

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'E'

1 Identify the aims of the policy/service/function and how it is implemented.			
	Key questions	Answers / Notes	Actions required
1.1	What is the aim, objective or purpose of the policy/service/function?	The Council has a statutory duty to adopt a Council Tax Support Scheme under the Local Government Finance Act 2012.	The Council has a statutory duty to adopt a Council Tax Support Scheme under the Local Government Finance Act 2012.
1.2	What outcomes do you want to achieve with this policy/service/function and for whom?	The Government will abolish Council Tax Benefit from 1 st April 2013. It will be replaced by a statutory requirement for all Council Tax billing authorities to develop their own Council Tax Support Scheme based on local priorities.	It is for the Council to decide whether to find the required savings by making conditions of entitlement to Council Tax reductions more stringent requiring everyone (except those of pensionable age) to pay at least 8.5% of their Council Tax bill.
1.3	Who defines or defined the policy/service/function?	As a result of changes from Central Government East Herts Council will develop and implement its own Council Tax Support Scheme based on local priorities.	East Herts Council will develop and implement its own Council Tax Support Scheme based on local priorities.
1.4	Who implements the policy/service/function?	East Herts Council as the Council Tax billing authority.	Not applicable
1.5	What factors or forces are at play that could contribute or detract from the outcomes identified earlier?	Changes in legislation.	Not applicable
1.6	Taking protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation), is there anything in the policy/service/function that could	Age The proposed scheme will reduce the amount of support given to people on low income who currently claim Council Tax Benefit and are not of pensionable age. The proposed scheme has no impact on claimants of	No further action required.

	<p>discriminate or disadvantage any of these groups?</p>	<p>pensionable age as the level of support for claimants of pensionable age is unchanged.</p> <p>Disability The proposed scheme will reduce the amount of support given to people on low incomes who currently claim Council Tax Benefit. Some people are unable to work because of illness or disability, have limited ability to work because of illness or disability and have limited ability to work because they are carers. The proposed scheme will have a negative impact on these groups who cannot work or have limited capacity for employment due to their disabilities.</p> <p>Gender The proposed scheme will reduce the amount of support given to working age claimants on low incomes who currently claim Council Tax Benefit irrespective of gender. No information is held about the sexuality of claimants so the impact on transgendered and transsexual has not been considered.</p> <p>Pregnancy/Maternity The proposed scheme will reduce the amount of support given to working age claimants on low incomes who currently claim Council Tax Benefit. The proposed scheme will have a negative impact on this group who either cannot work or have restricted capacity for employment due to parenting responsibilities.</p>	<p>Se 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3.</p> <p>No information is held about the sexuality of claimants so the impact on transgendered and transsexual has not been considered.</p> <p>See 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3</p>
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2	Consideration of available data, research and information		
	Key questions	Answers / Notes	Actions required
2.1	What do you already know about who uses this policy/service/function?	The scheme will directly affect approximately 3500 households in East Herts who get Council Tax Benefit and are not of pensionable age.	Approximately 3500 households were directly mailed on the proposed changes to the scheme.
2.2	What additional information is needed to ensure that all protected characteristic group's needs are taken into account?	Additional information has been provided by respondents in the comments section of the recent consultation.	Comments have been summarised and included in the Council Tax Support Report by Executive Member for Finance.
3	Formal consultation		
	Key questions	Answers / Notes	Actions required
3.1	Who do we need to consult with?	We have consulted generally with the residents of East Herts and specifically with approximately	We have consulted generally with the residents of East Herts and

		3500 households affected.	specifically with approximately 3500 households affected.
3.2	What method/form of consultation can be used?	We have consulted generally with the residents of East Herts through an article in LINK magazine Autumn 2012 and by providing details of the proposed changes to the scheme and a consultation questionnaire on our website. We have consulted specifically with the 3500 households by directly mailing details of the proposed changes to the scheme and inviting comments through completion of the consultation questionnaire.	We have consulted generally with the residents of East Herts through an article in LINK magazine Autumn 2012 and by providing details of the proposed changes to the scheme and a consultation questionnaire on our website. We have consulted specifically with the 3500 households by directly mailing details of the proposed changes to the scheme and inviting comments through completion of the consultation questionnaire.
4	Assessment of impact		
	Key questions	Answers / Notes	Actions required
4.1	Have you identified any differential impact and does this adversely affect any protected characteristic groups in the community?	The Council will continue to support pensioners but for those who have restricted scope for finding employment or increasing earnings from employment they will have less ability to find the means to pay increased Council Tax.	See 4.2
4.2	If there is an adverse impact can it be avoided, can we make changes, can we lessen it etc?	The Council will not reduce support for working age claimants further than the 8.5% reduction sought by government. It will be fair to all working age claimants. It will not adjust those factors which provide a higher level of support for vulnerable groups such as families with a member who has a disability.	See 4.3
4.3	If there is nothing you can do, can the reasons be fairly justified?	As East Herts Council is committed to not increasing the council tax, the rules for working	As East Herts Council is committed to not increasing the

		age claimants have to change.	council tax, the rules for working age claimants have to change.
5	Consideration of the effect of proposed changes on other groups.		
	Key questions	Answers / Notes	Actions required
5.1	Do any of the changes in relation to the adverse impact have a further adverse affect on any other protected characteristic group?	It will not adjust those factors which provide a higher level of support for vulnerable groups such as families with a member who has a disability.	It will not adjust those factors which provide a higher level of support for vulnerable groups such as families with a member who has a disability.
INTERNAL PROCESSES FOR THE ORGANISATION			
6	Making a decision in the light of data, alternatives and consultations		
	Key questions	Answers / Notes	Actions required
6.1	The organisations decision making process	The Council will take sufficient time to evaluate and consider all responses to the consultation on the proposed scheme before agreeing its final proposals by 31 st January 2013.	The Council will take sufficient time to evaluate and consider all responses to the consultation on the proposed scheme before agreeing its final proposals by 31 st January 2013.
7	Monitor in the future and publication of results of such monitoring		
	Key questions	Answers / Notes	Actions required
7.1	What have we found out in completing this EqIA? What can we learn for the future?	It ensures that decisions taken by East Herts Council are made in a fair and transparent way and demonstrates our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty – Section 149 Equality Act 2010.	No further action required.
8	Publication of results of the impact assessment Date 20/11/2012 Lead Officer Marianne McWhinnie Engagement and Partnerships Officer (Equalities & Consultation)		