

## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

<b>Committee</b>	<b>COUNCIL</b>	Item	Page 1
<b>Report Originator</b>	Julie Trahern Head of Customer Services	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i>	
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All	13 <sup>th</sup> December 2017	
<b>Title</b>	<b>LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT – UPDATE REPORT</b>		

**Portfolio Holder: Cllr Lesley Thurland**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide members with an update following consideration of this item by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

### **2. INFORMATION**

- 2.1 A detailed report on this issue has already been circulated to members with the agenda for this meeting.
- 2.2 The Executive Committee considered the item at its meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017, and resolved / recommended the following;

**RESOLVED** that the comments that were submitted as part of the formal consultation process are noted.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that;

Option 1 - That with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 having considered the responses from the public consultation and the information contained within this report,

Option 2 - To freeze the taper of 45% for a period of 2 years

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Council approve the following;

- 3.1 Having considered the responses from the public consultation and the information contained within this report, Option 2 (Freeze the taper of 45% for a period of 2 years) is agreed and implemented with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.



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<b>Report Originator</b>	Julie Trahern Head of Customer Services	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> A17/019	
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All	6 <sup>th</sup> December 2017	
<b>Title</b>	<b>LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT</b>		

**Portfolio Holder: Cllr Lesley Thurland**

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- a. Remind members of the background to the Local Council Tax Support scheme.
- b. Outline the findings from the public consultation undertaken.
- c. Outline the choices that are available to the Council following the consultation.
- d. Request the Committee to make a recommendation to Council in relation to the changes in the Council Tax Support Scheme to be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will recall that, from April 2013, Council Tax Benefit was replaced with Local Council Tax Support. Council Tax Benefit had been 100% funded and was a national welfare scheme through which a maximum relief of 100% could be granted. The cost of the Council Tax Support scheme is designed to be met locally and, as such, the government funding to support it has been reduced year on year since 2013.
- 2.2 To comply with Kettering Borough Council's 'Budget Containment Strategy', each year the cost of the scheme has generally been reflective of reduced Government funding levels – accordingly the proportion of Council Tax of those people on the scheme has increased.
- 2.3 In previous years, the Council has undertaken a public consultation exercise relating to the scheme. This includes consulting with the major precepting authorities (the County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner), the voluntary sector and the public. A formal consultation process is required if the Council is considering options that are different to the existing scheme – in each and every year since the original scheme was introduced, this has been the case for Kettering Borough Council. Previously, consultations have been undertaken to determine local views and feed into the decision making process (and to comply with statutory requirements).

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2.4 Members have previously endorsed a simple set of additional guiding principles that would help frame the discussion about which option was preferable, when setting the levels of support. These principles were: -

a) In the medium term, the cost of a local scheme must be contained within the grant made available from the Government, to comply with the existing budget guiding principles,

b) The scheme should incentivise work, and

c) The impact on working age claimants should as far as possible be minimised through considering changes to Council Tax exemptions and discounts.

2.5 In previous submissions to the Government, the Council has made the point that schemes relating to Welfare / Benefits should be treated as a national issue and fully funded by Central Government. This remains the Council's policy position.

### 3. **CURRENT SCHEME**

3.1 Table 1 provides a summary of the history of the Council Tax Support scheme within the borough of Kettering, since its introduction in 2013/14.

**Table 1 – Summary of Council Tax Support Levels**

Year	Level of Council Tax Support / Benefit	Taper Rate – Amount of Council Tax to Pay
2012/13*	100%	0%
2013/14	91.50%	8.50%
2014/15	85%	15%
2015/16	75%	25%
2016/17	55%	45%
2017/18	55%	45%

\*Previous Council Tax Benefit Scheme

3.2 For the current year, 2017/18, a pilot scheme for one year was agreed to maintain the maximum level of support that could be received by those in receipt of Council Tax Support to 55% of their Council Tax bill, rather than increase the taper levels in line with the Council's budget requirements, this was possible due to:

- It maintaining the overall income level
- There was a reducing caseload

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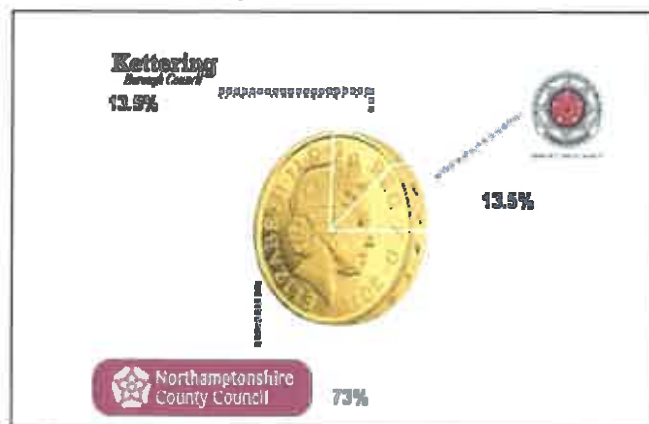
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- The changing national and local financial landscape with an increased number of residents requiring assistance around debt, budgeting and money management.

- 3.3 The Council has always been mindful of its budget guiding principles when setting the 'local scheme'. In effect the Council has made a calculation of how much central government funding has reduced for Council Tax Support each year and approved a scheme that fits within the available funding envelope (without substitute funding).
- 3.4 In coming to a decision each year, the Council has sought to adjust other Council Tax discounts and exemptions, so that the pressure on the Council Tax Support scheme is minimised – these measures have now effectively been fully utilised.
- 3.5 Although this is a 'Local Scheme', some key variables of it have been determined on a national basis; for example, pensioners entitled to local council tax support, are 'protected' - this means that the liability to pay falls on the remaining 3,300 households and, of those, around 2,000 households are in receipt of the current full rebate of 55%.
- 3.6 It is fair to say that decisions in relation to Council Tax Support have never sat comfortably with Members. The Council has long since argued that welfare schemes (such as these) should be determined and funded nationally. In recent budget rounds, members have often referred to the decision on this issue as one of a 'dilemma' rather than a straightforward choice. The Council has in the past remained true to its then guiding principles of not providing substitute funding if another agency / government body reduces funding for a specific purpose.

