

Initial Equalities Impact Assessment screening form

1. Within the aims and objectives of the policy or strategy which group (s) of people has been identified as being potentially disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

The people who will be potentially disadvantaged by this policy are the 4,904 households who do not have to pay any Council Tax, due to being on a low income. The policy recommendation is to maintain the existing level of support, which if agreed will not see anyone disadvantaged. If a different decision is made the people impacted will be those on low incomes. Research conducted into the local impact of welfare reform has shown that this group are managing the impact by borrowing from family and friends, and often skipping meals. A reduction in Council Tax Support would exacerbate this impact. Maintaining the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme, also supports the objectives of the Council's Financial Inclusion Strategy, particularly the objectives linked to the theme of debt.

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?

Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan

The recommendation is not to make a change. However an alternative decision could see low income households facing annual Council Tax bills of between £100 and £600. A number of frontline teams work with households to mitigate the impacts of welfare reform, including Tenancy Sustainment, Revenues, Rents and the Welfare Reform Team.

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them

If a decision is made to alter the existing Council Tax Reduction scheme, then a full public consultation is required. The Council would also have to consult the County Council and the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner as there would be an impact on their income.

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?

Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments

The recommendation is to make no change, which will mean there is no adverse impact.

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place

The overall impact of the CTR Scheme is already monitored on a monthly basis and is part of the monthly highlight report of the Revenues & Benefits Programme Manager which is reported to the ODCS Board.

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA:

Role: Revenues & Benefits Programme Manager

Date: 7 September 2016