The Cabinet received the recommendations of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board regarding the consultation on the Council’s Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and reviewed the changes proposed to the Scheme from 1 April 2020.

However, as a result of increases to the Minimum Wage, state benefits and Tax Credits recently announced by Government, the Cabinet was advised that it was necessary to amend the income bands within the banded discount table previously reported to the Advisory Board. This would avoid losses for households and redress the original objectives of the review of fairness, simplification and to remain cost neutral. The revised table was attached as Annex 1 to the supplementary report of the Director of Finance and Transformation. Members were informed that a Scheme had been prepared and could be viewed at: https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/services/advice-and-benefits/council-tax/council-tax-reduction-scheme

RECOMMENDED: That the proposed changes set out below be written into the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2020/21:

(1) Proposed change 1 – Paragraph 1.5.1 of the report
- To stop posting decision letters to working age LCTRS claimants
- To stop posting decision letters to pension age LCTRS claimants
- To introduce online applications as the primary method to make a claim for LCTRS for pension and working age claimants
  (Subject to paper forms being available on an exception basis);

(2) Proposed change 2 – Paragraph 1.5.7
- To introduce a minimum income floor for self-employed income after one year of making a new claim or starting a business, at a rate of 35 hours per week x national minimum wage;

(3) Proposed change 3 – Paragraph 1.5.14
- To introduce a banded discount scheme utilising thresholds as set out in Annex 1 to the supplementary report of the Director of Finance and Transformation.

*Referred to Council