

# **MINUTES OF CABINET MEMBER SIGNING MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2023, 10:30AM - 10:40AM.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Seema Chandwani, Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Resident Services

**In attendance:** David Graaff, Head of Service Delivery, Customer Services, James Straw, Benefits Manager and Nazyer Choudhury, Principal Committee Co-Ordinator

## **1. FILMING AT MEETINGS**

The Chair referred to the notice of filming at meetings and this information was noted.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

## **4. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were none.

## **5. DEPUTATIONS/ PETITIONS/ QUESTIONS**

There were none.

## **6. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME AMENDMENTS 2024/25**

The report set out the proposed amendments to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) to include some technical changes in the scheme for working age claimants which have already been included scheme for pension age claimants. The report sets out these technical changes, with a preferred option recommended for consultation. It also sets out the proposed consultation process.

### **The Cabinet Member RESOLVED**

1. To agree to a consultation on the preferred option to amend the existing CTRS in respect of working age claimants to replicate some technical changes which Government has already mandated for the pension age scheme.
2. To note the changes detailed in Appendix 1.
3. To note and approve that, following consultation with the Greater London Authority ("GLA") and having considered the GLA's response that a draft CTRS will be published and a consultation (found on Appendix 2 of the report) on the draft CTRS will be

carried out with persons likely to have an interest in its operation and the findings of the consultation would inform the final CTRS, which would be put to members to consider at Full Council in early 2024.

## **Reasons for Decision**

Central government mandated how CTRS was assessed for people who had reached state pension age. The relevant legislation was the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012. These mandatory requirements for the pension age scheme were updated annually by Statutory Instrument.

There was no such mandatory updating mechanism for the CTRS scheme for working age claimants. Instead, the Council was obliged to consider whether to revise or replace its CTRS each year.

The Council was not obliged to revise or replace the CTRS scheme, and if any revision or replacement is to be made, the Council must follow the consultation process set out in the legislation and the decision must be made by Full Council.

Where the changes were minor and/or technical changes it would not be efficient or proportionate to run a public consultation annually. Indeed it was not possible to replicate any changes from the pension age scheme to the working age scheme in the same year as there is insufficient time following the issuance of the Statutory instrument (usually in January) to complete the required consultation process.

The Council had not updated these technical changes since 2013 and there was a sufficient divergence to make a consultation exercise worthwhile. For example, there were some technical changes permitting the Council to disregard certain payments (such as those relating to Windrush and Grenfell Tower) for the purposes of calculating capital, which may have more relevance to some Haringey residents.

The Council was not seeking to enhance or reduce the current working age CTRS scheme beyond the capital disregards and is seeking to consult only on the technical changes set out in Appendix 1. The following changes were proposed:

Replication of capital rules. The proposed change was to update the capital rules to fully disregard certain compensation payments (Such as Windrush or Grenfell Tower support payments). This would replicate the existing pension-age CTRS rules and whilst this might only be applicable for a small number of residents, but it would be beneficial for any affected.

Replicate the Scottish/Welsh legislative changes. The proposed change would update the working-age scheme to replicate the pension age scheme regarding several changes to Scottish and Welsh Page 2 4, 4.1, 4.2, 5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, legislative provisions. The changes were administrative and the impact on households would be negligible as most affected households were resident in Scotland and Wales.

Replicate references to national legislation, so as to include new statutory benefits and income and other minor changes from the pension-age scheme to the working-age scheme. These changes were technical and will simplify the administration of the scheme.

## **Alternative options considered**

Not replicating the changes to the working age CTRS and having divergent technical requirements schemes for working age and pension age CTRS. This was not recommended

because amending the scheme will reduce the administrative burden on the Council and afford greater clarity and consistency of CTRS entitlement for residents.

Replicating all aspects of the pension age CTRS scheme for working age applicants. This was not recommended as it would either have the effect of creating adverse effects for some residents (such as some households with more than two children) or increasing entitlement for other residents (such as through the reduction of some non-dependant deductions) which would increase the cost of the scheme significantly.

**7. PROPOSED ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS ON SHEPHERDS HILL AND WOLSELEY ROAD.**

This item was deferred and would be considered on 14 November 2023.

**8. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were none.

CABINET MEMBER: Councillor Seema Chadwani

Signed by CABINET MEMBER .....

Date .....7 November 2023.....