## **4. ADMINISTRATION OF FUTURE COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

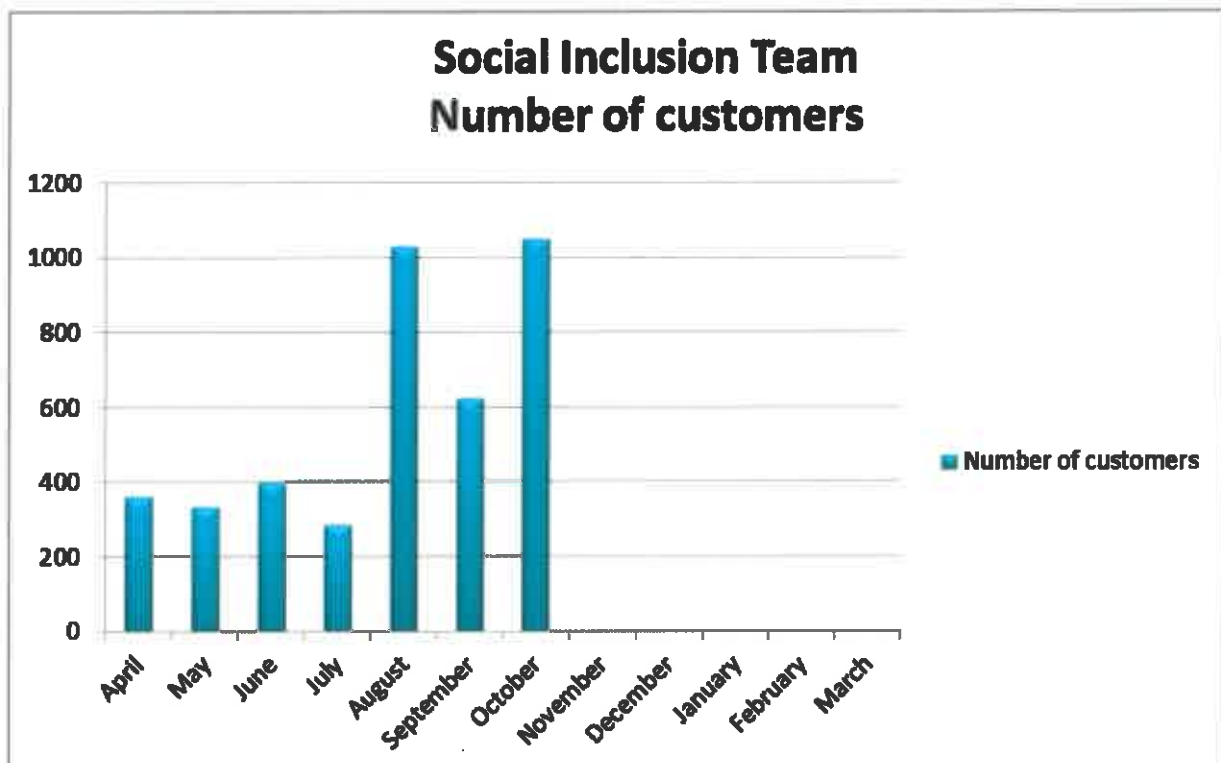
- 4.1 The Council are responsible for the administration and collection of Council Tax for the borough of Kettering, the split in Council Tax funding is broken down in the following diagram;



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- 4.2 The impact of welfare reform and the current economic climate has increased significantly customer contact and office administration for the Council. Going forward this is expected to continue to increase and as such will continue to put pressure on the Council's revenue account.
- 4.3 The support the Council are giving customers to manage their own finances has helped see a considerable reduction in recovery action being taken by the Council at a time when the taper for council tax support has increased.
- 4.4 The credit union launched in April 2014 was set up to assist the borough's more vulnerable customers, it was established to give assistance in managing finances and give access to more affordable banking and credit. The expectation of need and the actual need continues to exceed the Council's expectation.
- 4.5 The Council had foresight to see the need for helping and assisting customers and understood the increased complexity of need – a new team was introduced – The Social Inclusion Team, this team was introduced in 2015 as a twelve month pilot, due to the continuous increased need the Council made this team permanent in early 2017, the table below shows the actual number of customers assisted by the social inclusion team to date during 2017.



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- 4.6 The steps the Council are taking to assist the Borough's most vulnerable Customers is having a positive impact in helping, assisting and preventing debt; however the increased number of customers needing this assistance continues to rise. Irrespective of the option chosen for this scheme, the Council will need to continue to proactively assist customers in conjunction with our partner agencies.
- 4.7 The figures below in table 6 show the increase in Council Tax recovery in 2013/14 when Council Tax Support was introduced, against the reduction in recovery until end of March 2017 and a small increase from April 2017 to Oct 2017.

Table 2 – Recovery	Action				
Description	13/14 Oct Cumulative	14/15 Oct Cumulative	15/16 Oct Cumulative	16/17 Oct Cumulative	17/18 Oct Cumulative
Reminder Notices	14,580	13,908	12,366	12,368	12,430
Summons	4,156	3,720	2,472	2,705	2,846
Liability Orders	3,477	3,191	2,275	2,498	2,552
Total	22,213	20,819	17,113	17,571	17,828

### 5. CONSULTATION OPTIONS 2018/19

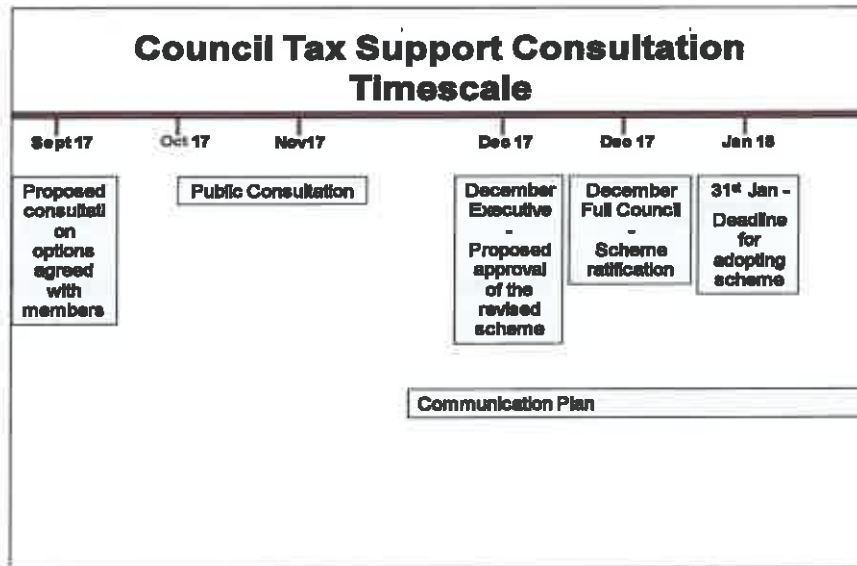
- 5.1 At the Executive committee on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017 members unanimously made the decisions to freeze the Council Tax Support taper rate of 45%, members also made the decision at the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017 Executive committee to undertake a public consultation on whether
- a. The taper freeze of 45% should be for a period of one year (2018/19)
  - or
  - b. The taper freeze of 45% should be for a period of two years (2018/20)

### 6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 A formal eight week consultation process which is dictated by law has been undertaken, the results of which are in the body of the report, the consultation timeline is reproduced on the next page

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6.2 The number of customers consulted was as follows;

Table 3		
Type of Consultation	No. Issued	No. of Responses
Face to Face In the Community	1,900	264
Via the web site	N/A	23
Written (Includes mailshot)	7,100	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>302</b>

6.3 All major precepting authorities were encouraged to respond to the local council tax support consultation. There has been no response from either of the major preceptors (County Council or Police and Crime Commissioner).

6.4 Partners, voluntary agencies, and individuals were also invited to respond to the consultation.



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### 7. CONSULTATION RESULTS

7.1 Overall, the following responses were received to the two options which the public were consulted on.

	Option 1 (Freeze taper at 45% for twelve months)	%	Option 2 (Freeze taper at 45% for two years)	%
Responses	31	10%	270	90%

\* One response was incomplete

\* Individual comments included on the consultation document - Appendix A

7.2 Further details from individual responses can be seen by reference to **Appendix A**.

7.3 From the consultation responses, it is fair to conclude that those who responded to the consultation understood the principle of Local Council Tax Support.

7.4 The majority of those who responded indicated a preference for Option 2 – which is to freeze the taper at 45% for a period of two years (2018/2020)

7.5 The results from the consultation clearly show face to face contact with customers yield a far greater response level compared to written and on line consultation, however recognition of the time and impact on daily Council services must be taken into account as day to day work is put on hold to deliver the face to face consultation which may impact on processing benefit applications and customer service which will have a detrimental effect on the help and support the Council are giving to customers.

### 8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This report will determine the local policy for the Council Tax Support Scheme.

### 9. FINANCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 As detailed throughout this report

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### **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **That the Executive Committee;**

- 10.1 Note the comments that were submitted as part of the formal consultation process.

