

Report of Head of Scrutiny Support

Report to Scrutiny Board (Citizens and Communities)

Date: 25th July 2016

Subject: Council Tax Support Scheme

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 Last year, the Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board undertook an in-depth inquiry into Universal Credit and its potential impacts on a number of stakeholders. The Board's report identified that many people in low-paid work with fluctuating earnings will also see their monthly Universal Credit payment fluctuate and, as things stand, this will lead to monthly changes to Council Tax Support with further implications for Council Tax payment dates and liability orders. A recommendation was therefore made to consider whether changes can be made to the Council Tax Support Scheme to manage this.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 22nd June 2016, the Executive Board received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) on Welfare Reform and Council Tax Support ([Click to access Executive Board report](#)). This report highlighted the expected impacts of the Government's continuing package of welfare reform on local Council Tax Support schemes and options for how the Council can respond to these changes. In conclusion, the Executive Board approved the development of a revised scheme and the need to undertake public consultation on the revised scheme, to be concluded by November 2016.
- 1.3 At its meeting on 27th June 2016, the Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board agreed to undertake an urgent review to assist in the development of this revised scheme. As such, the Board agreed to hold a working group meeting prior to the Board's July meeting to discuss the potential scope for this review. This meeting was held on 6th July 2016.

- 1.4 The draft terms of reference for the Scrutiny Board's review into the development of a revised Council Tax Scheme will be tabled at today's meeting for the Board's consideration and agreement.
- 1.5 The Chief Officer (Welfare and Benefits) will also be attending today's meeting to provide a presentation on the main issues surrounding the Council Tax Support scheme and to prompt discussion surrounding the development of an alternative scheme that utilises the Universal Credit needs assessment, as well as discussing the potential options that will be subject to public consultation.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Members are requested to note the presentation and discussion during today's meeting and agree the terms of reference for its forthcoming review into the development of a revised Council Tax Support Scheme.

3. Background documents¹

- 3.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.