

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DATE: TUESDAY, 29 JANUARY 2013

REPORT BY: HEAD OF FINANCE

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF THE COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT
SCHEME - APRIL 2013

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 The report explains the change from Council Tax Benefit to the Council Tax Reduction scheme, addresses the funding implications and the requirement to adopt the scheme by the 31st January 2013.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The current Council Tax Benefit Scheme is to be replaced from 1st April 2013 with a Council Tax Reduction Scheme; In Wales there will be a national scheme (in contrast to England, where schemes are local to each billing authority).

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The Prescribed Requirement Regulations 2012 requires the Council to adopt a Council Tax Reduction Scheme by the 31st January; If the Council fails to make a scheme then a default scheme will apply under the provisions of the Default Scheme Regulations. There were tight timescales between the making of the Prescribed Requirement Regulations and the 31st January 2013 (when the scheme has to be adopted). Consultation was truncated in Flintshire between the 17th December 2012 and 14th January 2013. During this period an Equalities Impact Assessment was also commissioned.

3.02 The proposed adoption report was presented to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 17th January 2013 where the proposed adoption of the Prescribed Requirement Regulations 2012 and the proposed discretions were endorsed.

3.03 After the scrutiny committee, in the afternoon of the 17th January 2013 a written statement was issued by Welsh Government concerning the new scheme. An announcement was made by Carl Sargeant Minister for Local Government & Communities that new regulations were to be laid as a matter of urgency changing the maximum level of support from 90% to 100%. *Appendix 1*

- 3.04 An adoption report was presented to Cabinet on 22nd January 2013 *Appendix 2* for consideration. Cabinet endorsed revised recommendations *Appendix 3* that took account of the contemporaneous changes. Cabinet endorsed the Prescribed Scheme, noting the written statement of the Minister for Local Government and Communities on the 17th January 2013 and endorsed the proposed local discretions; Cabinet recommended the Prescribed scheme to full Council, subject to the inclusion of any change in prescribed limits set by Welsh Government and the consequential detail. *Appendix 3*
- 3.06 More detail will be given when the regulations have been laid. It is hoped that this will be before 25th January 2013. When the new regulations have been laid assessment will be made of their impact and reported.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 To note the endorsements of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 17th January 2013 & Cabinet on the 22nd January 2013 with regard to the Prescribed Regulations and the Discretions for 2013/14.
- 4.02 To note the making of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations, (“the Prescribed Requirement Regulations”) by the National Assembly for Wales on the 19th December 2012.
- 4.03 To note the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the introduction of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. As set out in Appendix (3) of the Cabinet report at *Appendix 2*
- 4.04 To note the written statement by the Minister for Local Government and Communities on the 17th January 2013 which sets out the intention to increase the maximum level of support from the current 90% to 100%? *Appendix 1*
- 4.05 That Council adopts Prescribed Requirement scheme as set out in Appendix (1) of the Cabinet report at *Appendix 2*, subject to any changes in prescribed limits set by Welsh Government and the consequential detail.
- 4.06 Council adopts for 2013/14 the proposed Discretionary Elements as set out in Appendix (2) of the Cabinet report at *Appendix 2*.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 Appendix 2 - Cabinet report 22nd January 2013.

5.02 Welsh Governments written statement on the 17th January 2013 indicates that there will also be £22 million available nationally in support of the regulatory change, Detail on how this will be distributed will be reported when it is known. *Appendix 1*

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 Appendix 2 - Cabinet Report 22nd January 2013.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 Appendix 2 - Cabinet Report 22nd January 2013.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 Appendix 2 - Cabinet Report 22nd January 2013 – *Appendix 4*

8.02 A full Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken. Within the assessment there is reference to the maximum liability being 90%. The document is still relevant as it provides invaluable information with regards the demographics of Flintshire which will help with the Wider Welfare Reform Programme.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 Appendix 2 - Cabinet Report 22nd January 2013.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Appendix 2 Cabinet Report 22nd January 2013.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Appendix 2 Cabinet Report 22nd January 2013.

12.00 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Written statement by Welsh Government 17th January 2013.

Appendix 2 - Cabinet Report 22nd January 2013.

Appendix 3 - Amended Recommendations to Cabinet Report 22nd January 2013.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Appendix 2 Cabinet Report 22nd January 2013.

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