

AGENDA



CABINET

MONDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2013

10.00 AM

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, ST PETERS HILL,
GRANTHAM**

Beverly Agass, Chief Executive

MEMBERS: Councillor Mrs. Linda Neal (Leader/Portfolio: Policy, Strategy and Strategic Partnerships), Councillor Paul Carpenter (Deputy Leader & Portfolio: Governance & Communication), Councillor Mrs Frances Cartwright (Portfolio: Grow the Economy and Economic Development), Councillor John Smith (Portfolio: Green, Healthy and Arts), Councillor Mike Taylor (Portfolio: Strategic Resources - Well Run Council) and Councillor Teri Bryant (Portfolio: Good Housing)

Committee Support Officer: Lucy Bonshor 01476 40 61 20
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Members of the public are entitled to attend the meeting of the Cabinet at which key decisions will be taken on the issues listed on the following pages. Key decisions are marked *.

7. *BUDGET REQUIREMENT FOR 2013/14

- **Determination of General Fund Budget** - Report HOF219 by the Strategic Director Corporate Focus and the Head of Finance.

(Enclosure)

- **Determination of Housing Revenue Account Budget** - Report HOF223 by the Strategic Director Corporate Focus and the Strategic Director Community & Environment Focus.

(Enclosure)



South Kesteven District Council

Equality Analysis (Stage 1)

General Fund Budget and Council Tax Setting 2013/14

Service Area:	Lead officer: Richard Wyles	Date of Meeting 11 th February 2013
	Assessors: David Scott Jo Toomey	
	Neutral Assessor: Carol Drury	

1. Name and description of policy:

The aim of the budget setting process is to establish the Council Tax base for the residents of South Kesteven for 2013/14. The Budget proposals are to financially support delivery the Council's stated priorities and to enable the authority to deliver on specific service policies. The budget provides a financial framework for Council Tax setting purposes for the financial year 2013/14 taking into account the council's overall financial position and service delivery requirements.

Is this a new or existing policy?

This is an Annual process as part of the Council's budget setting framework and constitutional requirements.

2. Complete the table below, considering whether the proposed policy/service/function/strategy could have any potential positive, or negative impacts on groups from any of the protected characteristics (or diversity strands) listed, using demographic data, user surveys, local consultations evaluation forms, comments and complaints etc.

Equality Group	Does this policy have a positive, or negative impact on any of the equality groups? Please state which for each group	Please describe why the impact is positive, or negative. If you consider this policy etc is not relevant to a specific characteristic please explain why
Age	Although any impact of this increase in Council Tax is not directly related to the protected characteristic of age we must acknowledge the potential for a negative impact on those of working age and some pensioners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working-age claimants of council tax support will be asked to pay a greater proportion of the bill under the new scheme – an increase in council tax further increases their liability

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People of working age who are not eligible for council tax support will incur the full cost of the increase. • Pensioners who are not eligible for council tax support will face the full impact of the increase unless entitled to other discounts • Pensioners in receipt of council tax support will see no increase as they are fully protected under the scheme.
Disability	Any impact of this increase in Council Tax is not directly related to the protected characteristic of disability	The Local Council Tax Support Scheme includes protection for people with a disability (defined within the scheme) which mitigates the impact of any increase. This would cover those people who are in receipt of a disability premium which would usually come from entitlement to other benefits such as DLA.
Race	No adverse impact in relation to the protected characteristic of race	
Gender Reassignment	No adverse impact in relation to the protected characteristic of gender reassignment	
Religion or Belief	No adverse impact in relation to the protected characteristic of religion or belief	
Sex	No adverse impact in relation to the protected characteristic of sex	

