

## Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy

Cabinet – 20 August 2015

### COUNCIL TAX - HELP FOR PENSIONERS

<b>Purpose:</b>	To agree a Council Tax Scheme to help Pensioners for 2015/2016.
<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.
<b>Report Author:</b>	Rose McCreesh
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Mike Hawes
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Patrick Arran
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Sherill Hopkins

#### 1. Background

1.1 The former Welsh Government Pensioner Grant Scheme provided financial support to pensioners receiving partial Council Tax Support, to help pay their Council Tax. Although specific grant funding for this scheme ended in 2013/14, the Welsh Government transferred £4m into RSG relating to the former Pensioners Grant Scheme, of which £294k was allocated to this authority. City and County of Swansea, using this funding, continued to support pensioners during 2014/15. This report is recommending that funds of £294k should be used to enable continuation of a Council Tax scheme to help pensioners for 2015/16, 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 2940 cases, which would be awarded approximately £113.00, where the amount of Council Tax payable is £113.00 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 September 2015, 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.

### **5. Equality and Engagement Implications**

- 5.1 The proposed scheme has been screened and does not require an Equality Impact Assessment.
- 5.2 It should be noted that in terms of equality impact there are no changes to the qualifying criteria for the proposed 2015/16 scheme compared to the scheme for 2014/2015. 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.