

# POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**Date:** 10 September 2012

**Venue:** East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

**Time:** 7.30 pm

**Present:** Councillors:-

<b>Richard Lewis</b>	<b>(Chairman)</b>
<b>Glenvil Greenwood-Smith</b>	<b>(Vice-Chairman)</b>
<b>Stephen North</b>	<b>(Leader of the Council)</b>
<b>Glenn Harwood MBE</b>	<b>(Deputy Leader of the Council)</b>
<b>Wendy Brackenbury</b>	<b>Sue Homer</b>
<b>John Farrar</b>	<b>Dudley Hughes JP</b>
<b>Richard Gell</b>	<b>Rupert Reichhold</b>
<b>Roger Glithero JP</b>	<b>Jeremy Taylor</b>
<b>Marika Hillson</b>	

## 161. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2012 were not presented to the committee. It was noted that they would be presented to the next meeting of the committee on 27 September 2012 alongside the minutes of this meeting.

## 162. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors David Brackenbury and Andy Mercer sent their apologies.

## 163. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members and officers declared interests in the items as shown. Where DPs were declared, the named members and officers left the room for the consideration of, and voting on, the items.

<b>Person</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Reason for Declaration</b>	<b>Discloseable Pecuniary Interest?</b>	<b>Other Interest?</b>
Councillor John Farrar	9 – Dog Control Orders	Member of Irthlingborough Town Council	No	Yes
Councillor Richard Gell	9 – Dog Control Orders	Higham Town Council Member	No	Yes
Councillor Marika Hillson	9 – Dog Control Orders	Member of Irthlingborough Town Council	No	Yes

Councillor John Farrar	10 – Revised Building Control Charges	Chairman of Spire Homes who use Building Control Service	No	Yes
Councillor Glenvil Greenwood- Smith	10 – Revised Building Control Charges	Current application with Building Control	Yes	No

**164. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3**

There were no questions.

**165. MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES & WORKING PARTIES**

**(a) Welfare Reform Sub-Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 August 2012 were received and approved with an amendment to the last sentence in paragraph 4.2 which would now read: “East Northamptonshire is currently facing an estimated reduction in the collection fund of £523,000, which would be split £47,000 reduction to ENC and £476,000 reduction for the County Council, Police and Parishes.”

**(b) District Regeneration Working Party**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 August 2012 were received and approved.

**166. FEES & CHARGES FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES**

The committee considered a report recommending revisions to the fees and charges payable in respect of licensing Hackney Carriages and private hire vehicles.

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows local authorities to recover the costs for the grant of a vehicle licence, which includes the costs of inspections, administration and control of Hackney Carriage and private hire vehicles. Following the completion of a tendering process, the overall fees for the test have been reduced and, in addition, operational changes have realised lower costs in the delivery of the service. The effect of the proposed changes would be:

	Existing Fee	Proposed Fee
Hackney Carriage Vehicle Fee	£293	£259
Private Hire Vehicle Fee	£293	£259

Local authorities are not able to generate a profit from vehicle licensing and the proposals would reduce income so that it remained in line with forecast expenditure. The proposed fees had been subject to consultation with the trade, with all representations taken into account in the development of proposed fees and charges.

## **RESOLVED:**

That the revised fees and charges for Hackney Carriages and private hire vehicles be approved.

*(Reason – To ensure that the authority complies with statutory requirements concerning fees and charges for Hackney Carriages and private hire vehicles.)*

## **167. NEW HOMES BONUS**

The committee considered a report from the Community Partnerships Manager requesting approval of new criteria for determining applications for the New Homes Bonus funding under stream 2 (Community Projects).

In recognition of stream 2 being the subject of higher levels of interest, the proposed criteria included an additional stage for the submission of expressions of interest detailing outline proposals from community groups, community partnerships and town and parish councils.

It was proposed that a panel of three councillors drawn from the DRWP membership would shortlist applicants, from which detailed applications would be invited for consideration by the whole membership of the DRWP.

It was reported that the DRWP would develop detailed application and guidance materials to support the application process for this stream, which would include the necessary terms and conditions of the grant award to ensure clear governance arrangements were in place.

Concern was expressed in relation to Planning Status criteria in the eligibility section. The potential requirement for full planning consent to be sought in advance of agreement of funding was felt to be a barrier in some smaller schemes. It was proposed that this should be changed to a requirement that the project's proposers had taken Planning Services' advice and the wording be amended accordingly.

