COUNCIL

24 NOVEMBER 2026

REFERENCE FROM CABINET

A.1 DISCRETIONARY COUNCIL TAX EXEMPTIONS / DISCOUNTS / PREMIUMS FOR 2027/28 AND ANNUAL MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY STATEMENT 2027/28

(Report prepared by Ian Ford*)*

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Council is asked to consider the recommendations submitted to it by the Cabinet in respect of the Council Tax Exemptions, Discounts and Premiums for 2027/2028 and the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement for 2027/2028.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting held on 13 November 2026 (Minute 61 refers), the Cabinet had considered a report of the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder (A.2) which had sought its agreement for recommending to Full Council the following:

- Locally determined Council Tax discounts;
- Council Tax discount policy for young people leaving care;
- Discretionary Council Tax Exemptions, Discounts and Premiums for 2027/28; and
- Annual MRP Policy Statement for 2027/28.

Having conducted the annual review of the above and allied matters, the Portfolio Holder had proposed to Cabinet:-

- to make changes to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) to provide additional financial support to those who may need it, with the underlying principle of providing financial stability wherever possible to Tendring residents remaining the same. Although a draft LCTS scheme would be considered by Cabinet at its December 2026 meeting that took account of the proposed changes, the underlying elements of the scheme would be the same as this year, which provided for a maximum discount of 80% for working age claimants.

- to allow the backdating of claims for financial support made under the LCTS scheme by working age claimants. Previously, the scheme had only provided this flexibility to pension age claimants with a backdating period of 3 months provided. There had been a limited number of recent cases where such flexibility to provide similar support to working age households would have been advantageous where there was 'good cause' to do so, such as clear evidence of eligibility prior to the date that the application forms were submitted.

- that due to this proposed change to the LCTS scheme, a short period of consultation was required. In line with legislation / regulations, it was a requirement to consult with the Major Preceptors first before drafting a scheme to include the proposed change. Therefore, it had been proposed that this be undertaken along with a request to present a draft LCTS scheme to Cabinet at its December 2026 meeting.

- to make only one change to the associated exceptional hardship policy compared to last year that provided for the opportunity to consider cases relating to council tax premiums on second homes and empty properties.

- to make no changes in respect of existing discretionary council tax discounts, exemptions and premiums (including discounts for young people leaving care) for 2027/28, with the same levels applying as in 2026/27.

- to make no changes in respect of existing council tax premiums on long term empty properties for 2027/28, with the same levels applying as in 2026/27.

- to make no changes in respect of the existing council tax premium of 100% on properties used as a second home for 2027/28, with the same levels applying as in 2026/27.

- to merely note that as part of the extension to council tax premiums on long term empty properties and the introduction of council tax premiums on second homes last year, the Government had stated that their intention was not to penalise property owners where they were making genuine efforts to make use of their properties. The Government had therefore introduced mandatory exceptions where the council tax premium on long term empty properties and/or second homes was not chargeable and that those remained in place for 2027/28, with no locally determined extensions to those mandatory exceptions proposed.

- to make no changes to the Annual MRP Policy Statement for 2027/28, and that the existing approach adopted from 2026/27 be continued.

- to present to the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration the proposed recommendation to change the LCTS scheme in 2027/28 as part of the required consultation process before recommendations are made to Full Council in January 2027.

- to 'refresh' a local modified housing benefit scheme relating to the disregard of income relating to war widows / widowers. The scheme set out within Appendix G to the Portfolio Holder's report reflected the continuation of the historic approach with no impact on existing or future applicants.

To enable the implementation of an LCTS Scheme in 2027/28 along with the required council tax discounts, exemptions and premiums, an MRP Policy Statement and a Housing Benefit War Pension Disregard Policy (Modified Scheme), Cabinet had:-

"RESOLVED that -

a) Cabinet agrees that the underlying LCTS scheme for 2027/28 remains the same as the current year, as set out as Appendix A, along with approving the following proposed change to the scheme for consultation with the Major Preceptors:

"that the LCTS scheme be amended to enable the backdating of claims made by working age claimants by up to a maximum of 3 months."

b) including consultation with the Major Preceptors, Officers be requested to present a draft LCTS Scheme for 2027/28 to the next formal meeting of Cabinet on 11 December 2026;

c) Cabinet agrees the Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Policy, as set out in Appendix B;

d) Cabinet agrees the Housing Benefit War Pension Disregard Policy (Modified Scheme), as set out in Appendix G, in the determination of Housing Benefit until such time as the scheme is required to be amended or revoked.

e) Cabinet agrees the discretionary Council Tax exemptions, discounts and premiums for 2027/28 as set out in the appendices and formally recommends to full Council that:

i) the locally determined council tax discounts, as set out in Appendix C be approved;

ii) the council tax discount policy for young people leaving care, as set out in Appendix D be approved;

iii) the discretionary council tax premiums, as set out in Appendix E be approved;

iv) the Corporate Director (Finance and IT) be authorised, in consultation with the Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder, to undertake the necessary steps to implement the council tax exemptions, discounts and premiums from 1 April 2027; and

f) Cabinet further recommends to Council that the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement for 2027/28, as set out in Appendix F be approved."

A copy of the published Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder's report (and relevant appendices) to the Cabinet meeting held on 13 November 2025 is attached to this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council, having considered this reference report from Cabinet –

(a) approves the locally determined council tax discounts, as set out in Appendix 2 to this report;

(b) approves the council tax discount policy for young people leaving care, as set out in Appendix 3 to this report;

(c) approves the discretionary council tax premiums, as set out in Appendix 4 to this report;

(d) authorises the Corporate Director (Finance and IT), in consultation with the Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder, to undertake the necessary steps to implement the council tax exemptions, discounts and premiums from 1 April 2027; and

(e) approves the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2027/28, as set out in Appendix 5 to this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

Published Decisions of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13 November 2026.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 = Published A.2 Report of the Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder for the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13 November 2026

APPENDIX 2 = Locally Determined Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions 2027/28

APPENDIX 3 = Care Leavers Council Tax Discount Policy

APPENDIX 4 = Discretionary Council Tax Premiums 2027/28

APPENDIX 5 = Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2027/28