

# Press Release



27 July, 2022

## **Residents' views sought on proposed Local Council Tax Support scheme**

We are consulting now on a new Local Council Tax Support scheme aimed at helping more people of working age in the district who are living on low incomes.

The planned scheme, which would be introduced from next April, has been shaped by our officers so that it is focussed on people's ability to pay.

Each applicant would be placed in an income band and their Council Tax support entitlement calculated accordingly.

The maximum council tax discount for non-vulnerable working age households is currently 80 per cent. Under the proposed scheme some households would get a 100 per cent discount based on their income.

There would be an exceptional hardship element to support those in need together with numerous other revisions to the existing scheme detailed in the consultation which is launched today.

These include:

- Disregarding Child Benefit
- The removal of the current banding restriction which limits Council Tax reduction to Band D level
- The removal of non-dependant deductions where an applicant has non-dependants living with them
- Protecting the disabled by disregarding Personal Independence payments or Disability Living Allowance and providing a further disregard of £85 per week where the applicant or partner is in receipt of the disability benefit
- Protecting carers by fully disregarding Carer's Allowance.

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Applicants receiving Income Support, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance and Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance would receive the full Band 1 discount.

As well as providing more targeted support the scheme would be simpler, reduce administration costs and bring stability as recipients would receive fewer Council Tax demands during the year.

While some households with higher incomes may receive less support, it is anticipated the majority of applicants will receive the same or an increased level of support.

Lichfield District Council's Cabinet Member for Finance and Commissioning, Councillor Rob Strachan, said: " We had become aware that our existing Council Tax Support Scheme was not meeting the needs of our most vulnerable residents and in some cases, was actually creating a separate problem of increasing Council Tax arrears that they could never expect to address.

"After a review of the scheme, it became clear that its scope could be expanded to offer complete relief for those in the greatest need, with other income from benefits disregarded to ensure that people who need the support most, can get it and are not trapped into debt.

"This scheme focusses on the ability to pay, simplifies the applications process for claimants, and should help the Council to reach far more people than we had done previously.

"It is important that we now gather views, not just from other public bodies but most importantly from the residents and claimants themselves, to make sure that we are bringing forward the best possible scheme for Lichfield District.

"That is why we are asking people to participate in this engagement exercise that we have launched."

Please give us your views through The Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24 Consultation at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/LICHFIELDCTRLIVE/> by 23.59 on Sunday 16 October 2022.

Hard copies of the consultation document are available at District Council House Reception in Frog Lane and we are offering help in completing the survey to people with disabilities.

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Andy Kerr

**Interim Communications Officer**

Lichfield District Council

## Notes to Editors

Lichfield District Council delivers a variety of good value, quality services to more than 100,000 people in Lichfield, Burntwood and the surrounding villages.

Its vision is to be strong and flexible authority supporting a vibrant and prosperous economy, healthy and safe communities and clean, green and welcoming places to live.