
Executive Member for Finance & Performance

11 April 2022

Report of the Director Customer & Communities

Council Tax Energy Rebate – Discretionary Scheme

Summary

1. This paper provides the Executive Member for Finance & Performance with the discretionary council tax energy rebate scheme for approval.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - a) Approve the council's discretionary council tax energy rebate scheme as set out at paragraph 6 – 10 and Annex A.

Reason: To provide financial support in respect of the increasing utility costs to the city's financially vulnerable residents.

Background

3. The Government announced on the 3rd February 2022 measures to help households with rising energy costs including a £150 council tax energy rebate. The Government have set the rules of the scheme and will provide funding for billing authorities to give all households in England whose primary residence is valued in council tax bands A – D a one-off council tax energy rebate payment of £150. This payment will operate outside of the council tax system, using council tax lists to identify eligible households. York's allocation is £11,383k
4. The payment is a cash payment made directly into resident's accounts where they pay by Direct Debit (DD). Where they do not pay by direct debit we will invite all qualifying residents to apply for the payment through an application process. The payment is per

household not per resident. The Government scheme is attached to this paper at Annex B.

5. The council has also received funding of £250k to provide a discretionary scheme for those residents who do not meet the criteria of the core scheme but may require support with rising utility costs.

Council Tax Energy Rebate Discretionary Scheme

6. The council can determine locally how best to make use of this funding to provide payments to other households who are energy bill payers but not covered by the Council Energy Tax Rebate.
7. This includes households living in property valued in bands E – H that are on income related benefits or those where the energy bills payers are not liable for council tax. Discretionary support will not be offered to occupants of property in exemption class O, where the Ministry of Defence will provide cost of living support, or class M student halls of residence or if the property is not the claimant's main home
8. Support from the Discretionary Fund does not have to be provided in relation to the position on 1 April 2022 (as in the core scheme), but we will not provide support to any household that has already received a payment under the core Council Tax Energy Rebate scheme.
9. The support from the Discretionary Fund will be no higher than £150 per household. We will always undertake prepayment checks before providing support from the Discretionary Fund.
10. The scheme is set out at Annex A. All discretionary funding should be spent by 30 November 2022.

Consultation

11. The scheme is set by central government and although the discretionary scheme provides some latitude to the council it is capped at £150 per customer, the funding available is fixed and support is hardship based. There have been some discussions

with the third sector and they were supportive of the council's approach. They were invited to send on any further comments or ideas but nothing further has been received.

Options

12. There are no options associated with this paper.

Analysis

13. The Government has provided funding for the core scheme based upon the Band A – D properties in the council tax base. This will ensure that each qualifying household receives the £150 energy rebate. The additional discretionary funding will provide support for residents who will be in a similar financial position to those in Council Tax Band A - D. An example of this is families on income related benefits and council tax support who require larger properties due to the family size pushing them above Band D for council tax. The maximum funding under the discretionary scheme is the same as the core scheme (£150) but it is not possible to say if the funding will be adequate. It will certainly be sufficient to meet the demand of those residents above Band D and in receipt of council tax support and will provide for approx. 1,700 payments.

Council Plan

14. Approving the decision in this paper will supports the council plan in delivering good health and wellbeing, safe communities and an inclusive economy.

Implications

- 15.

Financial

The costs of all schemes are met in full by central government

Human Resources (HR)

There are no HR implications.

Equalities

This report will impact on all communities equally.

Legal

No implications

Crime and Disorder, Information Technology and Property

No implications

Risk Management

16. The risks to the council from this scheme are low. It is funded by central government and there will be sufficient funding for all those residents above Council Tax Band D who receive income related benefits and council tax support. All other applications will be judged on their own merits and the scheme rules. It is not possible to know the numbers that may arise other than they would be living in properties above Band D and not be in receipt of income related benefit. There is a small risk that the unknown demand could exceed the funding provided.

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Chief Officer responsible for the report:

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Director Customer & Communities

Report Approved

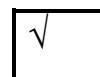


Date 31/03/22

Specialist Implications Officer(s):

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Annexes

Annex A – Council Tax Energy Rebate Discretionary Scheme

Annex B – Council Tax Energy Rebate Government Guidance