

Options Previously Considered by the Council Tax Support Member Panel Review

Option 1: Continue with the current level of support for 2017/18 and review in 12 months time once more claims for Universal Credit are in payment and the impact of the April 2016 Housing Benefit and Tax Credit changes are known.

Potential Costs/Savings	Officers Comments	Panel Comments
<p>Additional cost cannot be quantified until further details have been released by central Government.</p>	<p>Will protect customers already undergoing a significant period of change with welfare reforms.</p> <p>May result in an increase in expenditure for 2017/18 as CTS will not reflect any changes to Tax Credits.</p>	<p>Panel members recommend this option which will not require any public consultation and the expense that this would incur.</p> <p>Any increase in expenditure will be for one year only as this will be reviewed again in 12 months time.</p> <p>Any increase in expenditure may be offset by a reduction in caseload if current trends continue.</p>

Option 2: Leave scheme unchanged until all working age cases have migrated to Universal Credit (expected to complete in 2020).

Potential Costs/Savings	Officers Comments	Panel Comments
<p>Additional cost cannot be quantified until further details have been released by central Government.</p> <p>Depending on whether caseload continues to fall, any additional cost may be absorbed by a fall in expenditure.</p>	<p>Will protect customers already undergoing a significant period of change with welfare reforms.</p> <p>May result in an increase in expenditure for 2017/18 and beyond as CTS will not reflect changes to Tax Credits.</p> <p>Will enable all working age claims to move to a more simpler CTS scheme based on Universal Credit income bands and this should achieve significant savings in administration costs.</p>	<p>Panel members do not recommend this option which will not require any public consultation and the expense that this would incur.</p> <p>There is a risk in waiting for a long time for a further review as the scheme will need to evolve to reflect other policy changes.</p>

Option 3: Consult on proposed changes to the 2017/18 scheme to reflect changes that are being made to the Housing Benefit scheme and Tax Credits under the Government’s programme of welfare reforms.

Potential Costs/Savings	Officers Comments	Panel Comments
<p>Estimated savings: Backdated benefit £28,000 (TVBC share £3,100)</p> <p>Changes to Tax Credits cannot be quantified until further details have been released by central Government.</p>	<p>Will align CTS rules to Housing Benefit rules.</p> <p>Provided the caseload does not increase this will result in reduced expenditure for 2017/18 and beyond.</p> <p>Will impact financially on customers already undergoing a significant period of change with welfare reforms.</p>	<p>Panel members do not recommend this option which will require a public consultation and the expense that this would incur.</p> <p>The Council will bear the full cost of collecting additional amounts and this could exceed any savings for TVBC.</p> <p>There is currently no information available regarding the changes to Tax Credits to enable any potential savings to be calculated.</p> <p>Will have an adverse affect on working customers already receiving a reduction in Tax Credits.</p>

Option 4: Consult on proposed changes to the 2017/18 scheme to apply a cap of 5%, 10% or 15% making everyone responsible for paying an element of Council Tax.

Potential Costs/Savings	Officers Comments	Panel Comments
<p>Estimated savings: 5% = £154,800 (TVBC £17,300) 10% = £309,800 (TVBC £34,700) 15% = £463,800 (TVBC £51,900)</p> <p>Children under 5 (631) 5% = £32,800 10% = £65,600 15% = £98,200</p> <p>Disability Benefits (1,044) 5% = £53,200 10% = £106,400 15% = £159,300</p> <p>Working 16 hours + (554) 5% = £29,800 10% = £59,700 15% = £89,400</p> <p>Jobseekers or working less than 16 hours (771) 5% = £39,000 10% = £78,100 15% = £116,900</p>	<p>Provided caseload does not increase will result in reduced expenditure for 2017/18 and beyond.</p> <p>Will impact financially on customers already undergoing a significant period of change with welfare reforms.</p> <p>The Council will have to collect small amounts from a large number of people which will increase administration costs.</p> <p>Consideration will need to be given to protect customers unable to work and increase their income in order to pay additional Council Tax.</p> <p>Impact will be greater in rural areas as these properties will usually attract a higher Council Tax Band</p>	<p>Panel members do not recommend this option which will require a public consultation and the expense that this would incur.</p> <p>The Panel members are concerned that this will have an adverse affect on customers in rural areas already facing other pressures such as housing and transport costs.</p> <p>The Panel members would recommend not going above 10% due to the amount of support customers will lose.</p> <p>Affects all customers receiving support.</p> <p>The national picture is unpredictable and this makes it very difficult to accurately forecast any potential savings.</p> <p>The Council will bear the full cost of collecting additional amounts and this could exceed any savings for TVBC.</p>