TAFLEN BENDERFYNIAD AELOD CABINET
CABINET MEMBER'S DECISION NOTICE

PWNC / SUBJECT:

Cynllun Cymorth Tuag at Dreth Cyngor i Bensiynwyr

Assistance towards Pensioners' Council Tax Scheme

AELOD CABINET / CABINET MEMBER:

Y Cynghorydd Peredur Jenkins / *Councillor Peredur Jenkins*

PENDERFYNIAD / DECISION:

Peidio parhau â'r cynllun i gynorthwyo pensiynwyr cymwys i dalu Treth Cyngor tu hwnt i ddiwedd blwyddyn ariannol 2014/15, gan adnabod y gyllideb o £150,000 fel arbediad yn 2015/16.

Not to continue the scheme to help eligible pensioners with their Council Tax payments beyond the end of the financial year 2014/15, with the budget of £150,000 identified as a saving in 2015/16.

RHESYMAU DROS Y PENDERFYNIAD / REASONS FOR THE DECISION:

Rhwng 2009/10 a 2013/14, darparwyd grant penodol blynyddol gan Lywodraeth Cymru i ddiben cynorthwyo pensiynwyr i dalu treth cyngor. Ar gyfer 2014/15, penderfynodd Llywodraeth Cymru na fyddai grant penodol ar gyfer hyn, ond ychwanegwyd swm yn setliad cyffredinol yr awdurdodau lleol.

Cyfanswm gwerth y grant penodol i'r Cyngor ar gyfer 2013/14 oedd £150,092. Yn ddamcaniaethol, trosglwyddwyd £150,000 i setliad Cyngor Gwynedd ar gyfer 2014/15, ond mae cyfanswm grant y Llywodraeth wedi gostwng £8m yn 2014/15 a £7m pellach erbyn 2015/16.

Gan fod yr arian bellach yn rhan o'r setliad, roedd gan y Cyngor ddewis ar gyfer 2014/15 o beidio'i ddefnyddio tuag at gynorthwyo pensiynwyr i dalu Treth Cyngor, a dargyfeirio'r gyllideb at bwrpasau eraill yn unol â'i flaenoriaethau. Er hyn, cymeradwywyd cynllun lleol cymorth i bensiynwyr am un flwyddyn arall gan y Cabinet ar 1 Gorffennaf 2014, a neilltuwyd cyfanswm o £150,000 yn 2014/15 er mwyn gweithredu'r cynllun, tra'n rhagrybuddio'r pensiynwyr cymwys gallai fod flwyddyn olaf i'r cymorth ychwanegol yma gael ei ddarparu.

Tra'n penderfynu ar gynllun 2014/15, nodwyd yn y Cabinet byddai angen ystyried terfynu'r cymorth yma erbyn 2015/16 a thu hwnt, a chyfrannu'r gyllideb berthnasol tuag at y targed £34m o arbedion sydd angen ei ddarganfod. Gan nad oes grant penodol i'r perwyl hyn bellach, nid yw'r gwariant yma yn wahanol i unrhyw wariant dewisol arall a wneir gan y Cyngor.

Yn wyneb y bwlch ariannol anferthol sy'n wynebu'r Cyngor, argymhellir peidio parhau â'r cynllun i gynorthwyo pensiynwyr cymwys i dalu Treth Cyngor y tu hwnt i ddiwedd blwyddyn ariannol 2014/15, gan adnabod y gyllideb o £150,000 fel arbediad yn 2015/16.

Between 2009/10 and 2013/14, a specific annual grant was provided by the Welsh Government for the purpose of assisting pensioners to pay their council tax. For 2014/15, the Government decided that a specific grant would no longer be paid for this, but a sum was added to the overall settlement of the local authorities.

The total value of the specific grant to the Council for 2013/14 was £150,092. Theoretically, £150,000 was transferred in Gwynedd Council's settlement for 2014/15, but the Government's total grant has reduced £8m in 2014/15 and a further £7m by 2015/16.

Since the money is now part of the settlement, the Council had a choice in 2014/15 of not using the money to assist pensioners to pay Council Tax, and to divert the budget to other purposes in accordance with its priorities. Despite this, a local scheme for assisting pensioners was approved for one more year by the Cabinet on 1 July 2014, and a total of £ 150,000 was allocated in 2014/15 to implement the plan, whilst forewarning eligible pensioners that this could be the last year that this additional assistance would be provided.

While deciding on the 2014/15 scheme, it was noted in the Cabinet that it would need to consider terminating this assistance by 2015/16 and beyond, and contribute the relevant budget towards the target of £34m of savings that needs to be found. As there is no longer a specific grant for this purpose, this expenditure is like any other discretionary expenditure made by the Council.

