

Anglia Revenues Partnership

Report of Operational Board to the JOINT COMMITTEE – 2nd December 2010

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Council Tax Class P Exempt progress update

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform members of progress with the Class P (USAF) exempt review.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report.

Note: In preparing this report, due regard has been had to equality of opportunity, human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental and risk management considerations as appropriate. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial or human resources implications and comments received are reflected in the report.

3. Information, Issues and Options

3.1 Background

Under Council Tax Legislation it is required that the Local Authority take reasonable steps to ensure the register is correct and that discounts and exemptions are only applied to accounts that meet the required criteria.

- 3.1.2 Audit recommends reviewing all discounts & exemptions on a minimum bi-annual basis. The Partnership has issued a change of circumstances form to all Taxpayers with their Annual Council Tax Bill, advising them of their duty of letting the Partnership know of any change that may affect their Council Tax.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 At the start of the exercise the number of Class P exempts for each Authority were as follows:

Breckland Council 610
East Cambs Council 618
Forest Heath Council 4162

Of these records 1468 cases did not match to USAF records. The breakdown is shown below.

Breckland Council 244
East Cambs Council 223
Forest Heath Council 1001

- 3.2.2 Review letters sent to these cases have resulted in the following number of responses to date:

Breckland Council 95 (43% response)
East Cambs Council 76 (31% response)
Forest Heath Council 279 (28% response)

The current number of Class P exempts are:
Breckland Council 597
East Cambs Council 607
Forest Heath Council 4162

Breckland Class P exempts have reduced by 13 cases, East Cambs Class P exempts have reduced by 11 cases, while Forest Heath has 16 more new cases than the number reduced by the review.

Reminders are being issued to non respondents, followed if necessary by a visiting officer to establish ongoing eligibility. It is anticipated that the remaining cases will have a higher number of cancellations than those already received resulting in a reduction in the number of exempt properties which will affect the collection rate targets.

3.2.3 It should be noted that whilst the collection rate targets may be adversely affected the number of chargeable dwellings will increase, which in turn will increase the number of Band D equivalents that the collection fund is based upon, thus it is likely that the collection fund will show a surplus in respect of the current year.

3.3 Options

3.3.1 To note the report.

3.4 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

3.4.1 To advise members of the so far in the review & the likely effects it will have on collection rates & the collection funds.

4. Risk and Financial Implications

4.1 Risk

4.1.1 Council Tax collection targets may not be met

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 Increase income may be generated

5. Legal Implications

5.1 None

6. Other Implications

None.

7. Alignment to Council Priorities

7.1 To be legally compliant

8. Ward/Community Affected

8.1 All within partner authorities

Background Papers

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Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only):