NEWS RELEASE

Council changes Council Tax support scheme and liability charges

Blaby District Council’s Cabinet Executive has approved plans to amend the current Council Tax Support Scheme from 01 April 2019 and to make amendments to Council Tax liability charges on second homes and empty properties.

Following significant reductions in central government funding, the Council no longer receives money based on the Council Tax Support provided to households. This money must now be found by Blaby District Council through its central budget.

The major changes to Blaby District Council’s Council Tax will be:

- Remove the 10% discount on properties classed as a “second home” in the district
- Charge 200% Council Tax on properties that have been empty for more than two years

Council Tax Support Scheme changes will be:

- Treating self-employed people in receipt of Universal Credit as receiving the minimum wage after at least 12 months trading – there will be some exemptions to this rule. This will align with Universal Credit regulations.
- To align the Council Tax Support Scheme with current Housing Benefit Regulations.

The changes could save around £163,000 which will be shared between the recipients of Council Tax; including Leicestershire Police and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service. Blaby District Council’s saving share could total £14,750.

Following feedback from residents during the six-week consultation in August and September of this year, proposals to increase the minimum some claimants have to pay for their Council Tax from the current rate of 15% were not put forward.

During the consultation, 86% of people agreed that the Council should remove the second home discount, with 83% agreeing to the 200% charge for long-term empty properties.

Councillor Lee Breckon, Portfolio Holder for Community Services, said: “These changes reinforce our aim to bring as many empty properties in the district back into use. These are properties many people would love to make their home, and the
200% charge will hopefully be an incentive for owners.

"We want to thank everyone who gave us their views during the consultation and we took these into account when making our decision. We do not want to place any additional burden on vulnerable residents of the district. The welfare of our residents most in need is more important than cost savings."

ENDS

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