
Bath & North East Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

Community Contribution Fund – Panel Discussion

Corporate Scrutiny 28th Sept 2020

Introduction

Following discussion at Council of a motion from the Labour Group on Community Contribution Funds it was decided:

- To agree in principle to introduce a Community Contribution Fund from 2021/22, but to ask the Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel to consider and report back to Council with recommendations on how it might work in practice including:
 - a. Whether to adopt an inclusive approach inviting all Council Tax payers to contribute or whether it should be limited to those in Band H;
 - b. The vehicle for managing any new Community Contribution Fund;
 - c. The mechanism for identifying local priorities for support; and
 - d. The means of consulting with residents on the introduction of any such Fund.

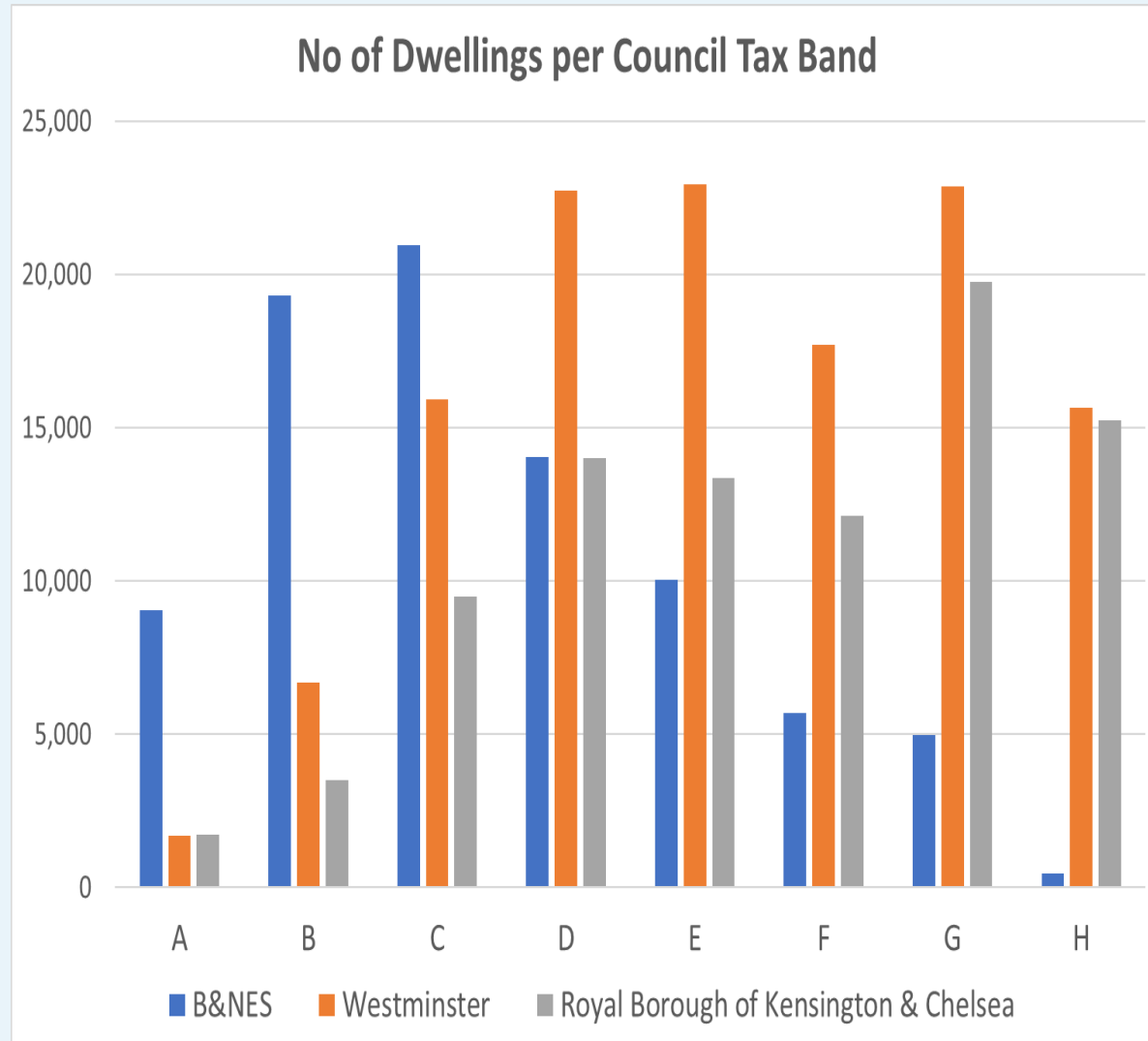
Background Info - Westminster Council Model

