

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**  
**Pre-Decision Question - Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 4th January 2017**

Cabinet Report	Question / Response
<b>5 .4 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18</b>	<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>1. Which organisation submitted the petition received by the Council regarding this item and what was the level of support for the petition?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The petition was submitted by an organisation called Zacchaeus 2000 Trust (Z2K), a London based charity Z2K providing free advice and support for vulnerable people with household debt, housing or welfare problems. The petition included the names of 521 residents.</p> <p><b>Question</b></p> <p>2. What is the nature of the risk assessment which has been undertaken in assessing the impact of this decision, how will the risks be minimised?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The council undertook an extensive public consultation which included a number of options for changing the current LCTRS scheme. No decision has yet been taken in respect of whether the current scheme should be changed and if so which option should be adopted.</p> <p>In order to assess the impact of the options, modelling was conducted on the main options to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The annual cost to the council</li> <li>• The number of households affected (separated into vulnerable and non-vulnerable households)</li> <li>• The average loss of income for each household affected. (separate figures for vulnerable and non-vulnerable households)</li> <li>• The impact on household types, family size, working/non-working</li> </ul> <p>Some options protect vulnerable households and the proposals contained in the Cabinet report include provision for discretionary funding to protect households that may suffer hardship including those who do not fall into the protected vulnerable groups.</p>

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	<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>3. Quantify the number of people/households affected and scale of the impact and potential savings for each of the proposed additions to options at 3.17 in the report?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>If agreed, the proposed additions set out in 3.17 of the report will apply from April 2017 and will only affect future claims, so it is difficult to quantify the numbers of households affected. Examples include a resident failing to claim at the appropriate time or decisions to travel abroad for longer than 4 weeks, and therefore it is difficult to predict the number of these events and frequency with which they are likely to occur. However, any derived savings are likely to be nominal and the main purpose of their inclusion is to bring the LCTRS scheme in line with changes to Housing Benefit as both are claimed via a single application and administered simultaneously by the council's Benefit Service.</p> <p><b>Question</b></p> <p>4. In determining council tax liability in individual cases, how are households defined and what approach is taken to defining individual and household income levels.</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>With regard to council tax liability, the liable person must be aged at least 18 years and is normally the tenant or owner occupier. In the case of couples both partners are jointly and severally liable. In respect of Council Tax Reduction only the liable person or partner can apply and the household consists of all people residing in their home. For income purposes under Option 4 the income of all adults living in the home is taken into account in the assessment of entitlement, whereas in Option 5 entitlement is assessed using only the claimant and partner's income and deductions are applied in respect of other adults living in the household. The level of deduction is predicated on the other adults' income and circumstances. However where an adult other than the claimant or partner income of £370.50 per week this will exclude the household from entitlement.</p> <p><b>Question</b></p>

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	<p>5. Under Option 4 will LCTRS claimant's income from (a) Job Seekers Allowance, (b) Employment Support Allowance, (c) Disability Living Allowance, (d) Personal Independence Payment and (e) Housing Benefit taken into account as part of total household income?</p> <p><b>Response</b> Under option 4 for LCTRS purposes all claimant's income other than Housing Benefit would be taken into account as it is now. Housing Benefit is not treated as income in the assessment of LCTRS.</p> <p><b>Question</b></p> <p>6. Under Option 4 will non dependent's income from (a) Job Seekers Allowance, (b) Employment Support Allowance, (c) Disability Living Allowance, (d) Personal Independence Payment and (e) Housing Benefit taken into account as part of total household income?</p> <p><b>Response</b> Under option 4 all non-dependants income other than Housing Benefit would be taken into account. Non dependants do not receive Housing Benefit.</p> <p><b>Question</b></p> <p>7. Under Option 4 will the applicable amount and associated premiums remain as they are in the current scheme? If they will not remain unchanged how will they be amended?</p> <p><b>Response</b> Applicable amounts and premiums will remain the same (annual uprating will apply).</p> <p><b>Question</b></p> <p>8. How many of the 2,634 claimants estimated to be affected by Option 4 will lose their entire entitlement to LCTRS?</p> <p><b>Response</b> It is estimated that 515 households with non dependants would lose their entire entitlement at an average of £23.61 per week.</p>

