

Equality Impact Assessment Form **Reference –**

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The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have **due regard** to the need to

* eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
* advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
* foster good relations between different groups

# Section 1: What is being assessed?

* 1. **Name of proposal to be assessed.**

The administration costs needed to deliver the Assisted Purchase Scheme and Fuel Top up schemes to be entirely externally funded.

**1.2 Describe the proposal under assessment and what change it would result in if implemented.**

The Council’s Assisted Purchase Scheme and Fuel Top Up Scheme supports low-income households with the cost of white goods and essential household items and with the costs of fuel. This scheme has been funded by a Local Welfare Provision reserve budget which is likely to expire in 2024/25.

There is no Council revenue budget to deliver the cost of the goods/fuel vouchers offered under the scheme.

The ability to continue to operate the scheme in 2024/25 will depend on external funding to cover the on-going costs of administration and the delivery of support provided to residents under the scheme unless an alternative source of funding can be found.

The current external fund most likely to support this activity is the Department for Work and Pension’s Household Support Fund. This is only offered as short-term funding (every 6 months initially rising to 1-year funding pots from last year) The Chancellor did not announce an extension to the Household Support fund in the 2023 Autumn Statement. If a late announcement is not made in the last quarter of 2023/24 or alternative funding sought, both schemes will end.

As the Council will only have certainty about the means to operate these schemes, once it is fully aware of the external resources to deliver the scheme, there is a need to build in the temporary nature of funding into the Council’s revenue budget.

It is therefore proposed that the revenue costs of staff to deliver the scheme are reduced in the budget for the service. Any future operation of the scheme would require both the cost of administration and of the cost of the service to be fully covered.

The Team carrying out this function is a multifunctional team who carry out statutory and non-statutory functions. The proposal affects the non-statutory work on the team i.e., the delivery of the Council’s Assisted Purchase and Fuel Top Up schemes.

Both schemes currently align with the Council’s Anti-Poverty Strategy.

# Section 2: What the impact of the proposal is likely to be

The Equality Act 2010 requires that we give due regard to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. Will your proposal support either of these two aims? It is particularly important that positive impacts are highlighted when they affect a lot of people or have high impact on a small number of people.

* 1. **Will this proposal advance equality of opportunity for people who share a protected characteristic and/or foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those that do not? If yes, please explain further.**

Not applicable.

* 1. **Will this proposal have a positive impact and help to eliminate discrimination and harassment against, or the victimisation of people who share a protected characteristic? If yes, please explain further.**

Not applicable.

* 1. **Will this proposal potentially have a negative or disproportionate impact on people who share a protected characteristic? If yes, please explain further.**

No, if the administrative costs can be funded from external funding. However, If the Council does not receive external funding to cover the administrative costs of the scheme, the scheme would be wound up and/or delivered by another organisation. If no funding to provide support to those residents struggling with the cost of living is made available, this would have a negative impact on those on low incomes.

* 1. **Please indicate the level of negative impact on each of the protected characteristics?**

(Please indicate high (H), medium (M), low (L), no effect (N) for each)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Protected Characteristics:** | **Impact**(H, M, L, N) |
| Age | N |
| Disability | N |
| Gender reassignment | N |
| Race | N |
| Religion/Belief | N |
| Pregnancy and maternity | N |
| Sexual Orientation | N |
| Sex | N |
| Marriage and civil partnership | N |
| **Additional Consideration:** |  |
| Low income/low wage |  L |
| Care Leavers |  N |

**2.5 How could the disproportionate negative impacts be mitigated or eliminated?**

(Note: Legislation and best practice require mitigations to be considered)

While there are no negative impacts if the administrative costs of the scheme can be funded in 2024/25, the removal of the ability to use external funding to support administration of the Assisted Purchase Scheme and Fuel Top Up scheme could mean that either :-

a) only administration costs cannot be covered in which case the Council would look for opportunities to use the core support funding to augment similar schemes operating across the District and residents would not be affected or

b) no external funding to deliver either the core support offered by the 2 schemes and the administrative costs would be covered. In this case, the Council would identify other sources of financial support available in the community to support/signpost to residents on low incomes. This may include support from utility companies/charities etc and marketed face to face, over the telephone and in the cost-of-living Bradford website/ leaflets.

# Section 3: Dependencies from other proposals

**3.1 Please consider which other services would need to know about your proposal and the impacts you have identified. Identify below which services you have consulted, and any consequent additional equality impacts that have been identified.**

Not applicable.

# Section 4: What evidence you have used?

**4.1 What evidence do you hold to back up this assessment?**

The Council needs to ensure that its resource costs are covered when delivering these types of externally funded schemes. The Department for Work and Pensions expect that the reasonable costs of administration can be covered when e.g., delivering Household Support Funding (HSF) but an extension to the HSF in 2024/25 is not certain.

**4.2 Do you need further evidence?**

The Council needs some assurance about external funding to cover the schemes in 2024/25 but may not have this until early 2024. The Chancellor did not announce an extension to the HSF in the 2023 Autumn Statement.

# Section 5: Consultation Feedback

**5.1 Results from any previous consultations prior to the proposal development.**

Consultation has been conducted with lead elected members and the Anti-Poverty Strategy Group

**5.2 The departmental feedback you provided on the previous consultation (as at 5.1).**

Not applicable

**5.3 Feedback from current consultation following the proposal development (e.g. following approval by Executive for budget consultation).**

• Make it referral only

• Agree discounts with suppliers/help charities with costs to deliver

• Reduce tops ups received by households

**5.4 Your departmental response to the feedback on the current consultation (as at 5.3) – include any changes made to the proposal as a result of the feedback.**

The current proposal is that external funding would be needed both for the cost of the support offered and the administrative costs of the scheme to be able to continue. External funding would still be needed if a scaled down version of the scheme were to be proposed. If no external funding were to be announced by the Government, residents would be signposted to other emergency crisis support (locally and nationally).