

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET 3 DECEMBER 2013 FROM THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE PANEL 26 NOVEMBER 2013

RP78: CABINET REPORT: CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE

The Policy and Partnerships Manager presented the report to which was attached the refreshed Corporate Business Plan following a mid-term review of progress against outcomes. The outcomes were detailed in the document as actions planned, underway and completed. The monitoring report was also attached for information.

Members were reminded that the Corporate Business Plan covered the four-year administrative term 2011/12 to 2014/15.

In response to questions from Councillor Gourlay in relation to the introduction of a pop up shop scheme in partnership with the Vancouver Centre to encourage the start-up of new retail business, the Chief Executive explained that the idea had come from an article he had read in the Municipal Journal which had been trialled in the north of England. Discussions had taken place with both the Leader and relevant Portfolio Holder who agreed that the idea should be explored in King's Lynn. The proposal was therefore currently under consideration.

Councillor Cousins asked for an update on the position relating to working with RAF Marham and the Ministry of Defence to ensure that the infrastructure enhancements required to support Lightning II were implemented. The Chief Executive informed Members that an officer level meeting had been held and proposals outlined. Wherever possible the work required would be sub-contracted to local companies.

RESOLVED: That the Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

That Cabinet note the revised Business Plan and Monitoring Report.

**RP79: CABINET REPORT: COUNCIL TAX 2014/2015:
COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME FOR 2014/2015
COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS FOR SECOND HOMES AND EMPTY PROPERTIES
OVERALL COUNCIL TAX BASE**

The Revenues and Benefits Manager presented the report which covered:

- The results of consultation on the Council Tax Support Scheme and recommendations for the 2014/2015 scheme.
- Recommendations for the Council Tax Discounts for Second Homes and Empty Properties for 2014/2015.
- The overall Council Tax Base for Council Tax setting purposes for 2014/2015.

Members were advised that both the Council Tax Discounts and Council Tax Support Scheme impacted on the Council Tax Base so they were included in the report.

The Panel's attention was drawn to the following sections of the report:

- Section 1 - Council Tax Support Scheme: Background, Timeline, Results of Consultation, Policy Implications, Statutory Considerations.
- Section 2: - Determination of Council Tax Discounts relating to Second Homes and Empty Properties for 2014/2015: Long Term Empty Property Levy, Policy Implications, Financial Implications.
- Section 3 – Determination of the Council Tax Base for 2014/2015.

Section 1 – Council Tax Support Scheme

In response to questions from Councillor de Winton relating to paragraph 1.4.1, the Revenues and Benefits Manager explained that adopting a Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) that reflected the reduced level of funding meant the reduction in Council Tax Base was fully offset by the CTS funding from Central Government and was therefore cost neutral.

In response to questions from Councillor Humphrey regarding parish precepts, the Revenues and Benefits Manager explained that the position was the same as last year and that briefing sessions had been arranged for Parish Councils on 9 and 11 December 2013. The Deputy Chief Executive added that letters had been sent to Parish Councils explaining the technical changes.

Section 2 – Determination of Council Tax Discounts relating to Second Homes and Empty Properties for 2014/2015

In response to questions from Councillor de Winton regarding the Class A dwellings and the use of second homes money, the Revenues and Benefits Manager explained that the situation had remained neutral, but there was a small shift relating to the technical reforms.

Councillor Bird asked for an explanation of the definition of a second home. The Revenues and Benefits Manager explained that the definition did not appear in legislation, but was considered a Class B dwelling which was commonly known as a second home.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager advised the Panel that referral forms were published on the Council's website which could be completed and submitted. The Council would then investigate to determine if there was a fraud case.

Section 3 – Determination of the Council Tax Base for 2014/2015

Councillor de Winton referred to Appendix B – Council Tax Support Consultation Responses and asked if the Council had an obligation to undertake the survey. In response, the Revenues and Benefits Manager advised that the Council had obtained legal advice and explained that if the consultation exercise was not undertaken this would leave the Council open to

Judicial Review. The survey had been conducted online, but letters had been sent to all key partner groups to let them know the survey was being carried out.

RESOLVED: That the Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

Cabinet recommend to Council to agree:

- (1) The Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/2015 as detailed at paragraph 1.8.
- (2) The Council Tax discounts for Second Homes and Empty Properties as detailed at paragraph 2.25.
- (3) The overall Taxbase for Council Tax setting purposes as detailed at paragraph 3.12.