

Scrutiny/Audit

A8 Which Committee should this decision be submitted to? *(Please tick as appropriate)*

Scrutiny (Value for Money Council) Committee

Scrutiny (Regeneration Development and Market Hall) Committee

Scrutiny (Health and Wellbeing) Committee

Scrutiny (Climate Change and Environment) Committee

Audit Committee

B1 What is the Decision?

To approve the request for a 63 day period of consultation in relation to potential changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme from the 2025/26 financial year.

2 What are the reasons for the Decision?

Annually the Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR) scheme undergoes a review. An exercise to remodel the scheme from the present 2024/25 scheme to an alternative which seeks to identify a more suitable model, which aims to deliver the following key deliverables, has been completed.

The key deliverables are:

1. Simplified access to the scheme for the resident
2. Simplified administration
3. For the cost of implementing any changes to the scheme to be affordable
4. A scheme that continues to recognise and tackle exceptional hardship
5. A future proofed scheme that is capable of adapting to change
6. Identification of options to further expand levels of support available to claimants not currently eligible for maximum levels of support
7. For the scheme to remain affordable

The review exercise produced 4 models - see **appendix A** for full report which details each of those models – and identified Model 4 as delivering the best outcome in terms of impact whilst retaining the increase in costs to a trivial level, at the same time as being the option which had the most positive impact on the delivery of key outcomes.

As any implementation of changes to the current scheme would see an impact on users of the service, there is an obligation to undertake a period of consultation. The purpose of the consultation is to gain insight into the impact of the changes within the effected groups and gauge the overall suitability of the scheme.

The proposed timeframe for the consultation is:

12th August 2024 to 14th October 2024

(a minimum period of 60 days is required under legislation – the above would meet this and provide a period of 63 days consultation)

We are proposing that the consultation seeks to reach out to the general public, with focused engagement with the precepting Bodies (Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire


<p>B2 Alternative options considered and rejected?</p>	<p>Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and local Parish Councils), debt advice agencies and representatives of the disabled and vulnerable sectors.</p> <p>The proposed timeframe for the consultation is important to ensure that there is sufficient time to analyse the feedback to be able to provide Cabinet with sufficient information and insight on which to base any decision – with a final report due to be presented to Cabinet in December 2024. Any delay to the start of the consultation would therefore impact on the ability to report the outcome effectively to Cabinet in time to make any changes ahead of the 2025/26 financial year.</p> <p>Four models were produced and compared against the key deliverables, with Model 4 identified as delivering the best outcome in terms of impact whilst retaining the increase in costs to a trivial level, at the same time as being the option which had the most positive impact on the delivery of key outcomes. Details of all models are included in Appendix A.</p> <p>Only Model 1 – no change – would not have required consultation.</p>
<p>B3 What are the contributions to Corporate Priorities?</p>	<p>An effective LCTR scheme provides appropriate assistance to those most in need and supports the move of claimants towards self-sufficiency, supporting the creation of a prosperous East Staffordshire and standing up for our communities.</p>
<p>B4 What are the Human Rights considerations?</p>	<p>Equality Impact assessment – Appendix B</p>

Financial Implications

<p>B5 What are the financial implications?</p>	<p>The main financial issues arising from this decision are as follows:</p> <p>The consultation itself does not carry significant costs, with activities undertaken as part of existing officers time to produce and run the consultation and to analyse and report the outcome of that. The outcome of the consultation will be reported to Cabinet in December 2024 to allow them to make a final decision which will allow East Staffordshire Borough Council's share of any increased costs to be built in to the refresh of the Medium Term Financial Strategy ahead of final approval of the budget for the Council for the 2025/26 financial year, when any changes to the LCTR would be implemented.</p>
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Revenue	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	0		

Capital	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	0		

<p>The finance section has been approved by the following member of the Financial Management Unit:</p>	<p>Please print name: Lloyd Haynes</p> <p>Please sign name: </p>
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Policy Framework

B6 Is the Decision wholly in accordance with the Council's policy framework?	Yes
B6.1 If No, does it fall within the urgency provisions (Part 3 of the Constitution)?	NA
B6.2 Has it got the appropriate approvals under those provisions?	Yes
B7 Is the Decision wholly in accordance with the Council's budget?	Yes
B7.1 If No, does it fall within the urgency provisions (Part 3 of the Constitution)?	NA
B7.2 Has it got the appropriate approvals under those provisions?	Yes

