

AGENDA



- Committee - **CABINET**
- Date & Time - Tuesday, 10 January 2017 at 10.00 am
- Venue - Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding

Membership of the Cabinet:

Councillors: The Lord Porter of Spalding CBE (Leader), C N Worth (Deputy Leader), M G Chandler (Deputy Leader), A Casson, P E Coupland, R Gambba-Jones, C J Lawton, S-A Slade, G J Taylor.

No substitutions permitted. Quorum 3.

Note: Cabinet reports may be referred to Council or Scrutiny Panels. They should therefore be kept for future reference during the current committee cycle.

Persons attending the meeting are requested to turn mobile telephones to silent mode

Democratic Services
Council Offices, Priory Road
Spalding, Lincs PE11 2XE

Date: 30 December 2016

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes - To sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8 November 2016 (copy enclosed). (Pages 1 - 12)
3. Declarations of Interest. - (Where a Councillor has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest the Councillor must declare the interest to the meeting and leave the room without participating in any discussion or making a statement on the item, except where a Councillor is permitted to remain as a result of a grant of dispensation.)
4. Questions raised by the public under the Council's Constitution (Standing Orders).
5. To consider any matters which have been subject to call-in.
6. To consider matters arising from the Policy Development and Performance Monitoring Panels in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure or the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.
7. Performance Overview Report – Quarter 2 2016/17 - To provide an update on Council performance for the period 1 July 2016 to 30 September 2016 (joint report of the Portfolio Holder Strategy , Governance and Transformation and the Executive Director Strategy and Governance enclosed). (Pages 13 - 18)
8. Local Council Tax Support Scheme - 2017/18 - To agree the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18, for recommendation to Full Council (joint report of the Portfolio Holder Finance and the Interim Executive Director Commercialisation enclosed). (Pages 19 - 40)
9. Write Offs - To recommend writing off irrecoverable debts (joint report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Interim Executive Director Commercialisation enclosed) (Pages 41 - 44)

(Please note that the appendices associated with this report are not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 1 (Information relating to any individual), 2 (Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual) and 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) in Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, and are therefore attached to this agenda as item 12.)

10. Any other items which the Leader decides are urgent. -

Note: (i) No other business is permitted unless by reason of special circumstances, which shall be specified in the Minutes, the Leader is of the opinion that the item(s)

should be considered as a matter of urgency.

- (ii) Any urgent item of business that is a key decision must be dealt with in accordance with the Constitution's Access to Information Procedure Rules.

11. To consider resolving that, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

12. Write offs - Appendix (Enclosed)

(Pages
45 - 70)

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Minutes of a meeting of the **CABINET** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priors Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 8 November 2016 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

The Lord Porter of Spalding CBE(Leader)
C N Worth (Deputy Leader)
M G Chandler (Deputy Leader)

A Casson
P E Coupland

R Gambba-Jones
S-A Slade

G J Taylor

Cabinet Support
Members:

C N Johnson and E J Sneath

Chief Executive, Executive Director Strategy and Governance, Interim S151 Chief Finance Officer, Executive Manager People and Public Protection, Executive Manager Information, Place Manager, Environmental Services Manager and Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillor C J Lawton, together with the Lincolnshire Community & Voluntary Service.

In Attendance: Councillor B Alcock (Chairman, Performance Monitoring Panel), Councillor G R Aley (Chairman, Governance and Audit Committee) and Councillor A M Newton (Independent Group Leader).

Community Representatives: Parish Councils

In the Public Gallery: Councillor F Biggadike, Communications Officer and the Press.

Action By

11. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2016 were signed by the Deputy Leader as a correct record. The Leader was delayed and not present at the start of the meeting.

12. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Councillor Newton informed the meeting that in relation to item 13, in the interests of transparency she wished it to be recorded that she was a member of the CPBS Board. She had to leave the meeting early, prior to discussion of this item, and would address questions through Councillor Alcock.

Councillor Coupland informed the meeting that in relation to item 13, in the interests of transparency, he wished it to be recorded that he was a member of the CPBS Board. He remained in the meeting during discussion of this item.

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13. QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC UNDER THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION (STANDING ORDERS).

No questions were raised under the Council's Constitution (Standing Orders).

14. TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS WHICH HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO CALL-IN.

There were no matters subject to call-in.

15. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANELS

Final Report of the Swimming Pool and Leisure Facilities Contract Task Group

Consideration was given to the final report of the Swimming Pool and Leisure Facilities Contract Task Group containing recommendations which had been approved by the Performance Monitoring Panel.

The Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor G Dark was unable to attend the meeting, and the report containing the Task Group's recommendations was presented to the Cabinet on his behalf by Councillor A M Newton.

The Portfolio Holder, Communities and Facilities reported that officers at the Authority and at 1Life had met, and that a number of issues were being dealt with. Staff training, cleaning and spot checks were being undertaken.

The Leader asked how a full time cleaner could be accommodated under the existing contract, and was advised that the contract made provision for cleaning of the facilities. It was requested that the contract be considered thoroughly and managed effectively.

With regard to the monitoring of progress, it was requested that the Portfolio Holder, Communities and Facilities be kept up to date on any relevant issues that arose.

The Leader welcomed the report of the Task Group and requested that his thanks be passed to the Task Group for the work it had undertaken.

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DECISION:

- a) That the following recommendations of the Task Group be approved:
- (i) That a full time cleaner is considered by 1Life as part of their annual budget allocations. It is evident that additional hours are required for the proactive cleaning of the swimming pool facility, in particular the changing room areas, in order to adhere to the requirements of the contract;
 - (ii) That contract management of the site improves with a formally recorded daily and weekly monitoring regime and that should standards fall short of the requirements within the contract, the contract warning system is to be followed through and be robustly pursued by the contract manager;
 - (iii) That staff within the facilities record and notify management of any repairs required on a daily basis and that these are dealt with in a timely manner. In addition, all outstanding repairs and maintenance should be undertaken promptly to improve standards at the leisure facilities;
 - (iv) That the blue overshoe policy is reviewed immediately and a new, more effective policy is put in place within three months;
 - (v) That these recommendations are allocated to an identified officer to ensure they are actioned and that an update is received by the Performance Monitoring Panel on actions against these at 7 February 2017 meeting; and
 - (vi) That the Performance Monitoring Panel is involved in the consultation stage of any future option appraisals in respect to Leisure Facilities provision in South Holland as detailed in the Transformation Programme.
- b) That the existing contract between South Holland District Council and 1Life be considered thoroughly and managed effectively; and
- c) That the Portfolio Holder, Communities and Facilities be kept up to date on any relevant issues that may arise.

EH CM

EH

EH

(Other options considered:

- *Not to approve the Task Group's Final Report and/or suggest that some or all of the recommendations be*

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amended; or

- *Do nothing.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To improve processes and procedures in the future, as identified;*
- *To enable effective monitoring by the Performance Monitoring Panel as identified.)*

(The Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Place joined the meeting during discussion of the above item.)

16. REVIEW OF THE EXISTING DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACE ORDER IN SPALDING TOWN CENTRE

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Portfolio Holder, Strategy, Governance and Transformation and the Executive Manager, People and Public Protection, which sought a review of the existing Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) in light of new tools and powers following the introduction of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Police and Crime Act 2014.

Councillors were advised that the Policy Development Panel had considered the report recently, had supported the recommended option 4, and had also suggested a new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) be considered, to include the wider riverbank area and to include a number of additional behaviours suggested during the consultation period.

Members commented that public expectation in relation to the issue of PSPOs to address anti-social behaviour was important. In addition, it was vital that residents reported issues where there were any as currently, perception was not always supported by the evidence of reported incidents.

The potential introduction of further PSPOs in the District was also discussed, as was the time it took to put these in place. It was explained that legislation dictated that this process be undertaken in a particular way, to include consultation, and that there was evidence of anti-social behaviour. It was requested that officers produce a timeline detailing how PSPOs could be extended in relevant areas and the quickest way in which these could be undertaken, and that the Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Governance and Transformation review this information.