#### **That the Executive Committee recommends the following to Council;**

- 10.2 Having considered the responses from the public consultation and the information contained within this report, Option 2 is the preferred option.

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#### **Background Papers:**

- Appendix A – Individual comments
- Appendix B – Copy of consultation document
- Appendix C – Face to Face community engagement timetable
- Appendix D– EIA Assessment

#### **Previous Reports/Minutes:**

Executive Report September 2017

**Localised Council Tax Support – Executive 06<sup>th</sup> December 2017**  
**APPENDIX A (i)**  
**Individual Comments**

No.	Source	Comment
1	Email	<p>I have been forwarded a link to a 'survey' regarding Council Tax support offered by Kettering Borough Council to vulnerable and disabled residents. Having been led to believe there would be a 'public consultation' on this matter, I am somewhat surprised to see that the only consultation is as to whether the current level of 'support' should be maintained for one or for two years.</p> <p>I am sure that the Council members are aware that the most vulnerable in our locality are expected to pay the highest amount of Council Tax among all UK boroughs and it seems unbelievable that the level of support is so much lower than neighbouring boroughs.</p> <p>As residents, we are aware that finances are tight, however, to punish the most vulnerable in our society seems a very unfair way to address this. I would appreciate this concern being raised.</p>
2	Email	<p>I would like it known that I am against the extremely high rate of 45% for people on benefits contribution to Council tax and as you never offer the option on the forms for a choice of it being reduced to bring it in line with the rest of the councils across the country, I am emailing my views in. It is absolutely disgusting that you have the highest rate in the country and are one of the worst councils for it. You clearly have no idea what it is like to struggle and have to find this high amount. You have never been in the position of having to choose between bread or milk because you can't buy both having just paid the council tax I have thanks to you people, more than once. You clearly don't understand hardship, if you did you wouldn't further insult people by smugly making out you are helping by keeping this at the same rate as last year, it's adding insult to injury to assume people do not have the intelligence to see through this ploy and know we were being overcharged last year so by keeping it the same we are being overcharged again. You are quick to take court action against late payers too so you know people have to go without to pay it rather than be in court. I suppose you assume we can go to the Food Bank like everyone else who is needy. It is KBC who creates the needy, food banks should not be necessary in 2017, homelessness should be a thing of the past but we have an abundance of both the needy and the homeless thanks to this council. Council Tax should be much much lower for people on benefits in fact there shouldn't be a contribution at all.</p>

3	Email	<p>I. have just tried to complete your consultation survey and it seems to have been designed incorrectly (as part of my job I occasionally organise Survey monkey surveys). You appear to only offer options to maintain the status quo. for either one or two years. I am assuming this has not been done on purpose and that you are missing the option to Increase support (either immediately or staggered over two years). Having now done some reading into the subject it would seem like the 45% contribution level is a statistical outlier among councils on a national basis and Kettering could be seen to be not delivering the expected level of support. This does not chime well with some of the messages we heard coming from the Conservative conference about supporting 'just about managing' constituents. Theresa May talked about the Conservatives needing to be seen as a party of change and not continuity - not standing for the status quo. She talked about sweeping away injustice and barriers, solidarity between the fortunate and less fortunate. The status quo here is simply not good enough so I would ask you to please revisit the questions being asked.</p>
4	Email	<p>I am writing to formally object to the consultation on offer via the Survey monkey website asking whether the current level of support offered should be extended to one or two years. While the level of support offered is extraordinarily low shouldn't the consultation be widened to give options such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To bring in line with the national median (which I believe is around the 20% mark).</li> <li>• To fall in line with 62 other councils that charge their most vulnerable constituents nothing.</li> </ul> <p>There is nothing extraordinary that this council does to counter the fact that our most vulnerable residents have to pay up to £400 per year more than their Corby counterparts in terms of services received. If you can please furnish me with evidence to the contrary please do. This seems a false consultation and one where the public are given a choice based only on the length of term. As a resident of All Saints Ward could you also please supply me with the voting record of the local All Saints Councillors on this issue.</p>
5	Email	<p>I am extremely disappointed with your local council tax support scheme 2018/19 online survey consultation. Just having the 2 options on the survey is ridiculous. Not having a chance to actually disagree with both options makes this consultation survey worthless and a waste of council tax payers money.</p> <p>I wish to complain about the diabolical lack of support KBC gives towards council tax bills for extremely vulnerable people in this borough. KBC is charging the highest percentage of council tax than any other council and is totally unfair and wrong.</p>

6	Email	<p>I've just been into the council's website and taken the "opportunity" to respond to the above consultation. I was given the two options, one of which I clicked, but no chance to respond with further comments.</p> <p>I would like to say that, although I clicked on the two-year option, it was only because that at least will mean that the payments are frozen at 45% for a longer period. In reality, this percentage is way above the norm for councils in the country, as Kettering Borough Council knows full well. I think a change of policy is required to bring our vulnerable residents more into line with those across the country.</p> <p>Please reconsider your "support" scheme.</p>
7	Email	<p>Your poorly constructed "survey" is akin to being offered the option of being punched or kicked.</p> <p>I find it outrageous that the council is seeking to maintain and possibly increase the highest, and most unfair, support system in the country.</p> <p>I do not believe either of the proposed options are adequate - you need to increase support to the level residents of Corby benefit from AT THE VERY LEAST.</p>
8	Email	<p>I would like to open by referencing the usual hiding away of a public opinion questionnaire. If it were not for my local councillor being so involved in his community I would have no idea about this at all. Next I would like to suggest that the two option format for whether the council should continue to be more indifferent/aggressive to the poorest of its borough for one year or two years is entirely insulting. It is the choice between a slap in the face or a hard slap in the face. It astounds me that Kettering's handling of its economics is so grim that the poorest pay the highest % of council tax in the whole country. Maybe the funds are so the former Director of the council could have his redundancy a year before his retirement?</p> <p>May I suggest a less elitist view both locally and nationally, and with that in mind, keep the council tax support in line with the national average. If you take away the small amount of spending power away from the poor you also take away that power from local business because the poor do not go spending money in Europe or London. Maybe a town of food banks, pound shops, crime, and begging is part of the plan. I would question such a plan.</p>



LCTS Officer  
Kettering Borough Council  
Municipal Offices  
Bowling Green Road  
Kettering  
Northants  
NN15 7QX

13 November 2017

Dear LCTS Officer

**Re: Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2018/2019**

We are aware that the above consultation is in process and would like to comment on the consultation process and options.

Kettering Mind is deeply involved in the care and support of many borough council tax payers who are unable to work full-time due to mental health difficulties and rely on welfare benefits to survive. There is a wealth of evidence that financial problems have a significantly adverse effect on the mental health of the population and, particularly for those with existing mental ill-health, financial pressures have been associated with higher rates of suicide.

In some local authorities low-income households continue to be exempt from paying Council Tax whilst in Kettering they are required to pay the highest minimum-payment level of 45% of their bill.

This consultation for council tax support 2018/2019 doesn't appear to be a consultation in the 'true sense' as there is not a space available for comments / views, or an option 3 'other' which will offer the opportunity to contribute an alternative. It therefore does not allow people's views to be recorded, and calls the credibility of this consultation in to question.

With this in mind, Kettering Mind is asking that the current LCTS consultation be withdrawn and the options / questions of this consultation be reconsidered, to ensure everyone has an opportunity to take part, contribute and be listened to.

For further evidence supporting our suggestion, may I refer you to the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS) 2014 findings which demonstrated overwhelming links between mental illness, suicide and socioeconomic context.