In light of the huge funding gap facing the Council, it is recommended that the support scheme for assisting eligible pensioners to pay Council Tax is not continued beyond the end of the 2014/15 financial year, with the budget of £150,000 identified as a saving in 2015/16.

YSTYRIAETHAU PERTHNASOL / RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS:

Bydd diddymu'r cynllun cymorth tuag at dreth cyngor i bensiynwyr yn cyfrannu oddeutu £150,000 tuag at gau'r bwlch ariannol.

Mae'r cynllun cymorth i bensiynwyr yn rhoi cymorth ariannol i un garfan o'r boblogaeth yn unig, tra mae llwyddiant y Cyngor i ddenu ychwanegiad gwledig tuag at y gronfa Taliadau Tai Dewisol yn golygu y bydd modd i'r Cyngor roi cymorth i gyfran mwy helaeth o'r boblogaeth. Mae'r Polisi Taliadau Tai Dewisol ar gyfer 2015/16 am ddarpraru cymorth ychwanegol ystyrlon (cyfanswm £620,483) i achosion teilwng lle mae caledi, a phobl bregus mewn dyled, gan gynnwys teuluoedd oedd wedi eu heithrio o'r Cynllun Cymorth Treth Cyngor.

O gofio nifer y pensiynwyr yng Ngwynedd, cyllideb cymharol fychan oedd dan sylw, ac nid oedd yn ymarferol na chost effeithiol i helpu holl bensiynwyr Gwynedd, ar sail mai swm cymharol fychan fuasai dan sylw i'r unigolyn. Roedd y grant yn darparu hyd at £95 o gwtogiad yn nhreth taladwy tua 1,740 o bensiynwyr cymwys (rheiny fu'n gyfrifol am dalu Treth Cyngor ac ar incwm isel, ac yn derbyn gostyngiad rhannol tuag at gyfrifoldeb treth cyngor blynyddol, ond ddim gostyngiad llawn).

Mae gwaith ymchwil wedi ei gynnal sy'n dangos fod mwyafrif awdurdodau lleol Cymru eisoes wedi dod â'r cynllun i ben yn 2014/15 neu erbyn 2015/16.

Removing the support plan towards council tax for pensioners will contribute approximately £150,000 towards the funding gap.

The pensioners support scheme provides financial support to one section of the population, while the Council's success in attracting a rural addition to the Discretionary Housing Payments fund will enable the Council to provide support to a wider proportion of the population. The Discretionary Housing Payment Policy for 2015/16 will provide meaningful additional support (a total of £620,483) to deserving cases where there is hardship, and vulnerable people in debt, including families that had been exempt from the Council Tax Assistance Scheme.

Given the number of pensioners in Gwynedd, only a modest budget was concerned, and it was not practical or cost effective to help all pensioners Gwynedd, on the basis of that amount would be insignificant to the individual concerned. The grant provided a reduction of up to £95 in the payable tax of around 1,740 eligible pensioners (those who were responsible for paying Council Tax and on a low income, and receiving a partial reduction towards their annual council tax responsibility, but not a full reduction).

Research has been undertaken showing that the majority of Welsh local authorities have already brought the scheme to an end in 2014/15 or by 2015/16.

BARN YR AELOD LLEOL / VIEW OF LOCAL MEMBER:

Nid yw hwn yn fater lleol / *This is not a local matter.*

BARN Y SWYDDOGION STATUDOL / VIEWS OF STATUTORY OFFICERS:

1. Y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive:

   Yn amlwg, nid yw'r mater hwn yn un hawdd ond, yng nghyd-destun yr her ariannol sy'n wynebu'r Cyngor, mae'n gynnig rhesymol yn yr amgylchiadau.

   Clearly, this issue is not an easy one but, in the context of the funding challenge facing the Council, it is a reasonable proposal under the circumstances.

2. Swyddog Monitro / Monitoring Officer:

   Mae'r daflen yn cloriannu'r cyd-destun ynghyd ac ystyriaethau ac effaith perthnasol yr hyn a gynigir.

   The notice balances the relevant context, considerations and effect of the proposal.

3. Prif Swyddog Cyllid / Chief Finance Officer:

   Rwyf wedi cydweithio gyda'r Aelod Cabinet i baratoi'r daflen yma ac rwy'n cadarnhau cywirdeb y cynnwys.

   I have worked with the Cabinet Member in preparing this notice and can confirm the accuracy of its content.

LLOFNOD / SIGNED: [signature] DYDDIAD / DATE: 17 03 15