



Council

Monday 28 February 2022

Agenda Item 8 (a), Written Questions

Question From: Councillor Andy Beere

Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor Barry Wood and Lead Member for Finance & Governance, Councillor Tony Ilott

Topic: Council Tax Rebates of £150 for Domestic Properties Bands A to D 2022 /23

Question

“The Government has announced a rebate scheme which will involve thousands of billings/invoices, thousands of individual bank accounts and, given that CDC is a collection authority, knock on effects for Oxfordshire County Council, the other Oxfordshire District Councils and the Thames Valley Police.

Can Councillors Wood and Ilott, as CDC Executive members, firstly describe how these arrangements will work locally. And, secondly, are and will CDC be lobbying Government, including the HM treasury and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to ensure there is not disruption to CDC’s financial planning at the start of, and through the 2022/23 financial year, that might require CDC and the other Principal Local Authorities to require emergency funds at short notice in order to sustain local authority services?”

Response

“The Government announced the Council Tax Rebate scheme on 3 February. The Council Tax Rebate will be a one-off payment of £150 to all Band A-D households main residences only (second and empty homes are ineligible). In addition, there will be a discretionary scheme to help those, for example, on income related benefits support in bands E-H. The Government is providing new funding to local authorities for these rebates, as well as extra funding to help with increased administrative costs.

In line with Government expectations we are aiming to make payments to those that pay by Direct Debit in April, as we hold their bank account details. As you would expect we are working to find a solution for those who do not pay by Direct Debit so payments can be made. Currently just over 70% of our council tax



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households pay by Direct Debit. We will run a communications campaign to encourage those not already signed up to Direct Debit to do so in order that we can make their payments sooner.

As with previous schemes Cherwell will have to swiftly design a policy, including eligibility criteria, when further details of the discretionary scheme are announced. We are used to delivering at pace to support our residents.

The Revenues and Benefits and Finance Teams have been very successful to date paying out over £54m across around 10,000 business grants over the last two years. The total number of payments for the mandatory scheme to Band A-H households is likely to exceed 50,000, meaning in excess of £7.5m payments to households in Cherwell.

To assure the opposition, throughout the pandemic the administration has a track record of lobbying through all available channels for the benefit of our residents. This will of course continue.“