is working and if so, what their net monthly earnings are. Officers would receive this information directly from the DWP.

This modelled scheme option has a series of 'income bands' and a customer's entitlement to CTS is based on what band their earned income falls within. A banded scheme means that small changes in a claimant's income will not necessarily change their entitlement to CTS.

To give this some context in terms of numbers, the CTS working age caseload as at 24<sup>th</sup> August 2022 is 8,441, and of this figure 3,414 customers are in receipt of UC – equating to 40.45%.

For the purposes of modelling such a scheme, the following parameters have been included. However, if this option was to be taken forward for further consideration/consultation – further work would be carried out on these income bands and levels of non dependant deduction.

<b>Income bands – monthly earnings</b>	<b>Contribution towards Council Tax (monthly)</b>
Not in work or less than £290	£0
£290 to £609.99	£35
£610 to £1,159.99	£80
£1,160 to £1,844.99	£120
£1,845 to £2,369.99	£185
£2,370 to £2,899.99	£240
Over £2,900	No entitlement to Council Tax Support

- 5.7 Whilst the UC banded scheme modelled as part of this report (paragraph 5.6 (above)), is likely to achieve some efficiencies, - potentially now is not the right time to change to this scheme. There are variables around entitlement which would result in some customers receiving an increased CTS award, and with some receiving a reduced CTS award. The initial modelling of the UC banded scheme also shows that the banded scheme could actually cost more due to there being more increased than decreased awards, also due to claimant numbers potentially increasing due to the cost of living challenges – which could be a further financial pressure for the Council at a time when it is facing escalating costs due to current economic factors.

Also, UC numbers are still relatively low – however, with the government announcing an intention to complete a managed migration from legacy benefits to UC by the end of 2024, the UC banded scheme would potentially achieve further efficiencies from either 2024/25 or 2025/26.

- 5.8 **Continuation of the Exceptional Hardship Scheme:** Exceptional Hardship Payments (EHP) assist persons who have applied for CTS and who are facing 'exceptional hardship' – it is similar to the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme (DHP) for Housing Benefit shortfalls. EHP provides a further financial contribution where an applicant is in receipt of CTS but the level of support being paid by the Council does not meet their full Council Tax liability.

The Council is required to provide financial assistance to the most vulnerable residents, who have been disproportionately affected by the changes made in 2023 to the CTS Scheme. Since April 2013, the Council has agreed to introduce an EHP scheme each year, in order to provide a safety net for customers, in receipt of Council Tax Support who were experiencing difficulty paying their Council Tax. Exceptional Hardship falls within Section 13A(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and forms part of the CTS Scheme.

The cost of EHP awards is borne solely by City of Lincoln. As at 26<sup>th</sup> August 2022, a total of £11,551.44 EHP has been awarded for 2022/23. It is proposed that an EHP budget of £25,000 be in place for 2023/24.

The EHP scheme could be particularly vital if an option such as that detailed in paragraph 5.6 was to be implemented – as this could potentially be used in appropriate circumstances to make payments to CTS recipients with reduced awards under the scheme and suffering exceptional hardship as a result.

## **5.9 Committee and Consultation Timetable**

5.10 The timetable to approve any changes to the new scheme takes into account the existing calendar of meetings. Full Council of the Billing Authority needs to approve the scheme after consultation as outlined in paragraph 2.4.

5.11 The timetable is as follows:

- Executive: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022, *to consider/approve options for consultation*
- Consultation starts (6 weeks): 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022, *including consultation with public, other appropriate organisations (e.g. Citizens Advice), and major precepting authorities*
- Policy Scrutiny Committee: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022, *as part of consultation process*
- Consultation Ends: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022
- Executive: 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2023, *to refer to Council a recommendation on a proposed 2023/24 scheme*
- Council: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023, *the Local Government Finance Act 2012 requires a full review of the scheme by the Billing Authority. City of Lincoln Council will need to approve a new scheme after consultation by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.*

