



## Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

5 March 2019

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2019/20</b>
<b>Contribution towards Vision 2030:</b>	 
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### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

**That Council:**

1. Approve changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/2020.

#### 1 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To make recommendations for changes to Schedule 1 of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for 2019/2020.

#### 2 **IMPLICATION FOR THE COUNCIL'S VISION**

- 2.1 The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme provides crucial support to low income families and our most vulnerable residents.
- 2.2 The new LCTRS is based on income bands and residents on very low incomes can continue to receive 100% support.

2.3 Sandwell is now the only council in the West Midlands to provide up to 100% support.

### **3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

3.1 The LCTRS for 2019/20 was approved by Council on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

3.2 Following confirmation of welfare benefit rates payable from April 2019 an issue has been identified with the income bands detailed in Schedule 1 of the LCTRS.

3.3 In order to continue to provide 100% support to our most vulnerable residents a change to Schedule 1 of the 2019/20 LCTRS is required.

### **4 THE CURRENT POSITION**

4.1 The LCTRS for 2019/20 was approved by Council on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019. Schedule 1 of the scheme details the income bands used to determine entitlement.

### **5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)**

5.1 A four-week consultation period commenced on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 where feedback on the proposed scheme was requested. Citizens were encouraged to provide feedback on the council's website, Facebook, Twitter and over 700 stakeholders were contacted directly by e-mail. Letters were also sent to 6,000 residents to ask for feedback on the proposed changes.

5.2 A total of 26 replies were received and the summary of the comments is as follows:

- Everyone should make some contribution towards council services
- Agreed that the LCTRS needs to be simplified

### **6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

6.1 The income bands detailed in Schedule 1 of the 2019/20 LCTRS Policy approved by Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019 could remain unchanged. However this would not achieve the Council's intention of continuing to provide our most vulnerable customers with 100% support.

### **7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None

## **8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 The LCTRS must be made in accordance with Schedule 4 paragraph 5 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 which states:
- 8.2 The authority must make any revision to its scheme, or any replacement scheme, no later than the 11<sup>th</sup> March in the financial year preceding that for which the revision or replacement scheme is to have effect.

## **9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 The equality impact assessment carried out on the original 2019/20 scheme still applies.

## **10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 10.1 Not required.

## **11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 11.1 Not required

## **12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS**

- 12.1 The calculation of the cost of LCTRS assumes that caseload levels will not change significantly.

## **13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)**

- 13.1 Sandwell's LCTRS is protecting families on low incomes by giving them 100% support towards their Council Tax

## **14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND**

- 14.1 No impact.

## **15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 15.1 Following receipt of welfare benefit rates payable from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 an amendment to the income bands detailed in Schedule 1 of the 2019/20 LCTRS is necessary.
- 15.2 The LCTRS must be approved by Council no later than 11<sup>th</sup> March each year.

## **16 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 16.1 None

## **17 APPENDICES:**

- 17.1 Appendix 1 – Amendments to Schedule 1 of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy 2019/20.

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