

**68. Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24**

Purpose of Report

1. To provide information regarding the outcome of consultation regarding 2023/24 Council Tax Support Scheme options.
2. To propose options for a Council Tax Support Scheme for the 2023/24 financial year, which must be approved by Council before 31st January 2023.

Decision

- (1) That the content of the report, taking into consideration the responses received as part of the consultation be noted.
- (2) That it be recommend to the City of Lincoln Council that:
  - (a) A 'no change' to the core Council Tax Support scheme for 2023/24, as set out in Section 4 of the report, subject to the technical amendments described in paragraph 5.3 be approved.
  - (b) Provision of an Exceptional Hardship Fund of £25,000, for the financial year 2023/24, be approved.
  - (c) Approval be given to a further detailed modelling of a Universal Credit banded scheme from 2024/25 to be undertaken with a view to consulting on such a scheme for 2024/25.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

An option to adopt an income-based local CTS scheme for Universal Credit recipients.

Reasons for the Decision

The council tax benefits system had been abolished by the government on 31 March 2013 and replaced by the Council Tax Support Scheme, which could be determined locally by the City of Lincoln Council, as the billing authority, after consultation with precepting authorities, key stakeholders and residents.

As at 24 of August 2022, there had been 8,441 residents claiming Council Tax Support in Lincoln, with 2,636 of these as pensioners protected under the legislation and receiving Council Tax Support, as prescribed by the Government, broadly similar to the level of Council Tax Benefit.

It was the 5,805 working age (including those classified as 'vulnerable' for CTS purposes) claimants, where a local scheme could be determined which could change the level of support provided. The split of the 5,805 working age CTS

recipients was 3,110 working age (vulnerable) and 2,695 working age (not vulnerable)

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 had changed in light of increasing scheme costs and budget pressures.

Unless a decision was made by Council to apply scheme changes to vulnerable working-age claimants, the localised CTS scheme would historically only be applied to non-vulnerable working age claimants.