

Portfolio Holder Report – Council 17 April 2013

By Cllr Jackie Branson – Governance and Logistics

Internal Audit

The Internal Audit partnership with Southampton and the Hampshire County Council went live on 1 April. An audit plan for the year is now agreed and the first audits are underway.

Revenues and Benefits

Council Tax Support scheme / empty property changes

These changes have been implemented successfully. Council Tax bills for 2013/14 including the revised levels of Council Tax Support and the revised empty property charges were sent out on schedule during March 2013.

Benefit Cap

The introduction of a cap on the total amount of benefit that working age people can receive. The cap will be set at £500 per week for out of work couples and lone parents and £350 per week for single out of work adults. The cap will not affect working families, pensioners and those on disability benefits. It is expected that these changes could affect around 100 households in the Borough who will see reductions in their Housing Benefit.

The Government have now confirmed that the national roll-out of these changes will take place from 15 July 2013 following on from the initial roll-out in four London Boroughs on 15 April 2013.

Size criteria for social sector Housing Benefit awards

These new rules have now come into effect and details of the revised level of Housing Benefit have been sent all tenants affected by the changes.

Shortly before the implementation date, the Government announced its intention to change some of the rules affecting foster parents, families with grown up children serving in the armed forces and situations in which disabled children might be expected to share a bedroom. Details of these changes were included in the Councillor newsletter issued on 20 March 2013.

Legal, Democratic and Electoral

2 May 2013 - Hampshire County Council Elections:-

Six Divisions ie Hayling Island, Bedhampton & Leigh Park, Emsworth & St Faiths, Cowplain & Hart Plain, Waterloo & Stakes North and Purbrook & Stakes South. Each division has one councillor except Bedhampton & Leigh Park, which has two.

Key dates:-

26 March - Publication of Notice of Election

Noon, 5 March - Close of nominations

17 April - Close of applications for registration and postal votes

18 April - Issue of postal votes

24 April - Publication of Notice of Poll

Day of Poll - 2 May

Verification and Count - From 10pm, 2 May – to be held in The Hurstwood Room at the Plaza.

Two by-elections are also planned for this day for HBC Councillors in Bedhampton and Emsworth. These will follow the same table.