## **6. Significant Policy Impacts**

### **6.1 Strategic Priorities**

**Let's drive inclusive economic growth** - Council Tax Support has a key role in Reducing poverty and disadvantage by ensuring residents in those households who cannot afford to pay their Council Tax receive financial support. The changes to Council Tax Support form part of the national welfare reform agenda, with the risks of changes to numbers of claimants due to economic change and funding gap costs being passed from central government to local authorities. Central government now has a fixed cost funding arrangement whereas local government must set a scheme in advance of the financial year it applies to but cannot change it should circumstances change unexpectedly or if the assumptions used to decide the

scheme are not realised. Central government states that this places responsibility for the local economy such as creating businesses and jobs on local government as part of the localism agenda

**Let's reduce all kinds of inequality** - The Authority will be obliged to comply with its general equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. The scheme is being amended in line with statutory requirements and uprating the financial allowances. Early modelling shows the number of customers affected and pay how much (total and average per week). Once a decision has been made regarding the options of modelling, an equality impact assessment will be undertaken.

Council Tax Support awards are notified on Council Tax bills. If the scheme were likely to change, consultation with precepting authorities, stakeholders (such as Citizens Advice and Financial Inclusion Partnership) and residents would be required. Once a decision has been made, notification within Council Tax bills and annual CTS uprating letters would be issued advising claimants of the decision once their award for the new financial year is known.

## **6.2 Organisational Impacts**

**Finance** (including whole life costs where applicable)

The actual cost of the discount scheme in 2023/24 will not be known for certain until the end of the financial year and will be dependent on the actual caseload in year as well as levels of Council Tax set by the City Council and the major precepting authorities.

An indicative range of costs for 2023/24 based on various scenarios and the options set out in section 5 of this report are set out in Appendix 1.

The estimated cost of the scheme, based on current caseload, is taken into consideration when calculating the Council's tax base for the financial year and will impact on estimated Council Tax yield for the year. Any difference in the actual cost of the discount scheme to that estimated in the tax base calculation will be accounted for within the Collection Fund and will be taken into account when future years surpluses or deficits are declared.

It is proposed an Exceptional Hardship Fund of £25,000, be made available during 2023/24 – the cost of this fund is wholly borne by City of Lincoln Council as Billing Authority.

## **6.3 Legal implications inc Procurement Rules**

The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (England) Regulations 2012, laid before Parliament on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012, set out the regulations for a default scheme and this was adopted by the Council subject to local policy needs in January 2013. The Secretary of State has issued amendment regulations setting out some changes that must be adopted by the Council for pensioners and the Council has also decided in 2013 to keep the schemes allowances and premiums in line with those for Housing Benefit for working age claimants. These are incorporated into amendments to the local scheme for approval by the Council

The regulations for the City of Lincoln Council scheme proposed to be adopted are to be collated and made available for Council in January 2023.

#### **6.4 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

The Authority will be obliged to comply with its general equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 – an Equality Impact Assessment is included at Appendix 2 to this report.

#### **6.5 Staffing**

No change to current staffing arrangements as a result of this policy.

### **7. Risk Implications**

- 7.1 The Council, along with the other preceptors, bears the risk of the cost of the Council Tax Support scheme should caseload increase causing the cost to increase more than predicted.
- 7.2 Any revisions to the scheme must be approved by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023, before the new financial year begins.
- 7.3 The scheme cannot be changed mid-year and therefore it is vital an appropriate scheme is in place.

### **8. Recommendations**

#### **8.1 Policy Scrutiny Committee is asked to:**

- 1) Consider and comment on options for a 2023/24 Council Tax Support scheme, noting that Executive agreed on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022 that a 'no change' scheme for 2023/24 be agreed as the preferred option for public consultation and scrutiny – also that further detailed modelling of a Universal Credit banded scheme from 2024/25 be undertaken.
- 2) Consider and comment on maintaining an Exceptional Hardship Fund of £25,000 for 2023/24.

<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Do the Exempt Information Categories Apply</b>	No
<b>Call In and Urgency:</b> Is the decision one to which Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?	No
<b>Does the report contain Appendices?</b>	Yes
<b>If Yes, how many Appendices?</b>	2
	Appendix 1 – Council Tax Modelling 2023/24 Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment
<b>List of Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Martin Walmsley – Telephone 01522 873597



**Appendix 1: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 – Policy Scrutiny Committee - City of Lincoln Council – Council Tax Support 2023/24 scheme**