Sexual Orientation:	No adverse impact in relation to the protected characteristic of sexual orientation	
Pregnancy and Maternity	No adverse impact in relation to the protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No adverse impact in relation to the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership	
Carers	Any impact of this increase in Council Tax is not directly related to the protected characteristic of disability	As part of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme those eligible residents defined as carers (as defined within the scheme) will be protected from any increases in the level of council Tax.
Other Groups (e.g. those from deprived (IMD*) communities; those from rural communities, those with an offending past)	Those households that are on low income (including lone parents) who will receive support through the Local Council Tax support scheme may be negatively affected as there will be a requirement to contribute towards council tax following the changes in the criteria regarding the Local Council Tax Support Scheme	Analysis has been undertaken on the potential impact by analysing the number of properties across the district in terms of Bands A and B where low income families are potentially likely to reside. These make up 41% of the district and proposal based on their Council Tax Band Weighting would be an increase of £3.27 pro-rata for the year for a Band A property. The local Council Tax support scheme requires a contribution of 20% under the Local Council Tax Support Scheme which reduces the impact further to 65p for the year. An equality analysis has been undertaken as part of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme in terms on the impact on low income households.

*(IMD = Indices of multiple deprivation)

3. What equality data and information did you use to inform the outcomes of the proposed policy? (Note any relevant consultation who took part and key findings)

Consultation has been undertaken on the proposals to increase Council Tax both through face to face publicised community events held in both the north and south of the district as well as an online survey. Consultation was also undertaken regarding the Local Council Tax Support scheme which supported the proposals recommended and adopted.

If there are any gaps in the consultation/monitoring data, how will this be addressed?

No

4. Outcomes of analysis and recommendations (please note you will be required to provide evidence to support the recommendations made): Please tick one of the options.

- a. No major change needed: equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or for negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken

If you have ticked option (a) go to stage 3

- b. Adjust the proposal to remove barriers identified by equality analysis or to better promote equality. Please complete the questions in the box below.

b.1 In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your proposed policy/service/function/strategy to minimise or eliminate the negative equality impacts?

b.2 Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

If you have ticked option b go to Stage 2

- c. Adverse impact but continue Please provide an explanation in the box below that clearly sets out your justification for continuing with the proposed policy. You should consider in stage 2 whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact.

As the payments for Council Tax support is demand-led the Local Scheme the Council has adopted does not limit the number of awards if residents are eligible for benefit.

The Local Council Tax Support Scheme mitigates the impact on those residents considered to be most vulnerable. Additional capacity has been built into the proposed budget for 2013/14 to off-set increased demand as a result of the current financial climate.

The impact of the change will be monitored throughout the year and a further assessment mid-year will be carried out.

If you have ticked option c please go to Stage 2

- d. Stop and remove the policy/function/service/strategy as equality analysis has shown actual or potential unlawful discrimination

Signed (Lead Officer): Richard Wyles

Date completed: 13 February 2013

Signed (Neutral Assessor): Carol Drury
Community Engagement and Policy

Development Officer
Date signed off: 13.2.2013



South Kesteven District Council

Equality Analysis (Stage 1)

HRA - Rent Setting 2013

Service Area:	Lead officer: Ian Richardson	Date of Meeting 07/02/13
	Assessors: Tracey Blackwell	
	Neutral Assessor: Carol Drury	

1. Name and description of policy/service/function/strategy

Rents are set annually in accordance with the funding requirements of the 30 year Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. This analysis has been carried out to ensure that consideration has been given to equality throughout the process.

Is this a new or existing policy? Annual

2. Complete the table below, considering whether the proposed policy/service/function/strategy could have any potential positive, or negative impacts on groups from any of the protected characteristics (or diversity strands) listed, using demographic data, user surveys, local consultations evaluation forms, comments and complaints etc.

Equality Group	Does this policy/service/function/strategy have a positive or negative impact on any of the equality groups? Please state which for each group	Please describe why the impact is positive or negative. If you consider this policy etc is not relevant to a specific characteristic please explain why
Age	Negative Tenants of working age who are claiming housing benefit and under-occupying their current properties are likely to be adversely impacted as a result of the national Governments changes to policy on housing benefit.	There is the potential for a negative impact because of the need to increase charges for rent and other support charges. This will have an impact on all tenants but with a potentially increased impact on tenants of working age affected by the welfare reform changes. These tenants have received individual letters informing them of the likely impact of the change in the level of housing benefit for which they will be eligible. Advice and support to manage this situation is available however we recognise that some tenants may suffer financial hardship due to the changes. The impact of the welfare reform changes has been recognised by the Government and as a result the council has received additional funding through the Discretionary Housing Payments scheme to support the most vulnerable and to some degree mitigate the effects of any adverse impact.
Disability	See: other groups	
Race	See: other groups	
Gender Reassignment	See: other groups	
Religion or Belief	See: other groups	
Sex	See: other groups	

