

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Tuesday, 15 January 2013

Decision No: (CAB 12/13 9637)

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
PORTFOLIO AREA:	CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
SUBJECT:	COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS FOR PERSONS OVER THE AGE OF 65 AND SPECIAL CONSTABLES
AUTHOR:	ANDY LOWE

THE DECISION

- (i) Considers the issues set out in this report and determines whether or not they wish to update the current discretionary Council Tax reduction scheme which is in place under S13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- (ii) Recommends that Full Council:
 - (a) Notes and considers the responses from the consultation process and the Equalities Impact Assessment as set out in paragraphs 7 to 13 and Appendix 1.
 - (b) Applies any changes resulting from an update of the Council Tax reduction scheme in respect of the “pensioners” element of the Scheme, to all persons who meet the current qualifying criteria which is that it is available to persons who are:-
 - a) liable to pay Council Tax either jointly or in their own right, by being an owner occupier or a tenant of a dwelling within Southampton, which is their sole or main residence;
 - b) aged 65 or over and all other residents of the household are 65 or over; and
 - c) not in receipt of Council Tax Benefit.
 - c) Applies any changes resulting from an update of the Council Tax reduction scheme in respect of the “Special Constable” element of the Scheme, to all persons who meet the current qualifying criteria which is that it is available to persons who are:-
 - (a) Special Constables: and
 - (c) reside in a property within Southampton where there is a liability for Council Tax and serve as a Special Constable within Southampton.
 - d) Updates the current discretionary Council Tax reduction scheme and reduces the level of reduction in respect of the “pensioners” element to zero.

- e) Updates the current discretionary Council Tax reduction scheme and reduces the level of reduction in respect of the “Special Constable” element to zero.
- f) Authorises the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to take any further action necessary to give effect to the recommendations in this report.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. The current discretionary Council Tax reduction scheme which is in place under S13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 was implemented for pensioners in 2009 in response to specific circumstances, as set out in paragraph 14, with the objective of mitigating the impact of Council Tax increases on those whose annual income levels were limited to inflation factors. It is appropriate to review this given that Council Tax increases have been low with several years of no increases whilst inflation has been rising more quickly and wages have been increasing more slowly and in some cases falling.
2. The scheme was extended in 2010 to offer a discount to Special Constables to address specific objectives, which had been identified originally in 2009, through the achievement of increased recruitment. When approved it was also acknowledged that the success of the discount in meeting this aim should be reviewed periodically.
3. The proposed changes will raise additional revenue for the Council and therefore help protect local services and so better meet current objectives at a time when national funding for local Councils is being withdrawn.

DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

1. Members need to consider whether the objectives and aims which were identified in 2009 in response to specific circumstances have changed.
2. Having considered this then the discounts could be retained or amended with changes made to the individuals to which the discounts apply, the level of the discounts or both.
3. These options have been rejected for reasons which are set out in the main body of the report.

OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION

None.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

CONFIRMED AS A TRUE RECORD

We certify that the decision this document records was made in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 and is a true and accurate record of that decision.

Date: 15th January 2012

Decision Maker:
The Cabinet

Proper Officer:
Judy Cordell

SCRUTINY

Note: This decision will come in to force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of publication subject to any review under the Council's Scrutiny "Call-In" provisions.

Call-In Period expires on 23 Jan 2013

Date of Call-in *(if applicable) (this suspends implementation)*

Call-in Procedure completed *(if applicable)*

Call-in heard by *(if applicable)*

Results of Call-in *(if applicable)*