

## **Welfare Reform and the “Bedroom Tax”**

### **Report by John Blair, Director, Resources**

#### **1 Purpose of Report**

To advise Council of the response from Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform, in response to a letter from the Provost with regard to Welfare Reform and the “Bedroom Tax”.

#### **2 Background**

- 2.1** At their meeting on 19 March 2013, Council unanimously agreed the following Motion submitted by Councillor Thompson and Countersigned by Councillor Beattie:-

*“Midlothian Council condemns the decision of the UK Government to introduce the “Bedroom Tax” from 1 April 2013; Recognises that at a recent vote on this in Westminster that more than 90% of Scottish MP’s voted against this tax; notes with concern this measure will have a detrimental impact on a number of Midlothian residents and agrees to write to Prime Minister Cameron calling for the introduction of the “Bedroom Tax” to be scrapped immediately”.*

A response from Lord Freud dated 29 May 2013, was reported to Council on 25 June 2013. The Minutes of the Council meeting of that date states:-

*“During debate Members expressed severe disappointment at Lord Freud’s response which ignored the impact of Welfare Reform on the Council and which could in Midlothian amount to £25 million per year. His letter did not reflect housing in Scotland which was a devolved matter. In this regard the Provost agreed to write to Lord Freud.”*

The Provost’s letter of 18 July 2013 is attached as **Appendix 1** and Lord Freud’s response of 5 September 2013 is attached as **Appendix 2**.

#### **3 Report Implications**

##### **3.1 Resource**

There are no resource implications arising directly from this report.

##### **3.2 Risk**

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

**3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation**

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- X None of the above

**3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

Not applicable

**3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach**

Not applicable

**3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders**

Not applicable

**3.7 Ensuring Equalities**

Not applicable

**3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development**

Not applicable

**3.9 IT Issues**

Not applicable

**4 Recommendations**

Council is invited to note the response from Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform.

**16 October 2013**

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