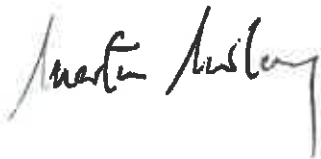
People in receipt of benefits had higher rates of suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts and self-harm than those who did not receive these benefits. Any suicide is a tragedy and we all have a duty to protect the most vulnerable in society and preserve life.

The current level of 45% has already negatively impacted disabled people's quality of life, as mental health and socio economic status are intrinsically linked. Where governance is for the benefit of all people, including and maybe especially those who are already struggling, let us not be counter-productive by squeezing the poor even tighter.

Following on from last year, it is alarming that again the consultation does not provide an option for reducing the minimum contribution, which each authority has the power to implement. We are aware that any cuts from Central Government do not have a mandate of where the deficit is to be made up, this is a choice within each council.

Local actions can, and do make a difference.

Yours faithfully



**Martin Moloney**  
**Chair of Trustees**



Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

Following on from last year's LCTS consultation Kettering Mind feels there doesn't seem to be a space on the form where people can put down their views regarding the options, so we have offered individuals the opportunity to submit their comments and have offered an alternative option (option 3) for consideration by KBC.

- Option 1 – Freeze taper at 45% for 1 year, customers will pay at least 45% of their bill for 1 year
- Option 2 – Freeze taper at 45% for 2 years, customers will pay at least 45% of their bill for 2 years
- Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

feels like this is for a utility company  
The vulnerable are being penalised again

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

Too high, please help us have a life  
don't want to rely on church for hot meals.  
want to COOK at home, can't afford hot meals  
I live on sandwiches

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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- Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

Too many people are having to struggle

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

Following on from last year's LCTS consultation Kettering Mind feels there doesn't seem to be a space on the form where people can put down their views regarding the options, so we have offered individuals the opportunity to submit their comments and have offered an alternative option (option 3) for consideration by KBC.

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- Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

Please help us not put us in need of foodbanks

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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- Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

Cost of living is becoming increasingly expensive and benefits are being cut. £10.64 is a lot of money to many people and lowering the rate could mean less pressure on food banks in local area.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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- Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

£40 a month is a full shop for me, please reduce

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

*Would seem fairer to bring council tax level down in line with other areas. Would have to pay an extra £40 per month if frozen. This is not something that many people can afford.*

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

Following on from last year's LCTS consultation Kettering Mind feels there doesn't seem to be a space on the form where people can put down their views regarding the options, so we have offered individuals the opportunity to submit their comments and have offered an alternative option (option 3) for consideration by KBC.

Option 1 – Freeze taper at 45% for 1 year, customers will pay at least 45% of their bill for 1 year

Option 2 – Freeze taper at 45% for 2 years, customers will pay at least 45% of their bill for 2 years

Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

*This would greatly effect my finances and I would struggle to find the extra money and would have to look at trying to reduce my energy or fuel bill even further.*

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

*Its too high*

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

A DIFFERENCE THIS MAKES IS I'M BARELY  
MANAGING CERTAINLY RELYING ON FAMILY  
GIVING ME MONEY FOR FOOD ON A WEEKLY BASIS

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

Following on from last year's LCTS consultation Kettering Mind feels there doesn't seem to be a space on the form where people can put down their views regarding the options, so we have offered individuals the opportunity to submit their comments and have offered an alternative option (option 3) for consideration by KBC.

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- Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

*Very dissapointed in KBC, the support they give to the most vulnerable is appalling. I hope they dont fall on hard times, experience a mental illness and need help + support*



Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

£10.64 PW is a lot of money to a lot of people and would make the difference of someone eating for a few days rather than visiting food banks.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

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Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

The cost of living is increasing, but benefits and wages are not. £10.64 can make the difference between someone affording food or having to visit a food bank.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

Very disappointing to have a council that gives benefits then takes them away through council tax. This system is not supporting my mental health it worries me that...

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

*My allowance is worked out as a basic. How then am I expected to pay council tax from this?*

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

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- Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

PLEASE REDUCE

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

Following on from last year's LCTS consultation Kettering Mind feels there doesn't seem to be a space on the form where people can put down their views regarding the options, so we have offered individuals the opportunity to submit their comments and have offered an alternative option (option 3) for consideration by KBC.

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

option 3 freezing the council tax - then I can budget better. know how much I need to keep aside for the council tax, however a reduced council tax would benefit me loads.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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- Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

Please consider reducing

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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- Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

In Having less food each day to cover the cost of council tax as I'm on Benefit.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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- Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

REQUIRE THE AMOUNT OF COUNCIL FOOD (NOT FOODS MEALS)  
AND THE REDUCTION OF OTHER TAXES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

Following on from last year's LCTS consultation Kettering Mind feels there doesn't seem to be a space on the form where people can put down their views regarding the options, so we have offered individuals the opportunity to submit their comments and have offered an alternative option (option 3) for consideration by KBC.

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

WORRY OF COUNCIL TAX IS AFFECTING  
MY MENTAL HEALTH, CAN'T AFFORD TO  
PAY IT, NOW HAVE A COURT SUMMONS

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

Following on from last year's LCTS consultation Kettering Mind feels there doesn't seem to be a space on the form where people can put down their views regarding the options, so we have offered individuals the opportunity to submit their comments and have offered an alternative option (option 3) for consideration by KBC.

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Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

*struggling with paying all my bills*

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

*The individuals / families accessing this type of support are the most vulnerable in society. It is socially irresponsible forcing them into poverty, nobody should be put in a position of choosing between paying their bills or eating.*

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

*To Expensive*

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Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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- Option 3 – Reduce level of council tax in line with neighbouring counties

Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

*PLEASE REDUCE IT AS IT GETS DEARER EACH YEAR AS I AM NOW ON REDUCED BENEFIT.*

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# Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2018/19

## Background

Council Tax Support was introduced in April 2013 to replace Council Tax Benefit, as a result of changes made by central government.

Previously, 100% of the cost of Council Tax Benefit payments was paid to Councils. Under the new scheme the government has reduced the level of funding provided.

As a result of reduced government funding, a new scheme for working age customers was introduced after extensive consultation. The scheme reduced the maximum award of support from 100% to 85% meaning customers had to pay at least 15% of their bill. This was phased in over two years. Following further public consultations this was subsequently changed, initially to 25% in 2015/16 and then 45% in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

The scheme is administered at a local level and is currently split between the following two areas:

- pensioners  
and
- working age customers

Pensioners are protected by legislation and their scheme will remain unchanged. **This consultation relates solely to the local working age scheme.**

In 2013/14 certain exemptions on empty properties were amended in order to assist funding of the shortfall in the new scheme. These amended exemptions will remain in place and no further amendments are proposed.

## 2018/19 Scheme

The Council's Executive Committee has agreed for the scheme to remain at 45%.

There are no other technical changes to be consulted on this year.

Consultation options - see overleaf



**Kettering**  
Borough Council

# Local Council Tax Support Scheme

In line with Government legislation Kettering Borough Council is consulting on its Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS). The consultation process will run for 8 weeks ending 20/11/2017 and customer feedback will be considered as part of the decision making process. Any changes to the scheme must be approved by Full Council before the 31st January 2018.

## Option 1

A freeze in the level of support for 1 year – maximum support remaining at 55%. Customers would have to pay at least 45% of their Council Tax Bill in 2018/19.

## Option 2

A freeze in the level of support for 2 years – maximum support remaining at 55%. Customers would have to pay at least 45% of their Council Tax Bill in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

## Impact of proposals

The average Council Tax Band in Kettering is a Band B. The annual bill in 2017/18 is £1,229.69. Currently a customer receiving the maximum LCTS is required to pay £553.36 a year which equates to £10.64 per week. This will remain broadly the same under either proposal, subject to any future Council Tax levels.

