

Single Member Cabinet Decision

Executive
Forward Plan
Reference

E2881

Public Consultation of Preferred Local Council Tax Support Scheme

Decision maker	Cllr Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency
The Issue	The Authority is to implement a revised scheme for Local Council Tax Support from April 2017. We are proposing a public consultation of a preferred scheme to run between August and October 2016.
Decision Date	1 st August 2016
The decision	The Cabinet Member agrees to proceed with 10 weeks public consultation on the preferred option for a Local Council Tax Support Scheme as detailed in the report.
Rationale for decision	<p>The scheme has not kept pace with other changes to Housing Benefit rules or Welfare Reforms. We want a new scheme to align with the principles of Universal Credits.</p> <p>A safety net for those most impacted by the change will be provided by an enhanced Local Welfare Support Scheme.</p> <p>In order to minimise the impact on existing customers only those households receiving Universal Credits will move to the new scheme.</p>
Financial and budget implications	<p>The Local Council Tax Support Scheme for working age residents costs the council circa £4,000,000 in reduced Council Tax payments to those eligible. In addition there is a cost of administration associated with the scheme in the region of £320,000.</p> <p>In order to ensure a smooth transition to the new scheme it is proposed that any reduction in the scheme awards is allocated to Local Welfare Support</p> <p>Within our current strategic review the initial change to the scheme should deliver £70,000 of admin savings and these should be achieved through natural staff turnover where possible.</p> <p>There are no anticipated impacts on major preceptors as a result of the proposed changes.</p>
Issues considered (these are covered in more detail in the report)	Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Human Resources; Equality (age, race, disability, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation); Corporate; Impact on Staff; Other Legal Considerations

Consultation undertaken	Cabinet colleagues; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer
How consultation was carried out	A period of consultation took place during May involving a number of our key internal and external support service partners. The purpose of this exercise was to gather views on the principles of the proposed scheme in advance of the public consultation. The responses were supportive of the proposals and a summary is included in the appendices. Subsequently as a result of this feedback and discussion with the Cabinet Member it was agreed that a further principle would be included to identify the fact that the new scheme aligned with Universal Credit and the wider Welfare Reforms.
Other options considered	The Council has considered a number of proposals for revised Council Tax Support schemes for people of working age, and it has already sought views from key stakeholders around the principles of the scheme before deciding upon a preferred option to put forward for public consultation.
Declaration of interest by Cabinet Member(s) for decision, including any dispensation granted:	<i>The nature of interest and whether interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest or an-other interest, including any conflict of interest, (as defined in Part 2, A and B of the Code of Conduct and Rules for Registration of Interests). Any Member who needs to clarify any matters relating to the declaration of interests is recommended to seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer or a member of their staff before taking the decision.</i>
Any conflict of interest declared by anyone who is consulted by a Member taking the decision:	None

Signature of Decision Maker	
Date of Signature	1 August 2016

Subject to Call-in until 5 Working days have elapsed following publication of the decision