

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

DECISION

Agenda Item No 6

meeting date: 7 NOVEMBER 2017  
title: LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017/18  
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES  
principal author: MARK EDMONDSON

### 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek approval for our Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme for 2018/19.

### 2 BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION

2.1 You will recall that, as part of the package of welfare reform measures, the Government decided to abolish Council Tax Benefit from 1 April 2013 and replace it with locally determined schemes of council tax support. In doing so the Government reduced the funding available, to local councils to pay for this support, from 100% subsidy to a grant of only 90%. This grant has now been rolled into the main local authority funding and will therefore be further reduced for each subsequent year in line with the reduction applicable to each council.

2.2 The Local Government Finance Bill imposes a duty on billing authorities to make a scheme by **31 January each year** and to consult with major precepting authorities i.e. LCC/Fire and Police authorities and other persons likely to have an interest in the scheme if any significant changes are proposed.

2.3 The scheme adopted by this council matched the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme but with a 12% reduction in entitlement for those of working age. We consulted extensively on this scheme and it was broadly supported.

### 3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHEME

3.1 The first bills containing Local Council Tax Support were issued in March 2013.

3.2 Our scheme has been updated by minor amendments each year to maintain the link with Housing Benefit and the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme.

3.3 We currently grant approximately £1.8 million in LCTS to 2,114 claimants, 1,151 who are pensioners and 963 who are working age.

3.4 Our experiences so far have shown that this debt is much harder to collect than other Council Tax liability and we have seen a significant increase in the number of reminders issued and subsequently the number of Council Tax payers that we have had to take recovery action against. However given the sensible approach that was decided by this committee to limit the reduction to reasonable levels I am confident that we will be able to continue to collect the sums due at almost the same rates as other Council Tax.

### 4 DECIDING OUR SCHEME

4.1 Members need to make a final decision on our scheme for 2018/19 in order to make a recommendation to Full Council on 12 December 2017.

4.2 We are not proposing any significant changes other than Maintaining and Uprating Income disregards, non-dependent deductions, applicable amounts and premiums in line with Housing Benefit as we do each year.

5 RECOMMEND THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Recommend to Full Council the approval of our local council tax support scheme for 2018/19 as set out in the report.

HEAD OF REVENUES AND BENEFITS

DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

PF61-17/ME/AC  
25 October 2017

A full copy of our current scheme and proposed draft scheme can be found at:  
[www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport](http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport)

For further background information please ask for Mark Edmondson