Equalities Implications

B8 What are the Equalities implications:
B8.1 Positive (Opportunities/Benefits):
A prescribed scheme for people of pension age is included in the regulations
People with disability needs are recognised through the receipt of disability benefits. They are entitled to higher rates of awards as a result of this.
B8.2 Negative (Threats): none found
B8.3 The subject of this decision is a policy, strategy, function or service that is new or being revised. An equality impact assessment is attached as Appendix B.
B8.4 [The equality impact assessment identified the following actions to be carried out:] None – we are engaging with any potentially affected parties and the outcome of the report is positive for the vast majority of the people subject to any change.

Risk Assessment

B9 What are the Risk Assessment implications:
B9.1 Positive (Opportunities/Benefits): the consultancy captures the impacts of the model, which may influence its inception.
B9.2 Negative (Threats): The consultancy may produce conflicting data preventing any decision being made.
B9.3 The risks do not need to be entered in the Risk Register. Any financial implications to mitigate against these risks are considered above.

B9 What are the Risk Assessment implications:

Legal Considerations

B10 What are the Legal Considerations:

B10.1 The main legal issues arising from this decision are as follows:

By s3(1), Schedule 1A of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992, before making or changing a scheme, the authority must (in the following order)—

- (a) consult any major precepting authority which has power to issue a precept to it,
- (b) publish a draft scheme in such manner as it thinks fit, and
- (c) consult such other persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.

This section has been approved by the following member of the Legal Team

Please print name: Glen McCusker – Locum Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer.

Please sign name: (Approval via email 12/07/2024)

Environmental Impact

B11 What are the Environmental Impacts:

Consider impacts related to the Climate Change & Nature Strategy aims:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions (climate change mitigation)
- Preparing for future climate change (adaptation)
- Protecting and enhancing nature
- Using resources wisely and minimising waste and pollution

B11.1 The impacts are **not significant** and are set out below without enhanced consideration by the Council's Climate Change and Adaptation Officers.

(note – a **significant** impact will likely result from any project, policy, procurement exercise or service change that has a direct or indirect effect on energy or fuel use, water use, land use, other physical resource use, waste generation, pollution,

B11 What are the Environmental Impacts:

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- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions (climate change mitigation)
- Preparing for future climate change (adaptation)
- Protecting and enhancing nature
- Using resources wisely and minimising waste and pollution

regeneration or construction - if unsure contact the Council's Climate Change and Adaptation Officers)

B11.3 Positive Impacts (Opportunities/Benefits):

B11.4 Negative Impacts (Threats/Mitigation):

Health & Safety Implications

B12 What are the Health & Safety implications:

B12.1 A Risk Assessment has not been carried out and entered into Safety Media for all significant hazards and risks because there are no significant hazards or risks arising from this decision.

B12.2 [The significant hazards and risks have been identified in the Safety Media Risk Assessment numbered []. Any financial implications to mitigate against these hazards and risks are considered above.]

B12.3 [Control measures and an action plan have been identified for any significant hazards and risks identified in the risk assessment. The positive/negative impacts are set out below]

B12.3.1 Positive (Benefits)

B12.3.2 Negative (Threats)

Key Decision

B13 Is this a Key Decision? Yes/No (*please delete as appropriate*)

Note: A Key Executive Decision is one where:

1. **REVENUE** – Any contract or proposal with an annual payment or saving of more than £100,000
2. **CAPITAL** – Any capital project with a value in excess of £150,000
3. **A decision which significantly affects communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards.**

B13.1 If this is a Key Decision, is this an urgent decision such that a delay caused by use of the Call-in Procedure would <u>seriously</u> prejudice the public interest?	Yes/No/NA (<i>please delete as appropriate</i>)
B13.2 If yes, has the Mayor or in his/her absence the Deputy Mayor or in his/her absence the Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Committee agreed that the decision will be exempt from Call-in?	Yes/No/NA (<i>please delete as appropriate</i>)

NOTE: If this decision is subject to the Call-in Procedure it will come into force, and may then be implemented, on the expiry of 3 working days after publication – unless 10 Members of the Council call in the decision.

Please send the original signed document to:
democratic.services@eaststaffsbc.gov.uk