<b>Option 1: No change to the current scheme</b>	<b>Estimated Total Spend (all preceptors)</b>	<b>City of Lincoln Spend – 14.5%</b>	<b>Difference to MTFS (£1,277,300) – (saving) / cost</b>	<b>Amount expected to be collected using collection figure of 98.75%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0% caseload change</li> <li>• 1.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£8,381,407	£1,215,304	(£61,996)	(£61,221)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0% caseload change</li> <li>• 2.5% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£8,554,088	£1,240,343	(£36,957)	(£36,495)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5% caseload increase</li> <li>• 1.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£9,335,984	£1,353,718	£76,418	£75,463
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5% caseload increase</li> <li>• 2.5% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£9,395,275	£1,362,315	£85,015	£83,952

**Appendix 1: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 – Policy Scrutiny Committee - City of Lincoln Council – Council Tax Support 2023/24 scheme**

<b>Option 2: Universal Credit Banded Scheme based on earnings income</b>	<b>Estimated Total Spend (all preceptors)</b>	<b>City of Lincoln Spend – 14.5%</b>	<b>Difference to MTFS (£1,277,300) – (saving) / cost</b>	<b>Amount expected to be collected using collection figure of 98.75%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0% caseload change</li> <li>1.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£8,421,750	£1,221,154	(£56,146)	(£55,444)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0% caseload change</li> <li>2.5% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£8,594,431	£1,246,193	(£31,107)	(£30,718)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5% caseload increase</li> <li>1.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£9,376,327	£1,359,567	£82,267	£81,239
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5% caseload increase</li> <li>2.5% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£9,435,620	£1,368,165	£90,865	£89,729

Further information re Option 2:

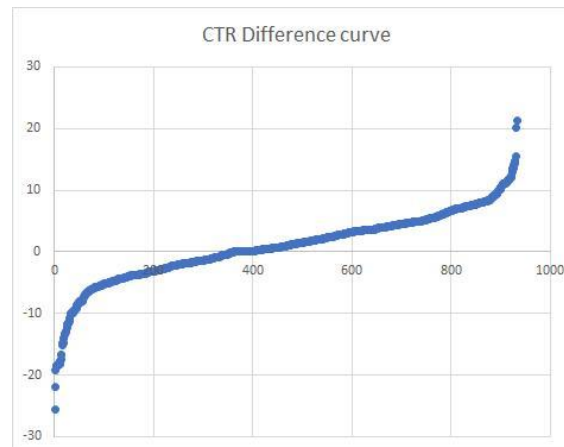
This UC Banded Scheme based on earnings would result in some Council Taxpayers receiving a higher level of CTS than under the current scheme, and some customers would receive a reduction in CTS. Based on the modelling that has taken place:

- Biggest **increase** for a resident: **£21.37 per week**
- Biggest **decrease** for a resident: **£25.56 per week**
- 536 have an increased award, 36 no change, 361 have a reduced award.

**Appendix 1: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 – Policy Scrutiny Committee - City of Lincoln Council – Council Tax Support 2023/24 scheme**

Difference in weekly entitlement range: From (£) (- decrease, + increase)	Difference in weekly entitlement range: To (£)(- decrease, + increase)	Number of customers
-20.01	-30.00	2
-10.01	-20.00	32
0.01	-10.00	327
0	0	36
+0.01	+10.00	499
+10.01	+20.00	35
+20.01	+30.00	2

Below: Council Tax Support (also known as Council Tax Reduction (CTR)) 'distribution curve' of potential increased and decreased awards from initial modelling:



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## Equality with Human Rights Analysis Toolkit



### SECTION A

Name of policy / project / service	Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24
Background and aims of policy / project / service at outset	<p>The Council must review and reapprove its Council Tax Support scheme each year as part of its budget setting process, and make any necessary changes for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.</p> <p>It is recognised that the combined effects of the wider welfare reform package on the residents of the District requires a robust and detailed Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).</p> <p>This EIA makes reference to data derived from the current Council Tax Support caseload.</p> <p>Following agreement by Executive on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022 to consult on a 'no change' scheme for 2023/24 of the draft scheme, formal consultation commenced on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022, - which included to those in receipt of Council Tax Support, potentially interested organisations such as Citizens Advice, and other Council Tax major precepting authorities.</p> <p>As a 'no change' scheme is being proposed this time round, there is likely to be minimal impact from an equalities perspective.</p>
Person(s) responsible for policy or decision, or advising on decision, and also responsible for equality analysis	Martin Walmsley, Assistant Director – Shared Revenues and Benefits
Key people involved <i>i.e. decision-makers, staff implementing it</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision Makers – City of Lincoln Members, and Executive</li> <li>• Staff implementing any changes</li> </ul>

