

OSCOM Council Tax Support Panel, 21st August 2019 – Consideration of Options

Option 1: Introduce a standard non-dependant deduction to replace the calculation of actual earnings for all non-dependants.

Potential Costs/Savings	Officers Comments	Panel Comments
<p>This would reduce the time taken to obtain earnings information from customers, reducing the time taken to process claims.</p> <p>There would be a small cost to the Council in applying a standard £4 per week deduction which would be offset by efficiencies in administering the scheme.</p>	<p>The current minimum deduction is £4 per week so no household should be worse off as a result of this change. Existing protections for students / pensioners etc. would continue.</p> <p>This information can be difficult to collect as it relates to other adults living in the property rather than the claimant themselves. This change would lead to operational efficiency in administering the scheme.</p>	<p>The panel considered this proposal and recommended that it be included in the draft scheme for 2020/21.</p>

Option 2: Reduce the capital limit for scheme eligibility to £6,000.

Potential Costs/Savings	Officers Comments	Panel Comments
<p>This would generate administrative savings from no longer needing to obtain and keep up-to-date records of applicants' savings.</p> <p>There would be a small budget saving from reducing the capital limit to £6,000.</p>	<p>There is a small caseload of customers affected by this area of the scheme.</p> <p>The change would result in no CTS being available to those applicants with more than £6,000 in savings.</p> <p>Operational efficiencies would be obtained from no longer having to collect information for those with more than £6,000 in savings.</p>	<p>The panel considered this proposal and recommended that it be included in the draft scheme for 2020/21.</p>

Option 3: Remove the second adult rebate from the scheme.

Potential Costs/Savings	Officers Comments	Panel Comments
There would be a very small saving arising from removing this element from the scheme.	<p>Removing this relief would affect customers who are not already entitled to receive CTS, for example due to high earnings.</p> <p>There is a very low caseload for this relief and removing it would help to simplify the scheme.</p>	The panel considered this proposal and recommended that it be included in the draft scheme for 2020/21.

Option 4: Remove extended payments from the scheme.

Potential Costs/Savings	Officers Comments	Panel Comments
There are no existing cases in receipt of this element of support.	<p>Removing this would help to simplify the scheme.</p> <p>The transition to Universal Credit makes it unlikely that there would be future beneficiaries of this part of the scheme.</p>	The panel considered this proposal and recommended that it be included in the draft scheme for 2020/21.

Option 5: Make no changes to the scheme for 2020/21.

Potential Costs/Savings	Officers Comments	Panel Comments
No costs / savings other than as a result of the natural movement in caseload.	There would be no requirement to hold a public consultation if no changes are recommended for the scheme.	The panel considered that there are opportunities to bring in small changes to simplify the scheme in 2020/21 and that this option should not be recommended.

Option 6: Restrict CTS to the equivalent of a band D property.

Potential Costs/Savings	Officers Comments	Panel Comments
This would result in a saving to the Council by reducing the amount of CTS payable to claimants living in properties in Council Tax bands E-H.	This is a straightforward change to implement but will have equality issues, particularly for those living in villages where property bandings are often higher than for similar properties in urban areas.	The panel concluded that implementing this change is likely to adversely affect those living in rural communities and should not be pursued.

Option 7: Increase the 10% minimum charge for working-age claimants.

Potential Costs/Savings	Officers Comments	Panel Comments
Increasing the amount of the minimum charge would result in a saving to the Council. An increase of 5% is estimated to generate a saving of around £130,000 (TVBC share £14,000)	The Council introduced a minimum charge of 10% in 2019/20. The impact of this is being reviewed throughout the year. However, it is too soon to accurately consider the effect this has had on recipients. Officers recommend that this existing level be retained for 2020/21.	The panel agreed with the officer comments and do not recommend any change to this part of the scheme for 2020/21.