

Report to COUNCIL

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2016/17

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Abdul Jabbar, Finance and Human Resources

Report of the Director of Finance, Anne Ryans

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Ext. 4905

4th November 2015

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to seek approval of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016/17.

Executive Summary

From the 1st April 2013, the Council introduced a localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme to replace Council Tax Benefit for those of working age. The scheme was revised from 1st April 2014 to increase the level of support provided. The requirement for the Council to develop a local scheme was set out in the Local Government Finance Act 2012. The legislation as detailed in this Act places a requirement that each year a Collection Authority must formally consider revising its Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme.

The Council made a change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/16 increasing the maximum reduction awardable from 80% of the Band A rate of Council Tax to 85%. That meant an extra £53.43 per year for someone who is entitled to the maximum award and this was agreed by Full Council in December 2014.

A CTR working group was formed to ensure a thorough review process and help to inform decision making around whether the Council should make CTR changes for 2016/17. The group was made up of representatives from across Finance, Policy, Business Intelligence, Legal, Communications and Exchequer Services.

The current scheme has only been in place since 1st April 2015 and it is difficult to estimate what the exact percentage collection rate might be at year end. However, an early indication is that the collection rate for the extra amount billed in 2015/16 will be higher than originally estimated at between 70% and 75%. Equally this may change in the remainder of the year.

As a consequence, there are two options which the Council may consider:

- Option 1: Leave the current Council Tax Reduction scheme unchanged for 2016 onwards.
- Option 2: Change the level of Council Tax Reduction.

Another issue which has to be considered is estimating the financial impact of the new government proposals for welfare and tax reform on Oldham. Whilst insufficient detail is available at this early stage to quantify the impact of these changes on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme as a means-tested benefit, it is highly likely that demand on the scheme will rise next year, as benefit freezes and reductions in tax credits will mean reducing incomes for sizeable numbers of Oldham residents.

Given that the scheme was changed for 2015/16 and considering the current financial position of the Council, it is not proposed to change the threshold level. If no change is made, the maximum amount of reduction available would remain at 85% of a Band A rate of Council Tax. As previously, the scheme would remain subject to any changes resulting from prescribed requirements issued by the Secretary of State under paragraph 2(8) of Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and any changes from time to time to the figures prescribed by central government for welfare benefits purposes.

These proposals for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2016/17 were considered by Cabinet on 21 September 2015. Cabinet commended that Council, when considering whether to revise or replace the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme, does not make any revision or replacement to the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Recommendation

That Council agrees to continue with the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016/17, with no revision or changes to the existing scheme.

1 Background

- 1.1 From the 1st April 2013, the Council introduced a Council Tax Reduction Scheme to replace the national Council Tax Benefit scheme for those of working age. The requirement for the Council to do this was set out in the Local Government Finance Act 2012. Financial responsibility for this support was transferred from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The DCLG would pay those bodies affected by the change a direct grant as part of its overall financial settlement with a reduction of 10% on the overall estimated cost. This was as part of the overall savings on welfare expenditure. Any reduction in actual benefit could only be passed on to claimants of working age.
- 1.2 In devising the 2013/14 scheme it was assumed by the Council that 50% of the extra Council Tax levied under the scheme would be collected in year. On this basis the maximum amount of reduction available to working age claimants was 75% of the Band A rate of Council Tax. However, the expected collection rate was exceeded which led to revision of the scheme for 2014/15 and again for 2015/16. The current year's scheme offers a higher level of support with the maximum amount awarded being 85% of the Band A rate of Council Tax. This is based on an anticipated collection rate of 70%.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 Early indications are that collection rates on the debt due from the 2015/16 scheme may be higher than the estimated 70%. It was also recognised that the number of recipients of working age has reduced from 16,206 when the scheme was agreed by Council in December 2013 to 15,454 as at October 2015. Based on these factors, the Council is in a position to maintain ongoing financial support through the current scheme.
- 2.2 As at the 8th October 2015 from the 15,454 taxpayers receiving Council Tax Reduction, the projected collection rate remains higher than original estimates and may reach 70% to 75%. An additional 5% collection could result in an extra £200,000 in Council Tax receipts for 2015/16. However attention is drawn to potential financial implications highlighted at Appendix 1. Given the uncertain and volatile nature of the Council's finances and the major budget reductions required in future years and in considering further welfare reforms to be implemented during 2016-17, the Council could choose to leave the scheme unaltered until there is greater certainty about the future financial position.
- 2.3 Given the extent of changes to the scheme last financial year increasing the maximum award from 80% to 85%, and the current financial position of the council, it is currently considered that there will be no change to the threshold level.