Sexual Orientation	See: other groups	
Pregnancy and Maternity	See: other groups	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	See: other groups	
Carers	See: other groups	
<p>Other Groups (e.g. those from deprived (IMD) communities; those from rural communities, those with an offending past)</p> <p>(IMD = Indices of multiple deprivation)</p>	<p>The Council's policy is to keep in line with Government guidance on rent restructuring. The actual rent is calculated on a property by property basis.</p> <p>There is the potential for a negative impact on tenants regardless of specific protected characteristics because the increase relates to properties across the district regardless of who occupies them. This will inevitably result in the increased financial burden of some of our most vulnerable tenants when considered alongside other elements of welfare reform (bedroom tax, universal credit) changes brought in by the localisation of council tax support.</p>	<p>Inevitably social housing is generally occupied by people who receive lower levels of income who will therefore be impacted by any level of rent increase unless their rent is fully covered by the level of housing benefit received.</p> <p>Approximately 60% currently receive housing benefits therefore offsetting the impact of any rent increase. This means that approximately 40% of tenants who are responsible for meeting the costs of their rent will be required to manage this increase in charge. This percentage is further increased when taking into consideration the number of tenants not in receipt of full housing benefit.</p> <p>The Council is required to invest in improving the condition of the stock in order to meet the national Decent Homes Standard. In addition as a social landlord the Council is required to provide the following services including ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responsive repairs • tenancy sustainment • estate management • lettings advice; and • tenant engagement <p>The HRA is required statutorily to be self-funding i.e. cannot be subsidised by general fund revenue.</p> <p>To help mitigate this potential impact advice and support is available through the housing services and other agencies to assist tenants sustain their tenancies.</p>

3. What equality data/information did you use to inform the outcomes of the proposed policy/service/function/strategy? (Note any relevant consultation who took part and key findings)

Consultation has been undertaken with tenants via the district-wide tenants' panel; no specific concerns were raised.

General consultation on the council's budget for 2013/14 has been undertaken through face to face publicised community events held in both the north and south of the district. Consultation was also undertaken regarding the Local Council Tax Support scheme which supported the proposals recommended and adopted.

If there are any gaps in the consultation/monitoring data, how will this be addressed?

Tenants who will be affected are being contacted but the impact will need to be closely monitored once these charges come into effect. This will be addressed in a stage 2 analysis.

4. Outcomes of analysis and recommendations (please note you will be required to provide evidence to support the recommendations made): Please check one of the options.

a)	No major change needed: equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or for negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option a) you will need to complete a Stage 3 analysis when your policy/service/function/strategy has been implemented</i>		
b)	Adjust the proposal to remove barriers identified by equality analysis or to better promote equality.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option b) you will need to answer questions b.1 and b.2</i>		
c)	Adverse impact but continue	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option b) you will need to answer questions c.1</i>		
d)	Stop and remove the policy/function/service/strategy as equality analysis has shown actual or potential unlawful	<input type="checkbox"/>

b.1 In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your proposed policy/service/function/strategy to minimise or eliminate the negative equality impacts?

b.2 Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

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If you have checked option b) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis

- c.1 Please provide an explanation in the box below that clearly sets out your justification for continuing with the proposed policy/function/service/strategy.**

The council has no other alternative but to proceed to set a balanced budget. This budget has been proposed taking into account all the implications as set out in this analysis and will be monitored for future impact through stage 2 of the analysis process.

If you have checked option c) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis. You should consider in stage 2 whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact.

Signed (Lead Officer): Ian Richardson
Head of Housing and Neighbourhoods

Date completed: 07/02/13

Signed (Neutral Assessor): Carol Drury
Community Engagement and Policy Development
Officer

Date signed off: 07/02/13