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Ref: AC/AH

3 October 2023

Dear Claire

South Kesteven DC: Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25 - Consultation (LCC)

Thank you for your email, received on the 1 September 2023, inviting Lincolnshire County Council to take part in the consultation of the proposed Council Tax Support Scheme changes for 2024/25.

The response from Lincolnshire County Council is specifically focused on the proposal to include all war veterans to the scheme of council tax support (option 7).

In respect of council tax income, Lincolnshire County Council is a major precepting authority which receives approximately 74.6% of council tax raised in South Kesteven (based on published 2023/24 data). The proposal to amend the council tax support scheme, which could make an additional 8,500 war veterans eligible for support, has the potential to significantly increase the cost of the scheme. This would reduce the council tax base and the amount of council tax collected locally. Lincolnshire County Council would bear the vast majority of this cost, which could equate to several million pounds.

This would reduce the level of resource available for Lincolnshire County Council and other preceptors, at a time when inflation and demand pressures has caused and continues to cause significant increases to the cost base. The proposal has the potential to adversely impact significantly more residents than the 8,500 the proposed change could potentially financially benefit, including vulnerable residents throughout Lincolnshire.

In addition, the proposal has the potential to mean that war veterans are treated significantly differently in South Kesteven in comparison to all other Lincolnshire districts. There are other relevant factors to consider, including:

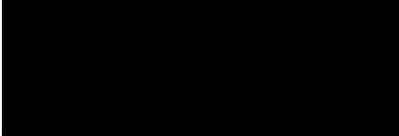
- The term veteran could potentially apply after one day of service
- The existing scheme already provides targeted support to those most in need
- Being a veteran does not necessarily equate to financial hardship, which is a key value for money consideration

It must also be noted that financial modelling has not been made available, to demonstrate the potential financial impact of the changes proposed. This impacts the extent to which all stakeholders can understand the impact of the proposal and respond accordingly.

Taking all factors into account, the Council is not supportive of changing the council tax support scheme to incorporate an additional discount for war veterans.

Once again, thank you for inviting the Council to take part in the overall consultation. Should you require any further information or wish to discuss the contents of this letter further, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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Andrew Crookham
Deputy Chief Executive & Executive Director of Resources