

Member Forum

17 January 2017

Statements from councillors



Procedural note:

STATEMENTS FROM COUNCILLORS:

- A maximum of 1 minute shall be allowed for the presentation of each statement (subject to overall time constraints).
- There shall be no debate on the statements and the Lord Mayor shall refer them to the Mayor for information/consideration.
- Statements will be dealt with in the order of receipt (subject to time).



The following member statement has been submitted – full details are attached:

CS 01 - Cllr Clive Stevens – Council tax reduction scheme



STATEMENT CS 01

Green Statement to Full Council - 17th January 2017

Statement from Councillor Clive Stevens

Subject: Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Much of the recently revealed council tax surplus came from a reduced call on the council tax reduction scheme. This scheme shelters those most income poor from the full force of this regressive tax. Pension Age relief is mandatory and Working Age relief is at our discretion. Council tax is the closest tax we have to Land Value Tax something considered over many years even dating back to Adam Smith's time, Green Party policy approves of Land Value Tax in principle.

As usual the devil is in the detail and that is especially true of the Council Tax reduction scheme but one major benefit is it makes Council Tax less regressive. Indeed if we doubled Council Tax rates (I am not recommending this, I am just saying if you do the maths), the effect of the Reduction Scheme is that there would be a doubling of Council Tax only to those earning over a certain income; many, many thousands of pensioners and tens of thousands of working age people would hardly see a rise at all. That means a doubling of Council Tax rates wouldn't double the Council's income, far from it, the reduction scheme would eat up a lot, and would cushion the blow for a large minority probably the majority of the population and crucially many, many voters.

For the reason I have stated we should all be proud of the scheme we operate in Bristol. It makes an unfair tax less unfair.