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## **EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2012**

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**EX.144/12    LOCAL SUPPORT FOR COUNCIL TAX**  
(Key Decision – KD.038/12)

**Portfolio**     Communities and Housing

**Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel**     Community; and Resources  
**Subject Matter**

Pursuant to Minute EX.093/12, the Communities and Housing Portfolio Holder submitted Report CD.55/12 concerning the issue of local support for Council Tax.

The Communities and Housing Portfolio Holder reminded Members that they had on 6 August 2012 considered report CD.39/12 which outlined the draft proposals for consultation for a local scheme through which the City Council would administer Support for Council Tax. She outlined the key recommendations of that report.

Following consideration, the recommendations had been approved and the consultation process for the draft Scheme initiated.

Members' attention was drawn to the findings from the consultation, namely that the vast majority of respondents supported the draft proposals.

The Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel had considered the matter on 11 October 2012 and resolved (COSP.68/12):

“That the Panel:

Agreed the principle of not reducing the current level of reductions given to existing Council Tax Benefit recipients when changing from a Benefit to a Discount.

Agreed that Carlisle City Council's LSCT Scheme would be identical to the current Department for Work and Pensions Council Tax Benefit Scheme but written as a S13A policy document, under The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), to ensure it becomes a legal discount rather than a Benefit.

Agreed the principles of funding the scheme, in part or full, through the application of Council Tax Technical Reforms and other funding streams.

Was aware that the full LSCT S13A policy and the decisions regarding implementation of Council Tax Technical Reforms and other funding streams would need to be approved by Council on 8 January 2013.

Approved the principle of a draft policy (statement of intent), to include consultees, as part of the formal consultation process.

Agreed that consideration be given to the financial implications of the local scheme during the first operational year and the position reviewed for subsequent years.

That a further update on the Localisation Support for Council Tax be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel.”

The Chairman of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel addressed the Executive. She emphasised that the public consultation period had closed just prior to the Panel meeting. The key question had been to seek views on the intention to maintain support at the same level, together with options for potential scheme changes. The findings from the consultation would be analysed and the Panel would examine that via a further report.

The Chairman also stressed that Panel Members were anxious that unintentional fraud would be treated sympathetically by the City Council, and had received an assurance to that effect. She added that the Panel was concerned as to whether sufficient resources were available within the Directorate to undertake the work, but the Communities and Housing Portfolio Holder was confident that the work could be done within current resources.

In addition, the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 18 October 2012 had resolved (ROSP.73/12):

- “1) That the localisation of Council Tax report CD.50/12 be noted.
- 2) That the Panel were in support of the progress made and the recommendations with the report.
- 3) That a further report be submitted to the Panel following the introduction of the legislation.”

The Chairman of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel was present at the meeting and gave an overview of the Panel’s work on a variety of issues, details of which could be found within his report to Council on 13 November 2012. On the issue of the Localisation of Council Tax he confirmed that the Panel was supportive of the progress made and the recommendations contained within the report.

In conclusion, the Communities and Housing Portfolio Holder recommended that the proposals be submitted for approval by the City Council in January 2013. The Leader seconded the recommendation.

**Summary of options rejected**    None

## **DECISION**

That the proposed Scheme for Local Support for Council Tax be submitted for approval by full Council in January 2013.

## **Reasons for Decision**

The proposed scheme would maintain support at the entitlement levels currently awarded. As a result, the new scheme would continue to support those most in need of assistance