



MEETING OF THE CABINET
20 AUGUST 2012 - 10.03AM – 10.23AM

PRESENT:

Councillor Paul Carpenter
Councillor Mrs Frances Cartwright
Councillor John Smith
Councillor Mike Taylor
Councillor Teri Bryant

Councillor Mrs Linda Neal - Chairman

Chief Executive
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Head of HR, Customer Services and Performance
Revenue and Benefits Service Manager
Cabinet Support Officer

Non-Cabinet Members : Councillor Bob Adams

CO14. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2ND JULY 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2012 were approved as a correct record of decisions taken.

CO15. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)

No interests were disclosed.

CO16. LOCALISATION OF SUPPORT FOR COUNCIL TAX BENEFITS POLICY

Decision:

- 1. Cabinet approves the proposed criteria for the localisation of council tax support for consultation purposes. The proposed scheme for working age customers has the following**

characteristics:

- i. 80% maximum eligibility for those who do not fall into a vulnerable group**
- ii. 100% maximum eligibility for vulnerable customers (as defined)**
- iii. No restrictions based on size of property or council tax band**
- iv. Carers, disabled and war pensioners protected**
- v. Inclusion of enhanced working disregards meaning that a certain amount of earnings is ignored in the calculation of support**

The findings of the consultation will be reported to Cabinet at their meeting in December 2012

- 2. Cabinet supports a one month exemption followed by 25% discount for remaining 5 months in relation to Class C (unoccupied and unfurnished) and to support the revised arrangements of a 25% discount for 12 months in respect of Class A (in need of structural repair)**

Considerations/Reasons for decision

- 1) Report HOF205 by the Head of Finance and appendices (appendix 1: chronology of work completed to date, appendix 2: other options considered, appendix 3: income derived from applying council tax technical changes, appendix 4: equality analysis – localised council tax scheme and appendix 5: equality analysis – Council Tax Technical Changes).
- 2) The Local Government Finance Bill, which required the development of a local scheme for council tax benefits.
- 3) Government would no longer fund 100% of council tax benefits but would pay a specific grant to billing and major precepting authorities, which equated to a 10% reduction in funding.
- 4) Grant funding would be based on previous expenditure on council tax benefit and applied to a projection for total national subsidised council tax benefit expenditure made by the Office of Budget Responsibility.
- 5) Proposals by government which would allow billing authorities greater discretion over applying discounts and exemptions for certain categories of property from April 2013.
- 6) National and local projections of caseload and total estimated funding gap. The proposed scheme and technical changes would help meet this gap.
- 7) Requirement on local authorities to protect pensioners and other vulnerable group (to be defined locally).
- 8) Work undertaken with Lincolnshire County Council, Lincolnshire Police and other district councils in Lincolnshire in developing proposals for a local scheme and the impact analysis of potential

- changes.
- 9) Modelling work and caseload analysis undertaken locally and countywide.
 - 10) Consultation strategy summarised in report number HOF205. Phase 1: major precepting authorities. Phase 2: members of the public.
 - 11) Recommendations of the Resources Policy Development Group (PDG).
 - 12) Comments made by Cabinet members during the meeting.

Other options considered and assessed:

- Working with colleagues around Lincolnshire, Cabinet and Resources PDG members a number of different options were considered. These are listed in appendix 2 of report HOF205

DATE DECISION EFFECTIVE:

Decision CO16 as made on Monday 20 August 2012 can be implemented by Thursday 30 August 2012 unless subject to call-in by the Scrutiny Committee Chairman or any five members of the Council from any political groups.

**South Kesteven District Council, Council Offices, St. Peter's Hill, Grantham,
Lincolnshire NG31 6PZ**

**Contact: Cabinet Support Officer - Jo Toomey Tel: 01476 40 61 52
e-mail: j.toomey@southkesteven.gov.uk**