

## Report of the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Personnel Policy

**COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT FUND 2023/24**1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval to develop the Council Tax Support Discretionary Scheme, in addition to the Mandatory Scheme, to support Council Tax Support recipients in 2023/24.

2. Recommendation

**Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, the Deputy Leader, Leaders of other groups and Portfolio Holder for Resources and Personnel Policy, be given delegated authority to develop a Discretionary Council Tax Support Fund Scheme.**

3. Detail

The Government has introduced additional funding of £100m to support Council Tax Support recipients with the potential increase in Council Tax charges.

Funding has been allocated to each authority based on their share of Council Tax Support claimants at the latest submitted data. The Government's Mandatory Scheme will see each Council Tax Support recipient having their Council Tax account reduced by up to a further £25, in addition to the Council Tax Support award, in the 2023/24 financial year. Where the remaining Council Tax charge is under £25 the eligible Hardship payment will only reduce the balance to zero.

In December 2022, Cabinet approved the continuation of the current Council Tax Support Scheme. This scheme allows for Council Tax recipients to receive maximum support and reduce their Council Tax charge to zero. This aspect of the scheme will mean that the number of people to be supported will be reduced but allow a more significant remaining funding allocation for the Discretionary Scheme.

Whilst further analysis is conducted on the levels of support that can be offered, it is important that the scheme is approved prior to the Council Tax Team undertaking the Annual Billing process. If approved after the Annual Billing process the Council will have to incur the additional cost that is attributed to rebilling up to 6,000 new households and potential additional contact to the Council.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

Central Government has allocated a total fund of £100m across all local authorities to support the Council Tax Support Fund in 2023/24. Of this, Broxtowe will receive a total of £171,201 to fund both the Mandatory and Discretionary Schemes. An initial analysis has identified that the Mandatory Scheme will cost approximately £50,000 leaving the remaining balance to support the Discretionary Scheme.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The scheme is consistent with relevant public law principles, in particular it is lawful, fair and rational. The Council can support this type of local welfare provision under the "Local authority's general power of competence", as set out in S.1 of the Localism Act 2011. Further, Local authorities' have the ability to act in this area under powers contained in other legislation, such as, section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables local authorities to provide financial assistance to any individual and Section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 allows local authorities to have discretion to apply further reduction in council tax bills.

6. Human Resources Implications

There were no comments from the Human Resources Manager.

7. Union Comments

There were no Unison comments in relation to this report.

8. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL Sensitive information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

Any new scheme which is approved will have an Equality Impact Assessment, which will inform the decision maker and Councillors of the impact of the scheme.

10. Background Papers

Nil