**Of Council Tax paid, Kettering Borough Council receives 13% of what you pay. The Police and Crime Commissioner receives 13% and Northamptonshire County Council receives 74%.**

## Consultation Questions

**Of the two options, which do you prefer:**

- Option 1** – Freeze taper at 45% for 1 year, customers will pay at least 45% of their bill for 1 year.
- Option 2** – Freeze taper at 45% for 2 years, customers will pay at least 45% of their bill for 2 years.

Please indicate your preference above and return by 20 November 2017 to:  
**LCTS Officer, Kettering Borough Council, Municipal Offices,  
Bowling Green Road, Kettering, NN15 7QX**

Alternatively you can respond to the consultation online at  
**[www.kettering.gov.uk/LCTS](http://www.kettering.gov.uk/LCTS)**

## Localised Council Tax Support – Executive 06<sup>th</sup> December 2017

### APPENDIX C

#### FACE TO FACE CONSULTATION TIMETABLE

Date	Venue
02.10.2017	Morrison's Supermarket
03.10.2017	Morrison's Supermarket
04.10.2017	Kettering General Hospital
10.10.2017	Mental Health Awareness Day – Pop up Shop
11.10.2017	Open Church Coffee Morning
13.10.2017	Rothwell Library
19.10.2017	Burton Latimer Playgroup
23.10.2017	ASDA Supermarket
24.10.2017	ASDA Supermarket
25.10.2017	Marlow House
25.10.2017	Burton Latimer Library
26.10.2017	Resource Centre
27.10.2017	Laburnum Crescent
28.10.2017	Johnny's Happy Place
31.10.2017	Sure Start Montagu
01.11.2017	Job Centre Plus
02.11.2017	Desborough Library
08.11.2017	Job Centre Plus
11.11.2017	Broughton Church
14.11.2017	Rothwell Playgroup
14.11.2017	Mawsey



Localised Council Tax Support – Executive 06<sup>th</sup> December 2017

APPENDIX D

# **Guidance 2 - Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Toolkit**

## **Contents**

<b>Background</b>	<b>pages</b>	<b>3 - 4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>pages</b>	<b>5 - 7</b>
<b>Guidance notes</b>	<b>pages</b>	<b>8 - 11</b>
<b>Flowchart giving overview of completing form</b>	<b>page</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Pro-forma Equality Impact Assessments</b>	<b>pages</b>	<b>13 - 28</b>
<b>Action plan template</b>	<b>pages</b>	<b>29 - 31</b>
<b>Website summary template</b>	<b>page</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Appendix 1 – Consultation Documentation</b>		
<b>Appendix 2 – Transitional Funding</b>		

## **Background**

### **Equality Standard for Local Government**

The Council is committed to principles set out in the Equality Standard for Local Government and is currently working towards Level 2.

The Equality Standard consists of five levels as shown below:

<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Commitment to a comprehensive equality policy</b>
<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Assessment and community engagement</b>
<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Setting equality objectives and targets</b>
<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Information systems and monitoring against targets</b>
<b>Level 5</b>	<b>Achieving and reviewing outcomes</b>

At each of the five levels there are four broad areas to consider, as follows:

- Leadership and corporate commitment
- Community engagement and accountability
- Service delivery and customer care
- Employment and training

A key part of the Equality Standard involves carrying out equality impact assessments on all existing, changing, and new policies, services and procedures within a service. This is to ensure that they do not have an adverse impact on a particular group of people due to their gender, sexuality, religion or belief, race, age, gender identity or because they are disabled people. It is also to make sure that opportunities are taken to actively promote equality and diversity, and good community relations, wherever possible. Equality impact assessments also identify any positive impacts for different groups.

The actual term used in the Equality Standard guidance is Impact and Needs/Requirements Assessment (INRA), which goes further than identifying the impact of changes to policies, services and procedures, as it also assesses whether or not people's needs are being met and if the Council and is meeting legislative requirements such as compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA), Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and The Equality Act 2006. The process adopted by the Council will be in line with this broader approach

**All functions and polices will be subject to an EIA.**

**Functions include services provided by the Council, plus other duties and powers, such as enforcement, licensing and regulation. Assessing all policies and procedures will therefore include those which are part of a corporate function as well as those which relate to services and employment.**

**Policies does not mean only formal written policies but includes procedures, codes of practice, strategies, plans, guidelines and even long standing "custom and practice".**



## **Introduction**

### **What is an equality impact assessment?**

An equality impact assessment is a tool to identify whether or not policies, services and procedures are having an adverse impact on a particular group of people due to gender, race or disability. In other words, is the policy or procedure being provided in a way that meets the needs of the customer and not in a discriminatory manner? The idea is to examine critically and identify any "institutional" barriers, acts or omissions that detrimentally affect individuals and communities because of factors of race, gender, age, religion or belief, sexuality, gender identity or disability.

For new or changing policies the equality impact assessment helps to identify potential adverse impacts and any unmet needs or requirements for different groups of people in the community.

Additionally the assessment also considers if there will be any potential positive impacts of the policy or service on groups of people in terms of disability, religion or belief, age, sexuality, gender or race equality, or any ways in which the policy will actively promote equality and diversity or good community relations.

Good practice also includes an assessment of needs and impact on other communities of interest, these include: asylum seeker and refugee communities; migrant workers and other new arrivals; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities; older people; Gypsy and Traveller communities; young people and people with caring responsibilities.

### **Why carry out equality Impact assessments?**

- Equality Impact Assessments help to improve the services delivered by identifying where improvements are needed and taking appropriate action.
- Equality Impact Assessments will form part of the business planning process so that it is not perceived as a separate exercise, thus saving time and resources.
- Equality Impact Assessments will enable service providers to engage with service users and stakeholders to identify/measure unequal outcomes or unmet needs, and then to use the results to develop equality objectives and targets that become part of business plans.

- Equality Impact Assessments will help KBC to become a better employer by identifying the needs of its different groups of employees and making changes as appropriate.
- Equality Impact Assessments will enable the Council to fulfil its wider “General Duty” under anti-discriminatory legislation including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), to promote good community relations and equal opportunities, and combat unlawful discrimination.
- Equality Impact Assessments will assist the Council in meeting its positive duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment of disabled people and to promote equal opportunities for disabled people, under the extension of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Equality Impact Assessments will assist KBC in meeting the duty to promote equality between women and men.

### **How do you carry out an impact assessment?**

A simple and user friendly form has been created to enable you to record your findings as a result of carrying out an equality impact assessment. For existing policies or ones which are being revised it will be useful to refer to the form used for the initial screening for relevance to equality when you begin your impact assessment.

### **Who will be carrying out the impact assessments?**

Service/Business managers have the responsibility for carrying out impact assessments. However it is advised that you do not undertake the EIA on your own but set up a group comprising a diverse range of staff responsible for delivering the service. You could also consider stakeholder involvement, such as a service user representative, or a “critical friend” from another service area.

### **When will you be required to carry out an equality impact assessment?**

Equality Impact Assessments are required to be carried out on all policies and procedures (new, changing and existing).

Each service area has screened all its policies and procedures for relevance to disability, gender, age, religion or belief, sexuality, and race equality.

