

CABINET DECISIONS ON REPORTS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OSC

The following reports were presented to the OSC on 17 December 2018 for comment prior to determination by the Cabinet.

The following is an extract from the Cabinet minutes of 19 December 2018:

(1) Approval of the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019-20

The report sought approval for the local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019-20 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B, along with the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC which had been circulated). Councillor Oliver introduced the report. The Administration was required to deliver a balanced budget and the position remained challenging. £36m of efficiency savings were still to be delivered over the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan. The report proposed that working age claimants would have their level of council tax support reduced by 8% of Council Tax due for their property and meant that some claimants would pay council tax for the first time. The maximum level of support available for working age claimants would be 92%. If the proposals were accepted, Northumberland would still offer the second highest level of support in the North East, and the proposals would not impact on pensioners. An extensive consultation process had been carried out.

Councillor Oliver referred to the point made by Scrutiny suggesting that implementation be deferred to allow for the full impact of Universal Credit to be known. He acknowledged this point, but the savings needed to be found now. Councillor Wearmouth felt it was a significant achievement that 92% of support would be maintained when many other Labour Councils could not do the same. He queried whether there was any clarification of the former Administration's plans regarding this specific area of the budget as had been previously mentioned. Councillor Oliver advised that this had not been through formal Cabinet or Council at the time, but he understood the proposal had been for a 50% cut in Council Tax support, with approval planned by Cabinet and Council in October and November of 2017. He added that all opportunities were being taken to bring additional funding into the Council from all potential sources, and recurrent expenditure had to be addressed in a recurrent way.

RESOLVED that the following recommendations be made to Council:

- (a) the results of the public consultation be noted;
- (b) an 8% reduction in the level of Council Tax Support for all working age claimants be approved;
- (c) the Council Tax Support Scheme attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved for financial year 2019-20; and

(d) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

(2) Enterprise Zone - Northumberland Energy Park East Sleekburn (NEP1)

The report updated the Cabinet on emerging investment interest and associated economic outputs at the NEP1 Enterprise Zone at East Sleekburn (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C, coloured pink and marked Not for Publication, along with the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC which had been circulated).

RESOLVED that:

- (a) Council be recommended to agree recommendations 1-8 as detailed in the report; and
- (b) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

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