

Report of	Record of	Date
Director (Customer and Digital) (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Member Decision	23 February 2023

Council Tax Support Fund & Discretionary Funding

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Yes
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Savings or expenditure amounting to greater than £100,000	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards
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Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for the discretionary distribution of the Council Tax Support Fund grant to claimants in receipt of Council Tax Support.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member (Resources) approves the approach to distribute Council Tax Support funds by increasing the mandated payments of £25 per claimant by a discretionary amount, as funds allow.
3. The amount per claimant can be finalised once Council Tax Support for 2023/2024 has been calculated. Payments will be credited to council tax accounts during annual billing.
4. Residual funds are to be used to grant awards or adjustments to new and existing claimants throughout 2023/2024 and to provide ad hoc discretionary payments to claimants suffering financial difficulty and have an outstanding bill for 2023/2024 who are not able to apply for other assistance through existing schemes, to be agreed in consultation with the Executive Member.
5. The ad-hoc discretionary payments will be limited to one payment per Council Tax Support claim, capped at the amount of £50 per claim.

Reasons for recommendations

6. The distribution of funds at the beginning of the financial year is the most efficient way of assisting residents with annual bills.
7. Increasing the mandatory payment of £25 ensures that funds are used to assist the financially vulnerable, who are those impacted most by rising bills therefore fulfilling the intention of the funding allocation.
8. Limiting the amount and number of discretionary awards ensures that financial

assistance is available to more claimants throughout the year.

Other options considered and rejected

9. Other options have been considered but have been rejected due to the restrictions of the software solution used to make payments.

Corporate priorities

11. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

12. In the Autumn Statement 2022 the Government announced its intention to increase referendum principles in relation to council tax increases to 3% for core Council tax and up to 2% for adult social care.
13. Recognising the impact rising bills will have, the Government has now provided additional funding for local authorities to support economically vulnerable households with their council tax payments. The funding is for the 2023/2024 financial year.
14. The Government expects that local authorities will use the majority of their funding allocation to reduce bills for working age and pension age CTS claimants by up to £25.
15. The total funding allocation is as follows:

	Allocation	CTS Caseload (Jan 2023)
Chorley	£170,884	6,479

Council Tax Support Fund and the discretionary allocation of funds

16. A mandatory payment of up to £25 will be payable to residents in receipt of Council Tax Support who have a residual bill for 2023/2024 once CTS has been granted.
17. It is recommended that any underspend following mandatory awards is used, as remaining funds allow, to top up the mandatory payment to assist CTS customers with their outstanding liability for 2023-2024.
18. Additional ad-hoc discretionary payments may be made to CTS claimants who are facing financial hardship and are not eligible for assistance under any other existing schemes, to be agreed in consultation with the Executive Member.

Climate change and air quality

19. The work noted in this report has an overall negative/positive impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

Equality and diversity

20. There are no equality implications arising from this report

Risk

21. Residents who may be economically vulnerable but have not applied for CTS do not receive assistance with their Council Tax bill.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

22. There is a separate government grant provided for the specific purpose of Council Tax support. This report sets out allocation processes to ensure the funding is maximised in use.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

23. There are no legal concerns with what is proposed here. Clearly though we need to ensure that all expenditure is within the parameters of the Government scheme.

Background documents

24. There are no background papers to this report

Appendices

25. n/a

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Following careful consideration and assessment of the contents of this report, I approve the recommendation(s) contained in Paragraph 2 of the report in accordance with my delegated power to make executive decisions.

Peter Wilson

Councillor Peter Wilson
Executive Member for Resources

Dated 23 February 2023

This decision will come into force and may be implemented five working days after its publication date, subject to being called in in accordance with the Council's Constitution.