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- 2.4 The only other development in recent months amongst revenues & benefits practitioners is the debate on whether CTR schemes should include specific reference to the recoverability of any CTR awards which were awarded erroneously (either due to an error by the local authority or because the taxpayer failed to provide the relevant information required in a timely manner).
- 2.5 Having consulted other Councils within Greater Manchester on their practice as well as the CIPFA Revenues & Benefits consortium, it has been concluded that this is not a matter that needs to be addressed within the scheme. Existing powers to recover and write off debts are considered to be adequate.
- 2.6 A CTR scheme working group which comprises of Council officers (from Legal Services, Finance, Policy, Business Intelligence, Communications, Revenues & Benefits Client unit) as well as staff from the Unity Partnership has been formed and this has been able to review all relevant issues. This review has influenced the recommendation in this report that there is no other compelling reasons or issues that necessitate any amendment to the existing scheme.
- 2.7 The current scheme is drafted in such a way that changes resulting from prescribed requirements issued by the Secretary of State under paragraph 2(8) of Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and any changes from time to time to the figures prescribed by central government for welfare benefits purposes are automatically imported into the scheme. It is considered prudent that this remains the case.
- 2.8 The legislation requires consultation prior to the making of a change to a reduction scheme but there is no such requirement when no change is being made.

3. Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 There are two options to be considered and taking into account the financial information detailed in Section 6 of this report, the options are as follows:
- **Option 1** - Leave the current Council Tax Reduction scheme unchanged for 2016/17 onwards.
 - **Option 2** – Change the level of Council Tax Reduction.
- 3.2 Option 2 would require financial modelling against potential impacts from the welfare reforms being introduced in 2016/17, to be able to offer alternative options. The details from the introduction of further welfare reforms is an assumed position as the details have yet to be disclosed by DWP.

4. Preferred Option/Recommendation

- 4.1 Cabinet commended that Council, when considering whether to the revise or replace the current Council Tax Reduction scheme, does not make any revision or replacement.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 The legislation requires consultation prior to the making of a change to a reduction scheme but there is no such requirement when no change is being made. Accordingly, there is no plan to undertake public consultation in respect of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016/17, given that no changes are being proposed to the existing scheme (2015/16).

6 Financial Comments

- 6.1 The direct grant paid by the Department of Communities and Local Government for Council Tax Reduction Support has now been subsumed within the Council's Revenue Support Grant figure (RSG). In 2013/14, the last time the Local Government Finance Settlement identified this grant independently; the Council's allocation was £17.418m including support for parishes but excluding the major preceptors (the GM Fire and Rescue Authority and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester). The 2014/15 Local Government Finance Settlement prescribed that the level of council tax reduction support would remain unchanged and this has again been assumed in 2015/16; however the overall level of RSG has continued to reduce over recent financial years. The DCLG's intentions for 2016/17 are unclear, although national announcements indicate that the 2016/17 Local Government Finance Settlement will result in a reduction in RSG.
- 6.2 As at the 8th October 2015, 78% of claimants had made some payments towards their 2015/16 Council Tax bills, suggesting a collection rate above that of the estimated 70%. As outlined above, data is not available to assess how many of these claimants making payments will fall into arrears during the remainder of the year, however, it is envisaged that proactive collection methods implemented by the Unity Partnership will enable the Council to collect an amount of between 70% and 75% of the amount due in 2015/16. Weekly monitoring of the collection rate is being maintained to manage the risk of non-collection. One perceived risk at this stage is that the present collection rate will reduce throughout the remainder of the financial year and beyond as the Government's welfare change programme is phased in. The amount of disposable income that many of the scheme claimants will have available to meet Council Tax and other financial commitments is likely to reduce. This will have the impact of increasing the risk of arrears from those who are currently paying their Council Tax.
- 6.3 Using the same assumptions upon which the 2015/16 scheme was based, the Council estimates it needs to generate additional Council Tax income of £1.976m (70% of £2.822m as highlighted in the table below) to offset the reduction in the level of Government grant support. This would therefore mean that the scheme would be self-financing by there being no call on resources outside those intended to support the scheme, namely:
- a) The Government grant to recompense the Council for Council Tax Benefit.
 - b) Council Tax income from the technical reform of the Council Tax system which has increased the Councils ability to charge when properties are empty.

c) Council Tax received from recipients of awards under the Council Tax Reduction scheme.

6.4 The table below summarises the impact of potential revised schemes in comparison to the current 2015/16 scheme based on a 70% collection rate.

	Collection Rate	Reduction in support to make the scheme self-financing	Average impact on individuals	
	%	£m	Annual	Weekly
Scheme options	65	3.040	£182.51	£3.51
	70	2.822	£168.47	£3.24
	75	2.635	£157.24	£3.02

Assuming the scheme is designed around the current assumed collection rate of 70% and that this can again be achieved, the income generated would be equivalent to the requirement of £1.976m (70% of £2.822m). On average this would reduce the claimant support by £3.24 per week when compared to the base Council Tax Benefit position in 2012/13, prior to the start of the localisation initiative.

