

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet Council	Date:	10 January 2018 25 January 2018
Subject:	Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2018/19		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Performance & Resources		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	Yes	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Stacey Jellyman, Intelligent Client Officer (Revenues and Benefits)		
	Email: stacey.jellyman@gloucester.gov.uk	Tel:	396014
Appendices:	None		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval to retain the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) for 2018/19.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 **Cabinet** is asked to **RECOMMEND** that the current Local Council Tax Support scheme as the approved scheme for Gloucester City Council in 2017/18 be adopted for 2018/19.

- 2.2 **Council** is asked to **RESOLVE** Council is asked to **RESOLVE** that

- (1) Members' Allowances remain unchanged at the levels detailed in the 2017-18 Scheme, subject to the wording of Schedule 2 being amended to reflect the Council's continued commitment to the Living Wage in respect of the Dependents' Carers' Allowance for the reimbursement of childcare costs.
- (2) The Council writes to the Local Government Association asking them to lobby the government in support of making the Dependents' Carers' Allowance exempt from taxation.
- (3) The Scheme of Members' Allowances set out in Appendix 1 be approved for 2018-19.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefit and a Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) was adopted from 2013 which also provides protection for pensioners. This localisation continues to have a reduction in support to local government of 10%.

- 3.2 The current Local Council Tax Support scheme was brought in line with reforms to Housing Benefit and Universal Credit for 2017/18 which has helped to simplify the system; staying up to date with the governments work incentives, alongside making it fairer and more sustainable for the claimant and the council.
- 3.3 Members will be aware that the current LCTS scheme was adopted and approved at the meeting of full Council of 6th February 2017 with a prior urgent decision of the Managing Director on 26th January to enable a decision to be made by statutory deadlines.
- 3.4 With Universal Credit Full Service due to go live in Gloucester on 21st February 2018, we are not yet able to anticipate the effects on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/19.
- 3.5 Our neighbouring districts' plans have been considered whilst drafting this report and in consultation with them, they expressed intention to continue with existing schemes until 2019/20 when Universal Credit implementation impacts will provide us with more insight to better tailor our scheme for 2019/20 onwards.
- 3.6 **War pensions income:** To note, we will continue to disregard £10 of the War disablement pensions and war widows pensions and in addition will disregard the remainder of the War disablement element of a war pension and the war widows element of a war widows pension, when assessing a reduction under the local Council Tax Support scheme.

4.0 ABCD Implications

- 4.1 There are no anticipated ABCD implications from this report

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 5.1 An alternative option would be to consider changes for the 2018/19 scheme but in line with the approach of other local Districts this has not been carried out.

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 Universal Credit is being introduced into Gloucester in February 2018 and it is not considered appropriate to change our scheme until the impacts of Universal Credit are known.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 7.1 Any changes in the level of LCTS claimed during 2018/19 will be monitored and if any changes to the new scheme are necessary they will be considered, and consulted upon, for the 2019/20 scheme.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The financial implications are contained in the body of the report.

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefit and instead required each authority to design a scheme specifying the reductions which are to apply to amounts of Council tax. The prescribed regulations set out the matters that must be included in such a scheme.

The Local Council Tax Support 'LCTS' scheme is required under Section 9 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012.

- 9.2 Pensioners (those over state pension age) are protected from any changes, but otherwise the Council has discretion to decide how it wishes to design its scheme to cover any shortfall, in accordance with the prescribed requirements.

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 10.1 Potential risks as a result of this report are potential income shortfall.

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

- 11.1 A PIA screening assessment has been undertaken and the impact is neutral. A full PIA is not required.

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

- 12.1 None

Sustainability

- 12.2 None

Staffing & Trade Union

- 12.3 None

Background Documents: None