

REPORT TO	ON
CABINET	6 th December 2017

September 2017



TITLE	PORTFOLIO	REPORT OF
Council Tax Support Scheme 2018-19	Corporate Support and Assets	Director Of Development, Enterprise & Communities

Is this report a KEY DECISION (i.e. more than £100,000 or impacting on more than 2 Borough wards?)	Yes
Is this report on the Statutory Cabinet Forward Plan ?	Yes
Is the request outside the policy and budgetary framework and therefore subject to confirmation at full Council?	No
Is this report confidential?	No

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report requests approval of a Council Tax Support scheme for 2018-19.

2. PORTFOLIO RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That delegated authority be granted to the Revenues+ Manager in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support and Assets to make all necessary updates to this Council's Council Tax Support Scheme to comply with any prescribed requirements that may be issued by central government. This may be by the making of specific regulations, or by amendment to the Local Government Finance Acts of 1992 and 2012.
- 2.2 That delegated authority be granted to the Revenues+ Manager in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support and Assets to make all necessary amendments to the Council's scheme to uprate the allowances and premiums in accordance with the revised Housing Benefit Circular when it is issued by the DWP. This process is a requirement of the prescribed elements of the scheme.
- 2.3 To publish the updated scheme in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 2012.
- 2.4 The level of the deduction to be applied to Working Age recipients of Council Tax Support from 1st April 2018 be finalised and agreed in accordance with South Ribble's scheme and as part of the Council's Budget and Council Tax Setting at the Council Meeting on the 28th February 2018. This figure will continue to be within the range (between £3.00 and £5.00 per week) which was consulted upon during the introduction and implementation of the council's scheme in 2012.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 The report relates to the following corporate priorities

Clean, green and safe		Strong and healthy communities	
Strong South Ribble in the heart of prosperous Lancashire		Efficient, effective and exceptional council	x

4. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 requires Local Authorities to approve their Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Scheme on an annual basis by the 31st January for the following financial year.
- 4.2 The scheme contains allowances and premiums upon which the Prescribed Council Tax Support Scheme relies. Where possible, South Ribble's scheme mirrors the provisions of the government's prescribed scheme for pensioners.

5. PROPOSALS (e.g.RATIONALE, DETAIL, FINANCIAL, PROCUREMENT)

- 5.1 South Ribble's scheme is relatively easy for all to understand in that it replicates the previous Council Tax Benefit system apart from including a flat rate monetary reduction for working age claimants.
- 5.2 South Ribble's scheme has been accepted by residents on the whole, including recipients of the support. Collection rates suggest that approximately 78% of the additional billed amounts are collected in the year that they become due, with collection of outstanding amounts continuing in subsequent years.
- 5.3 Additional support is available for residents suffering hardship via the council's exceptional hardship policy.
- 5.4 The current scheme prescribes a reduction in entitlement to LCTS of £3.50 per week for all working age claimants and there are no proposals for this to change. Pensioners are unaffected by the changes implemented in this policy as the government has legislated to ensure that pension age recipients cannot be worse off under LCTS schemes than under previous CTB regulations.
- 5.5 If the recommendations contained in this report are adopted, the Council Tax Support scheme for 2018-19 will be the unchanged from the 2017-18 scheme, subject to the incorporation of prescribed changes from central government and the annual uprating of allowances and premiums.

6. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The council's scheme was introduced after consultation with stakeholders and a significant number of residents. The consultation included all recipients of Council Tax Benefit. This consultation supported the view that the costs of South Ribble scheme should be implemented according to the resources provided by the DCLG.

7. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 The original consultation exercise considered a number of alternatives to reducing the amounts that claimants received in their council tax support. These included reducing council services and increasing levels of council tax.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The continuation of the current scheme into 2018-19 will have no financial impact on the authority. However, there would be a financial impact on South Ribble and other precepting authorities if the council decided not to adopt or to amend the scheme.

9. HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

None

10. ICT/TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

None

11. PROPERTY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

None

12. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 12.1 A failure to approve a Council Tax Support Scheme would mean that the Council would have to either adopt the Statutory Prescribed Scheme or leave itself open to legal challenge if the current scheme was extended into 2018-19.

13. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT

- 13.1 A review of the Impact Equality Assessment has been undertaken and no changes have been made. Details of the Assessment are published on the council's website.

14. RELEVANT DIRECTORS RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 That delegated authority be granted to the Revenues+ Manager in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support and Assets to make all necessary updates to this Council's Council Tax Support Scheme to comply with any prescribed requirements that

may be issued by central government. This may be by the making of specific regulations, or by amendment to the Local Government Finance Acts of 1992 and 2012.

- 14.2 That delegated authority be granted to the Revenues+ Manager in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support and Assets to make all necessary amendments to the Council's scheme to uprate the allowances and premiums in accordance with the revised Housing Benefit Circular when it is issued by the DWP. This process is a requirement of the prescribed elements of the scheme.
- 14.3 To publish the updated scheme in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 2012.
- 14.4 The level of the deduction to be applied to Working Age recipients of Council Tax Support from 1st April 2018 be finalised and agreed in accordance with South Ribble's scheme and as part of the Council's Budget and Council Tax Setting at the Council Meeting on the 28th February 2018. This figure will continue to be within the range (between £3.00 and £5.00 per week) which was consulted upon during the introduction and implementation of the council's scheme in 2012.

15. COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

- 15.1 A failure to approve the Council Tax Support Scheme will result in South Ribble Borough Council having to implement the Statutory Prescribed Scheme which would have to be funded by all precepting authorities. This would result in additional expenditure of approximately £580,000 of which South Ribble's contribution would be approximately £72,000. This amount is not contained within the medium term financial strategy of the authority.

16. COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

- 16.1 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 places a legal requirement to amend and approve schemes by 31st January 2018.
- 16.2 Any changes to our scheme would be subject to a legislative requirement to consult upon the changes and details of any amended or proposed scheme.
- 16.3 Maintaining the existing scheme apart from uprating avoids the need to undertake fresh consultation.

17. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

Denise Johnson
Director of Development, Enterprise & Communities

Report Author:	Telephone:	Date:
Peter Haywood	Ext 5578	6 th November 2017