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	<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>9. Under Option 5 does the figure of £370.50 refer to a) the total income of a household containing one or more non-dependent or b) the total income of all non-dependents resident in the property c) the income of each non dependent resident in the property?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Non dependant deductions will apply individually for each non dependant (or non-dependant couple) as is the case currently.</p> <p>Non Dependant Deductions in the event that option 5 were to be introduced</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="506 597 1459 789"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="506 597 1272 630">Aged 18 or over - All income</th> <th data-bbox="1272 597 1459 630">2017</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="506 630 1272 662">- gross income: less than £195.00</td> <td data-bbox="1272 630 1459 662">4.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="506 662 1272 695">- gross income: £195.00 to £281.99</td> <td data-bbox="1272 662 1459 695">8.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="506 695 1272 727">- gross income: £282.00 to £370.49</td> <td data-bbox="1272 695 1459 727">12.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="506 727 1272 760">- Income £370.50 per week and above</td> <td data-bbox="1272 727 1459 760">No CTR</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="506 760 1272 789">- Lowest Deduction</td> <td data-bbox="1272 760 1459 789">4.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Under Option 5 there would be no entitlement to CTR for any household where a non dependant's income is greater than £370.50 per week.</p> <p><b>Question</b></p> <p>10. Under Option 5 will non dependent's income from (a) Job Seekers Allowance, (b) Employment Support Allowance, (c) Disability Living Allowance, (d) Personal Independence Payment and (e) Housing Benefit taken into account as part of their total income?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Under option 5 the income of each non dependant resident in the property would be taken into account. Non dependants are not eligible for Housing Benefit as they do not have a rental liability.</p> <p><b>Question</b></p> <p>11. How many of the 1,261 claimants estimated to be affected by Option 5 will lose their entire entitlement to LCTRS?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>It is estimated that 464 households with non dependants will lose their entitlement at an average of £24.04 per week.</p>	Aged 18 or over - All income	2017	- gross income: less than £195.00	4.00	- gross income: £195.00 to £281.99	8.00	- gross income: £282.00 to £370.49	12.00	- Income £370.50 per week and above	No CTR	- Lowest Deduction	4.00
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	<p><b>Question</b> 12. Under Options 4 and 5, are the potential savings of £1.3 million and £700,000 additional to the income generated if the current Non Dependent Deduction regime is retained?</p> <p><b>Response</b> Yes, as current non dependant deduction regime does not provide any savings.</p> <p><b>Question</b> 13. Under Options 4 and 5, is it proposed that pensioner households in receipt of Local LCTRS would be subject to the revised income assessment for non-dependents or remain subject to the current banded scheme of Non-Dependent Deductions?</p> <p><b>Response</b> Options 4 and 5 only apply to working age claimants/households. Pension age claimants are protected as required by the Government.</p> <p><b>Question</b> 14. Further to Paragraph 3.17, is it still the Mayor's intention that the period for which backdated claims can be made will be reduced from six months to one month, and if so, what is the saving achieved by this change?</p> <p><b>Response</b> The purpose of this proposed change is primarily to align the LCTRS rules with Housing Benefit rules; the change will provide nominal LCTRS savings.</p> <p><b>Question</b> 15. Further to paragraph 3.17, is it still the mayor's intention that the length of time claims can continue while the recipient is abroad will be reduced from 13 weeks to four weeks, and if so, what is the saving achieved by this change?</p> <p><b>Response</b> The purpose of this proposed change is primarily to align the LCTRS rules with Housing Benefit rules; the change will provide nominal LCTRS savings.</p>

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	<p><b>Question</b> 16. What has been the total number of (a) pensioner households and (b) working-age households in receipt of (i) full LCTRS and (ii) partial LCTRS in each year since 2013/14?</p> <p><b>Response</b> Identifying partial and full LCTRS recipients in each category requires a bespoke report which is being developed and will be made available on completion. The information below details Pensioner and Working age households in receipt of LCTRS.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="506 516 1633 708"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Pensioner households</th> <th>Working age households</th> <th>Total households</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2013</td> <td>9,760</td> <td>25,675</td> <td>35,435</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>9,405</td> <td>24,920</td> <td>34,325</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>9,028</td> <td>24,318</td> <td>33,346</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>8,751</td> <td>23,163</td> <td>31,914</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>End of April LCTRS figures shown above.</p> <p><b>Question</b> 17. What is the total number of working-age LCTRS claimants whose claim is affected by a Non-Dependent Deduction(s), broken down by each of the four current bands?</p> <p><b>Response</b> Similarly identifying by band requires a bespoke report which is being developed and will be made available on completion.</p>	Year	Pensioner households	Working age households	Total households	2013	9,760	25,675	35,435	2014	9,405	24,920	34,325	2015	9,028	24,318	33,346	2016	8,751	23,163	31,914
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<p><b>5.7 Six Month Strategic Performance Monitoring report</b></p>	<p><b>Question</b> 1. What actions and initiatives are there either in place or being developed to manage sickness absence, and what is the approach to monitoring and measuring the impact of these actions?</p> <p><b>Response</b> Information requested.</p>																				

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	<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>2. What is the current position in relation to the extension of specific elements of the waste contract, how is this linked to performance?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>There has been a meeting with Veolia regarding the contract extension, which centred around identifying efficiencies, and improving the performance. A number of challenges have been identified, and these require all Members to be involved in discussions regarding the current contract, and how it is retendered in the future. A briefing paper is being developed, which will be used to discuss the key issues at an all Member workshop on 8th February 2017. The paper will be circulated prior to the meeting to prepare Members for the discussion.</p> <p><b>Question</b></p> <p>3. Regarding the activity “Develop a sustainable offer of support to children with special educational needs (SEN)” what is the current status of this activity, and will the development of the future offer take account of the context of reducing schools budgets and the need to review and restate the school/ Council relationship and responsibilities in relation to SEN?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>An external review of SEND provision was undertaken and the resulting report was shared with headteachers and other stakeholders during the autumn.</p> <p>A new SEND strategy is being drafted, informed by a number of workshops which include opportunities to discuss the budget position, an analysis of SEND data and projected trends upto 2010. Key focuses include consideration of how the anticipated increase in demand can be managed down, improvements in joint commissioning of services and transition to adult social care.</p> <p>Once the new strategy is in a draft form, there will be a wider consultation which includes the community, parents and young people. The final outcome will be a sustainable SEND strategy for the borough which clearly articulates roles and responsibilities and takes account of the council's and schools budgets.</p>

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