
Cabinet

Report of the meeting held on 21st March 2013

Matters for Information

63. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 2012 – CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS

Further to Item No. 46 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 19th December 2012, the Cabinet has been acquainted with the present position in relation to the Government's proposals to reform Council Tax.

Executive Councillors were advised that recent changes in legislation have resulted in the need to make amendments to the Council Tax Support scheme and Council Tax Exemption arrangements. Particular mention was made of the need to introduce a Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy, amend the Council's fraud arrangements and make a slight amendment to the Council Tax technical reforms. **Having considered the information before them and the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 50 of their Report refers)** the Cabinet has agreed to:-

- ◆ adopt the Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy with effect from 1st April 2013 and authorise the Head of Customer Services to determine claims under the Policy;
- ◆ adopt the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Detection of Fraud and Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2013 to allow for the investigation, prosecution and recovery of alleged Council Tax Support fraud and authorise the Head of Customer Services to investigate fraud and implement these Regulations; and
- ◆ amend the Council Tax Local Class C discounts scheme to provide for a renewal application to require at least 6 weeks occupation before a new Class C discount can be awarded.

The Council's Scheme of Delegation will be varied to reflect the above changes.

64. HOUSING BENEFIT DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT POLICY

Having regard to the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 51 of their Report refers), the Cabinet has approved the content of a Discretionary Housing Benefit

Policy for implementation from 1st April 2013. The Policy has been updated to reflect recent welfare reform changes and an increase in the level of grant awarded to each local authority by the Department of Work and Pensions.

65. HUNTINGDONSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE BUSINESS PLAN 2013/14

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 49 of their Report refers), the Cabinet has been acquainted with progress made towards the implementation of a Community Infrastructure Levy for Huntingdonshire and a proposed Infrastructure Business Plan.

Attention was drawn to a list of infrastructure projects and multi-area projects necessary to deliver the Core Strategy. Executive Councillors discussed the classification of projects particularly in relation to education and cemetery provision. Members were advised that the Business Plan identified the infrastructure requirements required to support all growth within the District to 2026. Projects will be prioritised with funding being targeted to those projects identified as critical. With this in mind and having been advised that the process will be reviewed annually, the Cabinet:-

- ◆ approved the Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Business Plan 2013/14;
- ◆ authorised the Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning, in conjunction with the Executive Councillor for Planning and Housing Strategy, to make any minor amendments to the plan prior to its publication on the Council website;
- ◆ approved the banking of CIL receipts during 2013/14 financial year with the exception of funding for the Huntingdon West Link Road scheme;
- ◆ requested the Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning to liaise with the Assistant Director, Finance and Resources and Head of Legal & Democratic Services to agree a 'service level agreement' for utilising release of any CIL receipts for infrastructure project delivery; and
- ◆ approved a draft Regulation 123 List for public consultation, subject to any minor amendments necessary as authorised by the Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning in conjunction with the Executive Councillor for Planning and Housing Strategy.

66. DOCUMENT CENTRE REVIEW

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the findings of a study by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 45 of their Report to the meeting of Council held on 20th February refers) which examined the operation and financial costs of the District Council's Document Centre.

In discussing the Panel's findings, Executive Councillors were of the opinion that some of the Panel's recommendations, including the use of multi-functional devices, printing requirements, Councillors' mail and the progress of the Electronic Document Management project were managerial issues and should be dealt with as such.

Having thanked the Working Group for their efforts in producing a thorough report, the Cabinet has requested the Managing Director, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources and the Panel's Document Centre Champion, to give further consideration to the Group's recommendations.

67. SETTLEMENT OF OUTSTANDING LEGAL PROCEEDINGS RELATING TO A STAFFING MATTER

(The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraphs 5 and 7A of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.)

The Cabinet has endorsed the action taken to settle outstanding legal proceedings relating to a staffing matter.

J D Ablewhite
Chairman