



**OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

Stephen Benton
Council Tax and Valuation Tribunals Policy
Team Leader
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
ZONE 5/H4
ELAND HOUSE
BRESSENDEN PLACE
LONDON
SW1E 5DU

Web Site: www.odpm.gov.uk

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COUNCIL TAX INFORMATION LETTER 5/2003

This is Council Tax Information Letter 5/2003. The topics covered in this letter are:

- **Local Government Bill progress**
- **Consultation on implementation of Part 6 of the Bill**
- **Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) (Amendment) (No2) (England) Regulations 2003**
- **Other forthcoming changes to regulations**
- **IRRV Conference, Bournemouth: 14 – 17 October**

Local Government Bill progress

The Local Government Bill completed its Third Reading in the House of Lords on 10 September. Commons Consideration of Lords Amendments is scheduled for 15 September. Royal Assent is expected shortly after. The council tax clauses, other than the clause relating to combined fire authorities as preceptors, will come into force two months after Royal Assent. That clause will be brought into force by commencement order and it is intended this will be done so as to allow the new arrangements to take effect for 2004/05.

Consultation on implementation of Part 6 of the Bill

We have today issued a consultation paper which sets out the proposed changes to secondary legislation needed to implement the changes in relation to council tax discounts and enforcement. This consultation also covers proposals to change council tax bills as a result of combined fire authorities becoming preceptors from 1 April 2004.

The consultation period has been limited so that we can make the necessary regulations as soon as the new powers are available in November. This means the new provisions can be in force for the 2004/05 billing year.

The consultation paper is now available on the Office's website at www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/conindex.htm

Paper copies are being sent this week to Chief Executives of all English billing and major precepting authorities. Further copies of the consultation paper can be obtained by telephoning 0870 1226 236 from Monday 15th September onwards.

Views on the proposals and the draft regulations are invited by 29 October 2003. Please send them to: Ronnie Gasper, LGF2, ODPM, Zone 5/H5, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London, SW1E 5DU or by e-mail to counciltax.consultations@odpm.gov.uk

Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) (Amendment) (No2) (England) Regulations 2003 – SI 2003/2211

Following consultation earlier this year, the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992 have been amended to uplift the scale of bailiffs fees. In addition, the prescription of set forms used by Magistrates' Courts has been repealed as part of the wider LIBRA project. These changes come into effect on 1 October 2003.

A paper copy of the amending Regulations has been sent to the chief finance officers of billing authorities. They can also be found on the HMSO website www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si200322.htm

Other forthcoming changes to regulations

We expect to be able to make three further sets of regulations shortly relating to:

- demand notices
- E-billing
- council tax liability for care homes

We will issue a further Council Tax Information Letter to inform you when these are made.

IRRV Conference, Bournemouth: 14 – 17 October 2003

We shall as usual have a stand at the IRRV annual conference – so do come and see us on Stand 63 if you want to discuss anything to do with council tax or non domestic rates.

In addition, we are having a question and answer session on the morning of Thursday 16th in the main conference hall which will be a further opportunity to discuss local taxation matters with us.

Contact

If you have any enquiries about anything in this letter, please contact Rai Tind on 020 7944 4187 or fax to 020 7944 4179. Email: council.tax@odpm.gsi.gov.uk



STEPHEN BENTON