December 07 2021

EQUALITY ANALYSIS

You must complete this in conjunction with reading Equality Analysis Guidance

Name of Policy/Decision/Project/Activity:

Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23

Date: 07/12/2021

Version Number: v1

Equality Analysis completed by:

Name/Job title:
Sharon Holden (Revenues Manager)
Loraine Nelson (Benefits Manager)

Responsible Officer or Group:

Name/Job title:
Paul Wilson (Assistant Director of Finance)

Is the Activity:

New/Proposed ( ) Changing/Being Reviewed (x) Other ( )

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1. Purpose and scope

Purpose

In this section outline briefly:

- what the policy, decision or activity is and what the intended outcomes/benefits are (linked to the Corporate Outcomes Framework)
- over what period of time the outcomes will be achieved
- why it needs to be implemented or revised
- what populations are affected by the proposal
- who is expected to benefit and how, i.e. young people, older people, carers, BME groups, ward areas/communities, etc
- whether there are any overlaps with regional, sub-regional, national priorities.

The Local Government Finance Act (LGFA) 2012 transferred responsibility for Local Council Tax Support Schemes (LCTSS) from central to local government from 1st April 2013. The LGFA 2012 also legislated that pensioners must receive protection, in that they must receive the same levels of entitlement under the new local Council Tax Support scheme as they had received under the old Council Tax Benefit scheme.

The Council adopted a scheme which was based on the government's default scheme incorporating protection for pensioners. The scheme requires that all working age households contribute towards their council tax bill.

Since April 2013, the scheme has been reviewed and moderately updated to reflect legislative changes and policy decisions. In April 2018 some further technical and administrative changes were implemented in order to align the scheme to Housing Benefit rules and to make the LCTSS more efficient to administer and easier for the customer to understand. The Sunderland scheme for 2019/20, 2020/2021and 2021/2022 continued with a reduction in Council Tax Support by 8.5% for all working age claimants (e.g working age on lowest income paid £1.44 per week (single people), and £1.93 per week (couples/families),
The council must approve its Local Council Tax Support Scheme by 11 March 2022. In line with reviewing the scheme, it is proposed that the existing scheme **continues to apply** for the year commencing 1st April 2022. Subject to approval by 11th March 2022, the scheme will come into force on 1st April 2022.

The scheme will be reviewed each year and any impacts or unintended consequences will be assessed and reviewed when considering the scheme for 2023/24.

None of the protected groups are restricted from claiming council tax support. Their eligibility is determined by their financial and personal circumstances. The current caseload is 32,712 of which 12,338are pensioners and 20,374 are working age claimants.

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Intelligence and Analysis

Please describe:

- What sources of information have been used to inform this assessment/analysis (this should include but is not limited to consultations, resident/service user feedback and statistical data and intelligence)
- **What the information is telling you** – this should be broken down by each of the protected characteristics or other identified groups which could be disadvantaged. Each of the aims of the equality act should be considered in relation to each of the protected characteristics.

This equality analysis has been informed by

- Consultation with the Revenues Manager, Benefits Manager and Assistant Director of Local Finance

The proposal makes no changes to the current system and is to continue for 2022/23.

Gaps in intelligence and information

Having analysed the information available to you:

- are there any gaps in intelligence or areas where understanding needs to be improved? Please describe what these are and what actions you intend to take to obtain/improve the information. These actions should be covered in the action plan.
- are there any groups who should be expected to benefit who do not? Please describe why not and whether you will amend the decision to change this outcome. This should also be covered in the action plan.

Not applicable.

Additional Impacts

The policy or action may also have an impact on other groups or individuals which are not covered by statutory requirements. Please outline any additional individuals or groups which have not already been covered. This could include socio-economic groups, voluntary and community sector, carers or specific communities which face additional challenges (such as former coal mining areas or areas of high deprivation)

Not applicable.

2. Analysis of impact on people

In this section you must **review the intelligence described above and summarise the intended and potential impact of the policy, decision or activity** on the people of Sunderland. This includes specific consideration of the impact on individuals, groups with protected characteristics and communities of interest within the city. Please briefly outline any positive, neutral or negative impacts on the specific groups below. Please note that any negative impacts should have a corresponding action in the action plan in the page below.

In this assessment it is important to remember the **Council is required to give due regard to:**

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Each of these aims must be summarised in turn in relation to the groups outlined below.

Characteristic	List of Impacts		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Age		Given that the scheme is unchanged, the impact is neutral.	
Disability		Given that the scheme is unchanged, the impact is neutral.	
Gender/Sex		Given that the scheme is unchanged, the impact is neutral.	
Marriage & Civil Partnership		Given that the scheme is unchanged, the impact is neutral.	
Pregnancy and maternity		Given that the scheme is unchanged, the impact is neutral.	
Race/Ethnicity		Given that the scheme is unchanged, the impact is neutral.	
Religion/belief		Given that the scheme is unchanged, the impact is neutral.	
Sexual Orientation		Given that the scheme is unchanged, the impact is neutral.	
Gender identity		Given that the scheme is unchanged, the impact is neutral.	

3. Response to Analysis, Action Plan and Monitoring

In this section please outline what actions you propose to take to minimise the negative, and maximise the positive, impacts that have been identified through the analysis. By considering and implementing these actions the policy or action can be refined to make sure that the greatest benefits are achieved for the people of Sunderland. The performance monitoring process should also be set out to explain how ongoing progress is going to be followed to make sure that the aims are met.

From the analysis four broad approaches can be taken, (No major change; continue with the policy/action despite negative implications; adjust the policy/decision/action; or stop the policy/action). Please indicate, using the list below, which is proposed.

No Major Change	(X)
Continue Despite Negative Implications	( )
Adjust the Policy/Decision/Project/Activity	( )
Stop	( )

Action Plan

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	Monitoring Arrangements
Monitor the impact through payment and arrears statistics	Sharon Holden (Revenues Manager)	Quarterly	As part of routine Council Tax performance monitoring
Monitor impact on claimants	Sharon Holden (Revenues Manager) and Loraine Nelson (Benefits Manager	Ongoing	In conjunction with Benefits team. Feedback from customers.
Review of scheme	Sharon Holden (Revenues Manager) and Loraine Nelson (Benefits Manager)	July 2022	Consultation exercise / workshops with the residents of Sunderland

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