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THE CABINET

MEETING, 21ST DECEMBER, 2020

Councillor Greenhalgh	Leader's Portfolio
Councillor Haslam	Highways and Transport
Councillor Muslim	Stronger Communities
Councillor Warren	Environmental Service Delivery
Councillor Morgan	Adult Social Care
Councillor Baines	Wellbeing
Councillor Mrs. Fairclough	Environmental Regulatory Services

Other Members in Attendance

Councillor Dean
Councillor Radcliffe
Councillor Walsh
Councillor Peel
Councillor Zaman
Councillor Donaghy
Councillor Hayes
Councillor McKeon (as
deputy for Councillor
Haworth)
Councillor Hornby
Councillor Sanders
Councillor Brady

Officers

Mr. T. Oakman	Chief Executive
Ms. S. Johnson	Deputy Chief Executive
Mr. G. Brough	Director of Place
Ms. B. Brown	Director of Children's Services

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Mr. P. Rimmer	Assistant Director Revenues, Benefits
Ms. H. Gorman	Borough Solicitor
Mrs. V. Ridge	Democratic Services Manager

Apologies for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillors Cox, Galloway, Haworth and Wild.

Councillor Greenhalgh in the Chair.

22. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 30th November, 2020 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

23. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SCHEME 2020/2021 – POST CONSULTATION REPORT

Further to minute 11 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5th October, 2020 the Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report which set out the results of the consultation exercise on proposals to review the Local Council Tax Top Slice.

By way of background, members were reminded that with effect from 1st April, 2013 the Council introduced a Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Scheme. Although this was subsidised by Central Government the level of subsidy awarded under the previous Council Tax Benefit Scheme was reduced which left the Council with a shortfall in budget.

Members were advised that since its introduction in 2013, several changes had been made to the working age LCTS scheme and the most significant of these were the introduction of a 12.5% top slice of council tax liability and the reduction of the capital limit to £3,000. These changes were introduced from 1st April, 2017 following consideration of a range of options and a public consultation.

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However, in response to further reductions in funding and the Council's need to find further savings it was proposed that the Local Council Tax Support Scheme be amended with effect from 1st April, 2021.

The report outlined the key principles of the current scheme and advised that currently pension age claimants received a maximum of 100% of their council tax liability, subject to a means test. In comparison, working age claimants could receive a maximum of 87.5% of their council tax liability (top slice of 12.5%) subject to a means test. At the moment 26,321 claimants received support through LCTS of which 9,394 were pension age and 16,927 were working age. It was also stated that there had been an increase in the LCTS caseload from 15,901 in April, 2020 to 16,927 in September, 2020 and if this trend continued, expenditure on Council Tax Support would rise further.

Members were also advised that in addition to the support provided by the Council's LCTS scheme, the government had provided additional grant funding in 2020/2021 as part of its response to Covid-19, however, at the time the report was written, this additional funding was a one off grant and would not be available in 2021/2022.

In respect of the proposed changes, the report outlined the options which had been consulted on for amending the LCTS scheme with effect from 1st April, 2021 and were as follows, viz:-

Option	Description	Annual Saving
1	17.5% top slice liability	£900,010.37
2	20% top slice liability	£1,344,069.77
3	22.5% top slice liability	£1,787,063.91
4	25% top slice liability	£2,229,080.17

The report also provided examples which demonstrated the impact the various options might have on an individual's entitlement to LCTS and consequently the amount they would have to pay.

Furthermore, it was proposed to maintain a discretionary fund to provide additional support to LCTS claimants that needed extra help paying their council tax or were affected by changes made to the LCTS scheme. Any additional reduction made under this scheme would be paid directly to their council tax account.

The report also outlined in detail the responses which had been received following a consultation exercise with residents.

Appendix A to the report provided a comparison of LCTS Schemes across Greater Manchester Authorities in relation to top slice reductions and Appendix C provided details in relation to the consultation response.

The relevant Equality Impact Assessment had been undertaken and was detailed in Appendix B to the report.

The Deputy Chief Executive also advised members that as part of the settlement the Council had received an indicative allocation of £3.2 million of Local Council Tax Support Grant which would enable the budget to be supported during the next financial year thus allowing implementation of the decision to 1st April, 2022 if members so wished. If this was agreed further ratification of the proposals would be sought next year.

Resolved – That, subject to the Council's approval on 17th February, 2021 and considering the feedback received from the consultation process, together with the recent allocation, the proposal to increase the Local Council Tax Support top slice from 12.5% to 17.5% be approved with effect from 1st April, 2022.

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