

MINUTES OF BUDGET WORKING GROUP MEETING

HELD 16 JULY 2012

Present: Cllrs: Ranson, T Hill, Rogerson, Sherras, Thompson, Hirst, Rogerson, Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Head of Revenues and Benefits.

1 Apologies

1 Cllr Knox.

2 Localisation of Council Tax Support

2.1 The Director of Resources set out the background to the Localisation of Council Tax proposals and explained Ribble Valley's position. She then went through various key principles and options which could form a new Ribble Valley Scheme. Members considered these and asked that exemplifications could be provided showing the impact of such proposals on different Ribble Valley benefit claimant groups.

3 Date and time of next Meeting

3.1 Agreed next meeting on Monday 9 August 2012 at 4pm in Committee Room 1 and not 13 August.

MINUTES OF BUDGET WORKING GROUP MEETING

HELD 9 AUGUST 2012

Present: Cllrs: Ranson, T Hill, Rogerson, Sherras, Thompson, Knox, Rogerson, Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Head of Revenues and Benefits.

1 Apologies

4 Cllr Hirst, Director of Community Services, Head of Financial Services.

5 Localisation of Council Tax Support

5.1 The Director of Resources reminded members that Policy and Finance Committee at its meeting on 7 August 2012 had agreed to delegate the draft scheme to herself in conjunction with the Budget Working Group. She briefly summarised her report which set out the principles underlying the draft scheme in particular the reduction in support to all working age claimants. She explained that the estimated amount of savings to be found were £228,000.

5.2 The main principles were:

- All current council tax benefit claimants (with the exception of pensioners who are protected) will have to pay something.
- The council propose a reduction of 12% from the final council tax support for all working age claimants.
- This would save £910,474 * 12% i.e. £109,000.
- The Council proposes that the shortfall be met by utilising the total income from second homes which is around £120,000. This had previously been allocated to our LSP.
- The Council do not propose any additional protection for vulnerable groups over and above the compensations built in to the existing benefit system i.e. existing vulnerable groups will face a 10 or 12% reduction in support.
- The current benefit system will be left unchanged to all other intents and purposes.

5.3 The DoR reminded the group that we had now received the responses from the major precepting authorities. It was important that the views of these authorities were considered before agreeing our draft scheme for wider consultation.

5.4 The Head of Revenues and Benefits then took members through a number of Council Tax Support calculations which compared the present position with a reduction of 12% (to Council's suggested reduction) and also 25% for illustrative purposes.

5.5 Members asked a number of questions and were extremely concerned that a reduction of 25% would result in many claimants being unable to pay their council tax. They also felt it was unfair that the reduction in benefit should be borne in total from working age claimants when the Government had cut overall funding by 10% at the same time as stating that pensioners must be protected.

- 5.6 The BWG then reviewed a number of suggested questions which could form the basis of the wider consultation exercise which would commence shortly. They made a number of comments but stressed the consultation should be meaningful.
- 5.7 The BWG agreed the draft scheme the draft as suggested as a basis for consultation.
- 6 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING
- 3.1 Monday 17 September 2012 at 4pm in Committee Room 1.