

SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW PLAN

Overview and Scrutiny



SELECT COMMITTEE TOPIC

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Raised by -	Member Request – Councillor Chris Penberthy
Date -	30 November 2016

Purpose of Review

The Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme is designed to provide help households with low income and with limited savings to reduce their council tax liability. Local CTS schemes replaced the then nationally administered Council Tax Benefit in 2013.

Devon authorities have worked together on their schemes since the responsibility for council tax support (previously known as council tax benefit) moved from national to local government. Eight changes have been proposed to revise the scheme for 2017/18, aligning it more closely with national welfare reforms. The proposed changes summarised below were subject to a 12 week consultation process -

1. Removing the Family Premium for all new working age claimants
2. Reducing backdating for new claims to 1 month
3. To assume a set minimum income within the calculation of Council Tax Support for self-employed earners after a 1 year's self-employment
4. Reducing the period a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Support to 4 weeks
5. To remove the work related activity component in the calculation of the current scheme for new Employment and Support claimants
6. To limit the number of dependent children within the calculation for Council Tax Support to a maximum of 2
7. To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where someone with a disability is cared for by another person who receives Universal Credit with a Carer's Element
8. To remove the additional earnings disregard and apply the standard earnings disregards regardless of hours worked to those claimants who receive Universal Credit

The Select Committee Review will –

- consider the findings of the Council Tax Support Scheme consultation to inform the development of the new scheme
- explore the impact on Plymouth residents of proposed changes to the local council tax support scheme
- consider information from witnesses

The Review will make recommendations to Cabinet.

Select Committee Membership

(As of 09/11/16) Councillors Penberthy, Morris, Ball and James

Process	
Methodology/Approach	Single Select Committee Session to be held in the Council House with invited witnesses, presentation from officers and relevant paperwork.
Sources of Information/Evidence	Plymouth City Council Local Government Association
Consultation Exercises	Initial feedback from summer consultation exercise.
Witness/Expert Participation	Witness will be sought from – Advice Plymouth Child Poverty Cross-Party Working Group
Site Visits	N/A
Resource Requirements	Will be met through existing scrutiny resources.

Post Review	
Reporting Process	The panel will report into Cabinet
Agenda Deadline	Monday 21 st November 2016
Anticipated Completion Date	Wednesday 30 th November 2016
Draft Report Deadline	Monday 21 st November 2016
Meeting Frequency	Single Session
Dates of Meetings	30 November 2016
Further Information	N/A