

Subject:	Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2014/15	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Council	Date:	17 th December 2014
Report of:	Head of Customer Services & I.C.T.	Portfolio Holder:	Customers, Legal and Licensing
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	That Full Council approve the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/16 as set out in this report.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To seek approval of Rossendale Borough Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/16.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:
- **Regenerating Rossendale:** This priority focuses on regeneration in its broadest sense, so it means supporting communities that get on well together, attracting sustainable investment, promoting Rossendale, as well as working as an enabler to promote the physical regeneration of Rossendale.
 - **Responsive Value for Money Services:** This priority is about the Council working collaboratively, being a provider, procurer and a commissioner of services that are efficient and that meet the needs of local people.
 - **Clean Green Rossendale:** This priority focuses on clean streets and town centres and well managed open spaces, whilst recognising that the Council has to work with communities and as a partner to deliver this ambition.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Local Council Tax Support Scheme is subject to annual approval, by full Council.

The Local Government Finance Bill states that an Authority must make any revision to its scheme, or any replacement scheme, **no later than 31 January** in the financial year preceding that for which the revision or replacement scheme is to have effect.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 5.1 Council Tax Benefit was replaced by a Local Scheme of Council Tax Support in April, 2013.

Funding to Local authorities to pay for this support was reduced in 2013/14 from 100% subsidy to a grant of 90 % (£871K). This grant has now been merged into the main local authority funding and is no longer separately identified.

- 5.2 The scheme approved in December 2012 and adopted by Rossendale Borough Council

matched the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme but with a 20% reduction in entitlement for those of working age. Extensive consultation was undertaken on this scheme and it was broadly supported.

- 5.3 Our Local Council Tax Support scheme is based, in a large part, on the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme. As such it remains a means tested benefit in all but name.
- 5.4 The scheme for 2015/16 will reflect any changes to supporting legislation. These changes will not have a material impact on the amount of Local Council Tax Support awarded but do need to be reflected in our scheme.
- 5.5 The Government recognises the need to maintain and uprate the income disregards, nondependent deductions, applicable amounts and premiums for pensioner cases and have therefore instructed local authorities to increase these in line with other social security benefits for 2015/16.
- 5.6 In order to ensure that our scheme for working age claimants continues to mirror the Housing Benefit scheme, and the scheme applicable to pensioners, it is necessary to uprate it in the same way as those schemes.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 6.1 The Council's default scheme has been accounted for in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

- 7.1 No comments to add.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 8.1 Extensive consultation was undertaken from 6th August 2012 to 26th October 2012 to inform the development of the currently adopted scheme including a full equality impact assessment to inform the decision making process.

This report is not proposing any changes to this scheme for 2015/16. It is determined that the potential impact and mitigating actions remain unchanged also, and therefore has not been re-assessed for equalities impacts.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 There are no significant changes from the scheme approved for 2014/15.
- 9.2 It is proposed to continue with the scheme approved in December 2013, but including benefit uprating and supporting legislative changes, for 2015/16.

Background Papers

Document	Place of Inspection
Council Tax Support Scheme	https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/counciltaxreductionscheme