DECISION:

- a) That Option 4 be approved, to proceed with the immediate transfer of the existing DPPO to a PSPO with conditions to address alcohol consumption;

PA, EH

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- b) That further consultation be undertaken to assess if any additional behaviours would need to be included within the new PSPO mentioned at (a) above;
- c) That a new PSPO be considered, to include the wider riverbank area and to include a number of additional behaviours suggested during the consultation period;
- d) That enforcement options and mechanisms are reviewed to ensure that public expectations are met; and
- e) That officers produce a timeline detailing how PSPOs could be extended in relevant areas, and the quickest way in which these could be undertaken, and that the Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Governance and Transformation review this information.

(Other options considered:

- *Do nothing.*
- *Proceed with the immediate transfer of the existing DPPO to a PSPO only.*
- *Leave the existing town centre DPPO to remain in place until 20 October 2017 until it automatically becomes a PSPO (to address alcohol in public) and conduct a thorough review of community concerns of street drinking or alcohol related concerns along the riverbank, raised through the consultation already undertaken, with a separate and new PSPO.*

Reasons for recommendations:

- *To address the main concern of the consumption of alcohol.*
- *In order to justify use of an order, the following conditions are required to be met and in the view of the Cabinet, these conditions are likely to be met:*

First condition

- *Activities carried out in a public place in the local authority's area have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality; or*
- *It is likely that the activities will be carried out in a public place within the area that will have such an effect support continued action in the Spalding Town Centre area and a transition from a DPPO to a PSPO.*

Second condition

- *Is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature;*
- *Is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable; and*
- *Justifies the restrictions imposed.)*

17. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017/18

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Interim S151 Chief Finance Officer which recommended that changes to the Local Council Tax support

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scheme were reviewed and agreement was given to release them for consultation.

Appendix A set out the detail of the proposed changes together with some examples of the impact for claimants. In summary, the amendments which would be consulted on were:

- Abolish second adult rebate
- Introduce a minimum weekly amount (£5) of Council Tax Support, such that amounts of benefit below this level will not be paid
- Decrease the non-dependant deduction rate
- Restrict the maximum level of benefit to the level that would be available to Council Tax Band C
- Lower the maximum capital limit to £8,000 (from £16,000)
- Lower the capital threshold to £3,000 (from £6,000)
- Limit the back dating of benefit to 1 month (from 3 months)
- Remove the family premium for new applications of Council Tax Support
- Reduce the maximum level of discount from 75% to 70%

The Leader requested that the following changes be made:

- One of the core principles of South Holland's local Council Tax Support scheme was that people with children, disabilities or caring responsibilities would be supported. It was requested that ex-forces personnel be added to this list.
- Proposals to abolish the second adult rebate be phased in over 3 years in order to minimise the impact on individuals.
- The restriction of Council Tax to a particular band be amended from Band C to Band D.

DECISION:

That the recommended changes to the Local Council Tax support scheme be released for consultation, with the following amendments:

SJ, KT

- (i) That ex-forces personnel be added to the list of those to be supported as one of the core principles of South Holland's local Council Tax Support scheme, in addition to people with children, disabilities or caring responsibilities;
- (ii) That proposals to abolish the second adult rebate be phased in over 3 years in order to minimise the impact on individuals; and
- (iii) That the restriction of Council Tax to a particular band be amended from Band C to Band D.

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(Other options considered:

- *Retain the existing Council Tax Support scheme for 2017/18*

Reasons for decision:

- *The local Council Tax support scheme is now embedded and in its third year of operation. An annual review of discount levels is required, even if there are no changes proposed. National funding for the scheme is diminishing with zero contribution from central government expected by 2019/20 meaning the full cost would be met by the precepting bodies.)*

18. UK MUNICIPAL BOND AGENCY

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Interim S151 Chief Finance Officer which sought approval for the Council to enter into the borrowing documents prepared by the UK Municipal Bonds Agency (the Agency).

The Agency required that local authorities borrowing from it entered into its Framework Agreement. The Agreement included an accession document confirming that the Council had the necessary approvals to sign the Agreement and a joint and several guarantee to those lending money to the Agency in respect of the borrowing of all other local authorities from the Agency. Entering into the Framework Agreement enabled the Council to access funding from the Agency as and when required.

The report set out the background to the Agency, key facets of the Framework Agreement and the advantages and disadvantages of entering into the Agreement, including an assessment of the risk that the Council would be called upon under the guarantee.

Members considered the information provided. It was agreed that the principles of the report would be discussed and there was therefore no need for the meeting to go into private session to consider Appendix 1 to the report specifically (exempt item – UK Municipal Bonds Agency PLC, Documents Package for Local Authorities).

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FULL COUNCIL:

- a) To approve the Council's entry into the Framework Agreement and its accompanying schedules including the joint and several guarantee;
- b) That delegated authority is given to the Executive Director, Commercialisation as Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance to agree amendments to the

LE, SJ, KT
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Framework Agreement as appropriate; and

- c) That subject to due diligence and assessment of the legal and financial implications of the proposal, delegated authority be given to the Executive Director, Commercialisation as Section 151 Officer and the Executive Director, Strategy and Governance as Monitoring Officer to sign agreed final documents, as appropriate, on behalf of the Council.

(Other option considered:

- *To note the report and not approve the recommendations.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To increase flexibility and availability of capital financing for future projects.)*

(The Environmental Services Manager, the Community Representative for Parish Councillors and the Press left the meeting following consideration of the above item.)

19. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE LEADER DECIDES ARE URGENT.

There were no urgent items.

20. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

DECISION:

That, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

21. ICT SERVICE AND INFRASTRUCTURE (EXEMPT PARAGRAPH 3)

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Portfolio Holder Governance and Customer and the Executive Director Strategy and Governance which sought a decision on the future approach regarding the ICT service and the development of the associated technical infrastructure in order to support Council services, (relevant to all Corporate Priorities).

Councillors discussed issues around these proposals, and considered the various options that had been proposed. It was agreed that investment in ICT was essential now and in the future.

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DECISION:

- a) That the recommendations of the Actica report be noted, for consideration around future ICT provision; and
- b) That subject to the agreement by full Council on the capital budget, the building of a new technical infrastructure in order to deliver improvements to IT services, security and disaster recovery, agile working, improved network access and to facilitate greater freedom to change the ICT delivery model in the future be agreed.

LE, RL CM

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- c) That the Council approves a capital budget of £523,000 to fund infrastructure improvements, a device refresh programme, and enhanced network connection to Breckland Council as part of an improved disaster recovery plan, and to enable Council-wide transformation benefits.

(Other options considered:

- *Do nothing.*
- *Implement a new shared ICT infrastructure and move to an insourced, shared ICT service.*
- *Implement a new shared ICT infrastructure and move to an insourced service with separate place based teams.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To provide a phased approach which would create a shared infrastructure allowing South Holland's current IT supply contract to continue, Breckland Council to realise some of the operational benefits of an internal service and allowing South Holland the space to consider future strategic direction.)*

**22. TRANSFORMATION – DIGITAL PAYMENT PHASE 2
(DISTRICT PROVISION) (EXEMPT PARAGRAPH 3)**

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Governance and Transformation and the Shared Executive Manager for People and Public Protection which detailed Digital Payment Phase 2 (District Provision), part of the Authority's Transformation programme.

The proposals within the report detailed how the Authority would expand the ability to make payments for Council services across the district, by use of Pay Point, Post Office and digital solutions. This proposal would enable residents and businesses greater flexibility in the way that they payed, and aligned with the Corporate Priority of providing the right service at the right time and in the right way.

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Members commented that there were some areas of the District that were not covered by these additional payment solutions however it was acknowledged that the locations secured to date still provided thirty more locations for payment than were currently available. Ward members were encouraged to identify payment locations within their wards to broaden the offer available to the public.

