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Our ref: HaringeyCTS2425

Your ref: Haringey CTRS

Date: 16 February 2024

James Straw
Benefit Manager
London Borough of Haringey
River Park House
225 High Road
London
N22 8HQ

Dear James

**LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2024-25
CONSULTATION WITH THE GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY (GLA)**

Thank you for your email of 14 November informing the GLA about the Council's consultation on proposed changes to the council tax support scheme for the London Borough of Haringey in 2024-25. We also acknowledge the related email communication sent by your Leader to the Mayor on 5 December. I apologise for the delay in responding.

As a precepting authority, the GLA shares in the risks and potential shortfalls arising from the impact of changes to boroughs' council tax support schemes. This letter sets out the proposed changes in more detail and represents the GLA's response to the consultation.

Introduction

As in previous years, the GLA recognises that the determination of council tax support schemes under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 are a local matter for each London borough. Individual schemes need to be developed which have regard to specific local circumstances, both in respect of the potential impact of any scheme on working age claimants (particularly vulnerable groups) and, more generally, the financial impact on the council and local council tax payers – and therefore the final policies adopted may, for legitimate reasons, differ across the capital's 33 billing authorities.

This fact notwithstanding the GLA also shares in the risks and potential shortfalls arising from the impact of council tax benefit localisation in proportion to its share of the council tax in each London billing authority. It is therefore important that we are engaged in the scheme development process and have an understanding of both the factors which have been taken into account by boroughs in framing their proposals, as well as the data and underlying assumptions used to determine any forecast shortfalls which will inform the final scheme design.

Framing Proposals

As part of the introduction of council tax support in 2013-14, the Government set out its expectation that, in developing their scheme proposals, billing authorities should ensure that:

- Pensioners see no change in their current level of awards whether they are existing or new claimants;
- They consider extending support or protection to other vulnerable groups; and
- Local schemes should support work incentives and, in particular, avoid disincentives to move into work.

The GLA concurs with those general broad principles and would encourage all billing authorities in London to have regard to them in framing their schemes.

Proposed Change for 2024-25 Scheme

The Council has consulted on three proposed changes to its scheme for 2024-25 as summarised below.

- replicating several capital disregards for compensation or support schemes, such as the Grenfell Tower and Windrush support payments, to ensure that the payments are not included in the income or capital calculations.
- matching the working-age scheme with the pension-age scheme by including changes to Scottish and Welsh legislation. These changes might affect residents moving into the borough from Scotland or Wales and will mean that these residents will receive the same level of support as residents with similar circumstances who are supported through English legislation. The number of claims affected by these changes is expected to be very small and this will have a negligible impact on the cost of the scheme.
- making several changes to match the working-age scheme with Housing Benefit and the pension-age scheme. These changes match the pension-age scheme and will help to make it easier for residents to understand. For example, including new benefits and definitions, such as Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay.

GLA Response to Proposals

The GLA recognises that local authorities face difficult choices on CTS schemes, as overall funding from central government has not been increased or been revised to take into account additional claimant numbers since 2013-14 which have generally grown in the capital outside the central London borough. Funding for CTS is, in any case, no longer separately identifiable within the local government finance settlement.

We note that the council's proposed changes are designed to simplify the scheme and protect payments residents may have received from schemes such as Grenfell Tower support payments and Windrush payments, as well as other compensation and support schemes. These proposals are not expected to materially impact on the cost of the scheme and there is not expected to be any adverse impact on CTS claimants.

Taking this into account the GLA raises no objections to the council's proposed changes to its CTS scheme for 2024-25. It is therefore content to endorse the proposed changes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Mitchell', written in a cursive style.

Martin Mitchell

Finance Manager

Email: GLAbudget@london.gov.uk and martin.mitchell@london.gov.uk