

**Item FIP 19/10 referred from Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board minutes of 9 January 2019**

**FIP 19/10 REVENUES AND BENEFITS UPDATE REPORT**

The report of the Director of Finance and Transformation gave details of recent developments in respect of council tax, business rates, council tax reduction and housing benefits. Comparative collection rates as at 31 December 2018 were updated at the meeting in respect of council tax at 83.77% (83.82% 17/18) and business rates 84.28% (84.20% 17/18). Details were given of measures announced in the 2018 Autumn Budget, the setting of the council tax base for 2019/20, the performance of the Benefits Service and roll out of Universal Credit. Members congratulated the team on achieving a ranking of third out of 391 councils in processing benefits claims with no other authority in Kent appearing in the top 20.

Further to Decision No D180061CAB, consideration was given to recommendations to the full Council that schemes for Retail Discount and Council Tax Reduction for 2019/20 be adopted, the "Class C" council tax discount be amended from 1 April 2019 and the long term empty homes premium of 100% be adopted from 1 April 2019.

**RECOMMENDED:** That

- 1) the change to the Class C discount be implemented from 1 April 2019 and a report be submitted during 2019/20 regarding any implications;
- 2) the long term empty homes premium of 100% be applied from 1 April 2019;
- 3) a local scheme be adopted for the retail discount to be awarded in line with the discretionary relief policy and MHCLG guidance from 1 April 2019 and the scheme be made available at the full Council meeting;
- 4) delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance and Transformation to grant relief in accordance with the adopted retail discount scheme, subject to any disputed entitlement to relief being referred to the Advisory Board; and
- 5) the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2019/20 (to be made available at the full Council meeting) be effective from 1 April 2019.

**\*Referred to Cabinet**