



meeting	CORPORATE STRATEGY AND COORDINATION SELECT COMMITTEE	
date	21 JUNE 2004	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE CORPORATE STRATEGY AND COORDINATION SELECT COMMITTEE

BALANCE OF FUNDING REVIEW – REFORM OF THE COUNCIL TAX SYSTEM

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcomes so far of the review of the proposed reform of the Council Tax system as part of the Government's balance of funding review.

Background

2. At the last meeting of this Committee on 10 May 2004, the Committee was informed about the options the Government was considering to reform the current method of raising finance for local councils. Members will recall that four options were put forward:
 - Local Income Tax
 - Hybrid of Local Income Tax and Council Tax
 - Increasing VAT
 - Updating Council Tax
3. The Committee agreed that it should put these options to the public to get their views. A press release was sent out to all Nottinghamshire media. In particular, it received extensive coverage in the Nottingham Evening Post over a two-day period with the public given the opportunity to share their views on the options by telephone, e-mail or letter (See Appendix A). There was also a dedicated feature on BBC Radio Nottingham as well as coverage in other newspapers such as The Chad.

Focus Groups

4. The Committee also agreed that three focus groups should be held across the county to gather public perceptions on the alternatives to

the current Council Tax system. 3 group discussions (1½ hours in length each) were held over 1 & 2 June in West Bridgford, Ollerton and Mansfield. A full report of the focus groups is attached as Appendix B.

Other Responses

5. At the time of writing the report, the closing date for responses has not yet been reached. Comments from the public are currently being received by telephone at the authority's call centre, by post, by e-mail, and as a result of the feature on BBC Radio Nottingham. Details of these findings will be shared at the Committee meeting. A copy of a letter on the subject to the Nottingham Evening Post is attached as Appendix C.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6. It is recommended that:
 - (i) the outcomes of the focus groups and the other public comments are discussed; and
 - (ii) the Committee considers how it wants to share the views of the Nottinghamshire public both locally and nationally.

Cllr Darrell Pulk

Chair of the Corporate Strategy and Coordination Select Committee