

Minutes of a meeting of the **JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL** held in Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 22 November 2016 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

B Alcock	L J Eldridge	A M Newton
D Ashby	P C Foyster	M J Pullen
C J T H Brewis	R Grocock	J L Reynolds
T A Carter	A Harrison	A R Woolf
H Drury	J D McLean	

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors G R Aley, J R Astill, M D Booth, R Clark, G K Dark, C N Johnson, J L King, A C Tennant and J Tyrrell

In Attendance: The Interim Executive Director Commercialisation and the Democratic Services Officer.

**15. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Consideration was given as to who should preside over the Joint meeting of the Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel.

**AGREED:**

That Councillor A Woolf act as Chairman for the duration of the joint meeting of the Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel.

**16. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were none.

**17. BUDGET TIMETABLE**

The Interim Executive Director Commercialisation provided the Joint Panel with an update on the revised timetable for approval of the budget for the forthcoming year. The main points were:

- A draft budget had been produced by services
- The Autumn Statement was due on 23 November 2016
- The draft settlement was expected in the first half of December
- SHDC has signed up to a four year settlement
- There was no feedback yet from consultation on the New Homes Bonus

Action By

**JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING  
PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT  
PANEL - 22 November 2016**

- Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme was currently being reviewed

The committee timetable for approval of the budget was as follows:

- Executive Management Team and Strategy Board – December 2016
- Public consultation (including consultation with the Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel – January 2017
- Cabinet and Council – February 2017
- Council Tax setting – 22 February 2017

Members considered the information and the following issues were raised:

- Housing Benefit LA Error Rate – Members were aware that a third party had been commissioned to help clear the backlog of outstanding work relating to the processing of claims. This was a costly exercise.
  - Officers were pushing hard to ensure that the situation was rectified, and were successfully getting the workload back under control. A lot of pressure was being put on CPBS to resolve the situation, and there was a strong will to get it right.
- The financial problems for the Authority caused by the LA error rate were not inconsequential.
- Percentages were often looked at as a means of measurement however, it had to be remembered that these issues related to individuals, and it was vital for the Authority and its reputation to ensure that the current problems were resolved and future processing of claims was satisfactory.
  - Officers were looking at the LA error rate and this was now well within the threshold. Also, the right kind of service needed to be provided – it was necessary to cure the cause and not just the symptoms.

**AGREED:**

That the update providing details of the revised budget timetable to noted.

**18. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME - 2017/18**

Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Executive Director Commercialisation which recommended that changes to

**JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING  
PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT  
PANEL - 22 November 2016**

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

**JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING  
PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT  
PANEL - 22 November 2016**

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. SH, SJ

**19. UPDATE ON FINANCIAL REPORTING**

The Interim Executive Director Commercialisation advised that work on financial reporting was being undertaken, and that it was an ongoing, evolving process. The Interim Chief Accountant had left the Authority and a successor was being sought.

**20. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT**

There were none.

(The meeting ended at 7.30 pm)

(End of minutes)