## SECTION B

This is to be completed and reviewed as policy / project / service development progresses

	Is the likely effect positive or negative? (please tick all that apply)			Please describe the effect and evidence that supports this?*	Is action possible to mitigate adverse impacts?	Details of action planned including dates, or why action is not possible
	Positive	Negative	None			
Age	Y	Y		<p>Pensioners are a protected group for the purposes of Council Tax support Scheme so will not be financially affected, therefore any reduction in benefit would be borne by the remainder of those in receipt of Council Tax Support (working age).</p> <p>There could be a risk people of working age who will bear all the financial impact of the changes, may resent the fact that pensioners are exempt. Working age claimants with younger children under 5 are more likely to be unemployed or work part-time hours (and are mostly female), therefore childcare costs could be a barrier to employment. However, the current Council Tax Support scheme takes childcare costs up to a certain level into account, also Universal Credit takes account of childcare costs in the assessment of entitlement.</p> <p>Due to the current economic climate, it is more difficult for younger people to access employment providing further financial difficulties. Council Tax Support will only be available to those young people who are</p>	Yes	<p>Action dependant on outcome of consultation and Executive recommendation on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2023</p> <p>With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023</p>

## Appendix 2 – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 Policy Scrutiny Committee – Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24 Equality Impact Assessment

				liable to pay Council Tax and this only applies to householders over 18 years of age. If the young person is living in their parent or other householder's home they will not be liable to pay Council Tax so will not be affected by the Council Tax Support scheme unless they are a non-dependent in the householder's home.		
Disability including carers (see Glossary)	Y			<p>The Department for Work and Pensions states that disabled people are less likely to be in employment, therefore the proposals do not impact on this group to the extent that they are regarded as a vulnerable group – or certain incomes would be disregards under the 'All working age banded scheme'.</p> <p>To qualify as 'disabled' the person must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualify for a disability, enhanced disability or severe disability premium for the claimant or partner, or</li> <li>• Qualify for disability or enhanced disability premium for a dependent, or</li> <li>• Qualify for a disability earnings disregard, or</li> <li>• Receive a disability related council tax reduction.</li> <li>• Be in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (Work Related or Support Group component).</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>Action dependant on outcome of consultation and Executive recommendation on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2023</p> <p>With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023</p>
Gender re-assignment			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	N/A	

## Appendix 2 – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 Policy Scrutiny Committee – Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24 Equality Impact Assessment

Pregnancy and maternity			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	N/A	
Race			Y	<p>Persons from abroad are excluded from provision by statute but race or ethnicity itself does not have any effect on the application of the scheme.</p> <p>Scheme rules do not take into account race or ethnicity.</p> <p>Council Tax Support is proposed to be considered to potentially affect all working age customers.</p>	N/A	
Religion or belief			Y	There is no evidence at this stage of an impact in relation to religion or belief	N/A	
Sex			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	N/A	
Sexual orientation			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	N/A	
Marriage/civil partnership			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	N/A	
Human Rights (see page 8)			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	N/A	

- Evidence could include information from consultations; voluntary group feedback; satisfaction and usage data (i.e. complaints, surveys, and service data); and reviews of previous strategies



## Appendix 2 – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 Policy Scrutiny Committee – Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24 Equality Impact Assessment

Did any information gaps exist?	Y/N/NA	If so what were they and what will you do to fill these?
	N	

### SECTION C

#### Decision Point - Outcome of Assessment so far:

Based on the information in section B, what is the decision of the responsible officer (please select one option below):


Tick here

- ✓ **No equality or human right Impact** (your analysis shows there is no impact) - sign assessment below [ ]
- ✓ **No major change required** (your analysis shows no potential for unlawful discrimination, harassment)- sign assessment below [ x]
- ✓ **Adverse Impact but continue** (record objective justification for continuing despite the impact)-complete sections below [ ]
- ✓ **Adjust the policy** (Change the proposal to mitigate potential effect) -progress below only AFTER changes made [ ]
- ✓ **Put Policy on hold** (seek advice from the Policy Unit as adverse effects can't be justified or mitigated) -STOP progress [ ]

