

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS MEDIA RELEASE

Further financial support for struggling households in Babergh and Mid Suffolk

For immediate release: Monday 6 April 2020

Families already struggling with financial hardship are to be given further support to reduce their council tax bills, with letters due through the doors of more than 4,000 households in Babergh and Mid Suffolk over coming days.

The Government recently announced a new Hardship Fund to support those households already in receipt of means-tested working age Local Council Tax Support (LCTS). This means that bills for these households will be reduced by up to £150 - which will ensure that the most financially vulnerable households in the districts have nothing to pay in 2020/21.

These awards will be applied automatically if households are already in receipt of this support - there is no requirement to apply. We are writing to the 4,372 working age households affected across both districts - with letters expected to start hitting doormats this week.

In addition to those on LCTS, anyone whose household financial circumstances have been affected may be entitled to help - with further advice available on the councils' website.

Mid Suffolk District Council cabinet member for Finance, Cllr John Whitehead said:

“We know how worried people are about the financial impact of this national emergency and are looking to reduce their bills wherever possible, but council tax is an essential source of income for us to be able to respond to, and support our residents during this difficult time. The council tax we collect primarily funds Suffolk County Council as well as ourselves, Suffolk Police and our town and parish councils, who collectively are at the heart of supporting the most vulnerable members of our communities. We have to find the balance between helping those genuinely in financial hardship, whilst still being able to sustain essential services for our county and districts.”

Babergh District Council leader and cabinet member for Finance, Cllr John Ward said:

“In the weeks and months ahead, our energy and resources will be focused on supporting our residents, our businesses and our communities to weather this storm. We know how worried people are about the financial impact of coronavirus and extra help is available. The Hardship Fund will support those who need help most – but there is support available for all residents who genuinely need it. If your household income has reduced, you may be entitled to extra help. We urge anyone concerned to check the support available on our website and if you’re still worried, complete the enquiry form and a member of the team will contact you to find out if we can help.”

If your household financial circumstances have been affected, please go to our website www.babergh.gov.uk or www.midsuffolk.gov.uk to find out more.