

Key Decision Required:	No	In the Forward Plan:	No
-------------------------------	-----------	-----------------------------	-----------

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

8 JANUARY 2015

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING, BENEFITS AND REVENUES

A.1 THE LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME FOR 2015/2016

(Report prepared by Harry Bates)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To consider the outcome of the consultation on whether or not to include Child Maintenance income within the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme assessment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 25 November 2014 the Council agreed the draft LCTS scheme for 2015/16 but decided that a further consultation exercise should be undertaken on whether or not its Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/2016 should disregard child maintenance income in the assessment for entitlement to LCTS.

The Council is required to carry out a public consultation on all aspects of its proposed scheme. Council, when making its decision on the final scheme, must have regard to the outcome of the consultation. The consultation period closed on Sunday, 4th January 2015 and an addendum report setting out the consultation outcomes was prepared and sent to all Members on Monday 5th January 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council, having considered the outcome of the consultation on whether or not the 2015/2016 LCTS scheme should disregard child maintenance income when making the assessment of LCTS entitlement, approves the Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2015/16 as set out in the report to Council on 25 November 2014.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

In developing a local scheme the Council must be mindful of its duties to vulnerable groups, and Council Tax payers.

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

The Council Tax rise required to fund the scheme is estimated to be 0.05% as referred to in the consultation document. That equates to £4,000 to Tendring District Council in monetary terms (the total being £35,000 to all precepting authorities).

The Council's decision on the final scheme needs to be made so that the precepting authorities can be advised of the outcome on 13 January 2015. It has been calculated that this is the minimum time they need to get meetings held to determine their own precepts in time to feed into the TDC Council Tax and Budget setting timescale.

The consultation is required to provide sufficient detail to enable responders to have adequate information to make an informed decision, particularly as regards options in respect of the question being asked. There is clearly a balance to be struck between sufficiency of information and providing too much and possibly confusing information and this is particularly the case in respect of a complicated issue such as LCTS disregards.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder / Equality and Diversity / Health Inequalities / Area or Ward affected / Consultation/Public Engagement.

Crime and Disorder

No impact.

Equality and Diversity

The Council believes that disregarding Child Maintenance payments from the household income calculation applies equally to both sexes and is therefore gender neutral in terms of its application. This is referred to in the consultation exercise.

Health Inequality

Not applicable

Area or Ward affected

All in Tending District Council's jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME FOR TENDRING

The LCTS scheme was agreed by the full Council on 24 November 2014. The specific wording was "That the proposed Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Scheme for 2015/2016 as set out in Item 5 of the report of the Housing, Benefits and Revenues Portfolio Holder, be approved subject to the exclusion of income from child maintenance payments when assessing claims for LCTS and that:

- (i) The revised scheme becomes the Council's draft 2015/16 LCTS Scheme;
- (ii) Officers be requested to carry out the necessary statutory consultation;
- (iii) The final LCTS Scheme be reported back to a meeting of the full Council;
- (iv) The funding for the additional level of support be met from the Austerity Reserve".

The consultation survey has been carried out and the responses were circulated to Members on 5 January 2015, the day after the closure date of the survey.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

- **Appendix A** - Full survey results. Summary results previously circulated by e-mail to all Members
- **Appendix B** – Response from Gingerbread charity