## **What happens to the information?**

**The results of the equality impact assessment are used to set equality objectives leading to improvements to services and employment practices. Policies and proposed policies may need amending in the light of the results of the impact assessment, especially if potential adverse impacts are identified. If any negative impact would amount to unlawful discrimination the policy must be changed unless there is an objective, lawful reason to justify this.**

**As well as using the information to make improvements to services and employment practices, the impact assessments will also be published for information for the public and for audit purposes. All assessments will be published on the Council website together with results of monitoring and consultation.**

## **Guidance notes**

Although equality impact assessment is not meant to be a complex process, it frequently requires more than a desk top review or a discussion between the members of the project group: it needs to be based upon both quantitative and qualitative data about service users and non-users. The starting point is to review existing information as it is important to recognise where there are gaps in our knowledge and to develop ways of finding that missing information, which may mean commissioning new data. If you do commission any new research though, beware of drawing any firm conclusions from a very small sample size.

Listed below are some potential sources of information which may help to inform the assessment.

### **Useful information sources**

The following sources of information may be useful in carrying out your equality impact assessment:

- Complaints and comments
- in-house expertise, especially front line employees
- issues raised with or by Elected Members
- Best Value Reviews or other reviews
- customer satisfaction surveys
- results of any previous consultation, focus groups or surveys
- employee opinion surveys
- inspectorate and review reports
- monitoring information, including employment
- local research findings
- service user profiles/statistics – applications for a service, allocations, take up
- other local authorities
- our partner organisations
- library or internet searches

### **Statistics**

There are various useful sources of demographic statistics:

- Equality and Human Rights Commission [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)
- Archive sites from the previous equality commissions:
  - Commission for Racial Equality – analysis by racial group on population, health, housing, criminal justice, education, and the labour market.

<http://83.137.212.42/sitearchive/cre/index.html>

- Disability Rights Commission DRC – labour market.

<http://83.137.212.42/sitearchive/DRC/index.html>

- Equal Opportunities Commission – comparing the lives of women and men, including women and men from different ethnic groups.

<http://83.137.212.42/sitearchive/eoc/index.html>

## **Consultation**

As stated at the beginning of the toolkit, this is one of the key elements to carrying out a meaningful impact assessment. It is imperative to hear the views of all sections of the community who may be affected by the policy, both service users and non-service users. If no recent consultation has taken place, it is important to consult at this stage, especially with any groups for whom you have identified a potential negative impact. This could be a “snapshot” survey or an informal consultation session. For new or revised policies a full community consultation exercise may be appropriate to assess potential impact if your proposals are highly relevant to equality. Different methods of consulting with people are more effective for some groups than others and consideration needs to be given as to when and where consultation will take place.

## **Monitoring**

It is also vital to monitor our policies and procedures continuously to ensure they are not having any adverse impact on people from different groups. This goes beyond merely collecting numbers but to detailed analysis and actions based upon the findings. If detailed monitoring information is not available then as with consultation it might be necessary to carry out some sort of “snapshot” monitoring exercise of the service user profile.

In the case of new or revised policies arrangements for monitoring the actual impact need to be established, as at the moment we are only assessing potential impact.

## **Key points the equality impact assessment looks to assess**

- **Intended Impacts** – the objectives and desired outcomes of your plans and how they will affect different sections of the community.

e.g. the purpose of the Hate Crime Policy and Procedure is to provide a sensitive and supportive service to victims and witnesses of racist harassment and discrimination and to ensure the alleged perpetrators are dealt with appropriately.

- **Unintended Impacts** – any "institutional" barriers, acts or omissions that could have a detrimental effect for certain sections of the community.

e.g. barriers to prevent off road motor bike access to green spaces may impede access for some wheelchair or scooter users and people with pushchairs.

e.g. mental health services provide counselling services but have no provision for doing so in community languages

- **Negative impacts** – where you identify any potential for negative impact, you should consider making changes. If the negative impact would amount to unlawful discrimination you **must** make changes to your proposal unless there is an objective, lawful reason to justify it.

e.g. failure to provide information about services in community languages has a negative impact as people cannot access services they do not know about.

- **Positive impacts** – this means positive impacts which could benefit a particular group in terms of equality, rather than any broad positive impacts of the policy overall.

e.g. our recruitment and selection guidance states that we will interview all disabled job applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy.

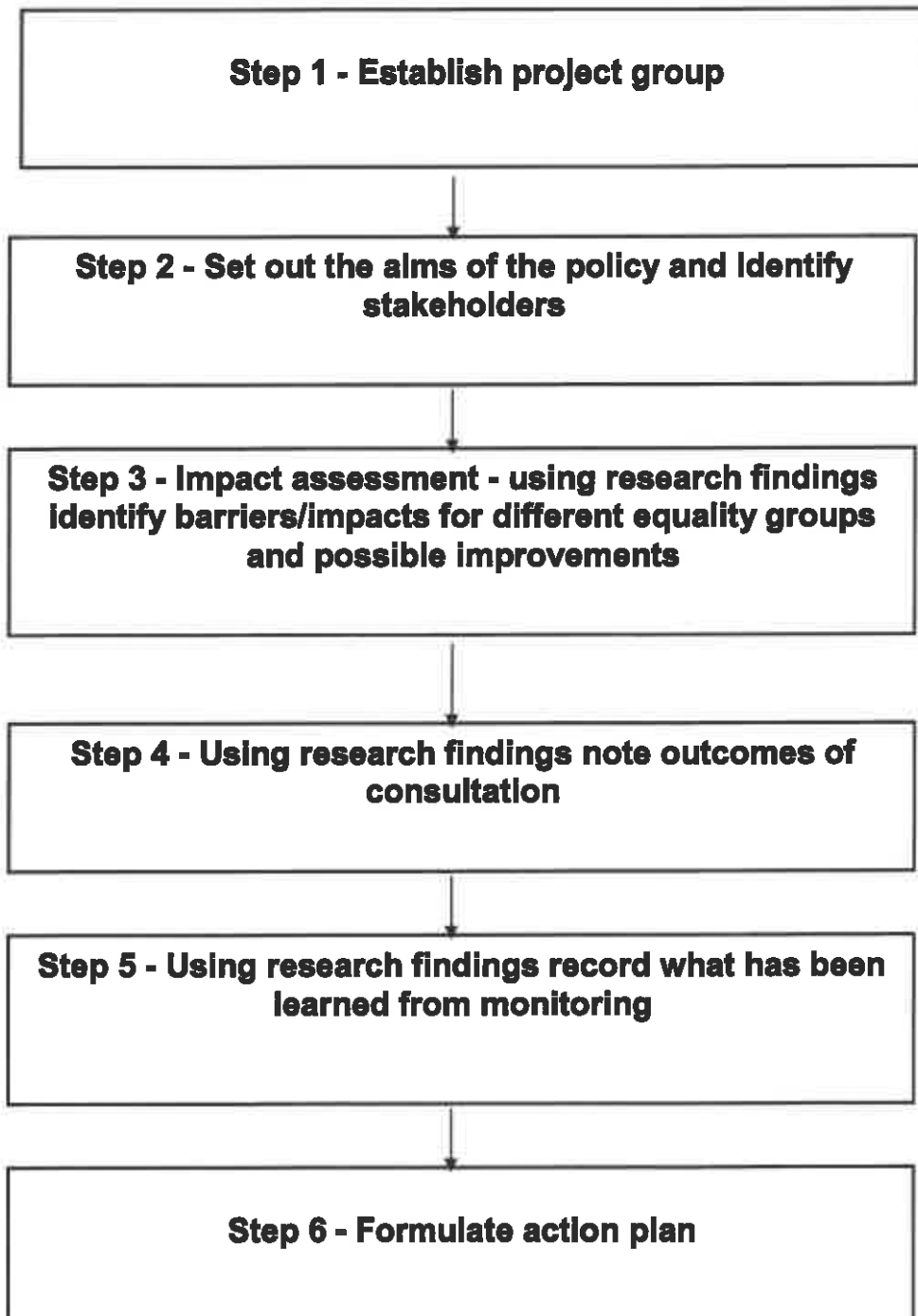
- **Promotion of equality** – doing this will improve both quality and equality of our policies and practice.