DECISION:

- a) That facilities to make payment for Council services via Pay Point, Post Offices and digital provision be provided;
- b) That the Priory Road cash desk remain open to facilitate the Transformation programme, until the Authority was required to accommodate its third party partners or organisations, or by Autumn 2017; and
- c) That floor walkers are used to assist residents and businesses within the Council reception area, to enable a smooth transition.

(Other options considered:

- *To do nothing.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To enable communities to have access to sites closer to their homes and businesses to pay for Council services, and to encourage local residents to use these outlets for additional services by supporting the place to develop and thrive locally;*
- *To facilitate the Authority's Transformation programme and to potentially accommodate third party partners or organisations;*
- *Through floor walkers, to provide customers with advice on a greater choice of payment options for Council facilities.)*

(The meeting ended at 11.35 am)

(End of minutes)

These minutes are published on Friday 11 November 2016. In accordance with the Council's Constitution the DECISIONS detailed above will, unless otherwise stated, come into force and may then be implemented on Monday 21 November 2016 (i.e. after the expiry of five working days from the date of publication of these minutes), unless during that period a notice which is signed by either a Ward Representative (in relation to a matter in their ward) or two members of the Performance Monitoring Panel or any three members, and complies with the requirements of the Council's Constitution, is served on the Executive Manager Governance requesting that the decision be called-in and the Executive Manager Governance approves the request

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for call-in. Where a decision is called-in it will firstly be considered by the Performance Monitoring Panel on a date to be fixed.

Any FINAL DECISIONS and any URGENT DECISIONS take effect immediately.

Any RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL detailed above will be submitted for consideration to the meeting of the full Council on Wednesday 7 December 2016.

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SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Governance and Transformation and the Executive Director, Strategy and Governance

To: Cabinet – 10 January 2017

Author: Greg Pearson – Corporate Improvement and Performance Manager

Subject: Performance Overview Report – Quarter 2 2016/17

Purpose: To provide an update on Council performance for the period 1 July 2016 to 30 September 2016

Recommendation:

- 1) To note the content of the report

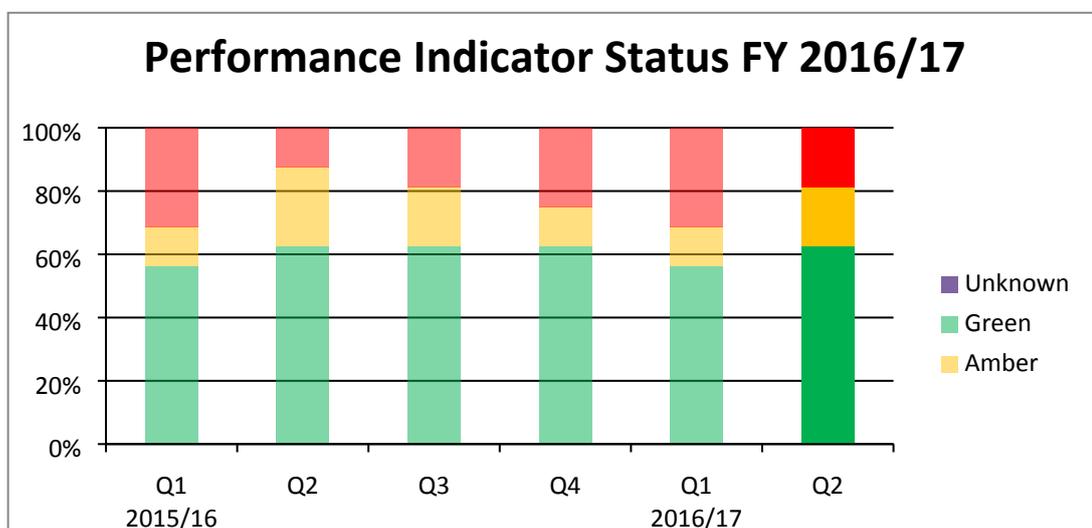
1.0 BACKGROUND

1.0.1 The Quarter 2 Performance Report 16/17 (Appendix A) aims to provide Members and residents with information about how the Council is delivering its services and how it is progressing against its Corporate Priorities. The covering report presents a summary of the status of the Council's key projects and indicators.

1.0.2 Areas where performance has improved since the previous period (Q1 2016/2017) are brought to Members' attention, as are areas of concern where performance is below expected levels or is considered to be worsening.

1.1 Key Performance Indicators

1.1.1 Quarter two saw increased levels of performance against the majority of indicators compared to the performance seen in quarter one. Performance is rated as good with 62.5% of indicators being green which indicates good performance. There are 3 amber indicators and 3 red indicators which in total make up the remaining 37.5% of indicators.



1.2 Areas of Success

Housing Re-Let Time

Performance around the re-letting of void properties has improved compared to previous quarters. The average key to key time for the re-letting of properties has fallen below the target of 28 days. This is a considerable improvement on the figures seen in Quarter one with a four day reduction (from 31 days to 27 days). When compared to the same period last year, a 34 day reduction has been seen in respect of re-letting times.

The Place Directorate continues to monitor the separate elements of the void process closely and work is undertaken to ensure that this positive improvement is maintained.

The area which still requires some focus is the Sheltered Housing letting delay which is still off target, however, reductions to delays have occurred in this area with a fall of three days from the previously reported figure (22 as opposed to 25).

Commercial Property

Commercial Property Occupancy is performing exceptionally well with 100% occupancy across the portfolio. This is contextualised against an occupancy rate of 93.33% during the same period last year.

Staffing

Staff turnover stands at 0.79% against a threshold of 2.5% which is an improvement and would suggest that employees have a good level of satisfaction in the workplace.

Planning

Planning application determination is performing well with 91.6% of applications being determined within time frames. This is well above the target of 70% and better than the performance for the same period last year which was 80.77%.

Revenues

Business Rate and Council Tax collections are both performing above their targets for the year so far.

Working Days Lost to Sickness per FTE

Sickness data for quarter two is only partially available at present as sickness information is reported two months retrospectively. However, sickness data recorded for July and August indicates that levels are within target. This is an improvement on the sickness level seen in quarter one where working days lost to sickness were 40% higher than target.

1.3 Areas of Concern

The following areas are either not achieving their target or are experiencing a significant decline in performance:

Missed Waste Collection Rate

The incidences of missed waste collection during Quarter two amount to an average of 40 per thousand households per month. This is approximately seven incidents above the monthly target. It should be stated however that this does represent a significant improvement on the previous quarter whereby an average of 95.9 incidences per thousand households were recorded per month.

When taken in isolation, the individual results for August and September have both been within acceptable levels: August saw 27.7 missed collections per thousand households against a target of 33 per thousand households and September saw 33 missed collections per thousand households against a target of 33 per thousand households. If the same control can be maintained over the next three months, the results for quarter three should be within target.

Housing Benefit LA Error Rate

Housing Benefit error rate currently stands at 0.54% against a target of 0.48%. In September work was commenced to implement a clearance strategy to deal with the backlog of outstanding work relating to the processing of claims; with a third party (Civica) being commissioned to help with this process.. Performance figures have shown a decline, which is to be expected. This area is now subject to weekly senior management scrutiny between Compass Point and South Holland to ensure that the position is improved.

2.0 OPTIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 To do nothing.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The report is for consideration and is presented in order that members are aware of how the Council is delivering its services and how it is progressing against its Corporate Priorities.

4.0 EXPECTED BENEFITS

- 4.1 The Council's performance is properly scrutinised.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Corporate Priorities

- 5.1.1 The report presents progress monitoring of performance of the corporate priorities.

5.2 Financial

- 5.2.1 The report contains information on Council's performance which does convey some information relating to financial matters.

5.3 Reputation

5.3.1 Performance issues can cause some reputational consequence. It is the purpose of this report to highlight performance issues at an early stage.

