

# Integrated Impact Assessment

<b>Name of the service, policy, strategy or project being assessed</b>	Council Tax Support Scheme
<b>What does the service, policy, strategy or project do?</b>	The council tax support scheme will replace the current system of council tax benefit, and be implemented from 1 April 2013. The system aims to provide support to residents who meet certain criteria to pay their council tax. The new scheme does not include provision for claimants over the pensionable age, as people in that category will continue to be dealt with under the old council tax benefit arrangements.
<b>Who is it intended to benefit and how?</b>	The support scheme is designed to benefit people who may not be able to pay their council tax because of low income.
<b>Officer responsible for completing the assessment</b>	Chris Sinnott / Julie Riding

<b>Date of Assessment</b>	10 December 2012
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<b>Date of Review</b>	1 October 2013
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# Introduction

## What is an Integrated Impact Assessment?

The integrated impact assessment is a tool to ensure that any policy, project or service is assessed to consider any positive or negative impacts for Chorley residents with regards to equalities, health or sustainability. It is important that this is done in a timely manner and ideally it should precede the start of the project, policy or strategy concerned.

## Why do we need to do Impact Assessments?

Chorley Council is committed as a community leader, service provider and employer that we will work to ensure that everybody is afforded equality of opportunity and good life chances. The Impact Assessment is a tool we use to ensure that we fulfil these commitments, and thus meet our legal duties.

## Quick Steps for Completion

1. There are four sections;
  - Equality – This section considers the impact on our 7 equality strands, which are; race, age, gender, sexuality, faith, disability and rurality. When completing this section, reference should be made to the Council's [Equality Scheme](#)
  - Sustainability – the impact on environmental and sustainability issues. Reference should be to the [Climate Change Action Plan](#)
  - Health – the impact on potential health impacts. Reference should be made to the [Health Inequalities Strategy](#)
  - Reputation – the impact on the Council's reputation and our ability to deliver our key priorities. Reference should be made to the Council's [Corporate Strategy](#) and Chorley Partnership's [Sustainable Community Strategy](#)

Each section has a number of questions which should be given a rating, and evidence given for why the rating has been selected.

Code	Description
P	Positive beneficial impact
N	Negative undesirable impact
U	Uncertainty over impact
NI	No specific impact/neutral impact

2. Actions – Once a rating is given, actions should be identified to mitigate any negative impacts or maximise any positive impacts of the policy/project/strategy that is being assessed.
3. Once the toolkit has been completed, changes should be made to the policy/project/service to respond to any actions identified.

If you require further information, please contact Sarah James, the Performance, Partnerships and Equalities Manager, [sarah.james@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.james@chorley.gov.uk) on 5348

Equality Impact Assessment	Yes	No	Evidence	Further action required
<p>1. Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that this particular activity will create problems which are specific to them?</p>	✓		<p>Consultation has been undertaken with potentially affected groups. The consultation included; postal surveys sent to all current council tax benefit claimants of working age, to all people who receive discounts and exemptions on empty properties and to a random sample of council tax payers.</p> <p>In addition, the survey was made available on the council's website for completion, and an invite was sent to local advice organisations.</p> <p>Three surveys were undertaken; one for benefits claimants; one for those in receipt of an affected discount or exemption and one for council tax payers. The two surveys that were for directly affected groups included questions that aimed to highlight any issues that may be caused by the proposed changes.</p> <p>The responses indicate that it is believed that single parents and disabled people are most likely to be affected by the proposals.</p>	<p>The information gathered through the consultation have been used to inform the judgements in the rest of this impact assessment</p>

What potential impact does this activity make to:						
	P	N	U	NI	Evidence	Further action required
2. Equality of opportunity amongst customer groups of different racial backgrounds (Race)				✓	The consultation results do not indicate that there is a potential adverse effect of the proposed changes based on race. The % of council tax benefit claimants from a BME background is similar to the overall population.	
3. Equality of opportunity amongst male and female customers (Sex)				✓	There is no evidence to suggest that male or females will be affected differently by the proposals.	
4. Equality of opportunity amongst able bodied customers and customers with a disability (Disability)				✓	<p>While the consultation response indicate a believe that the proposals may impact most on disabled people, this may be related to the belief that disabled people are likely to be able to find sustainable employment.</p> <p>The proposed scheme will retain the measures in place under the existing council tax benefit. This includes consideration of the additional needs of disabled people in the process by 'disregarding' other benefits and income that are received, such as disability living allowance, before making the income calculation.</p>	
5. Equality of opportunity amongst customers of different ages (Age)			✓		The nationally prescribed rules for the new support scheme	

					mean that claimants above the pensionable age are exempt from any changes. This means that this potentially vulnerable group will not be affected by the proposed changes.	
6. Equality of opportunity amongst customers of different sexual orientations (Sexual Orientation)				✓	There is no evidence to suggest that this protected characteristic will be affected by the changes.	
7. Equality of opportunity amongst customers of different religions (Religion or Belief)				✓	There is no evidence to suggest that this protected characteristic will be affected by the changes.	
8. Equality of opportunity amongst customers that live in different parts of Chorley (Rurality)				✓	There is no evidence to suggest that this protected characteristic will be affected by the changes.	

