

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of proposal/policy	West Northamptonshire Council Local Council Tax Support Scheme	Budget number (if applicable)	N / A
Programme / Service area responsible	Revenues & Benefits Service	Programme Board meeting date	
Name of completing officer	Belinda Green & Nick Woods	Date EqIA created	27.10.20
Approved by Programme Manager	Akhtar Pepper	Date of approval	

The Equality Act 2010 places a 'General Duty' on all public bodies to have 'Due regard' to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations

We do this by undertaking equality impact assessments (EqIAs) to help us understand the implications of policies and decisions on people with protected characteristics – EqIAs are our way of evidencing this.

PART A – REMOVE ALL GUIDANCE IN ITALICS ONCE COMPLETED

1) Description of current provision/policy and main beneficiaries/stakeholders

From April 2013 each Local authority has been required to determine a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS). The current 3 Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes within the West Northamptonshire area assist people on low incomes to pay their Council Tax. There are currently circa 13,000 working age residents who benefit from a reduction in Council Tax. The scheme applies to working age claimants only, as the Government prescribes the scheme for pensioner claimants who can receive up to 100% support.

The existing maximum reduction rates across West Northamptonshire for 2020/21 are

- Daventry – 80%
- Northampton Borough 69%
- South Northants – 91.5%

2) Description of proposal under consideration/development

The new West Northamptonshire authority requires a new harmonised LCTRS scheme that is fair and equitable for all Council Taxpayers in the West Northamptonshire area.

A Task & Finish Group comprising of Members met to consider a new LCTRS scheme and proposed that the scheme should be cost neutral.

The harmonised percentage that would have no net impact upon Council Tax income would be 26.5%, based upon current caseloads. Permission to consult on the scheme recommended by the Task & Finish Group will be considered at the Shadow Executive Committee meeting on the 27.10.20.

A public consultation will now take place for 6 weeks starting on the 2nd November 2020.

3) Data used in this Equality Impact Assessment (general population data where appropriate but each EqIA should contain information on people who use the service under consideration – if this is not applicable to your proposal then you probably do not need to do an EqIA)

Data Source (include link where published) – quantitative or qualitative	What does this data tell us?
LCTRS helps those residents of working age who are on low income pay their Council Tax.	Any changes to the LCTRS scheme will have a direct impact upon those residents of a working age on a low income. Currently there are circa 13,000 working age residents within the area who benefit from the scheme.

4) Please give details about planned consultation or engagement with communities and other stakeholders that are likely to be affected by the policy/decision/service change. Contact the Consultation, Equalities & Accessibility Team (ceat@northamptonshire.gov.uk) for advice or complete the online form with details of your consultation/engagement activity.

If you are not carrying out any consultation or engagement activity, please provide reasons why you think this is not necessary.

We are carrying out a 6-week consultation period which involves the following

- Online digital survey
- Telephone survey for any residents that are unable to partake digitally
- Writing to all 13,000 residents currently in receipt of LCTRS to let them know about proposed changes to the scheme
- Sent briefing note to all West Northamptonshire Members town and parish councils to inform them
- Writing to our local partners and housing providers that work actively with our residents to inform them

5) If consultation or engagement has been carried out in the past, please provide details. If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced the work to date?

N/A

Protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010

6) Based on the above information, what is the likely impact on the following groups? Please explain why you have made this assessment. If you are unsure, set out what you will do to get enough information to make an assessment.

Sex	Impact and explanation	Neutral Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	Neutral impact, not relevant to assessing eligibility.
Gender Reassignment	Impact	Neutral Explanation:

	Mitigations/actions	Neutral impact, not relevant to assessing eligibility.
Age	Impact	Positive & Negative Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	<p>There will be an impact on some customers of working age due to the different levels of support currently available in each district and borough council. Some of those affected will be families with children.</p> <p>This can be mitigated to a degree by early notification of the changes starting with the consultation and as we move forward to the new scheme customers will be encouraged to work with debt and money advice teams to maximise income and so lessen the impact.</p>
Disability	Impact	Neutral Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	Neutral, the disability premiums and disregards currently used in the calculation of LCTRS will still remain.
Race & Ethnicity	Impact	Neutral Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	Neutral impact, not relevant to assessing eligibility.
Sexual Orientation	Impact	Neutral Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	Neutral impact, not relevant to assessing eligibility.
Religion or Belief (or No Belief)	Impact	Neutral Explanation:

	Mitigations/actions	Neutral impact, not relevant to assessing eligibility.
Pregnancy & Maternity	Impact	Positive and Negative Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	<p>There will be an impact on some customers of working age due to the different levels of support currently available in each district and borough council and the proposed changes to family premium and child allowance for new claims from 1st April 2021.</p> <p>This can be mitigated to a degree by early notification of the changes starting with the consultation and as we move forward to the new scheme customers will be encouraged to work with debt and money advice teams to maximise income and so lessen the impact.</p>

