

Template for Impact Assessment Level 1: Initial screening assessment

Subject of assessment:	Local Council Tax Support			
Coverage:	Service Specific			
This is a decision relating to:	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Function
	<input type="checkbox"/> Process/procedure	<input type="checkbox"/> Programme	<input type="checkbox"/> Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Review
	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change			
It is a:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New approach:		Revision of an existing approach: <input type="checkbox"/>	
It is driven by:	Legislation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Local or corporate requirements: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Description:	<p>Insert short description, using the following as sub-headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key aims, objectives and activities <p>The purpose of the report is to specify how Middlesbrough Council will operate the Local Council Tax Support Scheme and sets out the factors which will be taken into account when deciding such applications. The new scheme will be operational from 1 April 2013 following the abolition of the national Council Tax Benefit scheme. The policy sets out how applications can be made, when applicants will receive a decision, how the Council will treat all types of income and savings together with providing details of how applicants can ask for a review of the decision if they are dissatisfied.</p>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory drivers (set out exact reference) The Local Government Finance Bill abolishes the national Council Tax Benefit scheme and empowers the Local Authority to introduce a new localised Council Tax Support scheme. Differences from any previous approach The purpose of this report is to present details of how the new scheme will be operated by Middlesbrough Council from 1 April 2013. There have been no such previous approaches as prior to Local Council Tax Support being introduced, the national Council Tax Benefit scheme applied Key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries (internal and external as appropriate) All residents who are liable for Council Tax (aged over 18) but under pensionable age and receive Local Council Tax Support could be affected by this policy. National legislation for pensioners will be prescribed by central government and will be adopted by Middlesbrough Council Intended outcomes. To present a policy for consideration by Council that has given full consideration to the impact of the proposals, has considered the risks associated with the new scheme and gives proper consideration to the Council's equality duties.
Live date:	1 April 2013
Lifespan:	April 2013 – March 2016
Date of next review:	December 2015

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
	No	Yes	Uncertain	
Human Rights Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The purpose of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme is to provide a policy document which allows the most appropriate support for the borough which minimises the negative impact upon residents. Specific criteria have been put in place within the policy document, which are broadly in line with the existing Council Tax Benefit regulations. Any changes have been clarified in the policy document and none of the proposed changes have a negative impact on individual human rights.

* Consult the Impact Assessment further guidance appendix for details on the issues covered by each of these broad questions prior to completion.

	<p>Equality Could the decision result in adverse differential impacts on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equality law? Could the decision impact differently on other commonly disadvantaged groups? *</p>	<p>Response</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>		<p>The Council has a duty to consider the impact of the proposed decision on relevant protected characteristics to ensure it has due regard to the public sector equality duty. The duty means the Council must have due regard when taking decisions to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. <p>The scheme is relevant to the age and disability protected characteristics. The Council has modelled the impact of the proposed changes to customers and assessed the various options open to it. The proposed model has been consulted on and this assessment is based on the recommended option – the purpose of this was to ensure consideration of the impact of different options on vulnerable groups within the town.</p> <p>Age (elderly) - The government have considered the situation for low income pensioners who are currently eligible for support with their council tax through council tax benefit. Unlike most other groups, pensioners cannot be expected to find work. As a result of this, low income pensioners are protected from any reduction in support as with the introduction of Local Council Tax Support by Government.</p> <p>Disability - There are likely to be a number of claimants who currently receive a disability premium within other state benefit awards and the exact number of people who are disabled and potentially affected by these changes are unknown. The income which is disregarded under Council Tax Benefit is to be maintained under Local Council Tax Support and as the proposals are to pass an equal reduction on to every benefit claimant, this protected characteristic is not adversely affected. The impact on people with a disability will be mitigated by the receipt of these other premiums and this income will continue to be disregarded.</p> <p>Age (families with young children) – Families with young children will be adversely affected by the proposal, however they will not be disproportionately adversely affected because they hold this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Evidence used to inform this assessment includes public consultation including drop in events, consultation with partner agencies and analysis of data held.</p>
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