MINUTES OF LOCALISATION OF COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT TASK GROUP

1 AUGUST 2012

PRESENT:

Councillors Gillias, Mahoney, Mistry, Pacey-Day, Ms Robbins, Roodhouse, Sandison, Helen Walton and Mrs Watson

Dave Wortley (Benefits Manager), Paul Ansell (Scrutiny and Policy Officer) and Veronika Beckova (Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer)

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED THAT – Councillor Helen Walton be appointed Chairman of the task group for the 2012/13 municipal year.

2. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Ms Robbins, Roodhouse, Helen Walton and Mrs Watson declared a general personal interest by virtue of being Warwickshire County councillors.

4. UPDATE

The task group received an update from the Benefits Manager concerning the scheme for the localisation of council tax support (agenda item 4).

Further to the update, the following points were made:

- The council has to agree a local council tax scheme by 31 January 2013 or the Department for Communities and Local Government will impose a scheme on the council.
- Currently the council’s scheme is demand led.
- The new scheme will contain a fixed grant (roughly 10 percent less than the council is receiving now).
- The draft scheme is being submitted to Cabinet on 20 August.
- The public consultation on the draft scheme starts on 21 August and ends on 15 October.
- After the public consultation, a report will be submitted to Cabinet on 19 November.
- The council will make its final decision at the Council meeting on 11 December.
- The new scheme will be operational by 1 April 2013.
5. **ONE PAGE STRATEGY**

The task group agreed the one page strategy (agenda item 5) which had been circulated as part of the agenda.

6. **METHODS OF CONSULTATION**

The Scrutiny and Policy Officer discussed methods of consultation with reference to the Community Engagement Toolkit (agenda item 6) with the task group. The citizens’ panel would be consulted and the draft scheme would be placed on the website for consultation. It was accepted that the short timescale combined with the relative complexity of the subject matter would preclude many of the consultation methods.

A possible option was a meeting with local community and interest groups who would be well positioned to offer new insights. This method – but also with professionals working in the field – had been used successfully in the joint review on Antenatal and Postnatal Services for Teenage Parents.

7. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The task group agreed the following programme of work:

**August 2012**

The next meeting of the task group will be held at 5.30pm on *Tuesday 21 August* in Committee Room 1 where the draft scheme consultation document would be available and the consultation exercise would be confirmed.

**September 2012**

Local community and interest groups will be invited to participate in an open discussion about the proposed scheme. The meeting will be held on *Thursday 20 September*. Depending on the take-up and availability of the participants, this may be spread between two sessions: one in the afternoon and one in the early evening.

**October 2012**

Two meetings were set for October: *Thursday 18 October* at 5.30pm in Committee Room 1 and *Tuesday 30 October* at 5.30pm in Committee Room 1.

**CHAIRMAN**