

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**THE QUEEN'S SPEECH 2010**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the change in policy direction outlined in the Queen's Speech on 24 May 2010.
- 1.2 The Queen at the State Opening of parliament set out the coalition government's legislative programme the next year.
- 1.3 22 Bills will be introduced in this first session of the new government which will run until the next Queen's Speech in November 2011.
- 1.4 The two key areas for policy change in local government are:  
  
**The Decentralisation and Localism Bill** - which seeks to devolve greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities control over housing and planning decisions.  
**The Education and Children's Bill** - which will allow different groups, including parents, to start and run state schools and establish the "pupil premium" to increase funding spent on children from a disadvantaged background.
- 1.5 The report outlines the main provisions of the Bills and recommends that further reports are brought to members as the Bills are published and the consultation stage begins.

**2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Queen at the State Opening of parliament set out the coalition government's legislative programme the next year. This included 22 Bills to be introduced in this first session of the new government which will run until the next Queen's Speech in November 2011.
- 2.2 There are two key Bills for Local Government:  
  
**Decentralisation and Localism Bill** - which seeks to devolve greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities control over housing and planning decisions. It will include the following specific measures:

1. Give councils a power of general competence.
2. Give local government and community groups greater financial autonomy.
3. Abolish the Standards Board regime and abolish Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).
4. Give residents the power to instigate local referendums on any local issue and the power to veto excessive council tax increases.
5. Require public bodies to publish online job titles of every member of staff and salaries and expenses of senior officials.
6. Give councillors the power to vote on large salary packages for unelected council officials.
7. Create Local Enterprise Partnerships (replacing Regional Development Agencies) to promote economic development.
8. Abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategies and the Infrastructure Planning Commission.
9. Return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils.
10. Phase out the ring-fencing of grants to local government and review the unfair Housing Revenue Account.

**Education and Children's Bill** - which will allow different groups, including parents, to start and run state schools and establish the "pupil premium" to increase funding spent on children from a disadvantaged background. Specific measures will include:

1. New providers can enter the state school system in response to parental demand.
2. To reform Ofsted and other accountability frameworks to ensure that head teachers are held properly accountable for the core educational goals of attainment and closing the gap between rich and poor.
3. Introduction of the pupil premium.

2.3 There were also a number of other Bills affecting local government including:

- Academies Bill
- Local Government (Revocation of Structural Change) Bill
- Police reform and Social Responsibility Bill
- Welfare Reform Bill
- Energy Security and Green Economy Bill
- Public Bodies Bill
- Health Bill.
- Pensions and Savings Bill

2.4 An outline of all the Bills is attached as appendix 1

2.5 Details of each Bill are only at outline stage. Detailed text will be drafted and the Bills will then enter their passage through Parliament.

2.6 The council will need to consider the implications of each Bill in detail once the draft has been produced. The normal process allows for consultation with councils.

### **3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 The council is required to implement the relevant provisions of the Bills once they become Acts.

### **4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

- 4.1 Detailed consideration of the resource implications of the Bills will need to be assessed when drafts are published.
- 4.2 The Government has announced measures to make £6.25bn of savings in the current year. The package includes £1.165bn of savings to be made in local government by reducing grants to local authorities. No details have yet been given to allow an assessment on the impact on the council.

### **5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

- 5.1. Once the Bills become Acts the council will need to ensure that it meets the requirements of all the provisions.
- 5.2. Detailed impact assessments will be undertaken by the Government and the council will need to undertake its own integrated impact assessment for any policy changes arising from implementation.

### **6. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Bills will undergo detailed consultation during the passage through Parliament.

### **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

- 7.1 Cabinet note the main provisions of the Bills and request more detailed reports once detailed drafts are published.

### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report -**  
The Queen's Speech 24<sup>th</sup> May 2010

- 1 **Academies Bill** -Will give more schools in England, including primaries, the freedom to become academies allowing them to opt out of local authority control. Will also make it easier for parents and other groups to set up "free schools". A second bill in the autumn will give schools greater freedom over the curriculum and give teachers greater powers to deal with bad behaviour. It will also set up the "pupil premium" to help disadvantaged children.
- 2 **Airport Economic Regulation Bill** - Includes measures to increase the competitiveness of UK airports , having ruled out new runways in the South-East of England. More details to be announced in due course. Would apply across the UK, except Northern Ireland, which regulates its own airports. The government is in discussions with Northern Ireland over whether to adopt the reforms there.
- 3 **Armed Forces Bill** -Will increase support for serving personnel, maximising leave periods and giving more assistance to their families. Will provide extra mental health services for veterans.
- 4 **Decentralism and Localism Bill** -Will give councils more powers over housing and planning decisions and begin a review of local government finance. Will apply to England and Wales but implications for Scotland cannot be ruled out because of the "wide scope" of the Bill.
- 5 **Energy and Green Economy Bill** -Will promote enhanced energy efficiency, including the roll-out of smart meters. Will promote low-carbon energy production. Most of the measures will apply to England, Wales and Scotland with some devolved elements, "depending on the final detail".
- 6 **Equitable Life Payments Scheme Bill** - Will secure compensation for nearly a million policyholders hit by the near collapse of the insurer Equitable Life UK-wide.
- 7 **European Union Bill** -Will mean a referendum must be held to approve any future treaties handing powers to the European Union.
- 8 **Financial Reform Bill** -Will shift responsibility for macro-regulation of the banking system from the Financial Services Authority to the Bank of England
- 9 **Freedom (Great Repeal) Bill** -Will limit the amount of time that DNA profiles of innocent people can be held on national database. Will tighten regulation on the use of CCTV cameras, remove limits on right to peaceful protest. The storage of DNA is a power devolved to the Scottish Parliament. The Bill would adopt the Scottish model.
- 10 **Identity Documents Bill** -Will scrap identity cards and National Identity Register introduced by Labour and cancel the next generation of biometric passports. UK-wide legislation.
- 11 **Health Bill** -Will seek to give health professionals and patients more say over NHS decision-making. Will cut health service quangos and some central targets and increase focus on "health inequalities".
- 12 **Local Government Bill** -Will block the creation of single-tier councils in Exeter and Norwich.
- 13 **National Insurance Contributions Bill** -Will block next year's 1% rise in NI contributions by employers. UK-wide.
- 14 **Office of Budget Responsibility Bill** -Will provide a "statutory underpinning" to new Office of Budget Responsibility, which will provide

- borrowing and economic growth forecasts for the Treasury. Main elements of the proposed bill "have yet to be decided upon".
- 15 **Parliamentary Reform Bills** -Measures will be introduced to establish fixed-term elections for Parliament, held every five years . Will require 55% of MPs to vote for a dissolution of Parliament between scheduled elections. Will give constituents the right to "recall" corrupt MPs between elections. Will reduce the number of MPs by about 50. Review of reform of the House of Lords may be included in a separate draft bill later in the year. A Bill will also be introduced for a referendum on changing the voting system to the Alternative Vote. Will apply to the whole of the UK.
  - 16 **Pensions and Savings Bill** -Will restore the link between earnings and the state pension from 2012 . Applies to England, Scotland and Wales. Will legislate for the phasing out of the default retirement age and set a timetable for raising the state pension age, depending on the outcome of a review.
  - 17 **Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill** -Will provide for directly elected commissioners to oversee local police forces. There is no mention of monthly local crime statistics, which were mentioned in earlier reports. Will also give police more power to deal with alcohol-related violence and ban sale of below cost price alcohol. Would also establish a dedicated border police force, as part of a refocused Serious and Organised Crime Agency. Applies to England and Wales only, except border police force, the scope of which is "to be confirmed".
  - 18 **Postal Services Bill** -Will allow injection of private capital into the Royal Mail, address its pension deficit, guarantee the post office network remains in public hands and seek to improve staff relations with management. Would apply to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
  - 19 **Public Bodies Bill** -Will abolish a number of non-department government bodies and limit the powers of other quangos. Applies to England and Wales only.
  - 20 **Scotland Bill** -Will grant the Scottish Parliament more powers over taxation and borrowing under proposals made by the Calman Commission.
  - 21 **Terrorist Asset Freezing Bill** -Will expand scope of existing legislation to cover new organisations thought to present threat to security. UK wide legislation.
  - 22 **Welfare Reform Bill** -Will create a single welfare-to-work programme and make benefit payments more conditional on willingness to accept work. Benefit changes will be UK-wide, but will need parallel legislation in Northern Ireland, where it is devolved.