Cross-cutting considerations

7) Based on the above information, what is the likely impact on the following groups? Please explain why you have made this assessment. If you are unsure, set out what you will do to get enough information to make an assessment.		
Human Rights – relevant articles and local authority context:	Impact	Neutral Explanation:
<p><i>Article 2 – Right to life</i></p> <p><i>Article 3 – Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment</i></p> <p><i>Article 4 – Prohibition of slavery and forced labour</i></p> <p><i>Article 5 – Right to liberty and security</i></p> <p><i>Article 6 – Right to a fair trial</i></p> <p><i>Article 8 – Right to private and family life</i></p> <p><i>Article 9 – Freedom of thought, belief and religion</i></p> <p><i>Article 10 – Freedom of expression</i></p> <p><i>Article 11 – Freedom of assembly and association</i></p> <p><i>Article 14 – Protection from discrimination</i></p>	<p>Mitigations/actions</p>	<p>Neutral impact.</p>

<p>Article 1 of the First Protocol: Protection of property</p> <p>Article 2 of the First Protocol: Right to education</p>		
<p>Rural isolation</p>	Impact	<p>Neutral Explanation:</p>
	Mitigations/actions	Neutral impact.
<p>Socio-economic exclusion</p>	Impact	<p>Positive & Negative Explanation:</p>
	Mitigations/actions	<p>There will be a negative impact for some residents who are on low income where their current authority run a more generous scheme than is proposed. This will be mitigated to some extent by working with customers to offer debt and money advice to maximise income.</p> <p>Some residents who are on low income will be positively affected.</p>
<p>Health and wellbeing considerations</p>	Impact	<p>Positive & Negative Explanation:</p>
	Mitigations/actions	<p>There will be a negative impact for some residents who are on low income where their current authority run a more generous scheme than is proposed. Working with customers to support and offer debt and money advice will help to maximise income and mitigate this risk</p> <p>Some residents who are on low income will be positively affected.</p>

* reference to Authorities includes: , Northampton Borough Council, Daventry District Council, Northamptonshire County Council, South Northamptonshire Council, West Northamptonshire Council.

PART B – if you are undertaking any further work before the decision on this policy or service change is made, please complete Part B and then make a final assessment based on this additional information

****TO BE COMPLETED FOLLOWING CONSULTATION****

REMOVE ALL GUIDANCE IN ITALICS ONCE COMPLETED

1) Consultation, follow up data and information gathered from actions identified above	
	What does this information tell us?
<i>Describe any consultation or engagement that you have carried out since you completed Part A and number of responses/event attendees/contacts</i>	<i>What did people tell you? Did they support the proposal? Did they make any alternative suggestions? Did support differ depending on who was responding?</i>
<i>Describe any further work you have undertaken since completing Part A – have you had further discussions with providers? Has the budget changed? Are alternative proposals being considered? Have you been able to fill in any gaps in information that you had identified?</i>	<i>What does this tell you?</i>

Protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010 – see Part A for explanations and guidance

2) Based on the above information, what is the likely impact on the following groups? Please explain why you have made this assessment. If you are still unsure, please explain what you plan to do in future to address this.		
Sex <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate)
	Mitigations/actions	Explanation:
Gender Reassignment	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate)

<i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>		Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	
Age <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate)
	Mitigations/actions	Explanation:
Disability <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate)
	Mitigations/actions	Explanation:
Race & Ethnicity <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate)
	Mitigations/actions	Explanation:
Sexual Orientation <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate)
	Mitigations/actions	Explanation:
Religion or Belief (or No Belief) <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate)
	Mitigations/actions	Explanation:
Pregnancy & Maternity <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate)
	Mitigations/actions	Explanation:

Cross-cutting considerations – see Part A for explanations and guidance

3) Based on the above information, what is the likely impact on the following groups? Please explain why you have made this assessment. If you are still unsure, please explain what you plan to do in future to address this.

Human Rights (Please see articles in the toolkit for more information)	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate)
		Explanation:

<i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Mitigations/actions	
Rural isolation <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate) Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	
Socio-economic exclusion <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate) Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	
Health and wellbeing considerations <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate) Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions Note: Depending on the scale of the impact identified, there may be a recommendation for a full Health Impact Assessment to be completed	

4) Final impact analysis (taking the findings from Part B into account) – including review date if required

Based on all the information contained in this assessment, and based on what you are proposing to do/recommend, what do you assess the impact to be – in particular, highlight where there may be negative impacts, and what can be done to mitigate them. These need to be made clear so that decision-makers are fully informed before making their decision. This equality impact assessment will be the authorities evidence of meeting its duties under the Equality Act and would be referred to in the event of a legal challenge.*

* reference to Authorities includes Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough Council, South Northants Council and West Northamptonshire Council