5.4 Risk Management

5.4.1 Performance issues may be subject to risk management measures to protect Council interests.

5.5 Staffing

5.5.1 The report contains information relating to staffing issues.

6.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

6.1 No Wards or Communities are affected

7.0 ACRONYMS

7.1 EMT – Executive Management Team

Background papers: None

Lead Contact Officer

Name and Post: Greg Pearson – Corporate Improvement & Performance Manager
Telephone Number: 01362 656866
Email: greg.pearson@breckland-sholland.gov.uk

Director / Officer who will be attending the Meeting

Name and Post: Greg Pearson – Corporate Improvement & Performance Manager

Key Decision: No

Exempt Decision: No

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A Quarter 2 Performance Report

2016/17 Q2 SHDC PMP Report

Generated on: 25 October 2016



Portfolio Holder	Performance Indicator	Same Period Last Year	Performance			
		Q2 2015/16	Q2 2016/17			
		Value	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend
Strategy & Governance Portfolio SHDC; Cllr Sally-Ann Slade	% of Calls Abandoned	10.22%	4.12%	10%		
Strategy & Governance Portfolio SHDC; Cllr Sally-Ann Slade	Average Wait Time in Seconds	76.33	34.33	86		
Strategy & Governance Portfolio SHDC; Cllr Sally-Ann Slade	% of Customer Complaints Upheld - Stage 1	26%	29.79%	25%		
Strategy & Governance Portfolio SHDC; Cllr Sally-Ann Slade	% of Customer Complaints Upheld - Stage 2	22.22%	0%	25%		
Cllr Roger Gambba-Jones	% of household waste recycled or composted	29.85%	33.15%	30%		
Cllr Roger Gambba-Jones	Missed Waste Collection Rate	29.6	40.0	33.0		
Cllr Roger Gambba-Jones	Waste sent to 'Energy from Waste' per Household (kg)	131.9	145.3	135.0		
Cllr Anthony Casson	Commercial Property Occupancy	93.33%	100%	90%		
Strategy & Governance Portfolio SHDC; Cllr Sally-Ann Slade	Staff turnover %	0.39%	0.79%	2.5%		
Strategy & Governance	# of Working Days Lost to Sickness per FTE*	2	1.32	1.32		

		Same Period Last Year	Performance			
Portfolio Holder	Performance Indicator	Q2 2015/16	Q2 2016/17			
		Value	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend
Portfolio SHDC; Cllr Sally-Ann Slade						
Cllr Christine Lawton	Housing re-let (void) time (total ave. key to key) All Tenures	61 days	27 days	28 days		
Cllr Christine Lawton	Housing re-let (void) time (Keys In to Keys Back from Contractor) - All	49 days	17 days	25 days		
Cllr Christine Lawton	Housing re-let (void) time (Contractor) - General Needs	52 days	21 days	25 days		
Cllr Christine Lawton	Housing re-let (void) time (Contractor) - Sheltered Housing	46 days	13 days	25 days		
Cllr Christine Lawton	Housing re-let (void) time (Letting) - General Needs	6 days	3 days	3 days		
Cllr Christine Lawton	Housing re-let (void) time (Letting) - Sheltered Housing	16 days	22 days	3 days		
Cllr Christine Lawton	Housing re-let (void) time (Key to Key) - General Needs	59 days	22 days	28 days		
Cllr Christine Lawton	Housing re-let (void) time (Key to Key) - Sheltered Housing	60 days	31 days	28 days		
Cllr Christine Lawton	Cases Prevented from Homelessness per 1,000 households	3.3	2.6			
Cllr Malcolm Chandler; Presentation Log In	% of all planning applications determined within time	80.77%	91.66%	70%		
Strategy & Governance Portfolio SHDC; Cllr Sally-Ann Slade	Housing Benefit LA Error Rate	0.37%	0.54%	0.48%		
Cllr Sally-Ann Slade	Business Rate In Year Collection Rate	57.16%	58.31%	56.91%		
Cllr Sally-Ann Slade	Council Tax In Year Collection Rate	58.51%	58.35%	58.05%		
Cllr Christine Lawton	New Homes - Affordable	8	0			

* Two months data available due to sickness information being reported two months retrospectively.

SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Portfolio Holder Finance and the Interim Executive Director of Commercialisation

To: Cabinet – 10 January 2017

(Author: Sharon Hammond – Head of Service, Revenues and Benefits (CPBS)

Subject: Local Council Tax Support Scheme – 2017/18

Purpose: To agree the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18, for recommendation to Full Council

Recommendations: That the Cabinet agrees and recommends to Full Council: -

- 1) That the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18 be amended with the range of changes consulted upon: -
 - i. Second Adult Rebate – Reduce to 20% in 2017/18 (10% in 2018/19 and zero from 2019/20)
 - ii. Introduce a minimum level of Council Tax Support at £5 per week
 - iii. Increase non-dependant deductions by 10%
 - iv. Restrict Council Tax Support to Band D Council Tax
 - v. Reduce the Capital Limit to £8,000
 - vi. Reduce the lower capital threshold to £3,000
 - vii. Reduce the maximum level of Council Tax Support available to 70%
 - viii. Limit backdating to 1 month
 - ix. Remove family premium for new claims made
- 2) The introduction of a hardship policy, with delegation to the Executive Director of Commercialisation in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder Finance to develop the policy and operational practice.
- 3) Delegate approval for the final scheme policy to the Executive Director of Commercialisation in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Finance.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Local Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme replaced the former national Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme from April 2013.
- 1.2 The scheme for pensioners continues to be prescribed by government, and allows up to 100% support against Council Tax liability.
- 1.3 War Disablement Pensioners and War Widowers are protected within South Holland's scheme.
- 1.4 In 2014/15 South Holland Council Tax Support Scheme required working age households to pay at least 25% of their Council Tax liability. This scheme has been reviewed annually and has not been changed in 2015/16 or 2016/17.

- 1.5 The costs of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme are borne in the following proportions by the County Council (76%), the Police and Crime Commissioner (13%) and South Holland District Council (11%).
- 1.6 In the Medium Term Financial Plan report to the Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel on 14th December 2015 it was suggested that this scheme be reviewed in 2016/17 as part of other opportunities work in the 2017/18 budget setting cycle. The panel supported this plan as part of the 2016/17 Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 1.7 Detailed examination has taken place with the Governance & Audit committee with reports presented on 28th July 2016 & 15th September 2016.
- 1.8 With some amendments, Cabinet decided at its meeting on 8th November 2016 to consult on changes to the working age scheme included in that report.
- 1.9 The proposed changes were presented and discussed at a meeting of the Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel on the 22nd November 2016; the points emerging from that meeting are included in the Consultation Report at Appendix B.
- 1.10 Consultation with the public took place between 11th November and 14th December 2016. The results of the consultation are summarised in Section 4 of this report, with more detail in Appendix B, Part 1.

2.0 **OPTIONS**

- 2.1 Option 1 – Do nothing. Retain the existing Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18
- 2.2 Option 2 – Revise the scheme through a range of changes.
The proposals consulted upon following Cabinet meeting on 8th November 2016 were: -
 - i. Second Adult Rebate – Phased removal over a three year period.
 - ii. Introduce a minimum level of Council Tax Support at £5 per week
 - iii. Increase non-dependant deductions by 10%
 - iv. Restrict Council Tax Support to Band D Council Tax
 - v. Reduce the Capital Limit to £8,000 (currently £16,000)
 - vi. Reduce the lower capital threshold to £3,000 (currently £6,000)
 - vii. Reduce the maximum level of Council Tax Support available to 70% (currently 75%)
 - viii. Limit backdating to 1 month (currently 3 months)
 - ix. Remove family premium for new claims made

These changes would see a reduction in Council Tax Support expenditure (based on current position) of around £187,000 (approximately £20,000 for South Holland District Council).