6.5 Taking into account the above information the Council has the option to amend the maximum amount of reduction available from its current rate of 85% of a Band A rate of Council Tax. However, it should be noted that there is still a significant level of risk associated with basing proposals for an amended scheme on historic collection rates. There could be a fall in collection rates over the remainder of the current financial year; in addition the scheme assumes the trend in the first part of 2015/16 will be mirrored in the whole of the financial year 2016/17. The Council will however be working with colleagues in the Unity Partnership to ensure collection rates are maintained by using existing recovery options and devising alternative recovery methods to support vulnerable Council Tax payers.

7 Legal Services Comments

7.1. The legislation confers an obligation on the Council to consider whether to revise or replace its scheme on an annual basis. When this matter reaches full council, full council may, having given such consideration, decide to leave the scheme unchanged. However, if, having given such consideration, full council does not at that point decide to leave the current scheme unchanged, a further report will be needed before any changes can be made. Such further report must follow a prescribed consultation process, which must inform recommendations. Any changes would need to be made by full council before 31 January 2016. There is no obligation to consult if no changes are made. Attention must be given to the advice below on paying due regard to equality implications. (Bill Balmer).

8 **Human Resources Comments**

8.1 There are no human resource comments.

9 **Risk Assessments**

9.1 There are a number of risks to be managed in this process:

- Ensuring the 2016/17 scheme is not subject to a legal challenge on the basis of equality legislation.
- Ensuring the scheme remains both fair and affordable to the Council for 2016/17 particularly as it will only be based upon limited collection rates information early in the financial year and assumptions on grant funding previously made.
- Retaining links in Council Tax Collection Processes to the Council's Corporate Fair Debt Policy. (Mark Stenson)

10 **IT Implications**

10.1 There are no IT implications.

11 **Property Implications**

11.1 There are no property implications.

12 **Procurement Implications**

12.1 There are no procurement implications.

13 **Environmental and Health and Safety Implications**

13.1 There are no Environmental and Health and Safety implications.

14 **Equality, community cohesion and crime implications**

14.1 In taking financial decisions the Council must demonstrate that it has given "due regard" to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between different groups.

14.2 Demonstrating that "due regard" has been given involves:

- Assessing the potential equality impacts of proposed decisions at an appropriate stage in the decision making process - so that it informs the development of policy and is considered before a decision is taken;
- Ensuring that decision makers are aware of the equality duties and any potential equality issues when making decisions.

NB – having due regard does not mean the Council cannot make decisions which have the potential to impact disproportionately, it means that we must be

clear where this is the case, and must be able to demonstrate that we have consulted, understood and mitigated the impact.

- 14.3 To ensure that the process of impact assessment is robust, it needs to:
- Be specific to each individual proposal;
 - Be clear about the purpose of the proposal;
 - Consider available evidence;
 - Include consultation and involvement with those affected by the decision, where appropriate;
 - Consider proposals for mitigating any negative impact on particular groups;
 - Set out arrangements for monitoring the actual impact of the proposal.

14.4 An initial screening for the Equality Impact Assessments being undertaken to consider any potential disproportionate adverse impacts on equality groups arising from the proposed scheme. (Dominic Coleman)

15 **Equality Impact Assessment Completed**

15.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and can be found at Appendix 2

16 **Key Decision**

16.1 Yes, any revisions to the localised Council Tax Reduction scheme can only be agreed by full Council.

17 **Forward Plan Reference**

17.1 CFHR-20-15.

18 **Background Papers**

18.1 The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act:

Background papers are contained in the Appendices

19 **Appendices**

19.1 Appendix 1 Oldham Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2016/17

Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment



Oldham Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2016/17

As this document is 126 pages it is not usually printed. The hyperlink to the 2015/16 CTR Scheme is below, and this will essentially be the same as the CTR Scheme for 2016/17 other than specific changes to Applicable Amounts and Non – Dependant Thresholds which will be announced by the Department of Works & Pensions in January/February 2016.

http://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/2632/council_tax_reduction_scheme_2014



Equality Impact Assessment

Stage 1: Initial screening

Lead Officer:	Bola Odunsi
People involved in completing EIA:	Bola Odunsi, Amanda Cawdron & Yvette Maguire
Is this the first time that this project, policy or proposal has had an EIA carried out on it? If no, please state date of original and append to this document for information.	No An EIA on the 2013/14 scheme accompanied the scheme for approval to Council on 12 December 2013. An EIA was also completed for the review of the scheme for 2014/15 and 2015/16. This EIA is for the scheme for 2016/17 onwards.

