

Council Tax Support Scheme Task Group – Session 2

Summary:

The Director of Finance gave a presentation to update members on the impact of the scheme. The slides, containing statistics and data analysis, had also been circulated prior to the meeting. In addition, a copy of a council tax support discretionary application outcome letter and a submission from Councillor Bonham were provided ahead of the meeting.

The key notes in addition to those raised in the slides were as follows:

- It was noted 3,200 household's Council Tax Support entitlement had remained unchanged.
- The Council Tax Discretionary scheme saw higher average payments last year due to support being provided through the Household Support Fund. This support assisted households that had got into arrears due to the old scheme and the cost of living crisis.
- There was a request for forecasting on arrears for CTS and non-CTSS households for quarter 2 to 4 of 2025/26. It was noted this this was not going to be available in time to inform proposals for a new scheme next year. Historic information could be provided for the old scheme.
- There was a request for additional information on why discretionary support applications were refused, and if they were CTS households.

Following a request from the previous meeting, a copy of a letter on discretionary support applications was provided and noted it had been reviewed by communications and recognised it was an improved letter.

The Task Group were asked to provide options they would like to be modelled and then considered at the next meeting:

- It was asked if adding more bands would prevent the big changes in the support provided. It was noted that this would likely to lead to more changes and in turn lead to issues seen in the previously scheme where households get in arrears due to changes in bills and the requirement to re-bill.
- There was a discussion by Councillors that there had been less contact from households than anticipated and discretionary support and been processed efficiently when contact was made.
- There was clarification on timelines for making changes to the scheme. It was noted that the latest we could go to consultation on changes is in October to

ensure any new scheme could be approved by the statutory deadline of the end of January.

- No requests for modelling were received at the meeting. Councillors were asked to provide alternative models by close of play on the 1st August to enable modelling could be completed for the next task group meeting on the 12th August.