Details of the current scheme and effect of the proposed changes are provided in Appendix A.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT OF THE CHANGES**

- 3.1 At the time of writing the report, if the changes are agreed as proposed, the impact in summary for claimants will be as follows:

Detail of change	Number of working age claimants affected
Abolish second adult rebate	37
Introduce a minimum weekly amount of £5	246
10% Increase in non-dependant deductions	144
Restriction to Band D Council Tax	25
Reduce capital limit from £16k to £8k	29
Reduce lower capital limit from £6k to £3k	116
Reduce maximum council tax support level to 70%	2848

Reduction in Council Tax Support	Average loss per year	Minimum loss per year	Greatest loss per year	% of Claimants losing above average	% of Claimants losing below average
£187,306	£67.23	£3.32	£1383.27	14%	86%

4.0 **CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Consultation to gain the views of the public and other interested parties on the proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme took place between 11th November and 14th December 2016.
- 4.2 The consultation was available on line, with paper copies available through Customer Services. It was promoted through South Hollands own channels of website and social media. Media coverage was also secured through the local newspaper in print and online.
- 4.3 A total of 30 responses were received. It is recognised this is a very low response rate and as such the results cannot be wholly relied on as being fully representative of respondent views or to be statistically significant.
- 4.4 The responses from the public consultation are summarised in the table below. Whilst acknowledging the response rate was low, the responses that were received demonstrate general support for the changes proposed.

	Yes	No	Don't know
Abolish second adult rebate, phased out over 3 years	68.97%	20.69%	10.34%
Introduce a minimum weekly amount (£5) of council tax support	70%	30%	0%
Increase non-dependent deductions by 10%	58.62%	20.69%	20.69%
Restrict Council Tax Support to Band D	53.33%	43.33%	3.33%
Lower the maximum capital limit from £16,000 to £8,000	58.62%	34.48%	6.90%
Lower the capital threshold from £6,000 to £3,000	51.72%	37.93%	10.34%
Reduce the level of Council Tax Support available from 75% to 70%	60%	40%	0%
Limit the back dating of benefit to 1 month (from 3 months)	72.41%	20.69%	6.90%
Remove the family premium for new applications	53.33%	36.67%	10.0%

4.5 Through the consultation process, views were also sought on whether South Holland should introduce a hardship policy, allowing individual circumstances of those affected to be examined from April 2017 and for time limited hardship payments where hardship is established through a claim process. This was again supported with 70% of respondents agreeing.

4.6 The consultation report, and the notes from the meeting of the Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel are provided at Appendix B.

5.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

5.1 The local council tax reduction scheme will be in its fifth year of operation in 2017/18. An annual review is required, even if no changes are proposed. National funding for the scheme is diminishing with zero contribution from central government expected by 2019/20 which means that the full cost will be met by the precepting bodies (SHDC, Lincolnshire County Council and the Police).

5.2 Introducing the changes as outlined will help South Holland reduce the scheme expenditure in 2017/18. The introduction of a hardship policy would provide time-limited support in individual cases where hardship is established. This would alleviate the concerns expressed by members of the Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel.

5.3 When revising a scheme which has the effect of reducing the amount of Council Tax Support to which any claimant is entitled, the revision must include transitional provision as the authority thinks fit. The proposal includes a phased approach to the removal of second adult rebate over a 3 year period. In addition, the introduction of time limited support in individual cases where hardship is established will offer transitional provision for claimants.

6.0 EXPECTED BENEFITS

6.1 The Council is able to demonstrate that best practice is followed and that they are proactive in examining policies within the financial framework of the Council to ensure value for money criteria is being satisfied.

6.2 There will be a cost reduction to the Council of approximately £20,000

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Constitution & Legal

7.1.1 The conditions of the existing scheme were reviewed against applicable legislation in 2012. The revised scheme will be subject to a similar review before it is introduced.

7.1.2 The current hardship policy of the council will operate with the CTS scheme conditions to allow individual cases to be examined as necessary. This is also likely to be used for transitional arrangements for individual claimants as needed.

7.2 Financial

7.2.1 Council Tax Support scheme costs in 2016/17 are forecast to be approximately £4,400,000 (£485,000 to this Council).

- 7.2.2 Working age claimant element costs approximately £1,718,000 with £189,000 (11%) borne by this Council.
- 7.2.3 The current Medium Term Financial Forecast approved February 2016 does not include any planned changes to the levels of discounts for working age claimants. If approved, the expected cost reduction will be built into the future forecast.
- 7.2.4 Applying the changes proposed will reduce CTS expenditure by approximately £187,000, based on current information. All working age claimants will be affected by the changes with the exception of war pensioners who are protected. The reduction in the overall level of CTS discount to 70% will affect all 2,848 claimants. Of these, 670 will also be affected by the individual discount adjustments. Overall weekly reduction for all working age claimants will be in the range of £0.06 to £26.60 depending on circumstances. The average overall loss is £1.29 per week; 86% of claimants will lose less than the average. 14% claimants will lose above average.
- 7.2.5 These changes represent an invest-to-save project with overall costs of £20k anticipated. Lincolnshire County Council has provisionally agreed to contribute £15k with £5k to be funded from the transformation reserve. The Police and Crime Commissioner will be asked to contribute £3k in line with the anticipated reductions in support going forward.
- 7.2.6 Software upgrades are required for further changes of a more fundamental nature are intended to progress with our system provider for operation 2018/19 and beyond.

7.3 Risk Management

- 7.3.1 Reduction in the level of Council Tax Support means working age claimants will be required to pay more of their Council Tax bill. An increased allowance for non-collection will need to be made. The impact on collection levels will be monitored over the course of 2017/18.
- 7.3.2 Changes to the local Council Tax Support scheme begin to move the working age scheme further away from the prescribed scheme for pensioners and the rules around Housing Benefit adding complexities to administration and customer contact. The administration of hardship claims will increase demands on the Revenues and Benefit service. During 2017/18 increased contact and demand on resources will be monitored.

8.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

8.1 All

9.0 ACRONYMS

9.1 CTS – Council Tax Support
CTB – Council Tax Benefit

Background papers:- None

Lead Contact Officer

Name and Post: Suzanne Jones, Interim Executive Director of Commercialisation
Telephone Number: 01775 761161
Email: Suzanne.jones@breckland-sholland.gov.uk

Key Decision: No

Exempt Decision: No

This report refers to a Mandatory Service

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A	Local Council Tax Support explanatory information
Appendix B	Consultation report

Cabinet – 10 January 2016

Local Council Tax Support Scheme

Introduction

The core principles of South Holland's local CTS scheme are: -

- **Protection for : -**
People over pension age (as prescribed by Government)

All War Disablement Pensioners and War Widowers
- **People with children, disabilities or caring responsibilities will be supported**
Retain the core features and continue to apply the wide range of provision in the previous Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme that recognised the additional needs of the disabled, those with children and those with caring responsibilities.
- **Incentives to work will be supported**
Retain provision within the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme, thereby maintaining the rate at which support is withdrawn as income increases.

1. 30 June 2016 (2016/17) Council Tax Support caseload and expenditure position

This table shows, as 30 June 2016, the profile between working age and elderly. The Council has no discretion in terms of the expenditure associated with the support for elderly category. Any saving can only be achieved through working age claimants.

	Total Claims	Average weekly CT liability	Average weekly award
All Groups	6,229	£17.92	£13.54
Elderly	3,400	£18.18	£15.15
Working Age	2,829	£17.62	£11.61

The split of 2016/17 scheme expenditure (at 30/06/16) between elderly and working age groups is shown in the following table.

Total	£4,414,615
Elderly	£2,696,090
Working Age	£1,718,525

2. Financial arrangements

Council Tax Support is administered as a local discount and is part of the collection fund. As such the cost of the scheme is borne by major preceptors.

South Holland's share of the cost of local Council Tax Support (based on 2016/17 CT levels) is around 11%, as demonstrated in the following table.

