

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

A meeting of the Executive Member for Finance and Governance was held on Thursday 7 July 2022.

**PRESENT:** Councillors , S Walker

**ALSO IN  
ATTENDANCE:**

**OFFICERS:** J McNally, N Mearns and J Savage

22/1

**COUNCIL TAX ENERGY REBATE DISCRETIONARY FUND**

The Director of Finance submitted a report, the purpose of which was to seek approval for the discretionary fund scheme.

The report outlined that on the 3 February 2022 Central Government announced a package of extra financial support of £9.1 billion to families to cope with the raising energy prices. Within the package, £1 billion has been allocated to Local Authorities in the form of a Council Tax Rebate which is intended to provide support to over 80% of homes in England within Bands A to D. Middlesbrough have been allocated £8.7m for awards that can be made within the guidance issued defining eligibility.

In line with the guidance, awards will be made to households whose Council Tax bill for their primary residence is based on a charge for homes in Bands A – D, as a single one off payment of £150.00. The payment will be administered outside of the Council Tax System, using council tax data to identify households potentially eligible.

Where the council holds a live direct debit instruction a direct payment will be made subject to pre-payment assurance checks.

Where no direct debit instruction is held the council will notify residents individually of the scheme and invite a claim, ensuring those that are digitally excluded have means to make a claim. Residents will be expected to self-certify that they are entitled to the payment with all payments where appropriate being made by 30 September 2022.

Residents will also have the option to have their £150.00 rebate payment allocated directly to their council tax account. Central Government have confirmed that Local Authorities can credit awards to Council Tax accounts, on the basis that the intention is to ensure the majority of residents benefit from the £150.00 payment, so residents who choose not to make a claim and are eligible will by default still receive support.

In addition to the Council Tax Rebate, a further £144m of discretionary funds has also been provided to support vulnerable people and individuals on low incomes who may not pay Council Tax or that pay Council Tax based on a charge for homes in Bands E to H. Each Local Authority is required to put in place a Local Scheme to offer the support. The report outlined the

Middlesbrough have been allocated £462k and within the report explained how this allocation would be divided.

### **OPTIONS**

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

No other potential decisions have been recommended as the approach is in line with central government intentions.

### **ORDERED**

- 1. That the Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme be noted**
- 2. That the *discretionary fund scheme be approved.***
- 3. *That the Executive Approves that delegated authority be provided to the Director of Finance, as Section 151 Officer to approve any future similar schemes or modifications to schemes.***

### **REASONS**

The decisions were supported by the following reasons:

- 1. At the request of central government, local authorities have been asked to put in place a local scheme.**
- 2. Middlesbrough's discretionary scheme has been designed to provide financial support to some of the town's most vulnerable groups. The scheme provides for secondary payments in some instances and extends to include groups that are not eligible for Council Tax Rebate.**
- 3. Appropriate funding is available to support the discretionary scheme. Once the funds have been committed the scheme will end.**

***The decision (s) will come into force with immediate effect and is not subject to scrutiny call-in procedures.***