Sustainability Impact Assessment	P	N	U	NI	Evidence	Further action required
<b>What potential impact does this activity make upon:</b>						
<p>1. The effective protection of Chorley's environment. Possible issues to consider are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limiting waste generation &amp; encouraging recycling</li> <li>• Limiting factors that contribute to climate change</li> <li>• Protection of and improving access to the natural environment</li> </ul>				✓	The proposed changes will not affect this factor.	
<p>2. Prudent usage of natural resources. Possible issues to consider are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limiting use of non sustainable energy, water, minerals and materials</li> <li>• Reducing the need to travel and encouraging walking, cycling and low carbon modes of travel</li> </ul>				✓	The proposed changes will not affect this factor.	
<p>3. Social progress amongst all of Chorley's communities. Possible issues to consider are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for education and information</li> <li>• Provision of appropriate and sustainable housing</li> <li>• Reduced fear of crime and community safety</li> <li>• Access to cultural and leisure facilities</li> <li>• Encouraging engagement and supporting volunteering</li> </ul>			✓		<p>Although introducing a reduction in benefits for some groups, the proposed changes could have a potentially positive impact on social progress by encouraging people into work. The proposed approach gives an opportunity to put in place programmes and initiatives which will support people into employment while also making some reductions to the cost of the scheme.</p> <p>The reduction in the benefit level may in some circumstances make it difficult to manage their finances. As</p>	<p>Deliver the key projects identified in the Corporate Strategy for 2013/14:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a process to deliver Working Together With Families.</li> <li>▪ Implement a joint employment initiative with Runshaw College.</li> </ul> <p>Work with partners to identify ways in which the welfare reforms are affected residents and put in place actions to respond.</p> <p>Include an exceptional hardship fund within the council tax support scheme.</p>

Sustainability Impact Assessment	P	N	U	NI	Evidence	Further action required
					such, it may be necessary to include a mechanism to provide a way for those unable to pay under certain circumstances to be able apply for support.	
<p>4. A vibrant local economy in Chorley. Possible issues to consider are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting better quality jobs and developing the skills of local residents</li> <li>Supporting local business by procuring goods and services locally</li> <li>Strengthening links with public, private and third sector partners</li> </ul>			✓		As above, the proposals give the opportunity for the council to work with partners and residents to support more people into employment.	

Health Impact Assessment	P	N	U	NI	Evidence	Further action required
<b>What potential impact does this activity make upon:</b>						
<p>1. Encouraging healthy lifestyles across Chorley's population. Possible issues to consider are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diet and nutrition</li> <li>Exercise and physical activity</li> <li>Substance use: tobacco, alcohol and drugs</li> <li>Risk taking behaviour</li> <li>Education and learning, or skills</li> </ul>				✓	The proposed changes will not affect this factor.	
<p>2. Promoting a positive social environment for all of Chorley's residents. Possible issues to consider are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social status</li> <li>Employment (paid or unpaid)</li> <li>Social/family support</li> </ul>			✓		As discussed above, the changes may have an initial adverse impact upon the affected groups. However, by limiting the reduction in benefits to 7.5% this should	

Health Impact Assessment	P	N	U	NI	Evidence	Further action required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stress/Mental Health</li> <li>Income</li> </ul>					limit impact. It will also provide an opportunity to put in place measure that can support affected groups into employment	
<p>3. Promoting a positive physical environment across Chorley. Possible issues to consider are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Living conditions</li> <li>Working conditions</li> <li>Accidental injuries or public safety</li> <li>Transmission of infectious disease</li> </ul>				✓	The proposed changes will not affect this factor.	



Reputational Impact Assessment	P	N	U	NI	Evidence	Further action required
<b>What potential impact does this activity make upon:</b>						
<p>1. Chorley Council's reputation. Possible issues to consider are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proving to local residents that we provide value for money</li> <li>• Informing and engaging with local residents</li> <li>• Building trust and confidence in Chorley Council</li> <li>• Improving customer satisfaction with council services</li> <li>• Chorley Council's role as a community leader</li> </ul>			✓		<p>The council's reputation is likely to be affected by the implementation of the scheme. It is likely that those people directly affected will be unhappy about the changes. However, the council's reputation is also based on handling change competently and efficiently, so some may view the changes positively.</p>	
<p>2. Our ability to deliver the Corporate Strategy. Issues to consider are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A strong local economy</li> <li>▪ An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area</li> <li>▪ Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all.</li> <li>▪ Clean, safe and healthy communities.</li> </ul>	✓				<p>The changes support the delivery of the corporate strategy</p>	
<p>3. Our ability to deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy. Issues to consider are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong Family Support</li> <li>• Education and Jobs</li> <li>• Being Healthy</li> <li>• Pride in Quality Homes and Clean Communities</li> <li>• Safe Respectful Communities</li> <li>• Quality Community Services and Spaces</li> <li>• Vibrant Local Economy</li> </ul>	✓				<p>The changes support the delivery of the sustainable community strategy.</p>	

Reputational Impact Assessment	P	N	U	NI	Evidence	Further action required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thriving Town Centre, Local Attractions and Villages</li> <li>• Sustainable Places and Transport</li> </ul>						

## Integrated Impact Assessment Action Plan

If any further actions were identified through the Integrated Impact Assessment then these should be listed in the table below. These should be added to the relevant business/service plan to ensure that any actions are carried out.

Actions needed following Integrated Impact Assessment	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer
Deliver the corporate strategy key project "Establish a process to deliver Working Together With Families"	As per project plan		Simon Clark
Deliver the corporate strategy key project "Implement a joint employment initiative with Runshaw College"	As per project plan		Vicky Willett
Continue welfare reform meetings with partners to monitor and react to the impact of welfare reforms on residents	December 2012	ongoing	Vicky Willett / Gary Hall
Provide an exceptional hardship fund within the council tax support scheme	April 2013	ongoing	Julie Riding