

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Referred from:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>6D</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>20 January 2026</b>
	<b>Title of item:</b>	<b>The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Effectiveness and Proposals 2026/27)</b>
<b>To be considered alongside agenda item:</b>		<b>9</b>

The report considered by Cabinet at the meeting held on 20 January 2026 can be viewed here: [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 20th January, 2026, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council](#)

**RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:** That it:

- (1) Amend the Council Tax discretionary policy to include the support provided to residents with a terminal illness, with the wording detailed in paragraph 8.17.
- (2) Approve changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme bands to reflect the impact of inflation.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:** To respond to the request from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and to consider changes for next year.

*Audio recording – 1 hour 9 minutes 55 seconds*

The Chair invited Councillor Claire Winchester, as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to present the referral on this item. Councillor Winchester advised that there had been discussions around:

- The age of residents who might be eligible for a reduction in Council Tax and how the awareness of the scheme may be raised.
- Appreciation of how well the scheme was working and of the consideration being given to families on low income or with a terminal illness.
- Residents were able to access information about Council services across many platforms and of the importance to ensure that any eligible residents were made aware of its existence.

Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member for Finance and IT, presented the report entitled 'The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Effectiveness and Proposals for 2026/27)' and advised that:

- The Council had introduced a new banded scheme (for working age applicants) from April 2023, as detailed in section 7 of the report.
- The regulations for Council Tax support for pensioners were set by the government.
- More information of the current working age scheme could be found in section 8 of the report, with details of disregards set out in paragraph 8.2.
- The Council continued to work with Marie Curie and were continuing to see how to implement providing Council Tax support to residents with a terminal illness

- It was important that an inflationary uplift to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme bands was made to ensure that households did not drop out of the scheme. A further update would be provided to Full Council on 29 January 2026.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Mick Debenham
- Councillor Laura Williams
- Councillor Donna Wright

In response to questions, Councillor Ian Albert advised that:

- Every local authority had a Council Tax Reduction Scheme and many had also adopted the banded scheme.
- The Council had researched the best forms of communication to ensure residents were made aware of the scheme.
- The banded scheme had simplified matters, with access to more information on income meaning that fewer adjustments to entitlements needed to be made.

In response to questions, the Director – Resources advised that:

- More local authorities were moving over to using the banded scheme.
- The aim of the inflationary uplift was to try and ensure that the number of residents benefiting from the Council Tax Reduction scheme remained the same.
- There had been no issues reported with the new banded scheme, which was working well.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Mick Debenham seconded and, following a vote, it was:

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