

Corporate and Scrutiny Management Policy 9th November 2015 **and Scrutiny Committee**

Report of the Director of Customer & Business Support Services

Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation

Summary

1. This paper provides scrutiny with details of the current public consultation exercise in respect of Council Tax Support (CTS). Executive approved public consultation to consider changes to the Council's CTS scheme on 29th October 2015. The consultation will run between the 2nd November & 29th November 2015.

Background

2. The Government reduced its support for Council Tax benefit on 1st April 2013. This saw the Council's previously demand-led grant reduced by 10% in 2013/14 and removed as an individual grant from 2014/15. The rules relating to Council schemes are set out in the Local Government Finance Act 2012 and ensure that qualifying pension age residents are fully protected.
3. The Council introduced the current CTS scheme on the 1st April 2013. This was based on the Housing Benefit scheme with a cap on support at 70% meaning CTS customers would have to pay a minimum 30% of their Council Tax liability. Full details of the background to the scheme are set out in the report 'Council Tax Support Scheme Review' **considered by the Executive on 29 October 2015 and** attached at Annex A to this paper.

Consultation

4. Following a motion to Council on 8 October 2015, the Authority brought forward the scheduled review period and is now currently out to consultation and the results of this will not be known until

after 29th November 2015. The questionnaire being used is attached at Annex 1 of this paper and is also available online at <https://www.york.gov.uk/consultations>. The communication plan being used is attached at Annex 2. The Council also has to consult with its major preceptors the Fire and Police Authority as part of the consultation process and both have been notified that the Council is considering making a change. Their response is awaited.

5. The final decision paper is due at Full Council in December 2015 which will consider the recommendation made by Executive at their December meeting, following receipt of the consultation results.

Options

6. There are no specific options associated with this paper, which is submitted to this Committee for information and to give an overview of the consultation arrangements, in light of the enhanced inclusive working arrangements between scrutiny and the Executive.

Analysis

7. The results of the consultation will not be known until the end of November so any analysis of customer's views will not be available for further analysis by this Committee, in view of the tight timescales now set for the consultation and review. However, an analysis of the current scheme is included in the paper attached at Annex A of this report.

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8. This paper provides the opportunity for scrutiny to consider the consultation process which is aimed at promoting financial inclusion, delivering tangible and measurable benefits to affected customers inline with the new Council Plan.

Implications

9. **Financial** – There are no implications with this report other than those associated with any change to the CTS scheme, set out in the paper at Annex A.

- (a) **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no implications
- (b) **Equalities** – There are no direct implications with this report those associated with any change to the CTS scheme are set out in the paper at Annex A.
- (c) **Legal** - There are no implications with this report those associated with any change to the CTS scheme are set out in the paper at Annex A
- (d) **Crime and Disorder** - There are no implications
- (e) **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no implications with this report those associated with any change to the CTS scheme are set out in the paper at Annex A
- (f) **Property** - There are no implications

Risk Management

- 10. There are no direct risk implications with this report. Those associated with any change to the CTS scheme are set out in the paper at Annex A.

Recommendations

- 11. Scrutiny are asked to note the consultation process, the review taking place and the revised timescales for that, in light of the Council decision

Reason: To ensure scrutiny members are fully informed of the options and implications of the consultation process.

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		Report Approved		Date	30.10.2015
Specialist Implications Officer(s) None					
Wards Affected: All					√
For further information please contact the authors of the report					

Background Papers

Council Tax Support Scheme Review – Executive 29th October 2015

Annexes

Annex A – Council Tax Support Scheme Review – Executive 29th October 2015 including Annexes A to C

Annex 1 – Hard Copy Questionnaire

Annex 2 – Communications Plan

Glossary

CTS – Council Tax Support Scheme