

**60. Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2020/21**

Martin Walmsley, Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits

- a. presented the proposed scheme for Local Council Tax Support for the financial year 2020/21, as part of the formal consultation period, as well as regarding proposals made in relation to an Exceptional Hardship Scheme, and Council Tax changes.
- b. gave the background to the scheme as detailed at paragraph 2 of the report and advised that there were currently 8542 residents claiming Council Tax Support in the Lincoln District.
- c. advised that there were 2,903 pensioners in receipt of Council Tax Support and they were protected under the legislation so that they would not be affected by any changes made to the Council Tax Support Scheme.
- d. further advised that there were 5,639 working claimants who would be affected by any changes made to the scheme, and such any potential reduction in support being provided.
- e. referred to paragraph 3 of the report and gave an overview of the current Council Tax Support Scheme.
- f. advised that based on the current core elements of the existing scheme, a caseload, reduction of 1% had been modelled along with an increase in Council Tax (ranging from 2% to 4%). These were summarised in Appendix 1 of the report which gave an indication of the potential cost savings to the City of Lincoln. Also included was the potential value for non-collection (based on projected collection in the tax base of 98.75%)
- g. explained that as a billing authority the Council could decide whether or not to amend core elements of its Council Tax Support scheme each year. Officers were not proposing any changes to core elements of the scheme.
- h. referred to paragraph 4.3 and 4.4 of the report and explained the technical amendments and assumptions that had been made in developing the modelling for each Council Tax Support Scheme.
- i. advised that alongside the proposed 'no change' Council Tax Scheme for 2020/21, it was proposed that £20,000 for an Exceptional Hardship Scheme be continued.
- j. explained the Care Leavers Council Tax Exemption as detailed at paragraph 5 of the report and advised that officers proposed to consider the extension of the 100% support up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

k. referred to paragraph 5.2 of the report and explained the Council Tax empty homes premium, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 Councils would have the powers to charge greater premiums on homes left empty following an amendment to legislation. Approval of any change for 2021/22 could not be made until the 2021/22 Local Council Tax Support scheme had been consulted on.

l. referred to Appendix 2, Annex 2 paragraph 2(a) and advised that this has been amended to:

*2(a) The additional charge shall not apply in the first 6 months that a taxpayer becomes liable for the Council Tax for a property following the date of its purchase.*

m. asked for committee's consideration and comments as part of the formal consultation process.

Members referred to paragraph 5.2 of the report and asked if the number of years could be amended for the premium charge?

Martin Walmsley, Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits advised that the number of years could not be changed as it was set in legislation.

RESOLVED that

1. the proposed 'no change' Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21, as set out in Section 4 be supported and referred to Executive for approval.
2. the continuation of the £20,000 Exceptional Hardship Fund for 2020/21 to top up Council Tax Support awards in appropriate cases be supported and referred to Executive for approval.
3. the proposed Council Tax charges for 2020/21 – i.e Care Leavers exemption, and Council Tax empty homes premium (with a range of factors for consideration) be supported and referred to Executive for approval.