

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Please ensure that you refer to the 'Equality Impact Assessment Guidance' while completing this form. If you would like further guidance please contact the Equalities Officer or Equalities Team

Details
Name of Initiative to be assessed: Budget Requirement and Council Tax Increase
Name of responsible officer: Steve Jones
Group/Directorate: Place and Transformation
Service Area: Finance
Date: 22 nd February 2016

(a) WHAT ARE YOU ASSESSING FOR IMPACT ?

Service/ Function <input type="checkbox"/>	Policy/ Procedure <input type="checkbox"/>	Project <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	Proposal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information/ Position statement <input type="checkbox"/>
--	--	-------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	----------------------------------	---	--

(b) Please name and describe below

Budget Requirement for 2016/17 of £114.245 million and proposed Council Tax increase for 2016/17 of 3.5%

(c) IS THE DELIVERY OF THIS INITIATIVE AFFECTED BY LEGISLATION OR OTHER DRIVERS SUCH AS CODES OF PRACTICE?

If so, please identify what and how?

Governed by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) which places a requirement for Local Authorities to disclose its Budget Requirement and Council Tax by 10th March prior to the beginning of the financial year which it relates

(d) Does the initiative directly affect service users, employees or the wider community?

Yes Continue assessment
 No No need to continue screening or carry out an EqIA

Screening/Relevance Test: Is an equality impact assessment required?

Screening is used to decide whether the initiative you are responsible for has a high or medium negative impact on any of the protected groups and will require a full EqIA. Please highlight the positive impact the decision will have on the protected characteristics.

What will be the effect on :-

Protected Characteristic	Impact? <i>Include Positive and Negative</i>
Age	No specific impact to the protected characteristic although a positive impact from increasing council tax is that services to the public will be maintained
Disability	No specific impact to the protected characteristic although a positive impact from increasing council tax is that services to the public will be maintained

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Gender Reassignment	No specific impact to the protected characteristic although a positive impact from increasing council tax is that services to the public will be maintained
Marriage & Civil Partnership	No specific impact to the protected characteristic although a positive impact from increasing council tax is that services to the public will be maintained
Pregnancy and Maternity	No specific impact to the protected characteristic although a positive impact from increasing council tax is that services to the public will be maintained
Race	No specific impact to the protected characteristic although a positive impact from increasing council tax is that services to the public will be maintained
Religion or Belief	No specific impact to the protected characteristic although a positive impact from increasing council tax is that services to the public will be maintained
Sex	No specific impact to the protected characteristic although a positive impact from increasing council tax is that services to the public will be maintained
Sexual orientation	No specific impact to the protected characteristic although a positive impact from increasing council tax is that services to the public will be maintained
Carers	No specific impact to the protected characteristic although a positive impact from increasing council tax is that services to the public will be maintained
Welsh Language	None

If after completing the EqlA screening/relevance test you determine that this service/function/policy/project is not relevant for an EqlA you must provide adequate explanation below (Please use additional pages if necessary).

Are you happy that you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision?

Yes **No**

Signed _____ **Position** _____

N.B. If the initial screening process has identified actual or potential high or medium negative impact on a particular group or groups then you MUST carry out a full EqlA.

Equality Impact Assessment Form

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative/adverse impact, including positive impact, and clearly identify which protected groups are affected.

In terms of any disproportionate / negative / adverse impact that the proposal may have on a protected group, what steps (if any) could be taken to reduce that impact for each group identified. Attach a separate action plan if necessary.

In respect of the increase in Council Tax and impact on householders there is no distinction made between different groups and the levy is not discriminatory as it applies to all based on property valuations. There is a potential impact on poverty and social exclusion since the proposed 3.5% Council Tax increase for 2016/17 equates to an increase of £47.35 for 2016/17 at the average Band D. It is recognised however that 85% of properties within the County Borough are valued at Band A to C and are therefore liable to increases of between £31.57 and £42.09. It is recognised however that this is still an increase for householders and may impact upon affordability.

If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.

It is recognised that through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme customers are able to receive assistance with Council Tax bills if specific eligibility criteria are met. This will mitigate the impact on householders of increasing Council Tax bills.

Please highlight positive impacts and actions that have been identified as a result of the assessment process.

A Council Tax increase of 3.5% for 2016/17 generates income of £1.1 million for the Authority which assists in maintaining high quality services to customers and also protects jobs thus benefiting the County Borough Council as a whole and all protected characteristics without discrimination.

Evidence Sources

(i) Give details of any data or research that has led to your reasoning above, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users.

Every resident of the County Borough benefits from services being protected and maintained from social care to environmental health to economic development to highways maintenance to waste collection and disposal.

(ii) Give details of how you have engaged with service users on the proposals and steps to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group and how you have used any feedback to influence your decision.

Public consultation concluded on 17th February 2016 where 73.88% of respondents supported a Council Tax increase if it meant services would be maintained at current levels..

Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality duties?

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Yes

Decision Log – (detail how Elected Members and Senior Managers have been involved in the decision process (give dates of key meetings and decisions made)

Indicative Council Tax proposals reported to Cabinet on 27th January 2016. Cabinet portfolio members attended public consultation sessions. Joint Scrutiny and Audit Committee of 24th February also engaged in the process. Cabinet of 24th February recommended the Budget Requirement and Council Tax increase to this Council.

Review

Date of Next Review:

January/February 2017

If review is not required, explain why.

N/a

Approved by: Steve Jones

Signature:

D.S. Jones

Job Title:

Chief Finance Officer

Approval date:

22nd February 2016

Date of Update:

Update recording