

Stage 1 Equality Impact Assessment – Initial Screening

Assessor(s) Name(s):	Ian Lloyd
Directorate:	Resources
Date of Completion:	December 2016

Name of Policy/Strategy/Service/Function Proposal

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme review of scheme for 2017/18

The Aims, Objectives and Expected Outcomes:

The original EIA stage 1&2 set out the scope of the EIA and can be found at:

<http://www.iwight.com/documentlibrary/download/eia-local-council-tax-support-stage-1-2>

The EIA stage 2 review completed December 2015 for the 2016/17 scheme can be found at:

<https://www.iwight.com/documentlibrary/view/eia-local-council-tax-support-scheme-april-2016>

Since 1st April 2013, the Council has maintained a local Council Tax Reduction scheme known as Local Council Tax Support (LCTS). This replaced the national Council Tax Benefit scheme, which ended on 31st March 2013. LCTS helps provide support to council taxpayers who have a low income. It supports the taxpayers by providing a reduction in the actual amount in Council Tax payable.

The Council has the ability to determine the level of support given to working age applicants only. The scheme for pension age applicants is determined by Central Government and therefore the ability of the Council to vary that part of the scheme is limited and can only enhance the national scheme in any event.

The Council has made a number of changes to the scheme since 2013 including the reduction to the level of the maximum support for working age to 80%. This is in addition to changes to the scheme to match the continuing changes to Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

The amount of grant received from Government to pay for CTS has been included within general grant (revenue support grant) which has been significantly reduced each year resulting in less money available to meet the costs of CTS as well as significantly reduced resources to pay for all council services.

In order to meet this funding gap the Council has to consider a reduction of council tax support paid to working age claimants. The estimated gross cost of the Isle of Wight Council CTS for 2016/17 is approximately £10.6 million. The Isle of Wight Council's share of this cost is around 86%, in line with the split of council tax with the Police and town and parish councils. For next year's budget (2017/18) the council will see a further reduction to the revenue support grant of some 36.8 per cent, which on a pro rata basis means the grant included for LCTS is to be further reduced by £2.104 million. Some of these savings could come from reducing the amount of help provided to residents through CTS.

The proposed potential changes to the scheme for 2017/18

The corporate management team in consultation with Executive members determined that in light of the council's current financial circumstances that exploration of further options should be considered and that a full review be undertaken as to the effectiveness of the current LCTS scheme. A public consultation has been undertaken to gather views as to whether the current scheme should be changed. A summary of the results of the consultation are provided together with this Equality Impact Assessment. The corporate management team in consultation with Executive members is minded to make changes to the working age scheme to meet the need to change the scheme, not only to align with proposed changes to Housing Benefit, but also to align the scheme with the approach taken by the Department for Work and Pensions in the creation, introduction and roll out of Universal Credit.

It should be noted that the changes, if made, would only apply to the working age scheme although the consultation was open to all Council Taxpayers.

The main changes proposed that were consulted upon are listed below. Any changes if adopted will be effective from 1st April 2017:

1. Should the Council maintain the current scheme for working age applicants?
2. Should an increase be made in the minimum payment? Views will be obtained as to whether the current minimum payment of 20% should be increased to either 25% or 30%
3. Should the scheme change the temporary absence rules in line with Housing Benefit, to limit the timescale for Council Tax Reduction to be paid where an applicant leaves Great Britain for a period of greater than 4 weeks? Certain exceptions would be applied for armed forces personnel, mariners, continental shelf workers and for certain cases where an applicant is receiving care;
4. Should the scheme be amended in line with Housing Benefit and Employment and Support Allowance whereby the Work Related Activity Component will not be granted when calculating Council Tax Reduction for all new claims to Employment and Support Allowance on or after 1st April 2017?
5. Should the scheme be amended in line with Housing Benefit to restrict the number of dependants additions granted in the calculation to a maximum of two? This change will have specific exceptions and will only affect those applicants who have a third or subsequent child on or after 1st April 2017;
6. Should the scheme change to remove entitlement to Severe Disability Premium where another person receives Universal Credit (Carers Element) for them;
7. Should the scheme limit the level of support to a maximum of Band C level;
8. Should the scheme only grant Council Tax Reduction where the claimant is entitled to at least £2 per week;
9. If the scheme is not changed, should the costs maintaining the current scheme be met by:
 - a. Increasing the Council Tax; or
 - b. Finding savings from other Council Services.

Please delete as appropriate:

- This is a proposed review and change to an existing policy/scheme

Key Questions to Consider in Assessing Potential Impact	
Will the policy, strategy, service or council function proposal have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics or other reasons that are relevant issues for the local community and/or staff?	Yes
Has previous consultation identified this issue as important or highlighted negative impact and/or we have created a “legitimate expectation” for consultation to take place? A legitimate expectation may be created when we have consulted on similar issues in the past or if we have ever given an indication that we would consult in such situations	Yes
Do different groups of people within the local community have different needs or experiences in the area this issue relates to?	Yes
Could the aims of these proposals be in conflict with the council’s general duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not?	No
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how services or a council function/s is/are delivered?	Yes
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate?	Yes
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment of resources?	Yes
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities?	Yes
<p>If you answer Yes to any of these questions, it will be necessary for you to proceed to a full Equality Impact Assessment after you have completed the rest of this initial screening form.</p> <p>If you answer No to all of these questions, please provide appropriate evidence using the table below and complete the evidence considerations box and obtain sign off from your Head of Service.</p>	

Protected Characteristics	Positive	Negative	No impact	Reasons
Age				Working age claimants of Council Tax support may receive a reduced level of assistance as compared with the former Council Tax Benefit Scheme; the CTS scheme for 2016/17 and the scheme for pension age applicants if the all the options proposed were adopted
Disability				No specific impact other than for working age generally
Gender Reassignment				No specific impact other than for working age generally
Marriage & Civil Partnership				No specific impact other than for working age generally
Pregnancy & Maternity				No specific impact other than for working age generally
Race				No specific impact other than for working age generally
Religion / Belief				No specific impact other than for working age generally
Sex (male / female)				No specific impact other than for working age generally
Sexual Orientation				No specific impact other than for working age generally

Are there aspects of the proposal that contribute to or improve the opportunity for equality?	Yes
<p><i>If answered Yes, describe what these are and how they may be promoted or enhanced</i></p> <p>Due to the nature of the reductions in the level of support, all working age claimants have the potential to have reductions in their support, however, they can be considered for further assistance under a targeted protection scheme based on exceptional hardship.</p> <p>The scheme will continue to protect disabled claimants through the continued granting of additional disabled premiums and disregard as income of certain benefits such as Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments in appropriate cases and in line with Housing Benefit provisions.</p>	

Evidence Considered During Screening
<p>A full modelling exercise has been undertaken using specialised modelling software to establish the effects of the changes on claimants.</p> <p>The government has stated that council tax support for older people will not be reduced as a result of the introduction of the council tax reduction scheme reform. This is because the government wants to ensure that low income pensioners, who would struggle to pay council tax without additional support, and whom the government does not expect to work to increase their income, will continue to receive support for their council tax.</p> <p>Pensioner protection will be achieved by keeping in place national rules which broadly replicate the</p>

former council tax benefit scheme.