This could include positive action either to encourage underrepresented groups to use services such as women only swimming sessions, or to assist underrepresented groups to gain access to employment opportunities.

**Promotion of good community relations and community cohesion** – for example, if your proposals are aimed at addressing unmet needs in one community of interest, this could lead to resentment in the wider community and

damage community relations, if you do not let everyone in the area know your plans and aims. This would mean explaining that the action is not about preferential treatment for some groups but to address imbalances in service provision.

**Flowchart giving overview of completing EIA form**





# Pro-forma Equality Impact Assessments

## Step 1 – Responsibility and involvement

This is a new and important process that will require different perspectives to be considered and, in some (hopefully a very few) cases, difficult decisions may need to be made about policy and service delivery.

Whilst it is necessary to identify a lead officer, it is advised that they do not undertake the impact assessment on their own, but set up a group comprising a diverse range of staff responsible for delivering the service.

**Policy/procedure:** Local Council Tax Support Scheme Review.....

**Name of Lead Officer (service/business manager) completing the assessment:**

Rob Thompson .....

**Job Title and Ext. No:** Benefits Manager - 2449 .....

**Service area:** Customer Services (Benefits)..... **Date:** September 2017

**Directorate:** .....

**List others involved in the assessment:**  
.....  
.....

## Step 2 – Identify aims/objectives of policy/procedure

No.	Question
1	<p><b>What are the aims/objectives of the policy/procedure and the intended outcomes?</b></p> <p>The intention of the policy is to provide a revised scheme to deliver a Localised Council Tax Support including the elements prescribed by government and to meet the financial burdens imposed by the new grant funding stream. The options looked at are those agreed for the purpose of public consultation by the Executive committee on the 20/09/2017 full details of which are available at <a href="http://www.kettering.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1576/executive_committee">http://www.kettering.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1576/executive_committee</a></p>
2	<p><b>Are there any associated services, policies or procedures?</b></p> <p><b>If 'Yes' please list below</b></p> <p>Prescribed national scheme for pensioners</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Yes</b></p>
3	<p><b>Are any other organisations involved in the delivery of the service?</b></p> <p>Software supplier – Academy (Capita) Information held by stakeholders such as the DWP will be required to ensure smooth delivery of the service.</p>
4	<p><b>How and where will information about the service, policy or procedure be publicised? Is this information available in other languages and formats if requested?</b></p>

No.

Question

A full 8 week consultation will be carried out from the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017 – 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017. Following this the approval of any revisions will be made at the Executive Committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and ratified by Full Council in January 2018, the full scheme and revisions will be made available on our website and in hard copy by request. A full publicity campaign will be instituted to ensure details of the revised scheme are distributed across the borough.  
The information will be available in hard copy format and downloadable from the Kettering Borough Council's Website. The information is not available in any other format or languages. However, a large format hard copy is available on request and translated versions may be made available on request. There may be a waiting period for the availability of the translated version, due to it being sent for translation.

5

**List the main people, or groups of people, that this policy or procedure was designed to reach or benefit, and any other stakeholders.**

Working age Council Tax Support recipients both current and future

Voluntary Sector

Council Tax payers

**Step 3 – Impact assessment**

Although this form is set out under the broad equality strands consider any impacts/barriers that might cross over between different groups e.g. race/gender, disability/gender, etc. Use the boxes on the next few pages to indicate where the policy could have a positive or a negative impact for different groups with your reasons. You will need to transfer this information to the action plan later.

Key questions to consider are:

Is there equal access to services for all groups?  
 Is there equal quality of service or employment experience for all groups?  
 Are there any significant differences in outcomes between groups?  
 Is there over- or under-representation of some groups for certain services or in facing enforcement?

You should bear in mind the following when completing this form.

- Race:** When looking at race consider different ethnic groups within the five broad census headings, and groups not listed as separate census categories, for example Middle Eastern, North African, European, Gypsies and Travellers, Asylum Seekers and Refugees.
- Gender:** Remember that women and men may have different priorities in relation to what services they want and different needs for how these are provided. Men-only or women-only delivery for some services could be an option.
- Disability:** All service providers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, including physical features of premises, so it is advisable to anticipate any adjustments that may be required. Consider the barriers faced by different groups of disabled people as listed below. Note also that changes to legislation mean that conditions such as MS, HIV and cancer are now covered from the time of diagnosis.
- Physical impairment -such as people who have difficulty in using their arms or who have mobility issues which mean using a wheelchair or crutches
  - Sensory impairment - such as being blind / having a serious visual impairment or being deaf / having a serious hearing impairment
  - Mental health condition - such as depression or schizophrenia
  - Learning disability/difficulty - such as Down's syndrome or dyslexia or a cognitive impairment such as autistic spectrum disorder
  - Long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy
- Lesbian / Gay Transgender:** Key areas of concern include 'hate crime' and a lack of social facilities. Remember that this type of information is very personal and although people may be willing to declare their sexual orientation on surveys to aid improvement of services they may prefer it to not otherwise be known.
- Religion/** Also includes people who do not follow and religion or have any particular belief system. Because 'hate crime'

- Belief:** is a concern for many people from different faith communities this may be a factor in low responses to surveys, so imaginative ways of gathering this information could be considered and good practice established to highlight the benefits of accurate data.
- Older people:** Older people have different needs so we need to ensure the views of older people are heard and increased participation is encouraged. Communication, mobility and transport are areas we need to consider to aid this involvement, also access to learning opportunities to develop skills.
- Young people:** Younger people have different needs and we need to ensure their views are heard and increased participation is encouraged along with opportunities to help develop services. Consider using technology, youth services, or School councils to encourage involvement should be considered.
- Carer's:** A carer is someone who looks after a partner, relative or friend who has a disability, is an older person, or has a long term condition. Carer's are not paid, can often be isolated and are of every age group and ethnic origin. We may therefore need to use more diverse approaches to delivering services and ways to consult with this group; consider using radio, internet, library services or other imaginative ways of consultation. Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004
- Other Groups:** It is good practice to consider the profile of all our communities e.g. Lone parents, people on low incomes, homeless people, EU Migrant Workers, and to note anything of which you are already aware or that results from your research.