Council Tax 2016/17 Band D	£	% 'share'
Lincolnshire County Council	£1,128.83	75.75%
South Holland District Council	£159.84	10.73%
Police and Crime Commissioner	£201.51	13.52%
	£1,490.18	

3. Options for South Holland's 2017/18 Council Tax Support scheme

It is important that any changes considered for 2017/18 can be supported by current software functionality and this precludes any fundamental changes to the scheme for 2017/18.

There are a number of changes that are recommended that the Council make to the current scheme for working age claimants, which would not represent a radical review, but would allow a reduction in support costs against current expenditure.

These are listed below: -

- Abolish second adult rebate.

The current scheme gives a reduction in Council tax up to 25% to a claimant whose income is too high to receive Council Tax support but who has other adults living in the household whose combined income is low.

Recommendation: Rebate to be abolished

- Introduce a minimum weekly amount of CTS.

At the moment Council Tax Support is paid even if a person is only entitled to a few pence per week.

Recommendation: Minimum weekly amount of £5 to be introduced

- Change non-dependant deduction rates.

A 'non-dependant' is an adult living with a claimant but who is not dependent upon them, for example an adult son, daughter, mother, father or friend.

An increase in the amount of non-dependant deductions would mean those getting more money coming into the household would get less Council Tax Support.

Recommendation: decrease the rebate by 10%

- Restrict Council Tax to a particular band.

Currently there is no restriction on eligibility for Council Tax Support based on the band. If Council Tax Support was restricted, for example to Band D, then the maximum amount of support would be fixed at the level of Council Tax for a Band D; those in bands E, F, G, or H would only receive Council Tax Support based on Council Tax level for a band C property resulting in them having to pay a higher proportion of their Council Tax.

Recommendation: Limit council tax support at Band D for properties in that band or above.

- Review capital limits.

Currently claimants who have more than £16,000 in capital are not entitled to Council Tax Support. Capital can be in the form of land, property, stocks, shares, premium bonds, money held in banks etc. If the capital limit was reduced this would mean some claimants might no longer be eligible for Council Tax Support.

Recommendation: lower the capital limit to £8,000

- Change the lower capital threshold

Currently capital up to £6,000 can be disregarded for the calculation of Council Tax Support. A reduction to this threshold would mean more claimants with savings would have to pay more towards their Council Tax.

Recommendation: Lower the capital threshold to £3,000

- Limit backdating

Currently 3 months, this could be limited to 1 month in line with the governments change in 2016/17 for Housing Benefit.

Recommendation: Limit backdating of award to 1 month

- Remove family premium for new CTS applications.

A family premium is currently awarded on all claims which include children. From May 2016 the government removed this premium from Housing Benefit for all new claims made or babies born.

Recommendation: Remove family premium for new applications from 1st April 2017

- Reduce the maximum amount of CTS

Currently working age claimants can get up to 75% support.

Recommendation: Change the maximum discount level to 70% for all claimants

- No change

Not Recommended

Detail of change	Number of working age claimants affected
Abolish second adult rebate	37
Introduce a minimum weekly amount of £5	246
10% Increase in non-dependant deductions	144
Restriction to Band D Council Tax	25
Reduce capital limit from £16k to £8k	29
Reduce lower capital limit from £6k to £3k	116
Reduce maximum council tax support level to 70%	2848

Reduction in Council Tax Support	Average loss per year	Minimum loss per year	Greatest loss per year	% of Claimants losing above average	% of Claimants losing below average
£187,306	£67.23	£3.32	£1383.27	14%	86%

Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2017/18

Consultation Report

Part 1 - Public Consultation results

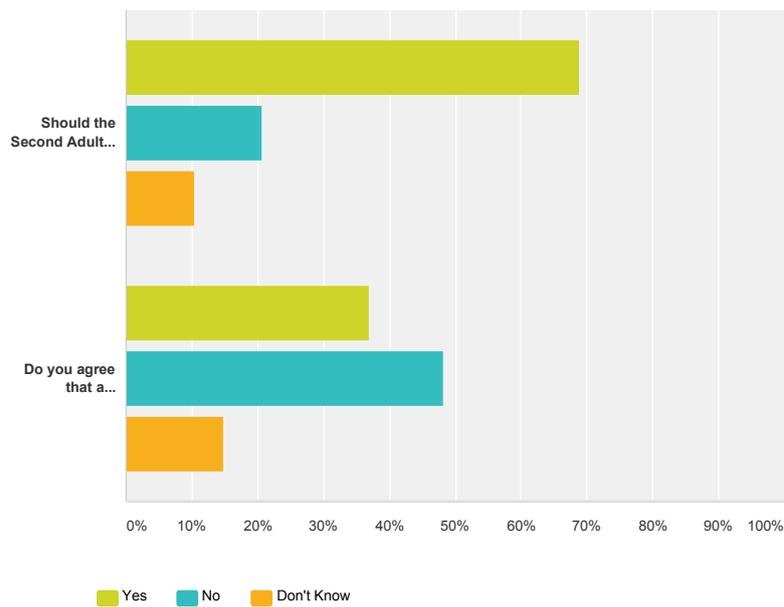
Part 2 - Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and
Policy Development Panel – 22 November 2016

Part 1 - Public Consultation results

Council Tax Support

Q1 Second Adult Rebate – The current scheme gives a reduction in Council Tax up to 25% to a claimant whose income is too high to receive Council Tax Support but who has other adults living in their household whose combined income is low. This change would affect around 34 households and would be phased in over a 3 year period.

Answered: 29 Skipped: 1

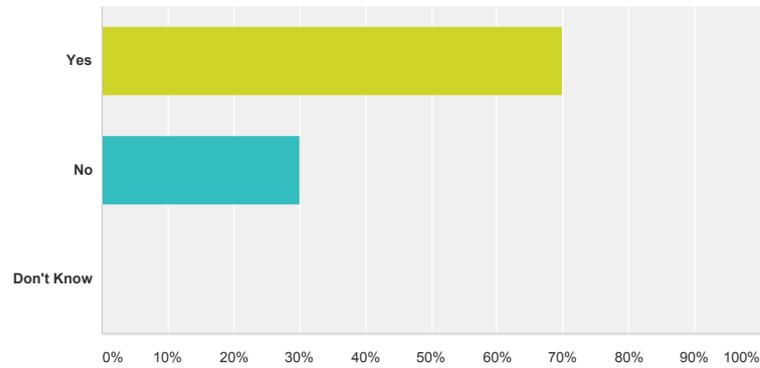


	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total
Should the Second Adult Rebate be abolished for working age claimants as it takes no account of their income?	68.97% 20	20.69% 6	10.34% 3	29
Do you agree that a transitional scheme is appropriate?	37.04% 10	48.15% 13	14.81% 4	27

Council Tax Support

Q2 Minimum level of Council Tax Support - At the moment Council Tax Support is paid even if a person is only entitled to a few pence per week. It is proposed to introduce a minimum award of £5 per week in order to reduce administration in the scheme. This change would affect around 246 households. Do you agree it is a sensible approach to have a minimum weekly support level?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0

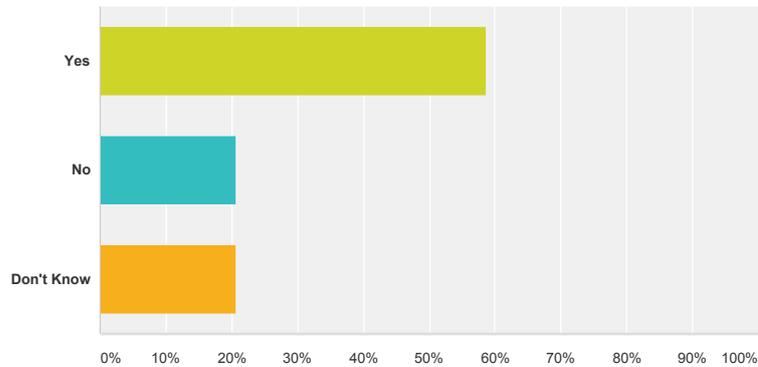


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	70.00%	21
No	30.00%	9
Don't Know	0.00%	0
Total		30

