

## **HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Report to Corporate Select Committee**

**10 June 2019**

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Re-appointment of Council Tax Recovery Working Group</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>Councillor Barrow - Executive Councillor for Corporate Services and Finance</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Rachel Rourke – Member and Community Services Officer</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>(All Wards);</b>

#### **1. Reason for the Report**

1.1 To appoint members to the Council Tax Collection Working Group.

#### **2. Recommendation**

2.1 That Corporate Select Committee appoint members to the Council Tax Collection Working Group.

#### **3. Executive Summary**

3.1 The Council Tax Working Group was established following a motion put before Council in December 2018.

3.2 The Working Group has met on 1 April 2019 and agreed the scope and duration of the review.

3.3 Members previously appointed to the Working Group were Councillors Barrow, Douglas, Fox, Grooby, Lomax and A McKeown.

#### **4. Alternative Options**

4.1 To not appoint Members to the Working Group.

**ANDREW P STOKES**

**Executive Director (Transformation) and Chief Finance Officer**

## 6. Detail

- 6.1 At the meeting on 12th December 2018, the Council considered the following notice of motion put forward by Councillors McKeown and Greenhalgh:

*This council notes:*

1. Budget constraints mean councils face significant pressure to collect all the tax they're owed.
2. That in 2016/17 this council referred 1153 council tax cases to bailiffs.
3. For residents in vulnerable or complicated circumstances intervention by bailiffs can cause unnecessary additional stress and added fees making clearing outstanding debt more complicated.

*This council resolves:*

1. To put in place a formal policy concerning the use of bailiffs and collection agents covering residents in vulnerable circumstances.
2. Exempt residents in receipt of Council Tax Support from Bailiff action.
3. To sign the Citizens Advice Council Tax Protocol which was jointly developed between the Citizen's Advice and the Local Government Association.

After consideration of the motion, the Council resolved:

"The Council notes the statements and proposals in relation to council tax collection put forward by Councillors McKeown and Greenhalgh. The Council requests the Chair of the Corporate Select Committee to establish a sub-committee to examine the proposals in detail.

- 6.2 Councillors Barrow, Douglas, Fox, Grooby, Lomax and A McKeown were appointed to the Working Group, which had its first meeting on 1 April 2019.
- 6.3 At that meeting, members received a presentation on the recovery process from the Principal Income Officer. The scope of the review was agreed which includes a review of the current council tax collection processes and the Council's use of bailiffs and collection agents. It is anticipated that a further 3 meetings will be required.
- 6.4 The Committee is requested to appoint members to the Working Group.
- 6.5 The Group will be supported by officers from the Council's Council Tax Recovery Team.