## **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the proposed criteria for the allocation of New Homes Bonus funding under Stream 2 (Community Projects) be approved subject to the amendment noted above.
- (2) That authority be delegated to a panel of three members drawn from the District Regeneration Working Party to shortlist expressions of interest.
- (3) That the Equalities Impact Assessment – Initial Screen be noted

*(Reasons - To ensure a transparent and effective application and governance process for allocating the New Hones Bonus to Stream 2 projects.)*

## **168. DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2012-2017**

The committee considered a report from the Housing Strategy Manager which sought approval for the draft Housing Strategy to be released for formal public consultation.

Following legislative changes and other reforms instigated by central Government in response to more austere economic circumstances, the Housing Policy Working Group was

established to consider these issues in the local context. The changes to the housing market in recent years had rendered the content of the previous housing strategy outdated. Additionally, all local authorities are required to have a Homelessness Strategy and the Housing Policy Working Party considered it to be appropriate to amalgamate that document with the Housing Strategy due to the cross-cutting nature of their content.

The consultation process would involve the strategy being issued to a wide range of key stakeholder organisations, such as registered providers, neighbouring local authorities, the council's Housing Forum and other key organisations, such as support providers and the voluntary sector. It was reported that, after a period of eight weeks, the consultation would close with all of the comments and representations received being incorporated, where appropriate, to create a final version of the strategy.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Draft Housing Strategy 2012-17 be released for formal public consultation.

*(Reason – To enable officers to continue to work towards a final Housing Strategy.)*

**169. DOG CONTROL ORDERS**

The committee received a report which sought approval for the introduction of a range of dog control measures to address problems of dog fouling and other dog issues at specific locations as requested by town and parish councils.

It was noted that the Saffron Road, Higham Ferrers site proposal would be the subject of a separate report to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 27 September 2012.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That areas listed in Appendix 4 be included in the proposed Dog Control Orders
- (2) That the Head of Environmental Services, Waste Manager, Environmental Services Officer (Dogs) and a nominated member review any representations received prior to the final notice being published and be authorised, in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council, to agree the final Dog Control Orders.
- (3) That the Equalities Impact Assessment detailed in Appendix 6 be approved.

*(Reason - To ensure that Dog Control Order in force are up to date and localised appropriately)*

**170. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:**

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business because exempt information, as defined under

paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, may be disclosed.

*Councillors John Farrar and Glenvil Greenwood-Smith left the room during the discussion and voting on this item.*

**171. REVISED BUILDING CONTROL CHARGES FROM 1 OCTOBER 2012**

The committee considered a report from the Building Control Manager in respect of the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 and the charges arising from their implementation.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Building Control Charges document, as required under the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010, be approved and be effective from 1 October 2012.

*(Reason – To accord with the Charges Regulations and provide the most cost effective service.)*

**Chairman**



# Welfare Reform Sub-Committee

**Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 28 August 2012 at 2.00pm, CHG2, East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston**

**Present:**

Councillors:            Andy Mercer (Chairman)  
                              Glenvil Greenwood-Smith (Vice-Chairman)  
                              Richard Lewis  
                              Steven North  
                              Jeremy Taylor

Officers:                David Oliver (DO)  
                              Lisa Hyde (LJH)  
                              Glenn Hammons (GH)  
                              Richard Hadden (RH)  
                              Lucy Hogston (LH)  
                              David Pope (DP)

**1.0    MINUTES**

1.1    The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**2.0    APOLOGIES**

2.1    Councillor John Farrar gave his apologies.

**3.0    DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

3.1    There were no declarations of interest.

**4.0    REPORT AND RISK ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS FOR A LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SCHEME IN EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

4.1    LJH presented members with a report which sought to outline all the available options for a Local Council Tax Discount Scheme (LCTDS) in East Northamptonshire.

4.2    Members noted the DCLG had now provided Local Authorities with an estimate of the reduction in funding to be received, with the exact figure to be published in November 2012. East Northamptonshire Council would currently face a reduction in funding of £523k.

4.3 At the initial meeting of the Sub-Committee on 17 July 2012, members had been presented with a list of thirteen LCTDS options for consideration. One option, relating to passported benefit claimants, had been deemed unworkable and was not investigated further. The remaining twelve options had been analysed by officers, taking into account the criteria below:

- To recover at least the 10% reduction in government funding
- To act as an incentive for people to work rather than remaining on benefits; or at least not to act as a disincentive to work
- To protect the vulnerable as far as possible
- To be simple to administer and to avoid increased costs where possible.

A summary highlighting whether each of the options met the criteria was supplied to the meeting.

