

DECISION-MAKER:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
SUBJECT:	WELFARE REFORMS INQUIRY: LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS
DATE OF DECISION:	13 DECEMBER 2012
REPORT OF:	CHAIR OF SCRUTINY PANEL A
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
None	

BRIEF SUMMARY

At the August 2012 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) members agreed the terms of reference for the Welfare Reforms Inquiry to be undertaken by Scrutiny Panel A. At the meeting the OSMC also requested that the timetable for the Inquiry included early consideration of the changes to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme and the abolition of the Social Fund. This would enable the Panel to influence key decisions to be made on these matters early in 2013.

The Panel has discussed the issue of the Local Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme at previous meetings of the Inquiry and is due to develop recommendations on this element at its meeting on 6th December 2012. The recommendations generated at the meeting of the Scrutiny Panel A enable the Committee to comment on the recommendations and forward them on to Cabinet for the 15 January 2013 meeting, at which the Local Council Tax Support scheme will be agreed and recommended to Council for approval on 16th January 2013.

RECOMMENDATION:

- (i) To consider and approve the draft interim recommendations of Scrutiny Panel A's Welfare Reforms Inquiry relating to the Localisation of Council Tax Support and forward them to the Executive for consideration and further action.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To enable Scrutiny Panel A's interim recommendations to influence key decisions to be made on the Local Council Tax Support scheme in January 2013.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

2. None.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

3. At the August 2012 meeting the OSMC agreed the terms of reference for the Welfare Reforms Inquiry to be undertaken by Scrutiny Panel A. At the meeting the OSMC also requested that the timetable for the Inquiry included early consideration of the changes to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme and the abolition of the Social Fund. This would enable the Panel to influence key decisions to be made on these matters early in 2013.

4. To date the Panel has had two meetings of the Welfare Reforms Inquiry at which the issue of the Local Council Tax Support scheme has been discussed. Members were provided with extensive background information to help inform the interim findings and recommendations that are scheduled to be agreed at the Panel's next meeting on 6th December 2012.
5. Background information and evidence which the Panel has considered in relation to the Local Council Tax Support scheme include:
 - An overview of the key changes within the Welfare Reforms Act
 - Options considered for the Local Council Tax Support and the scheme proposed to Cabinet
 - The opportunity to include a discretionary fund in the Local Council Tax Support Scheme
 - A presentation on the levels of deprivation in Southampton and an insight into residents most likely to be impacted by the Welfare Reforms
 - Feedback on the Local Council Tax Support Consultation
 - Responses to the Welfare Reforms Inquiry 'Call for Evidence'
 - Equalities matters in relation to the Welfare Reforms Act
6. The Committee are asked to consider and approve the Welfare Reforms Inquiry: Local Council Tax Support scheme, draft interim recommendations and forward them to the Executive for consideration in relation to the Cabinet decision to be made on the proposed scheme on 15th January 2013.
7. The draft final recommendations and report of the Welfare Reforms Inquiry are due to be agreed by the Panel on 7th March 2013. In addition, it is proposed that a further interim report from Scrutiny Panel A on their recommendations relating to the Social Fund will be presented to 24th January meeting of the OSMC. This will enable the recommendations to be considered by the Executive in advance of the budget setting meetings in February 2013.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

8. To be identified in the information to be presented to the Committee following the meeting of the Scrutiny Panel on 6th December.

Property/Other

9. None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

10. The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Other Legal Implications:

11. None.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

12. None.

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KEY DECISION? No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Non-confidential appendices are in the Members' Rooms and can be accessed on-line

Appendices

1.	None
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Documents In Members' Rooms

	Cabinet Report 21 st August 2012 Item 33: Local Council Tax Support – proposed scheme for consultation
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Integrated Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to be carried out.	No
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Other Background Documents

Integrated Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:

Title of Background Paper(s) Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

None	
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