

URN: 20-113

Subject: Council Tax Discounts 2021/22

Report to: Policy & Resources Committee 17th November 2020
Council 26th November 2020

Report by: Stuart Brabben, Revenue Services Manager

SUBJECT MATTER

This report asks the Council to approve the levels of council tax discount that shall apply for 2021/22 as set out in this paper.

RECOMMENDATION

That Committee is asked to endorse:

- 1) The council tax discounts as shown in Section 3.1 which will apply for 2021/22, this includes the discount change outlined in section 2.2 which is subject to Council approval

1. Council Tax Discounts

- 1.1 Under Section 11A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as enacted by Section 75 of the Local Government Act 2003, Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as enacted by Section 11 and Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 2002 and in accordance with the provisions of the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) Regulations 2003 and the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 the mechanism for levying council tax discount on unoccupied and empty domestic properties is set out. The regulations allow Councils some discretion in setting the level of council tax charged in respect of these unoccupied properties and second homes.
- 1.2 For the financial year 2021/22 it is proposed that there is one change to these discounts following a change in legislation on Long-Term Empty Premiums in 2018.

2. Long Term Empty Property Premium

- 2.1 The Council has discretion to be able to add a premium charge to properties that have been empty over more than two years. This premium was introduced in 2013 as part of the Government's range of measures to bring empty homes into use. Empty homes are wasted assets and are often a blight on the local community, harming the local amenity of

neighbouring properties. Therefore, putting empty homes more quickly back into productive use will increase housing supply.

- 2.2 Currently this premium can be up to 100% for those properties that have been empty between 2 years and five years and 200% for those properties empty for more than 5 years. However, from 2021/22 regulations allow a further discretion, which means that the Council can now increase the premium to 300% for properties that have been empty for more than ten years. It is recommended that this increase is approved.
- 2.3 The table below shows the empty property charges for 2021 including the increase in premium to 300% for properties empty for more than ten years.

Table1

Financial Year	Premiums for Long-Term Empty Property (Discount Class C)	Premium Value
2021	Properties empty for greater than two years less than 5 years	100%
	Properties empty for more than 5 years but less than 10 years	200%
	Properties empty for more than 10 years	300%

3. Recommended Council Tax Discounts to be applied for 2021/22

- 3.1 The table below shows the recommended Council Tax discounts to be applied in 2021/22.

Table 2

Discount Class	Equivalent in 2020/21	2021/22
Class C: Properties vacant (unoccupied and unfurnished) for one month or less	100% discount	100% discount
Class C: Properties vacant (unoccupied and unfurnished) for one month and one day or more and up to 2 years	0% discount (full 100% charge)	0% discount (full 100% charge)
Class C: Properties vacant (unoccupied and unfurnished) for 2 years and 5 years	200% charge (100% Empty Property Premium)	200% charge (100% Empty Property Premium)
Class C: Properties vacant (unoccupied and unfurnished) for more than 5 years	300% charge (200% Empty Property Premium)	300% charge (200% Empty Property Premium)

Class C: Properties vacant (unoccupied and unfurnished) for more than 10 years	300% charge (200% Empty Property Premium)	400% charge (300% Empty Property Premium)
Class B: Furnished properties and second homes that are no one's main residence	0% discount (Full 100% charge)	0% discount (Full 100% charge)
Class D: Property that is vacant (unoccupied and unfurnished) and (a) it requires or is undergoing major repair work to render it habitable, (b) It is undergoing structural alteration or (c) it has undergone major repair works to render it habitable or structural alteration and less than six months have elapsed since the date on which the work was substantially completed and the dwelling has remained vacant since that date.	0% discount (full 100% charge)	0% discount (full 100% charge)
Class A: Properties that fall into Class A of Section 11A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A property that is not the sole or main residence of an individual, - which is furnished, and - the occupation of which is restricted by a planning condition preventing occupancy for a continuous period of at least 28 days in a relevant year 	10% discount	10% discount
Care Leavers Discount A care leaver is defined as a person aged 25 or under, who has been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14; and who was looked after by the local	100% Discount	100% Discount

authority at school-leaving age or after that date.		
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4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Extra revenue could be generated by this change to Long-Term Empty Premiums, but the main purpose of the increase is to get empty properties back into use.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The committee is asked to endorse the council tax discounts as shown in Section 3.1, Table 2 that will apply for 2021/22, this includes the discount change as outlined in section 2.2 which is subject to Council approval.

Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Yes
Existing Council Policies:	N/A
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	Yes, as outlined
Legal Implications (including human rights):	Yes, as outlined
Risk Implications:	
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	
Crime & Disorder:	
Every Child Matters:	