

# North Tyneside Council

## Report to Council

Date: 24 January 2013

### ITEM 4

Title: Technical Reforms  
of Council Tax

Portfolio(s): Finance  
Housing

Cabinet Member(s): Councillor Judith  
Wallace  
Councillor Paul  
Mason

Report from Directorate: Finance and Resources

Report Author: Fiona Rooney, Strategic Director of Finance and Resources (Tel: (0191) 643 5724)

Wards affected: All

## PART 1

### 1.1 Purpose:

The report and its Appendix concerns changes to Council Tax legislation included in the Local Government Finance Act 2012. The Act, which was granted Royal Assent on 31 October 2012, provides the statutory framework under which decisions on local discounts may be made.

### 1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Council:

- (1) Consider the options presented at paragraph 1.5 in the Cabinet report at Appendix 1, in respect of each of the four Council Tax exemptions/discounts listed in the report as being subject to change; and
- (2) Agree the level (and where appropriate period) of discount to be awarded by the Council (if any) in respect of each of the said four Council Tax exemption/discounts.

### 1.3 Forward Plan:

Notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 12 December 2012.

## **1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework**

This report does not directly relate to priorities identified in the Council Strategic Plan 2012-15 or the Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-13.

## **1.5 Information:**

### **1.5.1 Background**

1.5.2 There are currently a broad range of exemptions and discounts prescribed by law which are applicable to liability for Council Tax. Of these, there are currently several exemptions and discounts which can be applied to empty and unfurnished properties, depending on the circumstance of that property. Recent legislative changes allow local authorities to make their own determination as to how to apply reductions for certain categories of empty properties, and in addition permit authorities to subsequently retain any additional income generated.

1.5.3 Under Section 67 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, determination of discounts to be granted in respect of a particular class of dwelling, and to permit a reduction in the level of Council Tax required to be paid by an individual, is the responsibility of full Council.

1.5.4 On 16 January 2013 Cabinet considered a report (attached at Appendix 1) setting out in detail the options available to Council in respect of four statutory exemptions/discounts, which are now subject to local determination (in respect of discount level and/or period of application).

1.5.5 At its meeting on 16 January 2013 Cabinet agreed to refer the available options in respect of these four exemptions/discounts, to Council for consideration and determination, the decision being one for which full Council is responsible.

## **1.6 Decision options:**

The decision options are set out in paragraph 1.5 of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

The recommended options in respect of each of the discounts, are set out in paragraph 1.6 of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

## **1.7 Reasons for recommended option:**

Officers' recommended option for each discount are set out in paragraph 1.6 of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1, with the reasons for those recommended options set out in paragraph 1.7 of the same report.

## **1.8 Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Cabinet report dated 16 January 2013, Technical Reforms to Council Tax.

Remaining Appendices are listed in paragraph 1.8 of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

## **1.9 Contact officers:**

Andrew Scott – Senior Client Manager Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services, tel. (0191) 643 7150

Geoff Huzzard – Financial Development Officer, Financial Strategy and Planning, tel. (0191) 643 5716

Tracy Vasey – Client Manager Benefits and Customer Services, tel. (0191) 643 7228

## **1.10 Background information:**

As set out in paragraph 1.10 of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

As set out in paragraph 2.1 of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

### **2.2 Legal**

As set out in paragraph 2.2 of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

### **2.3 Consultation/community engagement**

As set out in paragraph 2.3 of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

### **2.4 Human rights**

As set out in paragraph 2.4 of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

### **2.5 Equalities and diversity**

As set out in paragraph 2.5 of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

### **2.6 Risk management**

As set out in paragraph 2.6 of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

### **2.7 Crime and disorder**

As set out in paragraph 2.7 of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

### **2.8 Environment and sustainability**

As set out in paragraph 2.8 of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

### PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive  X
- Strategic Director(s)  X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)  X
- Chief Finance Officer  X
- Monitoring Officer  X
- Strategic Manager Policy and Partnerships  X