

## **Consultation Plan**

The Council will be required to consult its proposed scheme with the public and preceptors. Any new scheme must be in place by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013, we have identified the following consultation strategy;

<p><b>Prepare initial Publicity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft article for website</li> <li>• Published on website</li> <li>• Advance press release drafted</li> <li>• Circulated to local press</li> <li>• Draft article for Council newsletter</li> <li>• Report to area committees</li> <li>• Council newsletter circulated</li> </ul>	<p>The initial stage will focus on advising Havering residents and Council Tax payers that central government are ending the current Council Tax Benefit scheme to be replaced by locally designed schemes, subject to reduced funding.</p> <p>It is also intended to advise that we will be consulting residents on aspects of the scheme in October.</p> <p>This will be achieved through a bulletin on the Havering Council website, a press release to local media and by inviting community groups to include the article within their own publications.</p> <p>It is also intended to place posters in Havering Council's public sites and libraries.</p> <p>The bulletin will be posted on the Havering website w/c 9 July, subject to clearance by the Communications team.</p>
<p><b>Prepare consultation with the Greater London Authority (GLA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise GLA of options/consultation and outcome</li> </ul>	<p>One of the requirements placed on local authorities is that we include major preceptors in the consultation process.</p> <p>When Cabinet has identified the options to be put up for consultation in their July meeting we will consult with the GLA accordingly.</p> <p>Advice will be sought from the Legal and Communications Team as to the detail and extent of the required consultation.</p> <p>The consultation outcome will be reported to the September cabinet.</p> <p>As a principle, the GLA will be kept informed throughout the new scheme implementation.</p>
<p><b>Consultation Period for GLA</b></p>	<p>The consultation will run for 4 weeks starting 16/7/12 and ending 6/8/12.</p>

<p><b>September Cabinet approval of draft final scheme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on GLA consultation outcomes drafted</li> <li>• Report signed off by project team</li> <li>• Report approved by Cabinet</li> </ul>	<p>The outcome of the GLA consultation will be reported at the September Cabinet meeting.</p> <p>This report will help inform Cabinet on the final design of the Local council Tax Support scheme and other changes to Council Tax charging scheme.</p> <p>Cabinet will also be made aware of any new issues (ICT or financial) which may significantly affect the operation, delivery or integrity of the scheme based on the shortlisted options.</p> <p>Cabinet will then be invited to sign off on the draft scheme to be in place from April 2013</p>
<p><b>Prepare consultation with residents and affected Persons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider &amp; procure appropriate service providers and communications media</li> <li>• Design questionnaire</li> <li>• Questionnaire signed off</li> </ul>	<p>Once Cabinet has approved the draft final scheme to be considered, a consultation document will be prepared that will allow residents to comment on aspects of the scheme. This will include case studies to help residents make informed decisions.</p> <p>The questionnaire will be drafted in consultation with the Communications team &amp; Equalities Team to ensure that it is understandable and accessible, ensuring clarity for residents.</p> <p>The consultation process has initially been planned as an online exercise whereby residents will be able to take part by visiting the Havering website.</p> <p>Other communications methods will also be considered such as telephone sampling and face to face interviews with a sample of residents</p> <p>We will also engage an external provider to undertake the consultation on Havering's' behalf and to collate and analyse responses to ensure timescales are met.</p>
<p><b>Consultation Period for residents on agreed draft final scheme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation on website</li> <li>• Meetings with external providers/partners</li> </ul>	<p>The consultation will run for 6 weeks for residents starting 4/10/12 and ending 14/11/12.</p> <p>During this period we will also meet with representatives from Havering's community groups, social landlords and voluntary organisations to separately canvas their thoughts on the final option put forward for consultation.</p>

<b>Option Consultation analysis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from meetings with external providers</li> <li>• Consultation outcomes published</li> </ul>	<p>During the consultation process, we will collate and analyse the responses received and from the meetings with the community representatives to brief members and senior officers of the progress of the consultation process.</p> <p>At the end of the consultation process, a full analysis of the responses received will be undertaken. This will be incorporated into a report to Cabinet in January. Once this report has been considered a further article for residents and Council Tax payers will be drafted advising of the results of the consultation.</p>
<b>January Cabinet</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report drafted</li> <li>• Report signed off</li> <li>• Submitted for inclusion on Agenda</li> <li>• Agreed by Council</li> </ul>	<p>At the completion of the consultation with residents and affected persons, a full report will be submitted for the January Cabinet meeting.</p> <p>Cabinet can consider the outcomes of the consultation and formally agree the details of the final scheme.</p> <p>Once the design has been ratified we will complete work on drafting the Council Tax Support policy document and the guidance manual and procedures for operational staff.</p>
<b>Final scheme publicity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Articles and press statements</li> <li>• Published on website</li> <li>• Press release to local press</li> </ul>	<p>On confirmation of the scheme design, a detailed article will be drafted and published both on the website and through the local press and other outlets.</p> <p>This will report on the outcome of the consultation process, the additional consideration given by Cabinet and the high level design of the new scheme, including the likely impact on residents.</p>
<b>Contact Customers affected</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify affected customers</li> <li>• draft information letter</li> <li>• Issue information letter</li> </ul>	<p>Once Cabinet has agreed the design of the local Council Tax Support scheme, we will identify where possible those households affected by the changes, using current Council Tax Benefit and Council Tax data.</p> <p>Each household will be contacted directly and advised of the changes to the level of support they will receive and/or the increases Council Tax payable.</p>