- Wealthy property owners requested a scheme
- All Council Tax payers receive a letter & non-residents can contribute
- Managed by an existing charitable trust (est. 1986)
- Generated £1m since its inception in 2018
- Web portal access for donations
- Local community groups apply for grant funds via online application
- Current year supported projects:
 - Rough sleeper assistance
 - Helping young people reach their potential
 - Assist lonely people

Background Info

- The following slide provides some comparisons on housing numbers in each Council Tax Band. This compares B&NES with Westminster & Kensington/Chelsea, both of whom have implemented Community Contribution Funds.

Comparison of No of Dwellings by CTax Band



- Much higher proportion of dwellings in Band G & H in Westminster & RBKC (30-40% compared to 7% in B&NES)
- Indicates potential lower contributions in B&NES if targeting higher banded property owners.
- RBKC consultation with Band H owners (c15,000) resulted in c700 indicating they would contribute from 1,172 replies.

Council Tax Band & Charges comparison

Band	B&NES (No of properties)	B&NES Charge*	Westminster (No of properties)	WCC Charge
A	9,040	£1,176	1,680	£520
B	19,304	£1,372	6,696	£524
C	20,952	£1,569	15,914	£599
D	14,043	£1,765	22,735	£674
E	10,018	£2,157	22,935	£824
F	5,692	£2,549	17,686	£974
G	4,976	£2,941	22,851	£1,124
H	436	£3,529	15,637	£1,348
Total	84,461		126,134	

*** B&NES Charge – excludes Police, Fire and parish precepts**

PDS Discussion Points – 1. Scope

Q. Should the Council adopt an inclusive approach inviting all Council Tax payers to contribute or whether it should be limited to those in Band H?

Considerations:

- Should the scheme be restricted to Band H residents or does this assume wealth in larger properties?
- Would it be a fairer approach to present the voluntary contribution to all residents?
- Could visitors / businesses / other organisations make contributions?

PDS Discussion Points – 2. Management

Q. What should be the vehicle for managing any new Community Contribution Fund?

Considerations:

- Should this be run through the Council or through an independent body – such as a new charitable trust or existing partner? (Potential for Gift Aid top up for charitable donations)
- Complexity and cost of set-up and administering scheme vs income generated.
- Timescales
- What will be the scheme's governance arrangements?
- Who will decide on use of fund / grants given from fund?

PDS Discussion Points – 3. Utilisation

Q. What should be the mechanism for identifying local priorities for support ?

Considerations:

- Should these be linked to agreed Council Priorities and the Corporate Strategy?
- Are there other specific areas / projects which are more suited to a voluntary contribution based funding approach?
- Engagement with residents to inform specific priorities

PDS Discussion Points – 4. Engagement

Q. What will be the means of consulting with residents on the introduction of any such Fund ?

Considerations:

- Any initial consultation exercise to gauge support for the principle of the voluntary contribution fund?
- Any consultation on priorities for use of funds?
- Consultation approach – mail based, web based, existing Council communications, community groups or a mix of these?

Next Steps & Reporting back to Council

- Following discussions, panel to agree next steps to develop options for consideration and the report back to Council on its considerations and recommendations on how the scheme could work in practice.