Question				
No.	Adjustment to <u>current scheme</u>	Actual or potential negative impact, unmet needs or barriers	Actual or potential positive impact or ways in which the policy promotes equality	Actual or potential impact of the policy on community cohesion and community relations
1				

	<p><b>A – Maintaining support at 55% for 1 year</b> This proposed change will continue to protect recipients on the basis of their gender by extending the current income disregards – some of which favour women as the majority of "main carers" of child benefit are female.</p> <p><b>B - Maintaining support at 55% for 2 years</b> This proposed change will continue to protect recipients on the basis of their gender by extending the current income disregards – some of which favour women as the majority of "main carers" of child benefit are female.</p> <p>All options will potentially impact on the ability of customers to pay regardless of gender.</p>	<p><b>A - Maintaining support at 55% for 1 year</b> This proposed change will continue to protect recipients on the basis of their gender by extending the current income disregards – some of which favour women as the majority of "main carers" of child benefit are female.</p> <p><b>B - Maintaining support at 55% for 2 years</b> This proposed change will continue to protect recipients on the basis of their gender by extending the current income disregards – some of which favour women as the majority of "main carers" of child benefit are female.</p>	<p><b>Maintenance at current level of support in percentage terms to all customers of working age</b></p>
<p><b>Women or men</b></p>			

<p><b>People from different ethnic groups</b></p>	<p>Though we do not keep case level data on race as it is not relevant to the calculation of Council Tax Support changes that impact on larger families may negatively impact certain ethnic groupings, however neither of the proposed changes affect larger families disproportionately to smaller families</p>	<p>We do not keep case level data on race as it is not relevant to the calculation of Council Tax Support.</p>	<p>Maintenance at current level of support in percentage terms to all customers of working age</p>
<p><b>Disabled People</b></p>	<p>The options include all current favourable treatment of income of disabled people. Benefits such as disability living allowance, attendance allowance etc will continue to be disregarded in full and recipients will continue to benefit from the enhanced premiums and personal allowances which favour people with disabilities.</p>	<p>This option includes all current favourable treatment of income of disabled people. Benefits such as disability living allowance, attendance allowance etc will continue to be disregarded in full and recipients will continue to benefit from the enhanced premiums and personal allowances which favour people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Maintenance at current level of support in percentage terms to all customers of working age</p>
<p><b>Lesbian, gay or bisexual people</b></p>	<p>We do not keep case level data on a person's sexual orientation as it would not be relevant to the calculation of Council Tax Support.</p>	<p>We do not keep case level data on a person's sexual orientation as it would not be relevant to the calculation of Council Tax Support.</p>	<p>Maintenance at current level of support in percentage terms to all customers of working age</p>



<b>Older people</b>	The proposals are subject to some national prescription relating to protecting pensioners' entitlements. Therefore we have no discretion about whether or not to follow this principle.	The proposals are subject to some national prescription relating to protecting pensioners' entitlements. Therefore we have no discretion about whether or not to follow this principle.	
<b>Young People</b>	All customers under pension age will be affected by this change and will receive the protection offered by the current scheme in proportion to their current needs.  Legislation prescribes that we must protect pensioners from the changes  Both options will potentially impact on the ability of customers to pay regardless of age	All customers under pension age will be affected by this change and will receive the protection offered by the current scheme in proportion to their current needs.  Legislation prescribes that we must protect pensioners from the changes	Maintenance at current level of support in percentage terms to all customers of working age
<b>People from different faith groups</b>	We do not keep case level data on a person's religion or belief. As it would not be relevant to the calculation of Council Tax Support.	We do not keep case level data on a person's religion or belief. As it would not be relevant to the calculation of Council Tax Support.	Maintenance at current level of support in percentage terms to all customers of working age
<b>Transgender people</b>	If someone currently undergoes a gender reassignment then it currently only affects what they are referred to as on official documents/systems. It does not affect any part of the calculation. This will continue in the local CTS scheme.	If someone currently undergoes a gender reassignment then it currently only affects what they are referred to as on official documents/systems. It does not affect any part of the calculation. This will continue in the local CTS scheme.	Maintenance at current level of support in percentage terms to all customers of working age

<p><b>Any other group (e.g. carers, rural communities, socially excluded)</b></p>	<p>These options include all current favourable treatment of income of groups such as carers; take up would continue to combat social exclusion.</p>	<p>These options include all current favourable treatment of income of groups such as carers; take up would continue to combat social exclusion.</p>	<p>Maintenance at current level of support in percentage terms to all customers of working age</p>
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## Step 4 – Consultation

For this step it is important to refer to any consultation exercises which have been undertaken and/or any complaints received.

No.	Question
7	<p><b>What have service users/non-users or other stakeholders (including employees) already told you about the policy and any negative impacts? Who has been consulted and what methods were used?</b></p> <p>A statutory public consultation has been carried out on the changes to the Local Council tax scheme running from 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017 – 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017</p>
	<p><b>If you need to carry out further consultation, who will you be consulting with and by what methods?</b></p>

## Step 5 – Monitoring and Research

For this step it is important to refer to any monitoring information which is already held. As stated in the guidance notes arrangements need to be set up for effective monitoring if this is not already taking place.

No.	Question
8	<p><b>How do we know whether our service is accessible all groups?</b></p> <p>High level data is obtained from customer of ethnic background and an ongoing social inclusion and take up program ensures we actively promote the service. No case level information is held in certain areas such as trans gender and faith as these are not relevant to the award of support</p> <p>.....</p>

No.

Question

**If there is a lack of information, what research will be carried out, and for which groups?**

Social Inclusion and take up will continue under Local Council Tax Support .....

.....

.....

.....

**If this is a new policy, or one that is not currently monitored, what are the arrangements to begin monitoring the actual impacts of the policy? (To go in action plan)**

Financial impact of policy will be monitored on at least a monthly basis .....

Caseload impact will be monitored on a monthly basis .....

New burdens impact will be monitored via customer feedback .....

Possible financial hardship impacts will be monitored through recovery data and the work of the budget support and social inclusion team.....

## **Step 6 – Complete the equality action plan**

### **Equality Action Plan**

Using the information already gathered, summarise your findings in the table on the next page in relation to potential or actual impacts for different groups. If you have identified that any group is experiencing, or is likely to experience, a negative impact, particularly if this could be unlawful discrimination or if it is unintentional, then action must be taken to address this.

**Remember that any policy which could unlawfully discriminate must be changed, unless it can be objectively justified.**

Even if you found negative impacts that would not amount to unlawful discrimination, you still need to identify ways to remove or reduce these. For example:

- change the policy or procedure
- change how the policy or procedure is put into practice
- find alternative ways of achieving the aims of the policy
- introduce additional measures

If no actions are taken to change the policy or procedure when adverse impacts for some groups have been identified, or where an adverse impact for some groups is unavoidable, you should double check that this could be justified legally. Major changes would need a report to your Directorate highlighting the findings of the equality impact assessment and setting out recommendations such as actions to change the policy, or whether or not to adopt a proposed or revised policy in the light of the findings.

Even if you found no evidence of potential negative impacts, you should consider how to improve any positive impacts or how your policy could be adapted to promote equality and/or good community relations and community cohesion. This should also form part of the action plan.

If you lack sufficient information to answer all the questions at this point, or are unaware what the impact is/will be, further research, monitoring data and/or consultation will be needed and objectives to obtain this information should be included in your action plan.

You should also set out the arrangements for monitoring the impact of the policy in your action plan.

These are suggested headings for the action plan but may be changed if you prefer to use your own directorate or departmental standard action plan format for consistency.

Problem/barriers identified	Aim/objective	Actions to achieve aim/objective	Resources required	Target date
Options to be decided	Re-evaluate impact assessment	Once the details of the review are known a further impact assessment will be undertaken if appropriate and if needed an action plan formulated.		

Ways to promote equality or good community relations identified	Aim/objective	Actions to achieve aim/objective	Resources required	Target date
<b>Set out your arrangements below for monitoring the policy</b>				
<b>Ongoing monitoring of the financial impact of the scheme</b>	<b>To evaluate the financial impact on the Council and on the customer</b>	<b>Feedback to SMT and members as appropriate</b>	<b>Work with Budget Support &amp; Social Inclusion team to alleviate financial impact</b>	

**Website Summary – Please complete for publishing on our website**

Completed equality impact assessments	Key findings	Future actions
<p>Directorate: Customer Services (benefits) .....</p> <p>Function or policy name: Local Council Tax Support scheme.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Function or policy status: Changing ..... (new, changing or existing)</p> <p>Name of lead officer completing the assessment:</p> <p>Rob Thompson .....</p> <p>Date of assessment: September 2017 .....</p>		