

## Screening/Scoping Pro Forma

<b>Section</b>	Revenues	<b>Officer responsible for the screening/scoping</b>	Donna Stacey		
<b>Name of Policy to be assessed</b>	Council Tax	<b>Date of Assessment</b>	26/09/2008	<b>Is this a proposed new or existing policy/procedure/practice?</b>	Existing
<b>1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy/procedure/practice?</b>	Bill, recover and account for the Council Tax from residents that helps the Borough, County, Parishes and Police to provide amenities and services				
<b>2. Are there any associated or specific objectives of the policy/procedure/practice? Please explain.</b>	Maximise the revenue available to Council through the levying of Council Tax to domestic households while balancing this with customers needs.				
<b>3. Who is intended to benefit from this policy and in what way?</b>	All residents and businesses within the borough to ensure optimal services through maximum collection.				
<b>4. What outcomes are wanted from this policy/procedures/practice?</b>	Maximise the collection of Council Tax in the most cost effective and efficient manner, while taking into account individual needs.				
<b>5. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?</b>	Customers are not always aware of the need to register or even that Council Tax is payable. As much of the area is rural, some customers have difficulty getting to the office to register or pay.				
<b>6. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy?</b>	Residents, Businesses, Elected Members, Parishes, Police Authority, County Council, Valuation Office, Magistrates Court, Bailiffs & Citizens Advice Bureau	<b>7. Who implements the policy, and who is responsible for the policy?</b>	This is a statutory service required by Central Government, actioned by the Borough, in accordance with legislation		
<b>8. Are there concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact on racial groups?</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Please explain:</b> Council Tax is payable regardless of race.			
<b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b>	The question of race is not asked when establishing liability for Council Tax. However, many residents from overseas are often not aware they have to register or pay the charge. <i>Consider monitoring the equality profile of payees.</i> The legislation does allow for exemptions of some student dependant spouses from overseas. This is dependant on the wording on the entry visa issued by immigration. Make documentation available in alternative languages on request.				
<b>9. Are there concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to gender?</b>	<b>N</b>	Council Tax is payable by male & female charge payers alike			

--	--	--	--

<b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b>	Although the question is asked for billing purposes, it has no effect on the amount charged or the administration of the collection procedures.	
<b>10. Are there concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to disability?</b>	<b>N</b>	Council Tax is payable by able bodied and disabled persons alike. Make documentation available in alternative formats on request
<b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b>	There are some exemptions and discounts available in accordance with legislation. Where a customer indicates this may be applicable, follow up questions are asked to ascertain their eligibility and where possible the information is taken & 'actioned' on the telephone, counter visit or via written or email correspondence.	
<b>11. Are there concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to sexual orientation?</b>	<b>N</b>	This question is never asked for any Council Tax purposes.
<b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b>	Council Tax is payable regardless of sexual orientation. This information is irrelevant to liability and would be classed as excess information in accordance with Data Protection.	
<b>12. Are there concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to their age?</b>	<b>Y</b>	Residents under the age of 18 years are automatically disregarded when the information has been obtained.
<b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b>	It is mainly reliant on the charge payer to inform us if they qualify, however, if a person appears to be under 18 will try to ascertain whether this is the case or not. It is therefore possible that some residents under 18 years of age are still charged Council Tax.	
<b>13. Are there concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to their religious belief?</b>	<b>N</b>	Council Tax is payable regardless of religious beliefs.
<b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b>	Question is not asked as it is irrelevant to the liability or the amount charged. However, for Counter visitors, female officers are available where the charge payer would find dealing with a male officer offensive to their religion.	
<b>14. Are there concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to them having dependants/caring responsibilities?</b>	<b>Y</b>	Exemptions & discounts available to some carers depending on eligibility

What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?		Reliant on information from charge-payer as not a standard question asked when ascertaining liability.	
15. Are there concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to them have an offending past?		N	Payable whether charge payer has had offending past or not and does not affect the amount charged.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?		However, an exemption is available while the charge payer is in custody, depending on the number of other adults residing at the property.	
16. Are there concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to them being Transgender or transsexual?		N	The question is never asked as is irrelevant to the charge or delivery of Council Tax.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?		Could be viewed as discrimination & excess of information held, if asked.	
17. Could the differential impact identified in 8-16 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy/procedure/practice?		N	<b>Please explain</b>
18. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or any other reason?	Y	N	<b>Please explain for each heading (questions 8-16) on a separate piece of paper.</b> Any impact due to gender, age, race etc are in accordance with the Council Tax legislation and therefore cannot discriminate either negatively or positively
<b>Business improvement</b> 19. Is there any concern that there	Y		<b>Please explain</b>  Not all residents may be aware of the discounts and exemptions available. However, details are posted annually to every domestic property within the Borough with the annual Council

<p><b>are unmet needs in relation to any of the above groups?</b></p>			<p>Tax bills. Information is also promoted at the CAB, DWP and within the Council offices. However, the services are currently available by personal visits, telephone, email or by written correspondence whichever is most convenient to the customer.</p>
<p><b>20. Does differential impact or unmet need cut across the equality strands (e.g. elder BME groups)?</b></p>	<p>¥</p>	<p>N</p>	<p><b>Please explain</b>  N/A</p>
<p><b>21. If yes, should the full EIA be conducted jointly with another service area/contractor/partner/agency?</b></p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>N</p>	<p><b>Please explain</b>  N/A</p>
<p><b>22. Is there a missed opportunity to improve your business in relation to any of the policies, procedures or practices to promote racial, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief equality?</b></p>			<p>Maybe need to look at further promotion of discounts and exemptions. Posters in different languages advertising the Language Line. Encourage the use of electronic systems such as automated payment line. However, information regarding age, race etc cannot be held by division under Data Protection Act, as would be deemed excessive, and therefore difficult to promote to individuals.</p>

			Yes	No
<p><b>24. If No, are there any changes required to the policy to improve it around the equality agenda?</b></p>		<p>Promote Language Line and hearing loop facilities  Promote availability of visiting officers for those who have difficulties visiting the offices for Council Tax purposes.  Promote existing electronic and on-line registration, amendment and payment facilities  Consider availability of leaflets etc in different languages or formats on request only, as not economically feasible to produce ad hoc.  Consider monitoring the equality profile of payees.</p>		

**Signed**  
**(completing officer)**

**Date September 2008**

**Signed**  
**(Head of Section) .....** **Date**

**Countersigned**  
**(HR representative)**

**Date September 2008**