Conclusion of Equality Analysis (describe objective justification for continuing)	<p>Council Tax has to be paid by all those liable to pay it but some people will have limited means to do this because of their low income or they have higher living costs due to illnesses, disabilities or family or personal circumstances.</p> <p>Council Tax is required to raise money to fund Council services but a certain amount of money is directed to those who cannot afford to pay the Council Tax to reduce the financial burden on those households because they need it or because society considers that financial support is beneficial to help certain categories of people in certain situations.</p> <p>As 'no change' scheme is proposed for 2023/24.</p>
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When and how will you review and measure the impact after implementation?*	<p>The policy and Council Tax Support is the responsibility of City of Lincoln Council. It is approved by Executive and then Full Council. It will be administered by the Council's Shared Revenues and Benefits Service.</p> <p>The Council continually analyses its Council Tax Support caseload and produce figures showing the main</p>
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## Appendix 2 – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 Policy Scrutiny Committee – Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24 Equality Impact Assessment

	groups of working age claimants getting Council Tax Support now and likely to be affected by changes to the current scheme. Extracts of the data will allow monitoring of the main types of people affected by the policy can take place as required.		
Checked and approved by responsible officer(s) (Sign and Print Name)		Date	
Checked and approved by Assistant Director (Sign and Print Name)	 Martin Walmsley	Date	9 <sup>th</sup> November 2022.

**POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**22 NOVEMBER 2022**

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>POLICY SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23 AND EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE</b>
<b>REPORT BY:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE &amp; TOWN CLERK</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>CLAIRE TURNER, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER</b>

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To present the Policy Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2022/23 and receive comments and considerations from members with items for the municipal year 2022/2023 and to advise Members of the items that are on the current edition of the Executive Work Programme.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The work programme is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 The Constitution provides for the publication of the Executive Work Programme on a monthly basis detailing key decisions/ exempt para (Section B) items to be taken by the Executive, a committee of the Executive or a Member of the Executive during the period covered by the programme. This is attached at **Appendix B** and has been provided to assist members in identifying items for inclusion within the work programme.

**3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 That Members give consideration to the Policy Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23 and update where appropriate to include items which they wish to consider from the Executive Work Programme as required.

**List of Background Papers:** None

**Lead Officer:** Claire Turner, Democratic Services Officer  
Telephone (01522) 873619

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## Policy Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – Timetable for 2022/23

**7 June 2022**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2022 -2023	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Animal Policy	Francesca Bell	
Noise Policy	Francesca Bell	
Internal Domestic Abuse Policy	Francesca Bell	

**16 August 2022**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-2023 Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
CCTV Revised Code of Practice	Caroline Bird	
Charged Bulky Collection Service	Steve Bird	
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report

**4 October 2022**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2022 -2023	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Neighbourhood Working Update	Paul Carrick/ Andrew McNeil	Requested at meeting on 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report

**22 November 2022**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-2023 Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24	Martin Walmsely	
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report

**10 January 2023**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-2023 Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Post Implementation Review – Public Conveniences	Steve Bird	
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Francesca Bell	Requested by committee at meeting held on 24 August 2021
Recycling- paper and card collections proposal	Steve Bird	

**14 March 2023**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2023-2024 Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report

**Unscheduled Items.**

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## EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME

**October 2022 - September 2023**

### NOTES

1. The Leader in consultation with the Chief Executive and Town Clerk prepares an Executive Work Programme to cover a period of twelve months.
2. The Executive Work Programme contains matters which the Leader has reason to believe will be the subject of a key decision during the period covered by the Plan or Executive decisions which are likely to be taken in private.
3. A Key Decision is one which is likely:
  - a) to result in the Local Authority incurring expenditure which is , or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Local Authority's budget for the service or function to which it relates; or
  - b) to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising 2 or more wards in the area of the local authority.
4. Whilst the majority of the Executive's business at the meetings listed in the Executive Work Programme will be open to the public and media organisations to attend, there will be some business to be considered that contains, for example, confidential, commercially sensitive or person information.

This document serves as formal notice under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that certain items in the Executive Work Programme will be considered in private because the item contains exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. If an item is to be considered in private this will indicated on the individual decision notice.

