

Annex 1 – City of York Council response to 2018/19 Local Government Finance Settlement Technical Consultation

Question 1: Do you agree that the government should continue to maintain the certainty provided by the 4-year offer as set out in 2016-17 and accepted by more than 97% of local authorities?

It is agreed that greater certainty in relation to funding is welcome to allow local government to plan strategically. City of York Council signed up to the 4 year settlement deal and supports the continuation of this and multi year settlements in future. As an authority in receipt of transitional grant in 2016/17 and 2017/18, the cessation of this grant is significant but has been managed through our budget setting process.

Question 2: Do you agree with the New Homes Bonus allocations mechanism set out above?

Whilst we recognise the need for the government to 'sharpen the incentive' to deliver more new homes, the major flaw with either of the reduction mechanisms proposed is that a local authority may have turned down a planning application for good reason, on the advice of a third party or because it was not of sufficient quality. Nationally, the current proportion of decisions overturned on appeal is low which suggests that there is not a significant problem with authorities being unsupportive of house building.

Question 3: Do you agree that the approach should be based on data collected by the Planning Inspectorate? If you disagree, what other data could be used?

The data collected by the Planning Inspectorate is a reasonable method to use.

Question 4: Do you agree with the proposed appeal/challenge procedure for the dataset collated by Planning Inspectorate? If you disagree, what alternative procedure should be put in place?

Notwithstanding the potential flaws in the process, as outlined in question 2, the data collected by the Planning Inspectorate is a reasonable method to use.

Question 5: Are there alternative mechanisms that could be employed to reflect the quality of decision making on planning applications which should be put in place?

We do not have any alternative suggestions.

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Question 6: Which of the two mechanisms referenced above do you think would be more effective at ensuring the Bonus was focussed on those developments that the local authority has approved?

Although the 'per unit' methodology may be a greater administrative challenge to operate, it has the advantage that it is based on actual properties. Therefore, this is the preferred method.

Question 7: Do you think that that the same adjustments as elsewhere should apply in areas covered by National Park Authorities, the Broads Authority and development corporations?

City of York planning decisions are made independently of any of the above authorities. The ideal solution is that NHB reductions reflect actual decisions and these are allocated to the authority responsible.

Question 8: Do you think that county councils should be included in the calculation of any adjustments to the New Homes Bonus allocations?

As a unitary authority any decision would not affect City of York. As stated above, the ideal solution is that NHB reductions reflect actual decisions and these are allocated to the authority responsible.

Question 9: Do you have views on council tax referendum principles for 2018-19 for principal local authorities?

The current principles provide certainty on council tax increases in 2018/19 and these are in line with our expectations.

Question 10: Do you have views on whether additional flexibilities are required for particular categories of authority? What evidence is available to support this specific flexibility?

We do not wish to propose any changes to the current principles.

Question 11: What factors should be taken into account in determining an Alternative Notional Amount for Combined Authority mayors?

Although, this does not directly affect City of York, the use of alternative notional amounts for combining authority mayors is reasonable.

Question 12: Do you agree with the proposed approach to correcting the reduction in relevant county councils' income from the Adult Social Care precept?

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As a unitary authority this does not directly affect City of York, but the proposals are reasonable.

Question 13: Do you have any comments on the impact of the proposals for the 2018-19 settlement outlined in this consultation document on persons who share a protected characteristic? Please provide evidence to support your comments.

No further comments.