

COUNCIL MOTION - SUPERMARKET LEVY

- 1 Council at its meeting on 12 November referred the following motion proposed by Councillor Jeff Osborn and seconded by Councillor Terry Chivers to Overview and Scrutiny for consideration and report back.

“This council requires officers to investigate the opportunities provided in the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 to levy a charge on all Wiltshire supermarkets with the object of reducing parking charges in our city and market towns.

A report should be presented in sufficient time before the next full council to enable a notice of motion to be prepared so that a debate can take place on the matter.”

- 2 The Sustainable Communities Act (SCA) provides a process by which local communities can, through their respective council, propose changes at a national level (such as legislation or policy) that could improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of their local area.
- 3 Local authorities do not currently have the power to levy this tax, hence the call under the SCA for Government to grant this power. As a power, the local authority can then decide whether it wishes to make use of that power or not. If powers were granted, then further detailed consultation would need to be carried out if the Council were to consider using the powers to implement a levy.
- 4 The Committee will be aware that this motion (and similar ones elsewhere) is as a result of a national campaign by an organisation called Local Works, an umbrella organisation who were instrumental in bringing about the Sustainable Communities Act and working with councils and the community to ensure it is used to achieve its objectives. It is understood from Local Works that Oxford City, Southwark Borough, Derby City, Weymouth & Portland Borough and Enfield Borough Councils have resolved to support a supermarket levy.
- 5 Currently Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK which operates a large retail levy. There has been a 15% retail levy on properties with a rateable value of £500,000 or more since April 2012. Scotland has introduced a public health supplement levy, a 9.3% supplement on retail outlets with a rateable value of over £300,000 that sell both alcohol and tobacco. Wiltshire currently has 76 properties with a rateable value of £500,000 or more of which 25 are retail shops.

- 6 There is research material available both nationally and within Wiltshire covering various mechanisms of rate relief and levy and the potential impact on business and communities which can be made available. The Committee may feel this motion raises some wider issues to do with town centre regeneration etc. and therefore the review could take on a broader remit?
- 7 The Committee is asked to decide how it wishes to respond to the referral by Council within its current work programme commitments. It may see certain similarities with the work undertaken by the Community Infrastructure Levy Task Group and that to shortly begin by the Parking Charges Task Group. Both of these operate under the Environment Select Committee.