If you have any queries, please telephone 01522 873387 or email [democratic.services@lincoln.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@lincoln.gov.uk).

### EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Date of Decision	Decision	Decision: Summary	Decision Taken By	Key Decision	Exempt Information
03 October 2022	Financial Performance Quarterly Monitoring	To present to Executive the first quarter's financial performance 2022/23	Executive	No	Public
03 October 2022	CCTV Revised Code of Practice	Adopting the revised CoP	Executive	No	Private
03 October 2022	To Dispose of Unused Land for the Provision of Supported Accommodation	To seek Executive approval.	Executive	Yes	Private
03 October 2022	Bulky Items Collections	To review options.	Executive	No	Private
17 October 2022	Western Growth Corridor - Next Steps	Decision on the next steps for landowner delivery of the development	Executive	Yes	Public
17 October 2022	Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24	To consider and comment on options for a 2023/24 Council Tax Support scheme.	Executive	Yes	Public
17 October 2022	Western Growth Corridor-Next Steps	Decision on the next steps for landowner delivery of the development	Executive	Yes	Private
17 October 2022	SETTING THE 2022/23 BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24 – 2027/28	a) note the significant financial challenges and risks that the Council faces, particularly the lack of clarity surrounding future funding reforms and current uncertain and volatile economic climate	Executive	No	Public

		<p>b) note the projected budget parameters for 2023/24 and future years and note the planning assumptions, as set out in Appendix A,</p> <p>c) note the budget, strategic and service planning preparation programme, set out in Appendix B.</p>			
21 November 2022	Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Review	To provide the Executive with a status report of the revised Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the second quarter 2022/23.	Executive	No	Partly Private
21 November 2022	Financial Performance Quarterly Monitoring	To present to Executive the second quarter's financial performance 2022/23	Executive	No	Public
21 November 2022	Re-imagining Greyfriars	To approve for inclusion in the General Investment Programme the Re-imagining Greyfriars Project	Executive	Yes	Private
21 November 2022	Operational Performance Quarterly Monitoring Report	To present to Members a summary of the operational performance position for the second quarter of the financial year 2022/23	Executive	No	Public
12 December 2022	Disposal of Property	To seek Executive approval.	Executive	No	Private
12 December 2022	Financial Procedure Rules	To recommend to Full Council the adoption of the revised Financial Procedure Rules	Executive	No	Public
03 January 2023	Council Tax Base 2023/24	The purpose of this report is to seek Executives' recommendation of the Council Tax Base for the financial year 2023/24.	Executive	Yes	Public

03 January 2023	Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24	To refer to Full Council to consider/approve a Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24 and accompanying Exceptional Hardship Payments scheme fund.	Executive	Yes	Public
03 January 2023	Housing Pipeline Approach	Decision on the approach to developing a housing pipeline on City Council owned land	Executive	Yes	Public
20 February 2023	Operational Performance Quarterly Monitoring Report	To present to Members a summary of the operational performance position for the third quarter of the financial year 2022/23	Executive	No	Public
20 February 2023	Health and Welbeing Strategy	On whether to implement strategy	Executive	No	Public
20 March 2023	Greetwell Place Managed Workspace - Future Arrangements	Nature of the City Council's involvement in the operation of Greetwell Place	Executive	Yes	Private
20 February 2023	Financial Performance Quarterly Monitoring	To present to Executive the third quarter's financial performance 2022/23	Executive	No	Public
20 February 2023	Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Review	To provide the Executive with a status report of the revised Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the third quarter 2022/23.	Executive	No	Partly Private
30 May 2023	Operational Performance Quarterly Monitoring Report	To present to Members a summary of the operational performance position for the fourth quarter of the financial year 2022/23	Executive	No	Public
30 May 2023	Financial Performance Quarterly Monitoring	To present to Executive the fourth quarter's financial performance 2022/23	Executive	No	Public

30 May 2023	Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Review	To provide the Executive with a status report of the revised Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the fourth quarter 2022/23.	Executive	No	Partly Private
19 June 2023	Treasury Management Stewardship and Actual Prudential Indicators Report 2022/23 (Outturn)	To review the treasury management out-turn of the City of Lincoln Council 2022/23	Executive	No	Public

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