

Teignbridge District Council

Cost of Living Award

Financial Year 2023-24

1. Policy intent

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to determine eligibility for a Cost of Living Award approved by a resolution of Teignbridge District Council as part of its budget setting process on 21st February 2023.
- 1.2 The Council has agreed that the Cost of Living Award is a one-off payment of £5.54 for each Council Tax Payer who meets the eligibility criteria specified in section 5 of this of this policy.
- 1.3 The Cost of Living Award is payable for the 2023-24 financial year only.

2. Scheme of Delegation

- 2.1 The scheme has been approved by resolution of Full Council under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.2 Officers of the Council will administer the scheme and the S151 Officer is authorised to make technical policy amendments to ensure it meets the criteria set by the Council.
- 2.3 All awards paid on behalf of the Council shall be determined by the Revenue and Benefits Service.

3. Funding

- 3.1 The cost of delivering the Cost of Living Award will be met from the Council's general fund.

4. Effective date

- 4.1 The effective date of this policy shall be 1st April 2023. To receive a Cost of Living Award the eligibility criteria set out below must be met in full on that date.

5. Eligibility

- 5.1 A Cost of Living Award will be paid only to resident Council Tax Payers who on or before, 1st April 2023, are known by the Council's Revenue & Benefits Service to be liable for council tax on 1st April 2023 in respect of a dwelling listed on the Valuation Officer's council tax valuation list. To qualify for an award all of the following eligibility criteria must be met on the effective date:

- The dwelling must be listed as a dwelling on the Council's Council Tax Valuation list.
- The dwelling must be the Council Tax Payer's sole or main residence
- The Council Tax Payer must be the liable person as defined by Section 6 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- The Council Tax Payer must be liable for an amount of Council Tax on that date, or would be but for an exemption, discount, disregard or reduction having been applied to the account.

6. Exclusions

6.1 For the avoidance of doubt, no Cost of Living award shall be paid where:

- The tax payer does not have their sole or main residence in the dwelling e.g. where the owner is liable to pay the Council Tax (e.g. under the Council Tax (Liability for Owners) Regulations 1992 as amended); or
- Where the premises are unoccupied; or
- Where the property is determined by the council to be a second home (as defined by the Council Tax (Prescribed Class of Dwellings) Order 2003 as amended); or
- Where the dwelling has been added to the Valuation List after 1st April, but with an effective date of, or before, 1st April 2023.

7. Awards

7.1 Where the Council determines that a Cost of Living award shall be paid, the amount will be a single one-off payment of £5.54.

7.2 Where two or more persons are jointly and severally liable for Council Tax on a dwelling, only one Cost of Living award shall be paid.

7.3 Where the Council has reason to believe the information it holds about the tax payer or applicant at the effective date is inaccurate, it may withhold or recover the award.

7.4 Where it is subsequently determined that the records held are incorrect, the Council reserves the right to recover any awards incorrectly paid.

8. Payment method and timescales

8.1 For those accounts who pay their council tax by direct debit, the £5.54 payment will be made automatically into the bank account details used for the direct debit. Provided the direct debit collection of the April instalment is successful, the

Council will make an automatic payment. The Council aims to complete all automatic payments by 30th April 2023.

- 8.2 For those accounts where automatic payment has not been possible, the Council Tax Payer will need to supply their bank details using a simple online application process. Assistance from the Council's Customer Support Team will be available to any Tax Payer unable to access the digital form.
- 8.3 The Council aims to make the application process available from 1st May 2023. The application process will remain open for applications for one calendar month, closing at 5pm on the final day. Subject to the application process being available from 1st May, the scheme will close to applications at 5pm on 31st May 2023. Applications submitted after the closing date will not be considered.
- 8.4 The Council will provide up to date information on its website in due course to indicate when the application process will open and close.

10. Disputes

- 10.1 The Council will operate an internal review process and will accept a tax payer's request for a review of its decision not to make a Cost of Living award..
- 10.2 All such requests must be made in writing to the Revenue and Benefit Service and should state the reasons why the tax payer believes the decision is wrong.
- 10.3 The decision will be reconsidered by a senior officer as soon as practicable and the taxpayer informed of the outcome. That decision shall be final.

11. Fraud

- 11.1 Where any person misrepresents information, falsifies records, or otherwise contrives to access awards to which they are not entitled, the Council will look to recover any payment/s made and take appropriate legal action, which may include prosecution for fraud.

12. Data Protection and use of data

- 12.1 All information and data provided by applicants shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection policy and Privacy Notices which are available on the Council's website.

