



RECORD OF CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION

Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Decision Ref. No.	PH084
Decision made by	Councillor Ronnie de Burle Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources Councillor Malise Graham Portfolio Holder for People and Communities (Deputy Leader)
Decision Title	Council Tax Support Policy
Key decision?	Yes
Date of decision (same as date form signed)	13 March 2023
Name and job title of Officer requesting the decision	David Scott Assistant Director for Resources
Officer contact details	dscott@melton.gov.uk
Decision	1. To approve the updated and refreshed Discretionary Payments Policy and the newly created Discretionary Council Tax Support Fund Policy.
Background	<p>The Discretionary Council Tax Support Policy has been newly created because of additional funding set out in the Local Government Finance Settlement in December 2022. In addition, the existing discretionary payments policy has been reviewed and updated.</p> <p>The two policies, define locally how we will look to spend the Discretionary Housing payments (DHP) and remaining Council Tax Support Fund (CTSF), both supplied from central government for 2023/24.</p> <p>DHP is a fund provided by Central Government annually for the council to provide additional financial assistance with housing costs to those who are entitled to housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit. The payment may be for ongoing help with rent or one-off housing related costs such as rent deposits.</p>

	<p>For council tax the council has long had powers under section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to use discretion to discount the amount of council tax paid by a council taxpayer.</p> <p>Currently both DHP and a section 13A reduction are both considered when an applicant makes a claim for a Discretionary Payment. However, this is more difficult under section 13A as the council receives no funding for this, unlike DHP.</p>
<p>Reason for Decision/Main Considerations</p>	<p>For 2023/24 the government have provided a Council Tax Support Fund of £56,478. Initially every council tax support claimant should be awarded up-to £25.00, may be less if their annual bill after support and discounts is less than £25. We have then been instructed to create a discretionary scheme with any money that remains after this initial payment.</p> <p>Early estimation expects us to have approximately £17,000 remaining for this fund. Awards are made using our section 13A powers detailed above, meaning that approximately £17,000 will support that power and provide funding for this.</p> <p>The Discretionary Council Tax Support Fund Policy will be used to make an automated award for any new applicants for council tax support after 1st April 2023.</p> <p>Where a customer requires additional help or is not in receipt of council tax support, we propose that the current discretionary payments form is used to invite applications for further help with council tax. In turn the Discretionary Payment Policy would be used as a tool to decide an award. This would allow us to look at the customers circumstances as a whole.</p>
<p>Alternative options rejected</p>	<p>Not to update the policy / or prepare a new policy but this would mean we wouldn't have any defined policy on how we would look to spend the Discretionary Housing payments (DHP) and remaining Council Tax Support Fund (CTSDF).</p>
<p>Legal implications</p>	<p>The Council has the power to award grants to organisations using its general power of competence in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. In exercising the power the Council must satisfy its public law duties. In essence this means that in making the decision the Council must have taken into account only relevant considerations, followed procedural requirements, acted for proper motives and not acted unreasonably.</p> <p>The Council will need to ensure the eligibility criteria is formulated, applied and met consistently to all grants in line with Government Guidance.</p> <p>Taking decisions outside of Policy/Guidance may result in financial implications for the Council.</p>

	[Legal – 10 March 2023]			
Financial implications	<p>For 2023/24 the government have provided a Council Tax Support Fund of £56,478. There will also be a new burdens payment to cover administrative costs which has yet to be received.</p> <p>DWP have confirmed the funding amount for 2023-24 of £35,685 in respect of DHP which is in line with 2022-23. All of the 2022-23 allocation has been spent. When the funding has been spent the Council will need to decide if it can top this up from existing budgets or alternative funding sources. In 2022/23 it was topped up by £10k through some remaining county funding and the homeless prevention grant. The council will always strive to maximise the use of external funds where possible.</p> <p>[Finance – 10 March 2023]</p>			
Other implications	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the revised policy. No significant negative issues were identified but monitoring will be carried out to ensure that the revised policy does not directly/indirectly impact on any client group.			
Background papers considered				
List consultees (Where applicable)		Name	Outcome	Date
	Ward Councillors	N/A		
	Human Resources	N/A		
	Equalities	Check and Challenge Group	No significant negative issues identified	14/02/2023
	Communications	N/A		
Confidential Decision?	Not applicable			
Call In Waived by Scrutiny Committee Chair?	Not applicable			
Has this been discussed by Cabinet Members?	Yes			
Cabinet Portfolio Holder Signature	<p>Email approval received Councillor Ronnie de Burle Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources</p> <p>Email approval received Councillor Malise Graham Portfolio Holder for People and Communities (Deputy Leader)</p>			

Declarations/conflict of interest?	-
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ONCE SIGNED, THIS FORM MUST BE HANDED TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES IMMEDIATELY.

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Form Received	13 March 2023	
Date published to all Councillors	13 March 2023	
Call In Deadline	16 March 2023	