As part of the changes the Council must give consideration to the effects on working age claimants only and in particular any vulnerable groups in the design of a new system.

Central Government has not been prescriptive in how it expects the Council to do this but points to the Council's existing responsibilities including the Child Poverty Act 2010, and the Housing Act 1996 as well as the public sector equality duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

A full analysis of the existing caseload of those in receipt of Council Tax Support has been undertaken and the expected effects of the proposed changes have been completed in the stage 2 EIA assessment.

Head of Service Sign off:	Claire Shand
Advice sought from Legal Services (Name)	Justin Thorne
Date	5 January 2017

IWC
Second Stage Equality Impact Assessment
Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18

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Assessor(s) Name(s): Ian Lloyd

Directorate: Resources

Date of Completion: December 2016

Name of Policy/Strategy/Service/Function Proposal
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The Aims, Objectives and Expected Outcomes:

Since 1st April 2013, the Council has maintained a local Council Tax Reduction scheme known as Local Council Tax Support (LCTS). This replaced the national Council Tax Benefit scheme, which ended on 31st March 2013. LCTS helps provide support to council taxpayers who have a low income. It supports the taxpayers by providing a reduction in the actual amount in Council Tax payable.

The Council has the ability to determine the level of support given to working age applicants only. The scheme for pension age applicants is determined by Central Government and therefore the ability of the Council to vary that part of the scheme is limited and can only enhance the national scheme in any event.

The Council has made a number of changes to the scheme since 2013 including the reduction to the level of the maximum support for working age to 80%. This is in addition to changes to the scheme to match the continuing changes to Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

The amount of grant received from Government to pay for CTS has been included within general grant (revenue support grant) which has been significantly reduced each year resulting in less money available to meet the costs of CTS as well as significantly reduced resources to pay for all council services.

In order to meet this funding gap the Council has to consider a reduction of council tax support paid to working age claimants. The estimated gross cost of the Isle of Wight Council CTS for 2016/17 is approximately £10.6 million. The Isle of Wight Council's share of this cost is around 86%, in line with the split of council tax with the Police and town and parish councils. For next year's budget (2017/18) the council will see a further reduction to the revenue support grant of some 36.8 per cent, which on a pro rata basis means the grant included for LCTS is to be further reduced by £2.104 million. Some of these savings could come from reducing the amount of help provided to residents through CTS.

The corporate management team in consultation with Executive members determined that in light of the council's current financial circumstances that exploration of further options should be considered and that a full review be undertaken as to the effectiveness of the current LCTS scheme. A public consultation has been undertaken to gather views as to whether the current scheme should be changed. A summary of the results of the consultation are provided together with this Equality Impact Assessment. The corporate management team in consultation with Executive members is minded to make changes to the working age scheme to meet the need to change the scheme, not only to align with proposed changes to Housing Benefit, but also to align the scheme with the approach taken by the Department for Work and Pensions in the creation, introduction and roll out of Universal Credit.

It should be noted that the changes, if made, would only apply to the working age scheme although the consultation was open to all Council Taxpayers.

Proposed Scheme changes 2017/18

The main changes proposed are listed below. Any changes if adopted will be effective from 1st April 2017:

1. Should the Council maintain the current scheme for working age applicants?
2. Should an increase be made in the minimum payment? Views will be obtained as to whether the current minimum payment of 20% should be increased to either 25% or 30%
3. Should the scheme change the temporary absence rules in line with Housing Benefit, to limit the timescale for Council Tax Reduction to be paid where an applicant leaves Great Britain for a period of greater than 4 weeks? Certain exceptions would be applied for armed forces personnel, mariners, continental shelf workers and for certain cases where an applicant is receiving care;
4. Should the scheme be amended in line with Housing Benefit and Employment and Support Allowance whereby the Work Related Activity Component will not be granted when calculating Council Tax Reduction for all new claims to Employment and Support Allowance on or after 1st April 2017?
5. Should the scheme be amended in line with Housing Benefit to restrict the number of dependents' additions granted in the calculation to a maximum of two? This change will have specific exceptions and will only affect those applicants who have a third or subsequent child on or after 1st April 2017;
6. Should the scheme change to remove entitlement to Severe Disability Premium where another person receives Universal Credit (Carers Element) for them;
7. Should the scheme limit the level of support to a maximum of Band C level;
8. Should the scheme only grant Council Tax Reduction where the claimant is entitled to at least £2 per week;
9. If the scheme is not changed, should the costs maintaining the current scheme be met by:
 - a. Increasing the Council Tax; or
 - b. Finding savings from other Council Services.

Scope of the Equality Impact Assessment

The following identifies the potential impact on claimants and particularly groups of claimants. It should be noted that Pensioners will continue to be protected under the rules prescribed by Central Government. These broadly replicate council tax benefit scheme, which existed prior to 1st April 2013.

Central Government has not been prescriptive in how it does this but points to the Council's existing responsibilities including the Child Poverty Act 2010, and the Housing Act

1996 as well as the public sector equality duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

Disability

Working age people with disabilities continue to make up a high proportion of the caseload at 35%. Working age people with disabilities receive more per week, than working age people without disabilities, on average due to the design of the scheme that ignores certain disability benefits and awards higher applicable amounts.

Carers

There is a slightly higher proportion of claimants with a carer in the household, than the population generally overall. Working age claimants with a carer in the household receive more per week, on average, than working age claimants without a carer in the household. The main reason for this is both the treatment of disability and care within the existing scheme.

Age

Age groups of person receiving reduction broadly reflect the overall population. Those aged 45-54 currently receive the highest weekly amount, on average. Those aged 35-44 currently receive the lowest weekly amount, on average.

Sex

Females continue to make up a high proportion of the caseload at 63%. Although, there is a difference between the average amounts females and males receive per week, this is due to factors relating to circumstances which directly affect the calculation of council tax reduction, and is not linked to a claimant's sex directly.

Race

This information is not collected from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax reduction.

Other protected characteristics

We do not collect information about the following characteristics from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax reductions:

- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy or maternity

Actions to mitigate any identified impacts

The Council has already introduced an Exceptional Hardship Scheme since April 2016. The design of the Exceptional Hardship Scheme is that it allows any claimant to apply for additional support. It examines their overall circumstances, examines both income and expenditure with a view to determining whether exceptional hardship exists. Under the scheme, claimants are potentially able to receive additional support up to the full level of their Council Tax.

Appendix 1 – Full Analysis of the effects of proposed changes

The following tables provide details of the expected effects of the changes (where available) on the working age claimants within the Council's area. The following however should be noted:

Population data - working age (Census 2011)	Disability (16-64)	Carer	Female (15-64)	Male (15-64)	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number	13038	11.9% of total	42434	41955	8190	6808	13030	16836	19324	20201
Proportion (of working age)	15.4%	Split not known	50.3%	49.7%	9.7%	8.0%	15.4%	20.0%	22.9%	23.9%

Current Scheme (2016/17)

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants	6474	2314	4160	977	5497	4070	2404	377	1356	1520	1825	1396
Proportion of claimants	51% WA compared to total	35%	65%	15%	85%	63%	37%	6%	21%	23%	28%	22%
Average benefit paid (per week)	13.87	15.89	12.30	17.39	13.25	13.77	14.10	12.36	12.96	13.66	14.15	14.92

Proposed changes (2017/18)

Increase the minimum % payable												
Would apply to existing claimants												
Data for claimants to pay 25% of their liability (predicted based on current data)												
Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants – predicted	5144	2209	2935	88 9	4255	3110	2034	30 8	104 5	111 9	147 4	119 8
Proportion of claimants – predicted	46% of total caseload	43 %	57%	17%	83%	60%	40%	6%	20%	22%	29%	23%
Average benefit paid (per week) – predicted	15.95	16.34	15.66	18.48	15.42	16.27	15.39	14.47	15.40	16.12	16.24	16.23
Differences between groups – predicted	-0.99	-0.98	-0.68	-0.94	-0.78	-0.79 - 0.83		-0.80	-0.76	-0.80	-0.81	-0.84

Increase the minimum % payable												
Would apply to existing claimants												
Data for claimants to pay 30% of their liability (predicted based on current data)												
Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants – predicted	5204	414 4	1060	89 4	4310	3159	2045	30 9	106 0	113 7	148 7	121 1
Proportion of claimants – predicted	47% of total caseload	80%	20%	17%	83%	61%	39%	6%	20%	22%	29%	23%
Average benefit paid (per week) – predicted	15.96	15.94	16.03	18.47	15.44	16.26	15.42	14.46	15.39	16.14	16.25	16.24
Differences between groups – predicted	-1.97	-1.74	-1.72	-2.06	-1.67	-1.72 - 1.76		-1.70	-1.65	-1.70	-1.77	-1.79

Reducing the period a person can get Reduction if absence from Great Britain for more than 4 weeks (predicted based on current data)												
Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Care r	Non Carer	Femal e	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants – predicted	The effect of this change is to align the Council Tax Reduction Scheme with Housing Benefit – no data is available to determine the number of future claimants affected											
Proportion of claimants – predicted												
Average benefit paid (per week) – predicted												
Differences between groups - predicted												

Removal of the Work Related Activity Component for new Employment and Support Allowance Claimant Affects all new ESA Work Related Claimants (predicted based on current data)												
Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants – predicted	The effect of this change is to align the Council Tax Reduction Scheme with Housing Benefit – no data is available to determine the number of future claimants affected											
Proportion of claimants – predicted												
Average benefit paid (per week) – predicted												
Differences between groups - predicted												

Limiting the number of dependants additions to two

Affects all claimants who have a third or subsequent child on or after 1st April 2017

(predicted based on current data)

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants – predicted	The effect of this change is to align the Council Tax Reduction Scheme with Housing Benefit – no data is available to determine the number of future claimants affected											
Proportion of claimants – predicted												
Average benefit paid (per week) – predicted												
Differences between groups – predicted												

Remove Severe Disability Premium where a person receives Universal Credit

(Carers Element) for them.

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants – predicted	The effect of this change is to align the Council Tax Reduction Scheme with Housing Benefit – no data is available to determine the number of future claimants affected											
Proportion of claimants – predicted												
Average benefit paid (per week) – predicted												
Differences between groups – predicted												

Limiting the Maximum Level of Council Tax Reduction to Band C

(predicted based on current data)

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants – predicted	68	24	44	15	53	43	25	0	7	9	34	18
Proportion of claimants – predicted	0.6%	35%	65%	22%	78%	63%	37%	0	10%	13%	50%	27%
Average benefit paid (per week) – predicted	28.57	28.92	28.38	29.80	28.23	28.23	29.33	0	26.21	26.23	29.17	29.55
Differences between groups – predicted	-3.80	-3.25	-2.76	-3.33	-2.82	-2.53 – 3.57			-3.45	-1.70	-3.46	-2.34

Should the scheme only grant Council Tax Reduction where the claimant is entitled to at least £2 per week

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants – predicted	55	4	51	2	53	38	17	6	13	16	15	5
Proportion of claimants – predicted	0.5%	7%	93%	4%	96%	69%	31%	11%	24%	29%	27%	9%
Average benefit paid (per week) – predicted	1.05	0.64	1.08	0.17	1.08	1.12	0.89	1.05	1.15	1.12	0.88	1.05
Differences between groups – predicted	-1.05	-0.64	-1.08	-0.17	-1.08	-1.12-0.89		-1.05	-1.15	-1.12	-0.88	-1.05

Appendix 2 – Analysis of Consultation Responses

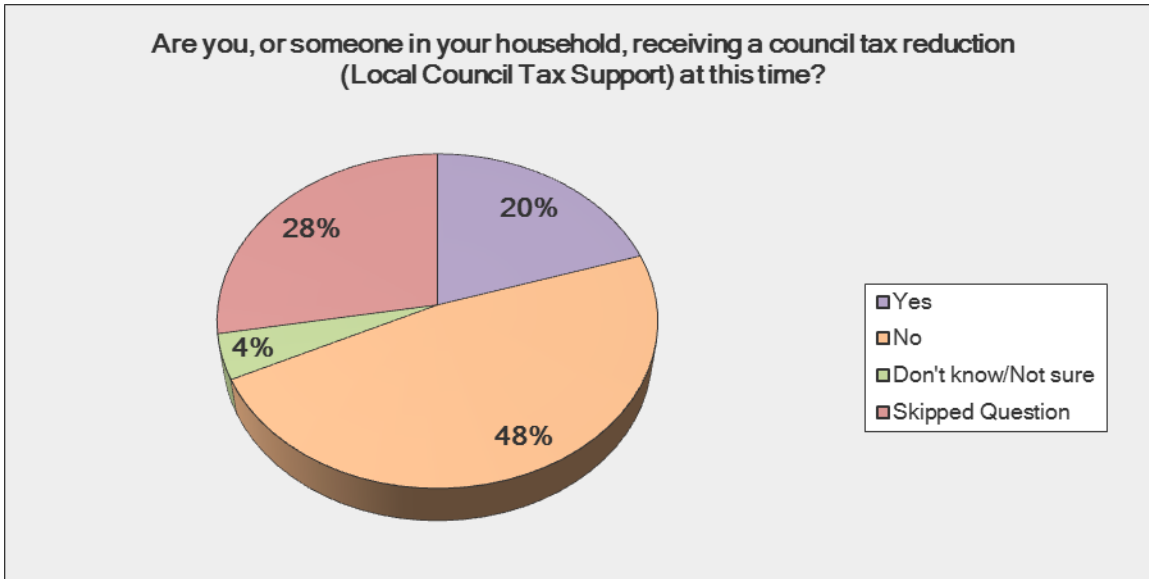
The above consultation was undertaken between 15/9/16 and 10/11/16 and on completion a total of 284 responses had been started with 10 participants, answering “no” to having read the background information and therefore, not being able to continue with the completion of any further questions. Therefore, a total of 274 responses have been received and considered from this consultation.

The consultation was undertaken as follows:

Stakeholders	Methodology
1.Existing claimants (both working age and pensionable age)	Individual postcards to promote the LCTS potential changes ‘Local Council Tax Support is changing’ slogan. Online survey via questionnaire explaining proposals and likely impact. Paper survey if requested.
2.Council taxpayers and service users generally	Online survey via questionnaire explaining proposals and likely impact. Paper survey if requested.
3. Interested organisations and groups.	Anti-poverty group meeting 22/9/16 to raise awareness and for them to circulate to their customers. Email to all parish and town council clerks to raise awareness and seek their response Letter sent to the police and crime commissioner seeking views.
General awareness	
Provision of information and awareness raising of changes and proposals	www.iwight.com Press releases. Face to face communication at customer service points. The council’s Facebook and Twitter sites (weekly promotions).

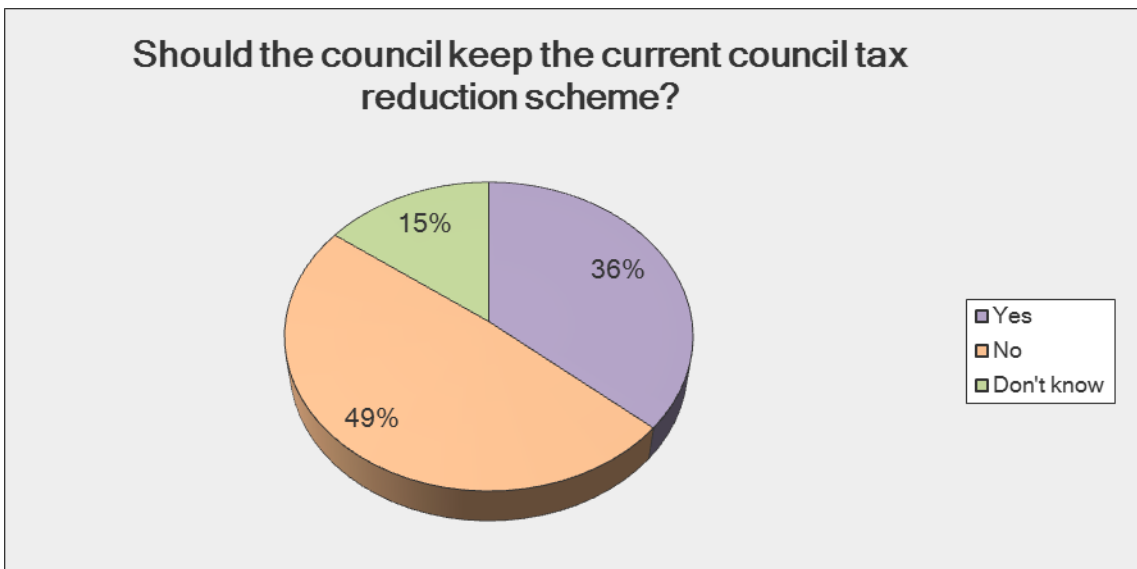
Respondents from a household currently claiming a council tax reduction.

55 responses indicated that they were from a household in receipt of local council tax support, which related to 20% of participants. 131 responses indicated that they were not in receipt of local council tax support which related to 48% of participants. It should be noted that 12 people (4%) did not know and 76 people (28%) did not give an answer.



Should the Council keep the current council tax reduction scheme?

116 of the consultation participants (49%) indicated that they would support a reduction in the levels of council tax support currently provided by the Isle of Wight Council. 37 people skipped this question.

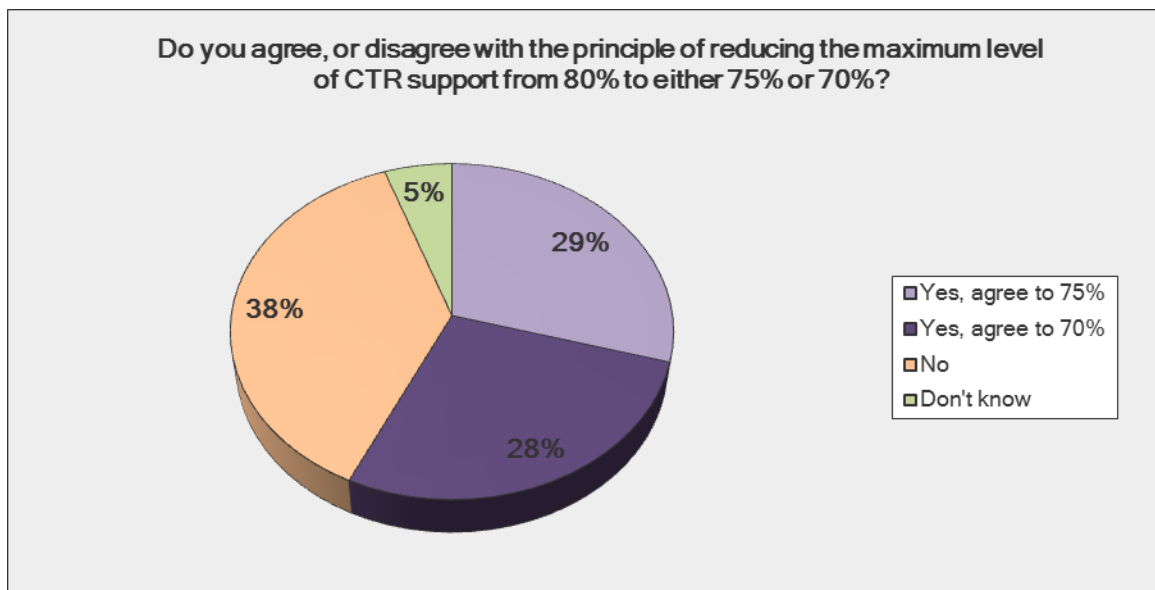


Of those in favour of retaining the current council tax reduction scheme 67 people provided additional information on how the council should achieve the savings, ranging from making savings from other council services (26 responses) to increasing the council tax for non-council tax reduction claimants (16 responses) and pursuing further funding from central Government (7 responses).

Do you agree, or disagree with the principle of reducing the maximum level of CTR support from 80% to either 75% or 70%?

126 respondents (57%) agreed with the principle of reducing the maximum level of Local council tax support from 80%. This was split between those agreeing to reducing the maximum support to 75% (65 respondents equating to 29%) and those agreeing to a reducing the maximum support to 70% (61 respondents equating to 28%). 83 of the participants (38%) disagreed with the principal of reducing the maximum support, with 12 people (5%) stating they did not know. There were 53 people who skipped this question.

Of those 83 participants who disagreed with a reduction to the maximum level of local council tax support, 38 people (46%) stated they lived in a household receiving local council tax support, 30 people (36%) stated they were not in receipt of council tax support and 15 people (18%) either did not know or skipped this question.

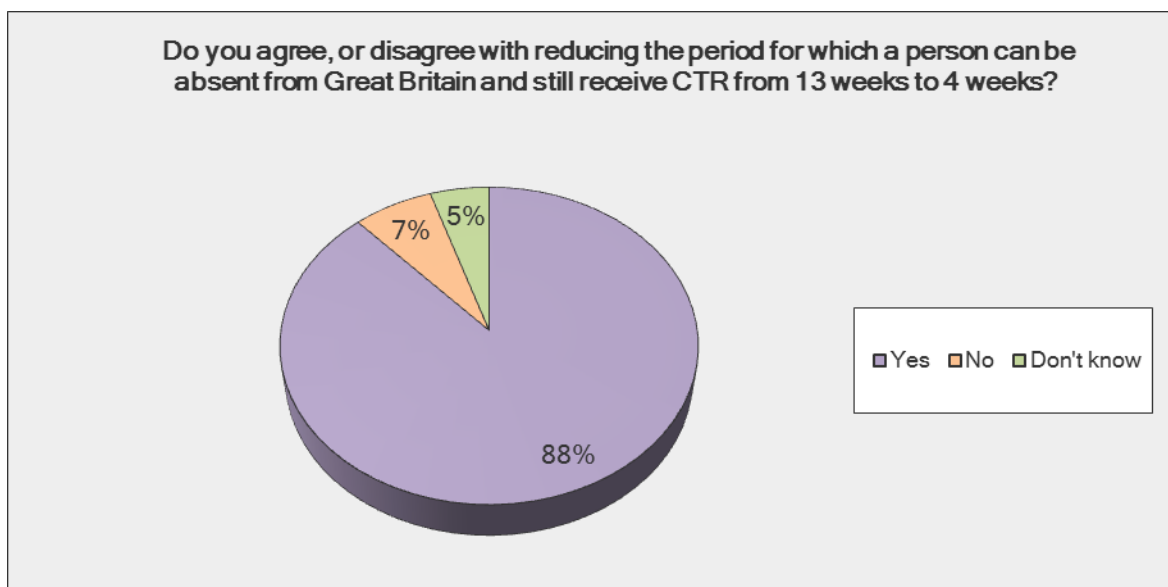


Of those in favour (38%) of retaining the maximum level of council tax reduction at 80%, 58 people provided additional information on how the council should achieve the savings. Many responses did not provide an alternative proposal, but of those providing an alternative proposal there were 11 responses suggesting savings from other council services and 14 responses indicating a preference in increasing the council tax for other demographic groups and 4 responses suggesting pursuing further funding from central Government.

Do you agree, or disagree with reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive CTR from 13 weeks to 4 weeks?

194 people (88%) agreed with the principal of reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive council tax reduction support. 15 people (7%) disagreed and 11 people (5%) stated they did not know. 220 people (80%) of the 274 consultation participants answered this question.

Of those disagreeing with a cut, some suggested of reducing the period from 13 weeks to between 6 and 10 weeks. Others felt it would be too difficult or costly to enforce, that the financial burden should be on the wealthiest or that it may impact on those looking for work abroad.

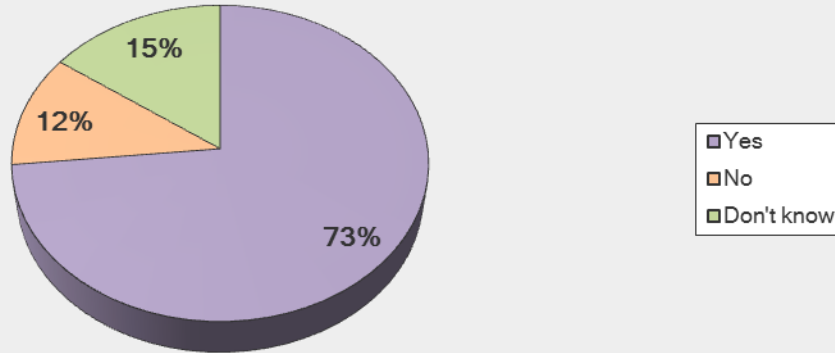


There were 17 comments related to this question, 9 of which suggested a different timeframe a claimant can be absent from Great Britain ranging from 0 weeks to 10 weeks. There were also representations to treat each case on their own merits and concern about the cost and difficulty in enforcement.

Do you agree, or disagree with removing the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of the current scheme for new Employment Support Allowance claimants?

Of the 218 who responded to the option of removing the element of a work related activity component on the calculation for new employment support allowance claimants, 160 people (73%) agreed, with 25 people (12%) disagreeing and 33 people (15%) stating they didn't know. 56 of the consultation respondents skipped this question.

Do you agree, or disagree with removing the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of the current scheme for new Employment Support Allowance claimants?

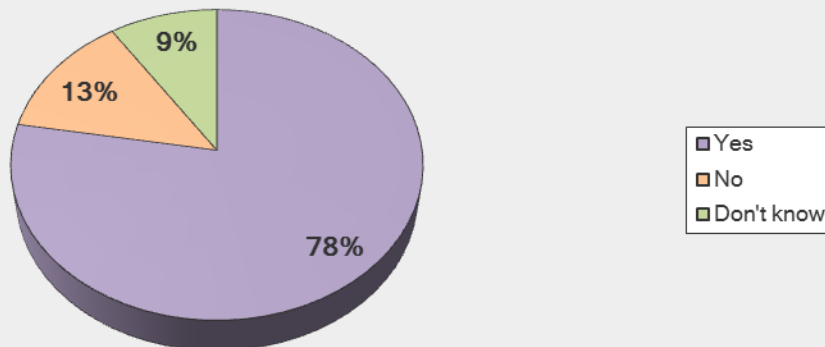


There were 15 comments made in respect of this question, the majority of which are concerned with the impact made to current claimants.

Do you agree, or disagree with the principle to limit the number of dependent children within the calculation of CTR to a maximum of two for any new children born on or after 1 April 2017?

216 people responded to the option of limiting the Council Tax Reduction calculation to a maximum of two children born on or after 1 April 2017. 168 people (78%) were in favour of the change, with 28 people (13%) against changing the current calculation and 20 people (9%) indicating they did not know. 58 people skipped this question.

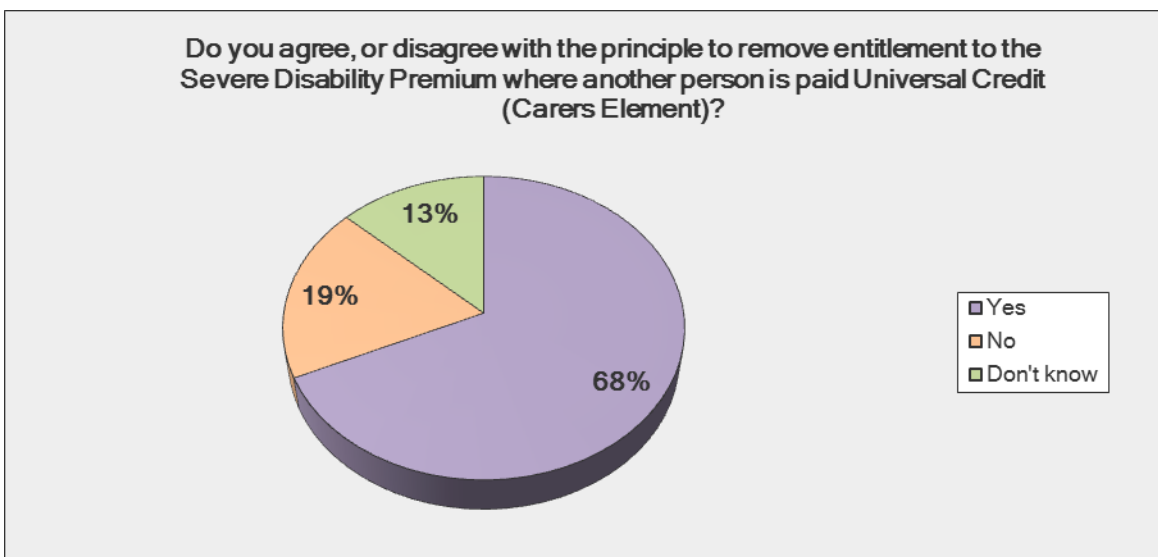
Do you agree, or disagree with the principle to limit the number of dependent children within the calculation of CTR to a maximum of two for any new children born on or after 1 April 2017?



There were 21 comments relating to this question in which some highlighted concerns regarding poverty and the impact it will have on families and children. There were also a number of comments in favour of the principal, with some suggesting it should also apply to those born before April 2017.

Do you agree, or disagree with the principle to remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers Element)?

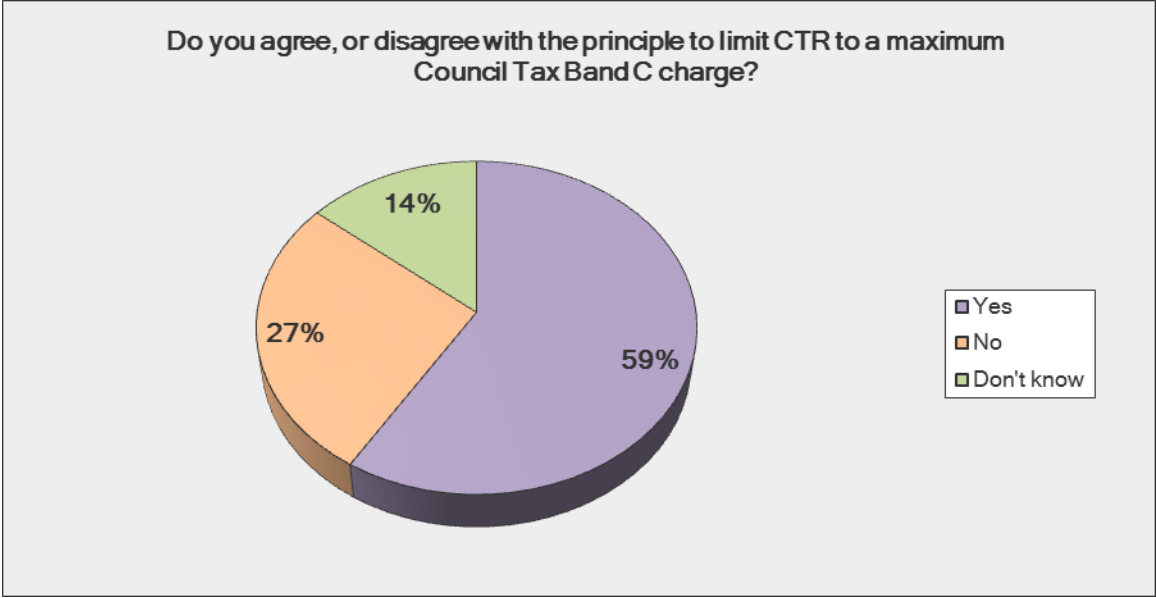
Of the 214 people who responded to whether they agreed with the principle of removing entitlement to the severe disability premium where another person is paid universal credit, 146 people (68%) were in favour of the option, with 40 people (19%) disagreeing and 28 people (13%) indicating they did not know. 60 of the consultation participants skipped this question.



There were 22 comments regarding alternative proposals, most of which were voicing concern for the impact on current claimants.

Do you agree, or disagree with the principle to limit CTR to a maximum Council Tax Band C charge?

126 (59%) of people agreed with the principle that council tax reductions should be limited to a maximum charge based on Council Tax band C. 58 people (27%) disagreed and 30 people (14%) stated they did not know. 60 participants skipped this question.



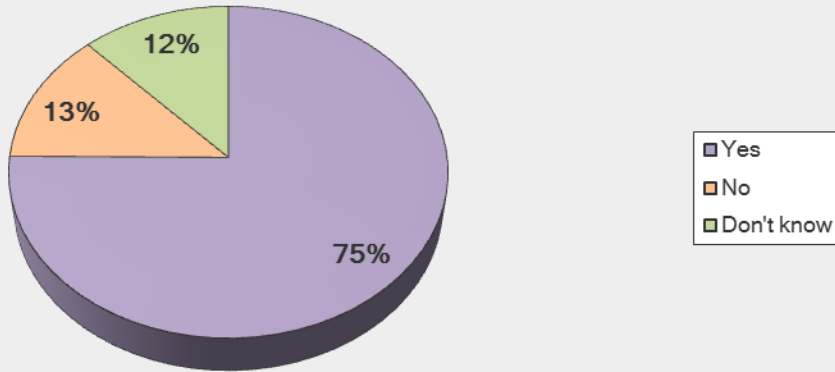
45 respondents provided comment to this question. There were representations made regarding the number of available rental properties available below council tax band D and the impact it would have on homeowners if they had to sell their family home. There were some suggestions that the council tax reduction should be limited to a maximum of band D.

Some alternative proposals were to increase council tax, charge more council tax for second homes and to make council savings.

Do you agree, or disagree with the principle to set a minimum level of CTR support at £2 per week?

Of the 209 people responding to the principle of setting a minimum level of Council Tax reduction support at £2 per week, 157 people (75%) were in the agreement with the principle. 27 people (13%) were against the principle and 25 people (12%) did not know. 65 people skipped this question.

Do you agree, or disagree with the principle to set a minimum level of CTR support at £2 per week?

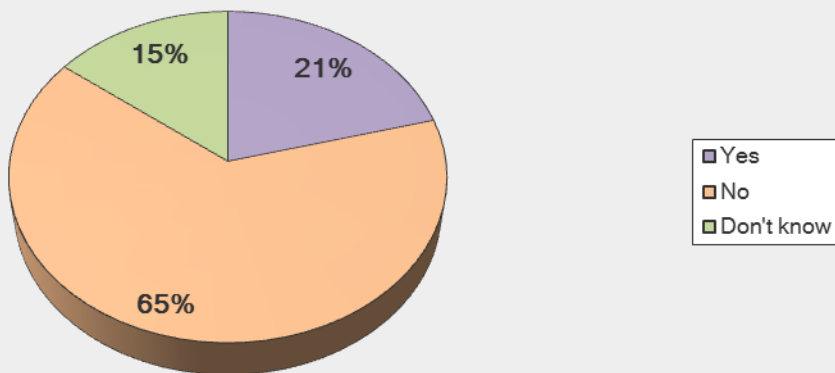


There were 19 responses to this question. A number of respondents suggested different minimum level of council tax support, ranging from £0.50 - £10 per week. Alternative proposals mainly related to council savings, which suggestions that electronic communication with claimants would save money.

Do you agree, or disagree that there should be an increase level of council tax?

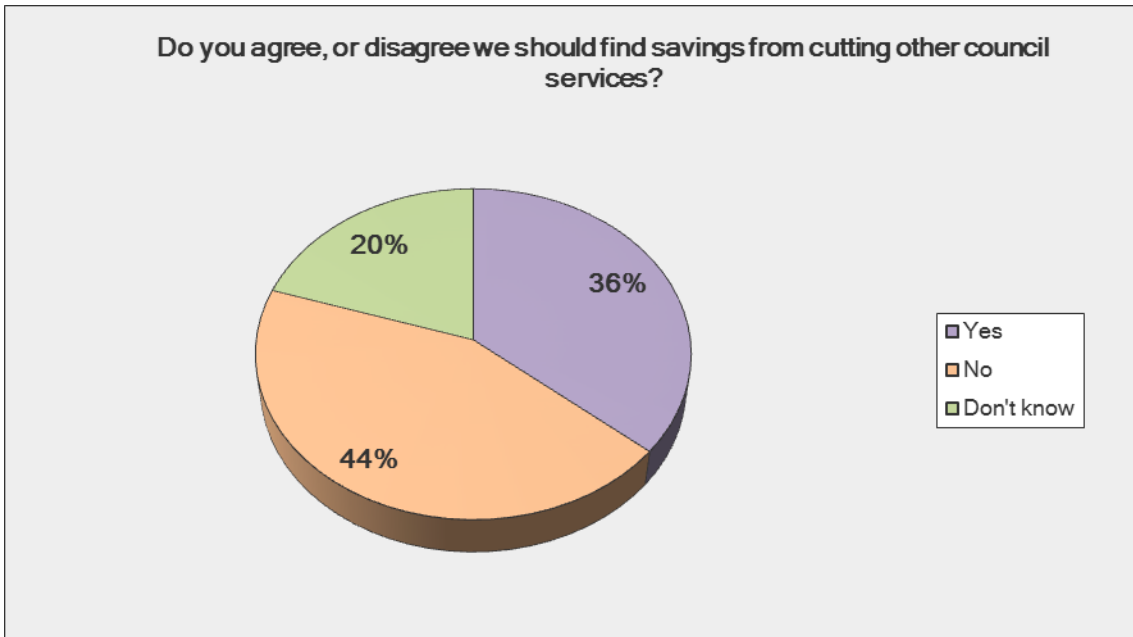
Of the 206 people who answered whether they agreed with a potential increase in Council tax 133 (65%) indicated they disagreed with an increase, 43 people (21%) thought there should be an increase and 30 people (15%) indicated they did not know. 68 people skipped this question.

Do you agree, or disagree that there should be an increase level of council tax?



Do you agree, or disagree we should find savings from cutting other council services?

90 people (44%) did not agree that the savings should be found by cutting other council services, 74 people (36%) agreed that the savings should be found by cutting other council services with 41 people (20%) stating they did not know. 69 people skipped the question.



There were 61 responses received in answer to why people agreed with the proposal of making savings cutting. The responses were varied with suggestions that there are lots of efficiencies to still be made within the Isle of Wight Council and other suggestions that the council will have to cut certain services.

Appendix 3 – Recommendations

The recommendation of the Council is to change the Council Tax Reduction Scheme from 1st April 2017 as follows:

1. To maintain the current approach to Council Tax Reduction and to continue to provide a scheme for the Working Age.
2. **Not** to change the support of a maximum 80 per cent of council tax liability for working age claimants;
3. **Not** to limit support to a maximum Band C charge;
4. **Not** to set a minimum level of CTS at £2 per week.
5. Mirror some amendments to the Housing Benefit and Pensionable Age CTS national schemes including:
 - a. Temporary absence from Great Britain;
 - b. Removal of the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) work related activity component for new claimants to ESA removed;
 - c. Limit number of dependents for the third and subsequent child born on or after 1st April 2017;
6. Remove Severe Disability Premium where another person is receiving Universal Credit (Carers Element); and
7. Continue to provide an Exceptional Hardship Fund that would require individual applications and take into account individual circumstances including the claimant's income and essential outgoings to assist those that are deemed to be in 'genuine hardship' and receive additional assistance based on need.

Appendix 4 – Action / Improvement Plan

Action/Improvement Plan

Area of impact	Is there evidence of negative positive or no impact?	Could this lead to adverse impact and if so why?	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or any other reason?	Please detail what measures or changes you will put in place to remedy any identified impact (NB: please make sure that you include actions to improve all areas of impact whether negative, neutral or positive)
Age	No impact	Other than that for working age claimants generally	<p>The proposed scheme applies to all people of working age and whose income falls beneath the applicable amount and is therefore considered overtly neutral with respect to age.</p> <p>Although retirement age is an age based criterion, it is not the councils proposed scheme that excludes pensioners from the 100% scheme but the primary legislation. The discretion afforded to billing authorities to promote a scheme reducing council tax support is limited to people of working age.</p>	<p>The existing means tested scheme will be maintained and the most support will be given to those on lowest income.</p> <p>Certain groups will continue to receive addition help under the scheme through the provision of premiums and allowances, e.g. Disability Premium, Severe Disability Premium, Enhanced Disability Premiums, ESA Components, and Dependants Additions.</p> <p>Certain incomes will continue to be fully disregarded in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Benefit; • Disability Living Allowance; • Personal Independence Payments <p>An exceptional hardship fund will be available for those claimants in most severe financial need</p>
Disability	No impact	Other than that for working age claimants generally		<p>The existing means tested scheme will be maintained and the most support will be given to those on lowest income.</p> <p>Certain groups will continue to receive addition help under the scheme through the provision of</p>

Area of impact	Is there evidence of negative positive or no impact?	Could this lead to adverse impact and if so why?	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or any other reason?	Please detail what measures or changes you will put in place to remedy any identified impact (NB: please make sure that you include actions to improve all areas of impact whether negative, neutral or positive)
				premiums and allowances, e.g. Disability Premium, Severe Disability Premium, Enhanced Disability Premiums, ESA Components, and Dependants Additions. Certain incomes will continue to be fully disregarded in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Benefit; • Disability Living Allowance; • Personal Independence Payments An exceptional hardship fund will be available for those claimants in most severe financial need
Gender Reassignment	No impact	Other than that for working age claimants generally		
Marriage & Civil Partnership	No impact	Other than that for working age claimants generally		
Pregnancy & Maternity	No impact	Other than that for working age claimants generally		
Race	No impact	Other than that for working age claimants generally		
Religion / Belief	No impact	Other than that for working age claimants generally		
Sex (male or female)	No impact	Other than that for working age claimants generally		
Sexual Orientation	No impact	Other than that for working age claimants generally		

Area of impact	Is there evidence of negative positive or no impact?	Could this lead to adverse impact and if so why?	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or any other reason?	Please detail what measures or changes you will put in place to remedy any identified impact (NB: please make sure that you include actions to improve all areas of impact whether negative, neutral or positive)
HR & workforce issues	Not known at this stage		The council will monitor the overall impact of work and resource accordingly if the preferred scheme is adopted and undertake an initial EIA screening on the impact of HR workforce issues.	
Human Rights implications if relevant	n/a			
<p>Please remember - actions should have SMART targets and be reported to the Diversity Board (this should be done via your Directorate representative) and incorporated into your service/team Plans and /or objectives of key staff</p>				

Summary	
Date of Assessment:	23 December 2016
Signed off by Head of Service/Director	Claire Shand
Review date	December 2017
Date published	6 January 2017