4.4 The twelve options listed below had been split into two distinct groups during the analysis process. Options 1 to 4 were seen to provide financially significant changes to the scheme and could stand alone. Options 5 to 12 would require combination with other options to achieve significant savings.

- Option 1 – Across the board reduction for all working age customers as a set %.
- Option 2 – Working age claims capped on a percentage of their Council Tax Liability
- Option 3 – Restriction for working age claimants to a maximum liability of Band B.
- Option 4 – Remove support from those in Band D or above.
- Option 5 – Include Child Benefit as income.
- Option 6 – Include Child Maintenance as income.
- Option 7 – Increase minimum entitlement to Council Tax Support to £5 per week.
- Option 8 – Introduce a maximum award of £1,500 per annum.
- Option 9 – Increase income taper rate from 20% to 30%.
- Option 10 – Increase Non Dependant deductions.
- Option 11 – Removal of Second Adult Rebate scheme for working age claimants
- Option 12 – Reduced capital limit from £16K to £10K.

4.5 Members were provided with in-depth scenarios highlighting the potential impact on ENC claimants for each of Options 1 to 4.

4.6 The provision of a hardship fund to protect vulnerable working age claimants was discussed by members. Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act would enable the creation of the fund. Members noted that a scheme for hardship could be agreed at county level, which would simplify administration and appeals systems.

4.7 Members were advised that a full Equalities Impact Assessment would be published alongside the consultation documents.

4.8 It was

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Options 2 and 11 were the preferred options to take forward to public consultation.
- (2) That consultation also include details of possible amendments to Council Tax discounts and exemptions and the possible creation of a hardship fund.

**5.0 UPDATE ON CURRENT POSITION UNDER CONSIDERATION ACROSS OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

5.1 LJH provided the meeting with a verbal update regarding the current position of five other Local Authorities in Northamptonshire regarding the LCTDS. Members noted that only one Local Authority in the county did not intend to implement an LCTDS in year one, and that all other authorities were currently examining options available to them.

**6.0 QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3**

6.1 There were no questions received.

**Chairman**





# District Regeneration Working Party

**Minutes of meeting held Tuesday 28 August 2012 at 2:00pm, CHG2,  
East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston**

## **Present:**

**Councillors:** Cllr Steven North  
Cllr Glenn Harwood MBE  
Cllr Richard Lewis

**Officers:** David Oliver, Chief Executive  
Sharn Matthews, Executive Director  
Lisa Hyde, Head of Customer & Community Services  
Mike Deacon, Head of Environmental Services  
Rob Back, Head of Planning Services  
David Pope, Member Services Officer

**Apologies:** Cllr David Brackenbury  
Mike Greenway, Community Partnerships Manager  
Katy Everitt, Head of Resources & Organisational Development  
Glenn Hammons, Chief Finance Officer

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## **1.0 Appointment of Temporary Chair**

1.1 The Working Group agreed to appoint Councillor Steven North as the temporary chairman.

## **2.0 Minutes**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

## **3.0 New Homes Bonus/Community Projects - Criteria for Stream 2**

3.1 LJH presented a report to the Working Party which contained draft criteria for determining funding for projects under Stream 2 of the New Homes Bonus. The criteria to determine funding had been produced following the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 9 May 2012. Stream 2 would provide support for medium-sized community infrastructure projects up to £50,000.

3.2 Members were advised that the expectation was for demand to exceed supply for this particular stream, hence the criterion regarding applicants taking a loan from ENC rather than a grant. An uptake in loans would increase the capacity of the New Homes Bonus to fund more projects.

3.3 Members made minor amendments to the criteria relating to tenure of sites and the requirement for match funding, and reduced the number of years detailed in "level of growth experienced in the local area" to 10.

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3.4 Members noted that a final draft of the criteria would be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 10 September 2012 for approval.

#### **4.0 Funding Maps**

4.1 Members were provided with maps to indicate the type and location of previous funding bids for both Rushden and Oundle. Also presented, were tables detailing funding queries received by year.

4.2 Members appreciated the data that had been provided and agreed that further mapping would be of use in future.

#### **5.0 Any Other Business**

5.1 The meeting was provided with an update regarding an infrastructure improvement funding bid to Sport England. Members were advised that a potential bid to renovate the changing facilities of Splash Pool in Rushden would require match funding and that the maximum funding available would be £150k. A report relating to the matter would be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 27 September 2012.

5.2 The meeting was advised that the townscape Heritage Bid has been unsuccessful but that we had since heard that new funding pots for town centre improvements had been made available by the Heritage Lottery Fund and that work was underway by officers to see if this funding could be accessed.

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