

Briefing notes on Issues included in the Forward Plan Issue 2003/04

SERVICE AREA: Corporate Services

Report ref	Report title
BFS/73	COUNCIL TAX - SPECIAL LOCAL DISCOUNTS

Summary:

PROVISIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2003

The Local Government Act 2003 gives Councils the power to grant special local discounts for Council Tax. This power came into force on 18 December 2003. The Council can either define a class or classes of cases that will qualify for a discount and/or can consider applications individually. The discount can be anything up to 100% of the Council Tax.

WHAT THE REPORT WILL TRY AND AGREE

The Council needs to decide if it wants to define a class or classes of cases that will automatically qualify for a discount, and if so specify the amount of the discount.

The Council needs to decide if it intends to grant any individual local discounts, and if so, it needs to consider a criteria to base decisions on.

ISSUES WITH FORMING A RECOMMENDATION

Legal advice is being taken on at what level decisions on individual applications can be made. The preliminary advice is that the Director of Finance has delegated powers to make these decisions, but the Council may still wish applications to go to the Executive.

Brent is consulting with other London Boroughs on how they are dealing with local discounts. Information has been received so far from 9 other London Boroughs. None of them have specified any classes of cases that will automatically qualify for a discount. Two of them have already decided not to grant any local discounts either by class or individually. Only one of them has actually received an application for an individual application, and this was refused by their Cabinet.

Brent has so far received letters from 3 residents indicating that they wish to be considered for a discount. Application forms have been sent to them, but as at 19 May 2004, these had not been returned.

Nature of Decision to be taken/Intended Outcome:

Timescale for decision:

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