

## Report of the Section 151 Officer

Cabinet – 3 June 2014

### COUNCIL TAX - HELP FOR PENSIONERS

<b>Purpose:</b>	To agree a Council Tax Scheme to help Pensioners for 2014/2015.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	None.
<b>Reason for Decision:</b>	To comply with Financial Procedure Rules.
<b>Consultation:</b>	Legal, Finance and Access to Services.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that:  1) The proposed scheme is adopted.  2) The proposals and qualifying criteria set out in paragraph 2 are agreed.
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<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Janet Hooper
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Sherill Hopkins

## 1. Background

1.1 As part of the Final Settlement, the Welsh Government transferred £4m into RSG in relation to the former Pensioners Grant Scheme, of which £294k was allocated to this authority. The former grant scheme provided financial support to Pensioners receiving partial Council Tax Support, to help pay their Council Tax. This report is recommending that the £294k allocated should be used to enable continuation of a Council Tax scheme to help pensioners for 2014/15, for eligible pensioner households.

## 2. The Proposed Scheme

2.1 It is proposed to adopt the same scheme criteria as used in previous years, where the allocated funding is distributed equally to pensioner households (i.e. pensioners aged 60+) who qualify for partial, but not full, Council Tax Reduction. As the cases can be accurately identified from our records, those who qualify would not need to make an application for the payment.

- 2.2 It is estimated that there are approximately 3144 cases, which would be awarded approximately £105.00, where the amount of Council Tax payable is £105.00 or more. In cases where the amount of Council Tax due is less than this amount the payment would be capped at the amount of Council Tax due, subject to a minimum payment of £ 5.00.
- 2.3 The amount of net liability would be fixed at 1 June 2014, which would mean that there would be no recalculation required for subsequent changes of circumstances, keeping the administrative costs to a minimum.
- 2.4 The payment would be credited to the relevant Council Tax account, and a revised bill and explanatory letter would be sent to the Council Tax payer.
- 2.5 The proposed use of the grant is consistent with the Council's objectives in tackling poverty.

### **3. Financial Implications.**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications other than those shown above.

### **4. Legal Implications**

- 4.1 There are no legal implications.

### **6. Equality and Engagement Implications**

- 6.1 The proposed scheme has been screened and does not require a full Equality Impact Assessment report.
- 6.2 It should be noted that in terms of equality impact there are no changes to the qualifying criteria for the proposed 2014/15 scheme compared to the Welsh Government's scheme for 2013/2014. The scheme is intended to provide financial support to those pensioner households who are not in receipt of full Council Tax Reduction but still qualify for partial reduction and therefore by definition are pensioner households which have lower disposable incomes in Swansea.

**Background Papers:** None.

**Appendices:** None.