

**COUNCIL**  
24th January 2013

**PRESENT** – The Mayor; Councillors Carson, Cartwright, Copeland, Cossins, Coultas, Crudass, Curry, Dixon, Donoghue, Francis, Galletley, Grundy, Harker, Harman, I. Haszeldine, L. Haszeldine, C. L. B. Hughes, L. Hughes, Johnson, B. Jones, Mrs. D. Jones, Kelley, Knowles, Landers, Lawton, Lee, Lewis, Long, D. A. Lyonette, Macnab, McEwan, Newall, Nutt, Regan, E. A. Richmond, S. Richmond, A. J. Scott, Mrs. H. Scott, Swainston, C. Taylor, J. Taylor, Thistlethwaite, L. Vasey, Wallis, Wright and York. (47)

**APOLOGIES** – Hutchinson, Lister, J. M. Lyonette, Stenson and J. Vasey. (5)

**41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

**42. ANNOUNCEMENT** – The Mayor reported on the death of Councillor Jackie Maddison, who had sadly passed away on 5th December 2012, and referred to Councillor Maddison's years of service, and roles on the Council.

The Mayor also informed Members of the death of Former Councillor Mrs. Rosemary Boynton, who had passed away on 19th January 2013, and referred to Former Councillor Mrs. Boynton's years of service.

As a mark of respect, Members held a short silence for Councillor Maddison and Former Councillor Mrs. Boynton.

**43. CABINET REPORTS – (1) Council Tax Support – Scheme Approval** – The Director of Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) to approve a Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for 2013/14.

The submitted report stated that a draft CTS scheme, based on a 20% reduction in benefits, had been agreed by Cabinet on 11th September 2012, and that consultation on the draft scheme had been undertaken. It was reported that there had been a low response to the consultation, with the majority of responses provided from those in receipt of Council Tax Benefit, and that the majority of responses were in favour of protecting existing benefits.

The submitted report highlighted that the Government had offered a one year grant to Councils who minimised the reduction in Council Tax Benefit to 8.5 per cent, however the report stated that the cost of accepting this grant would have been an additional £120,000 in 2013/14, and an additional £293,000 a year from 2014/15. The submitted report advised that the CTS scheme was subsequently considered, and endorsed, by the Cabinet at a Special Meeting held on 15th January 2013.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That it be noted that the results of the public consultation exercise and the equality impact assessments were considered.

(b) That the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS Scheme), as appended at Appendix 9 of the submitted report, be approved.

**REASON** – The Council is required to publish a local CTS scheme by 31st January 2013.

**(2) Council Tax Empty Property Discounts** – The Director of Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) to recommend changes to discounts for empty dwellings, and the introduction of an empty homes premium for long-term empty dwellings.

The submitted report stated that consultation had taken place on recommendations made by Cabinet in November 2012, in terms of Council Tax Empty Property Discounts, and that only four responses had been received. It was also reported that the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had issued final guidance that amended one aspect of the November recommendations, and as a result no discount would be given for properties undergoing major repairs.

The submitted report highlighted that the changes to discounts for empty dwellings, and the introduction of an empty homes premium for long-term empty dwellings, was considered, and endorsed, by Cabinet at a Special Meeting held on 15th January 2013.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the following discounts and premiums be approved:

(i) Empty properties undergoing major repairs – no discount (0%).

(ii) Empty unfurnished dwellings – 100% discount for one month.

(iii) Second home – no discount (0%).

(iv) Empty homes - +50% premium.

**REASONS** – (a) The Council is required to set the level of discounts for empty dwellings and consider the introduction of an empty homes premium from April 2013.

(b) The changes proposed are considered to be reasonable in the light of the current financial situation.