Council Tax Support

Q3 Non-dependent Deductions – A non-dependant is an adult living with a claimant but who is not dependent upon them, for example an adult son, daughter, mother, father or friend. An increase in the amount of non-dependant deductions would mean those getting more money coming into the house would get less Council Tax Support. This change would affect around 144 households. Do you agree increasing non-dependant deductions by 10% will result in reasonable contributions for all households?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 1

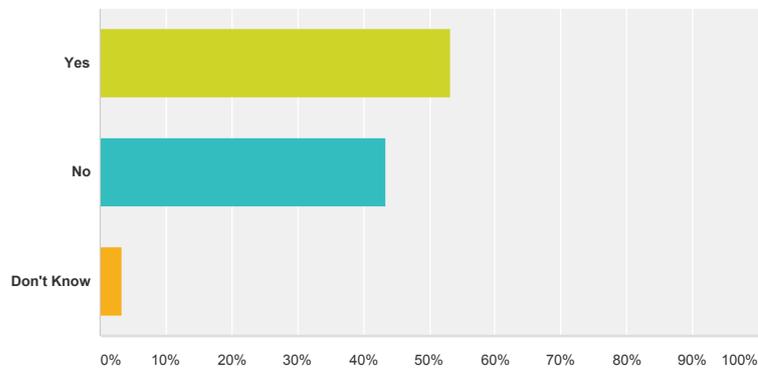


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	58.62% 17
No	20.69% 6
Don't Know	20.69% 6
Total	29

Council Tax Support

Q4 Restrict Council Tax Support to a maximum band – currently there is no restriction on eligibility for Council Tax Support based on the band of the dwelling. If Council Tax Support was restricted, for example to Band D, then the maximum amount of support would be fixed at the level of Council Tax for a Band D dwelling for residents in bands E, F, G or H resulting in those households having to pay a higher proportion of the Council Tax charge. This change would affect around 25 households. Should Council Tax Support be restricted to Band D?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0

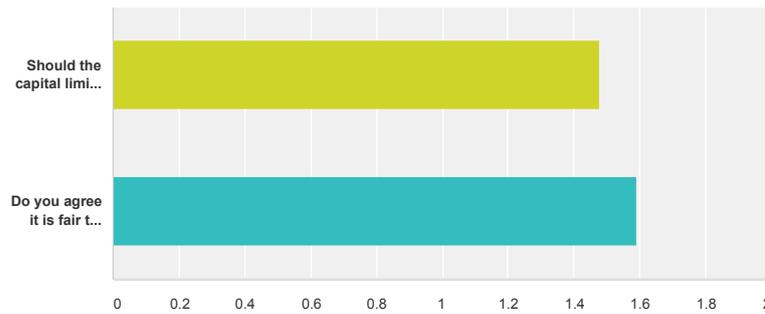


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	53.33%	16
No	43.33%	13
Don't Know	3.33%	1
Total		30

Council Tax Support

Q5 Review capital limits a) Reduce Capital Limit - Currently claimants who have more than £16,000 in capital are not entitled to Council Tax Support. Capital can be in the form of land, property, stocks & shares, premium bonds or cash. As a consequence of reducing the limit some claimants might no longer be eligible for Council Tax Support. This change would affect around 29 households. b) Reduce the lower capital thresholds – Tariff income is a notional adjustment for each £250 (or part thereof) of capital above the threshold (Currently £6,000). £1 is added to assessable income per week when council tax support is determined. This change would affect around 116 households.

Answered: 29 Skipped: 1

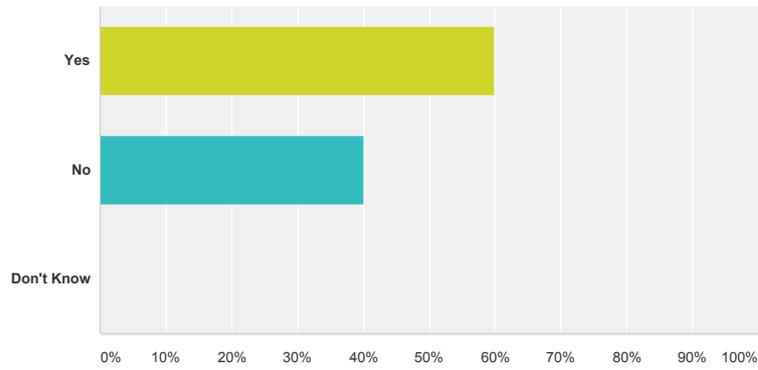


	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total	Weighted Average
Should the capital limit of £16,000 be reduced to £8,000 in line with National limits applied to other benefits?	58.62% 17	34.48% 10	6.90% 2	29	1.48
Do you agree it is fair to reduce the capital threshold from £6,000 to £3,000?	51.72% 15	37.93% 11	10.34% 3	29	1.59

Council Tax Support

Q6 Reduce the level of Council Tax Support available – Currently the scheme provides for a maximum reduction of 75%, requiring working age claimants to pay at least 25% of their Council Tax. Do you agree it is fair to change the maximum amount of support to 70%, and all working age Council Tax payers be required to pay at least 30% of their Council Tax bill? This change would affect around 2,848 households.

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0

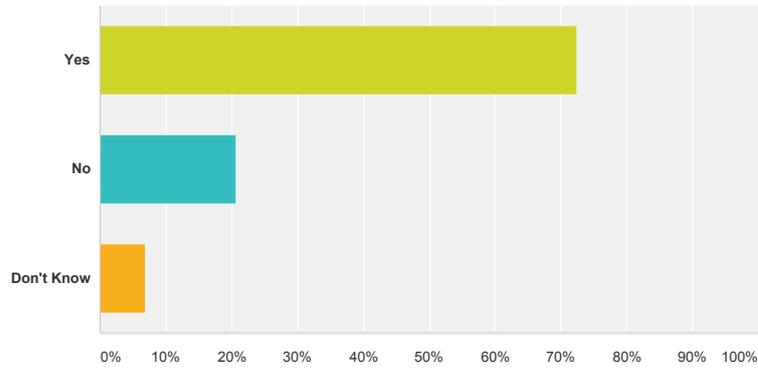


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	60.00%	18
No	40.00%	12
Don't Know	0.00%	0
Total		30

Council Tax Support

Q7 Restrict Backdating of Awards – All backdating of council tax support is currently applied from the date a change in circumstances occurred or 3 months whichever is the lower time period. As all submissions should be made on a timely basis the government has changed national schemes to restrict backdating to a maximum of 1 month. This will only apply to future claims so no estimate of the impact on households is available. Do you agree that the local scheme should be standardised with national guidelines by backdating of support being limited to a maximum of 1 month?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 1

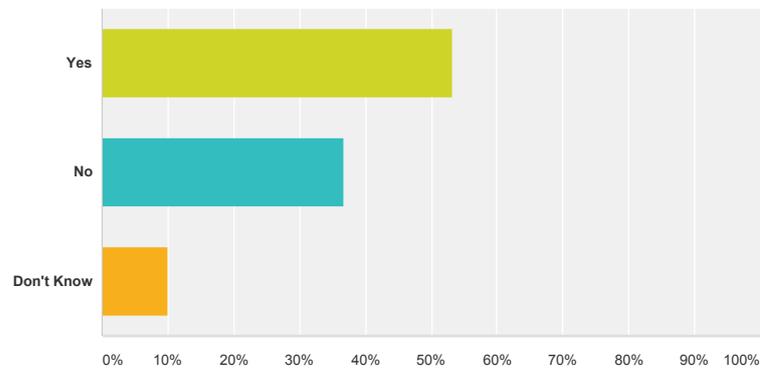


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	72.41%	21
No	20.69%	6
Don't Know	6.90%	2
Total		29

