

## Initial Equalities Screening Record Form

<b>Date of Screening:</b> 17/8/2015	<b>Directorate:</b> Corporate Services	<b>Section:</b> Revenue Services
<b>1. Activity to be assessed</b>	The implementation of a revised recovery policy for Council Tax and Business Rates that ensures harsher recovery methods can be used in the most serious of cases.	
<b>2. What is the activity?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy/strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function/procedure <input type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change	
<b>3. Is it a new or existing activity?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Existing	
<b>4. Officer responsible for the screening</b>	Sarah Kingston,	
<b>5. Who are the members of the screening team?</b>	Sarah Kingston, Julie Keyworth	
<b>6. What is the purpose of the activity?</b>	To obtain permission from the Executive to utilise harsher recovery methods such as Bankruptcy, Charging Orders, Committal Proceedings and Insolvency for companies.	
<b>7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?</b>	Any taxpayer who knowingly fails to report a change in their circumstances that affects their Council Tax liability.	
<b>Protected Characteristics</b>	<b>Please tick yes or no</b>	<b>Is there an impact?</b> What kind of equality impact may there be? Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.
		<b>What evidence do you have to support this?</b> E.g equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc Please add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform members decision making, include consultation results/satisfaction information/equality monitoring data
<b>8. Disability Equality – this can include physical, mental health, learning or sensory disabilities including conditions such as dementia.</b>	Y	There could be some difficulty in understanding the policy and its potential impacts if a person has learning difficulties, inability to read/write and/or reduced mental capacity.
		The main way in which the council interacts with its residents is in writing – whether that be by post or digitally – it is likely to involve reading and digesting information which people with disabilities may find difficult.  In order to mitigate these factors we would look to engage with adult social care/social workers who may be supporting these individuals.
<b>9. Racial equality</b>	Y	There could be a potential impact for any residents where English is not their first language.
		There could be a language barrier which could mean that the recipient may not understand the communication.  In order to mitigate this we would look to include a statement on each communication we send

			regarding the harsher methods stating that the information can be provided in a different language or format on request.
<b>10. Gender equality</b>		<b>N</b> Neutral No impact identified at this time	
<b>11. Sexual orientation equality</b>		<b>N</b> Neutral No impact identified at this time	
<b>12. Gender re-assignment</b>		<b>N</b> Neutral No impact identified at this time	
<b>13. Age equality</b>		<b>N</b> Neutral No impact identified at this time	
<b>14. Religion and belief equality</b>		<b>N</b> Neutral No impact identified at this time	
<b>15. Pregnancy and maternity equality</b>		<b>N</b> Neutral No impact identified at this time	
<b>16. Marriage and civil partnership equality</b>		<b>N</b> Neutral No impact identified at this time	
<b>17. Please give details of any other potential impacts on any other group (e.g. those on lower incomes/carers/ex-offenders, armed forces communities) and on promoting good community relations.</b>			<p>There could be an impact on low income families who may not have the means to meet their liabilities. In the main, families on low incomes should be in receipt of Council Tax Support which will mean that their bills will be reduced and the need for a harsh remedy will not be there. Debtors are always given ample opportunity to make affordable payment arrangements before these types of proceedings are commenced.</p> <p>There could be a minimal impact on the armed forces community who may be paying Council Tax for the first time and have little understanding of the process and the necessity to report changes. The Council can raise awareness of this change working with the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.</p> <p>The policies state that affordable payment arrangements will be offered at all stages and debtors will be signposted to free debt advice charities if they are deemed to be in financial difficulty.</p>
<b>18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group</b>			The introduction of this policy will demonstrate that the council is aiming to provide a value for money service to its residents by endeavouring to collect Council Tax and Business Rates arrears.

or for any other reason?			
<b>19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?</b>	The impact on the two groups identified is of a similar nature. It is not possible to give an estimation of the number of residents within those groups will be directly affected as we do not hold this information on the Revenues systems and it would not be possible to estimate the number that may fall into arrears. There will, however, be an element of discretion written in to the policy to ensure that each decision is taken on a case by case basis to ensure that the action taken is proportionate and reasonable.		
<b>20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?</b>		<b>N</b>	There are mitigating factors, as explained above, to help to minimise the impact on those adversely affected.
<b>21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?</b>	Not applicable.		
<b>22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?</b>		<b>N</b>	There are mitigating factors, as explained above, to help to minimise the impact on those adversely affected. The documentation of the decision making process will also ensure that our actions are transparent and taken knowing all of the facts.
<b>23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Milestone/Success Criteria</b>
<b>24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?</b>			
<b>25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?</b>	Please list		
<b>26. Chief Officers signature.</b>	Signature:		Date:

