

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SPECIAL)

10th January 2013

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Wheeler (Chairman), Councillor Mrs. Watson (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Jones, Lemmon, Murray, Smith and Watson.

Labour Group

Councillors Frost, Rhind, Richards, Southerd, Taylor and Wilkins.

In Attendance

Councillors Atkin and Mrs. Plenderleith (Conservative Group).

FM/74. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Richards declared a personal interest in respect of Item 6A concerning the Energy Saving/Fuel Poverty initiative.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

FM/75. **LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME – RECOMMENDED PROPOSALS**

A report was submitted to recommend details of the final scheme for Local Council Tax Support for South Derbyshire that would become effective on 1st April 2013. This followed the Committee's deliberations of proposals at its Meetings on 6th September, 18th October and 6th December 2012.

At the Meeting on 6th December, final proposals were approved, subject to the Government's Council Tax Support Grant being confirmed in the Local Government Financial Settlement. The Grant, split between all preceptors on the Collection Fund was £4,537,911, which was £28,000 lower than the provisional figure, but would have no significant effect on the overall cost and financing of the recommended scheme. The estimated cost of the new scheme, together with the estimated income arising from charging Council Tax on empty properties was summarised in a table within the report. The balance of £24,572 was not considered significant. A verbal update was provided on the report's recommendations.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That under Section 10 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012, a Local Council Tax Support Scheme for South Derbyshire is recommended to Full Council as detailed in 1.2 below:***

- (2) That the existing national parameters and thresholds for calculating Council Tax benefit are applied to claimants adjusted for the following circumstances in the Local Scheme:**

 - i. That all claimants of pensionable age receive exactly the same level of support as exists under the current national scheme.**
 - ii. That all households who qualify for benefit through disability premiums receive exactly the same level of support as exists under the current national scheme.**
 - iii. That all war widow and war disabled claimants receive exactly the same level of support as exists under the current national scheme.**
 - iv. That all military compensation payments are fully disregarded in calculating council tax support.**
 - v. That working age passported claimants currently receiving 100% council tax benefit are deducted 8.5% from their entitlement calculated under the Local Scheme.**
 - vi. That all other working age claimants are deducted 10% from their entitlement calculated under the Local Scheme.**
 - vii. That full Council Tax support for claimants entering work is extended from 4 weeks to 8 weeks in the Local Scheme.**
- (3) That the Local Scheme is implemented on 1st April 2013.**
- (4) That all new claimants eligible for support under the Local Scheme are assessed in accordance with the criteria in 1.2 (above).**
- (5) That detailed regulations to enact recommendations 1.2 to 1.4 are laid before Full Council on 24th January 2013.**
- (6) That the Council applies for support under the Government's Transitional Grant Scheme for 2013/14 to support the implementation of the Local Scheme.**
- (7) That the existing Council Tax exemption (Class C) for unoccupied and unfurnished dwellings is abolished on 31st March 2012.**
- (8) That under Section 11 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012, all unoccupied and unfurnished dwellings are liable for**

full Council Tax at the appropriate rate after 3 months and that this is implemented on 1st April 2013.

- (9) That under Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012, any dwelling that has been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than 2 years, is liable for Council Tax at a rate of 150%, i.e. as if the dwelling was being occupied by two adults with no discounts applicable and that this is implemented on 1st April 2013.***
- (10) That a grant of £5,000 is made to the Derbyshire Financial Inclusion Partnership.***
- (11) That the Council works with local agencies to support single parent families to access financial support and advice regarding employment opportunities and child care arrangements.***
- (12) That the new Local Council Tax Support Scheme and new Council Tax Charges are monitored and regular progress reports are made to the Committee during 2013/14.***
- (13) That the Local Scheme is reviewed during autumn 2013 prior to any new arrangements being required for 2014/15.***

FM/76. **ENERGY SAVING / FUEL POVERTY INITIATIVE**

The Committee's approval was sought for a joint project, facilitated by the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Energy Partnership to deliver a fuel poverty and carbon reduction initiative in the District, utilising funding from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC).

Formal notification of the grant funding only came to the Council in recent days, but the Government and County Council required a formal commitment to the project by 11th January 2013. In line with the Council's Constitution, this Committee had the power to determine all matters coming within the purview of any other Committee on the grounds of urgency or expediency in between Meetings. The Chairman of the Committee had given his consent to the consideration of this matter for the reasons set out above. Additionally, the Chairman of the Housing and Community Services Committee had been consulted, as this matter would normally rest with that Committee.

The detail of the report set out the successful bid to DECC resulting in a collective award of £2.1m. Of this, South Derbyshire had approximately £150,000 to spend on the installation of approximately 50 new boilers, 4 new heating systems and 100 loft and cavity wall insulations. The monies needed to be targeted at households experiencing fuel poverty, with inefficient heating and insulation systems. The bid was also successful for Green Deal Pioneer Places Funding and part of this fund would be used to procure specialist software, energy performance certificate data and household income data for

participating authority areas. The data, combined with local knowledge, would be used to target the resources on the most vulnerable households. Derbyshire County Council was the responsible body for the duration of the project. The installation of loft and cavity wall insulations would be funded using an extension of the already existing CERT funding and the continued partnership with Apex Carbon Solutions.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee approves the agreement for the joint delivery of a 'fuel poverty and carbon reduction project' between South Derbyshire District Council and Derbyshire County Council.

R. WHEELER

CHAIRMAN

The Meeting terminated at 5.15 p.m.