Council Tax Support

Q8 Remove family premium for new CTS applications - A family premium is currently awarded on all claims which include children. From May 2016 the government removed this premium from Housing Benefit for all new claims or additional responsibility for a child(ren).The council is proposing to adopt this change into the council tax support schemeThis will only apply to future claims so no estimate of the impact on households is available.Do you agree that the local scheme should be standardised with national guidelines by removing family premium?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0

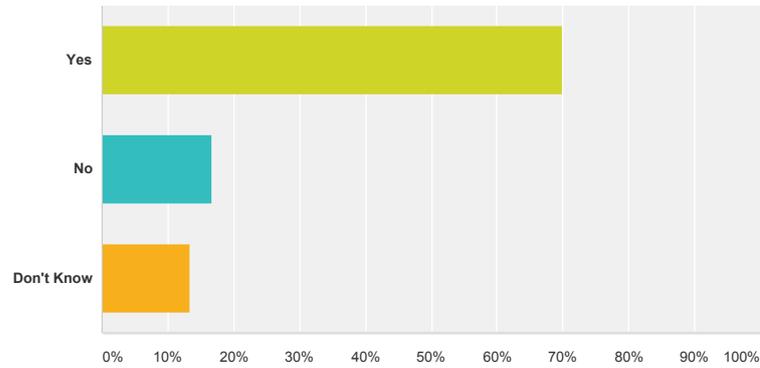


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	53.33%	16
No	36.67%	11
Don't Know	10.00%	3
Total		30

Council Tax Support

Q9 Introduce the council policy on hardship into the scheme – In order to allow individual circumstances to be examined when the new scheme is introduced in April 2017 it is proposed to include a version of the existing council on hardship. This will be time limited and be applied when hardship has been established. This will only apply to future claims so no estimate of the impact on households is available. Do you agree that the local scheme should be standardised with other council policies by introducing a hardship claim process as part of the new council tax support scheme?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	70.00%	21
No	16.67%	5
Don't Know	13.33%	4
Total		30

Part 2 - Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel – 22 November 2016

Joint Scrutiny – 22nd November 2016

Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Executive Director Commercialisation which recommended that changes to the Local Council Tax support scheme were reviewed and comments as appropriate be included in the report to Cabinet following consultation.

Appendix A set out the detail of the proposed changes together with some examples of the impact for claimants. In summary, the amendments which would be consulted on were:

- Abolish second adult rebate, with a three year transitional implementation
- Introduce a minimum weekly amount (£5) of Council Tax Support
- Decrease the non-dependant deduction rate
- Restrict Council Tax to band D for support purposes
- Lower the maximum capital limit to £8,000 (from £16,000)
- Lower the capital threshold to £3,000 (from £6,000)
- Limit the back dating of benefit to 1 month (from 3 months)
- Remove the family premium for new applications of Council Tax Support
- Reduce the maximum level of discount from 75% to 70%

Details of the potential number of claimants that could be affected by each proposed change were detailed within Appendix A to the report.

Members were advised that the consultation period was still open, and that it would end on 14 December 2016. All councillors could submit comments outside of the scrutiny process.

Members considered the report and the following points were made:

- If changes were agreed, how would publicity around the changes be handled?
 - Claimants that the Authority were aware of that would be affected would be written to, and the changes would also be publicised.
- Those in higher banded properties could be asset rich but cash poor, and could also be affected.
 - The Authority needed to take a position on where to draw a line. This view could be considered as part of the consultation.
- Some people could be in more than one of the proposed categories for change, and could therefore be hit quite hard. This may only be a small number but for those that it could affect, they needed to be advised how they could be helped.
- With regard to non-payment, the Authority needed to mitigate for both parties – the Council who were owed money, and Council Tax payers that owed money.

- The Authority did try to assist with those that could not pay, whilst pursuing those that would not pay.
- There was a cost to the consultation exercise – did it have to be undertaken and was it worth it?
 - All authorities were required to review their schemes annually.

AGREED:

- a) That the report of the Interim Executive Director Commercialisation be noted; and
- b) That the comments of the Joint Panel be considered as part of the consultation process.

SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Portfolio Holder Finance and the Interim Executive Director of Commercialisation (S151 Officer)

To: Cabinet 10 January 2017

(Author: Mark Woolerton – Revenues and Recovery Team Leader))

Subject: Write Offs

Purpose: To recommend writing off irrecoverable debts

Recommendation:

- 1) That the amounts identified in this report are approved for write off.

NOTE: Please raise any queries that you may have regarding individual write offs included in the appendices with the Revenues and Recovery Team Leader at least two working days ahead of the scheduled meeting.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 This report reviews irrecoverable debts over £1,050 which require Cabinet approval for write off. A summary of these debts is shown in the table below totalling £264,994.37

1.2 The need to write off debt usually arises due to the debtor being untraceable, insolvent, ceased trading with no assets or deceased with insufficient funds in the estate. Where possible all methods of recovery are pursued before making the decision to write off. This can include internal recovery action, use of debt collection agents, external tracing agents and procedures through the Courts.

1.3 A summary of debts requiring approval for write off is given in the following table.

Value by Debtor £	Council Tax £	Business Rates £	Sundry Debt £	Former Tenant Arrears £	Housing Benefit Overpayments £	Total £
1,050 - 1,500	2,557.03	-	1,320.00	2,698.02	1,495.27	8,070.32
1,500 - 2,000	1,968.33	6,953.75	1,952.31	8,596.88	1,567.25	21,038.52
Over 2,000	39,820.75	152,687.58	11,871.51	7,684.38	23,821.31	235,885.53
Total	44,346.11	159,641.33	15,143.82	18,979.28	26,883.83	264,994.37

Details of individual debts are shown in the Confidential Appendices listed below:

- Appendix A – Council Tax
- Appendix B – Business Rates
- Appendix C – Housing Benefit Overpayments
- Appendix D – Former Tenant Arrears
- Appendix E – Sundry Debtors

1.4 All debts approved for write off will be set against the existing bad debt provisions and they can be resurrected in full or in part at any time should new information come to light suggesting that they may be recoverable after all. In every case, we believe that all collection options have been exhausted and that there are now no realistic prospects of recovery.

2.0 **OPTIONS**

2.1 To approve the recommendation.

2.2 To approve the recommendation with amendments.

2.3 Not to approve the recommendation.

3.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

3.1 All recovery methods available have been considered and where appropriate pursued before making the decision to write off.

4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS AND TIMELINES**

4.1 Not applicable

5.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 **Constitution & Legal**

5.1.1 This report has been written in line with the Constitution.

5.1.2 The Appendices to this report are confidential as they include exempt information as described in Schedule 12A Part 1, Paragraph 1 (information relating to any individual), Paragraph 2 (information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual) and Paragraph 3 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person [including the authority holding that information]).

5.1.3 The anticipated benefits of publishing information identifying individuals does not outweigh the risks of a data protection breach and it is therefore considered that the information should remain exempt from publication and public meetings.

5.2 **Financial**

5.2.1 The proposed write offs will be written off against the existing bad debt provisions.

5.3 **Risk Management**

5.3.1 Debts can be resurrected if new information comes to light to suggest they may be recoverable after all.

5.4 **Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales**

5.4.1 Once approval of this report has been given, debts are able to be written off.

6.0 **WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

6.1 The Council has a provision for the write off of debts therefore no wards or communities are directly affected.

Background papers:- None

Lead Contact Officer

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Key Decision: No

Exempt Decision: No

This report refers to a Mandatory Service

Confidential Appendices attached to this report for consideration:

(Please note that the following appendices are not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 1 (Information relating to any individual), 2 (Information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual) and 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

Appendix A – Council Tax

Appendix B – Business Rate Write Offs

Appendix C – Housing Benefit Overpayments

Appendix D - Former Tenant Arrears

Appendix E – Sundry Debtors

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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