

**Template for Impact Assessment Level 1: Initial screening assessment**

**Appendix A**

<b>Subject of assessment:</b>	Local Council Tax Support			
<b>Coverage:</b>	Service Specific			
<b>This is a decision relating to:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Strategy</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Policy</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Service</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Function</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Process/procedure</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Programme</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Project</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Review</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Organisational change</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other (please state)</b>		
<b>It is a:</b>	<b>New approach:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Revision of an existing approach:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>It is driven by:</b>	<b>Legislation:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Local or corporate requirements:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<p><b>Description:</b></p>	<p>Insert short description, using the following as sub-headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key aims, objectives and activities</li> </ul> <p>The purpose of the report is to specify how Middlesbrough Council will operate the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for the financial year 2018/2019 and sets out the factors which will be taken into account when deciding such applications. There are some minor changes to the scheme aswell as the level of support provided through the scheme, both of which will be operational from 1 April 2018. The policy sets out how applications can be made, when applicants will receive a decision, how the Council will treat all types of income and savings together with providing details of how applicants can ask for a review of the decision if they are dissatisfied.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory drivers (set out exact reference)</li> </ul> <p>The Local Government Finance Act abolished the national Council Tax Benefit scheme and empowers the Local Authority to introduce a new localised Council Tax Support scheme. Local Authorities have to agree and publish their scheme by 31 January each year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differences from any previous approach</li> </ul> <p>The Local Council Tax Support scheme has been operational since 1 April 2013 and has remained unaltered (apart from some minor legislative changes) since this date and has been approved annually by full Council. For the financial year 2018/2019, the proposals are to make some small changes to the scheme and also increase the amount of support provided through the scheme from 80% to 85%, therefore meaning working age residents would have less to pay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries (internal and external as appropriate)</li> </ul> <p>All residents who are liable for Council Tax (aged over 18) but under pensionable age and receive Local Council Tax Support could be affected by this policy. National legislation for pensioners is prescribed by central government and will be adopted by Middlesbrough Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended outcomes.</li> </ul> <p>To present a policy for consideration by Council that has given full consideration to the impact of the proposals, has considered the risks associated with the new scheme and gives proper consideration to the Council's equality duties.</p>
<p><b>Live date:</b></p>	<p>1 April 2018</p>
<p><b>Lifespan:</b></p>	<p>April 2018 – March 2021</p>
<p><b>Date of next review:</b></p>	<p>December 2020</p>

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
	No	Yes	Uncertain	
<b>Human Rights</b> Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation? *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The purpose of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme is to provide a policy document which allows the most appropriate support for the borough which minimises the negative impact upon residents. The proposed changes to the existing scheme have been assessed and none of the changes have a negative impact on individual human rights.
<b>Equality</b> Could the decision result in adverse differential impacts on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equality law? Could the decision impact differently on other commonly disadvantaged groups? *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>There will be no disproportionate adverse impact on any groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equity law.</p> <p>The government have considered the situation for low income pensioners who are eligible for support with their council tax. As the scheme for pensioners is prescribed by Central Government and adopted by Middlesbrough Council, there is no disproportionate adverse impact on this group of residents.</p> <p>The Council has considered the impact of the proposed revisions to customers with a disability. There are likely to be a number of claimants who currently receive a disability premium, the support to this group who qualify for the scheme will be improved by the proposals as it reduces the amount they have to pay. People with disabilities are provided with support when requested if possible to support. The income which was previously disregarded under Council Tax Benefit, which ended from 31 March 2013, has been maintained under the Local Council Tax Support scheme and will continue for 2018/2019. In respect of the amount of support provided, an equal amount of support will be provided for all working age residents therefore this protected characteristic is not adversely affected.</p> <p>Alternative arrangements for claiming Council Tax Support are in place for those who hold a protected characteristic such as being pregnant / on maternity leave or have language barriers. In addition, residents are able to apply for Local Council Tax Support 24 hours per day, 7 days per week through the Council's website therefore allowing all residents the same level of access.</p> <p>Extensive consultation has been undertaken on the proposed revisions to the scheme. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widely publicised through the Council's website, all media channels and the Council's Financial Inclusion Group</li> <li>• Paper copies of the consultation document made available in Council Hubs, Civic Centre and the Contact Centre</li> <li>• The views of Cleveland Police and Fire Authority obtained and taken into account.</li> </ul> <p>No concerns were raised that the proposed revisions to the policy could have a disproportionate adverse impact on individuals or a group because they hold a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Given the evidence above, it is not anticipated that there will be any disproportionate adverse impact on any groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equity law.</p>
<b>Community cohesion</b> Could the decision impact negatively on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town? *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Pensioners are protected from any changes in the Local Council Tax Support scheme due to national legislation introduced by central government.</p> <p>Apart from this group, there will be no negative impacts on any different groups as a result of this policy. The policy does not discriminate against any groups and the service will be sensitive at all times to the needs of all applicants.</p>

\* Consult the Impact Assessment further guidance appendix for details on the issues covered by each of these broad questions prior to completion.

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
<p><b>Middlesbrough 2025 – The Vision for Middlesbrough</b></p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on the achievement of the vision for a Fairer, Safer Stronger Middlesbrough?</p>	☒	☐	☐	<p>The adoption of this policy does not have any negative impacts on the community strategy objectives for Middlesbrough. The policy intention is to assist the most vulnerable claimants whilst promoting the availability of work for those under pensionable age. Should the aims and objectives be achieved, this will have a positive impact on the town as more claimants will be in work</p>
<p><b>Organisational management / transformation</b></p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on organisational management or the transformation of the Council's services as set out in its transformation programme? *</p>	☒	☐	☐	<p>This decision will not impact negatively on any organisational or transformation services the Council has in place</p>
<p><b>Next steps:</b></p> <p>➡ If the answer to all of the above screening questions is No then the process is completed.</p> <p>➡ If the answer of any of the questions is Yes or Uncertain, then a Level 2 Full Impact Assessment must be completed.</p>				

<b>Assessment completed by:</b>	Martin Barker	<b>Head of Service:</b>	John Shiel
<b>Date:</b>	30.10.17	<b>Date:</b>	30.10.17