

---

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

A meeting of the Executive Member for Environment, Finance and Governance was held on Tuesday 26 April 2022.

**PRESENT:** Councillors B Cooper (Chair),

**PRESENT BY  
INVITATION:** Councillors

**ALSO IN  
ATTENDANCE:**

**OFFICERS:** S Bonner and J Savage

21/7

**SECTION 13A (1) (A) (EXCEPTIONAL HARDSHIP FUND) POLICY**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which sought approval to revise the Council's Section 13A (1) (a) Exceptional Hardship Fund policy so that residents who are adversely affected by the Council's recently adopted Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme, and cannot afford the new shortfall in Council Tax, can apply for a payment from this fund.

The report outlined that On 23 February 2022, Full Council approved the Council's revised CTS scheme for working age residents. The new scheme is distinctly different from any of the Council's previous schemes and offers more support for working aged residents who have a low income (an increase from 85% to 90% maximum support).

The new scheme was budget neutral there are some residents who will be negatively impacted by the scheme from April 2022.

The Council already has an existing Section 13A (1) (a) policy which provides the Council with the power to make discretionary payments to Council Tax payers where hardship can be demonstrated and funds remain available. This updated policy will replace the previous one.

Whilst adopting the CTS scheme, the Council consulted Middlesbrough residents, stakeholders, partners, councillors, etc. upon the proposed scheme. The consultation also detailed that an exceptional hardship scheme would be used to help those residents who were unable to afford the additional annual council tax where their entitlement to CTS was reduced or ended. See appendix of the report.

The policy covers a number of specific areas including:

- How to claim
- Who can claim
- What the fund can and can't cover
- Guidelines for consideration
- Length and payment of awards
- Changes in circumstance

- Signposting to further help and support

The revised Section 13a policy was attached to this report for consideration and approval.

## **OPTIONS**

### **Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended**

No other potential decisions have been recommended as in accordance with Section 13A (1) (a) of the Local Government Finance Act (LGFA) 1992 (as amended), the Council is required to have such a policy.

## **ORDERED**

- That the amendment to the Section 13A(1)(a) policy (attached) be approved.
- That delegated authority to approve any future similar schemes or modifications to schemes be provided to the Director of Finance, as Section 151 Officer.

## **REASONS**

The decisions were supported by the following reasons:

1. It was a legal requirement that the Council has a Section 13A (1) (a) scheme.
2. Under the new CTS scheme, there are a number of residents who are negatively impacted. The policy provides a mechanism for residents who are impacted under the new CTS scheme to apply for an Exceptional Hardship payment.
3. Appropriate budget is available to provide support through the Section 13A (1) (a) policy.

**The decision(s) will come into force after five working days following the day the decision(s) were published unless the decision becomes subject to the call in procedures.**