General Information

1a	Which service does this project, policy, or proposal relate to?	This proposal relates primarily to the revenue and benefits section of the Customer Service Team (which works with the Council Tax Reduction Scheme). There are also close links into the finance team on this project.
1b	What is the project, policy or proposal?	<p>The proposal is the approval of Oldham's Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016/17 onwards.</p> <p>From 2013/14, all local authorities were put under a duty to agree a localised Council Tax Support Scheme at full Council to replace Council Tax Benefit by 31st January. Previous to this, the Council Tax Benefit Scheme was administered nationally.</p> <p>There was additional complexity in developing a scheme given that the resource envelope, in which we had to deliver any scheme, was 10% smaller than the funding we had received to cover CTB the previous year. The Councils desire was to ensure the scheme was self-financing to ensure no additional burden to the authorities' financial position.</p> <p>There is an obligation within the legislation on the council to consider whether to review this scheme on an annual basis and if the Council wants to revise the scheme, any revised scheme for 2016/17 needs to be approved by full Council on a date before 31st January 2016.</p>



		<p>The council made a change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in 2015/16 increasing the maximum reduction awardable from 80% of the Band A rate of Council Tax to 85%. That meant an extra £53.43 per year for someone who is entitled to the maximum award. This was agreed by Full Council in December 2014.</p> <p>Given the changes to the scheme last financial year increasing the maximum award from 80% to 85%, and the current financial position of the council, there is currently no intention to amend the scheme.</p>
1c	What are the main aims of the project, policy or proposal?	<p>1. To continue to use a scheme that is affordable As in 2015/16, Oldham is once again aiming to put in place a scheme that is affordable. In 2014/15, the council tax reduction scheme was calculated to offset budget pressures of approximately £1.975 million. The 2015/16 council tax reduction assumed a collection rate of 70%. We estimate that the budget pressure is likely to be the same in 2016/17.</p> <p>Against the backdrop of needing to find £30 million of savings in order to balance the budget over the next financial year and already having taken over £170m out over the last 6 years, Oldham Council still cannot afford to fund any further shortfalls. We are therefore once again looking to maintain a local scheme that is affordable and balance the impact against the cost of providing a local council tax support scheme.</p> <p>2. To continue to use a scheme that limits the financial impact across all Council Tax benefit recipients We will maintain our protection of pensioners in line with the current scheme, and maintain our consideration of protecting vulnerable groups and providing incentives to work.</p> <p>Whilst not providing a specific definition for vulnerable groups, the Government did advise that authorities should consider their duties under specific legislation when designing a scheme, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Equality Act 2010• Child Poverty Act 2010• The Housing Act 1996 <p>Whilst we have no legal duty to protect people on low incomes (this was revoked in December 2010), as a</p>



borough with a number of deprived areas, Oldham still chooses to continue considering the impact of any decisions on this group.

We are now even more informed about the scale of the impact of welfare reforms on Oldham and its people than we were last year and produce quarterly topical welfare reform impact reports and which are available publicly once they have been to cabinet .

A report in January 2015 on the impact of welfare highlighted the following groups as particularly vulnerable: single people, in particular young single people in rented accommodation, younger people in general and older people with disabilities.

We are now looking at the new government proposals for welfare and tax reform and the emerging picture is that those not in work, especially those with children as well as lone parents overall and families with only one earner will be the most heavily affected by the latest changes.

The findings of this need to consider when identifying those who are most vulnerable under the scheme.

3. To continue to maintain a scheme that will enable the Council to collect as much Council Tax as possible, whilst supporting residents to meet their payments

To date, Oldham's collection rate in relation to CTR is relatively high and it is hoped that the Council will continue to achieve collection rates of between 70% and 75%. The good collection rate was due in no small part to a number of the actions we have continued to put in place through last year's EIA to reduce the impact of the scheme. Flexible funding options, partnerships with the Credit Union, co-operative campaigns such as the Energy Switch and launch of Our House have helped a number of families to be able to make their payments.

Once again, through this process we will endeavour to do things differently, to do things co-operatively, which will help the residents of Oldham and in doing so, enable the Council to collect the funds it needs to continue to provide services. We are acutely aware that shortfalls in Council Tax mean creating a budget pressure that has the potential to require further savings to be made from within council services.



1d	Who, potentially, could this project, policy or proposal have a detrimental effect on, or benefit, and how?	The proposal for the 2016/17 scheme is to maintain the current levels of support provided through the CTR scheme. Under this proposal there will not be any revision or replacement to the scheme and there will be no disproportionate impact on equality groups.

1e. Does the project, policy or proposal have the potential to <u>disproportionately</u> impact on any of the following groups? If so, is the impact positive or negative?				
	None	Positive	Negative	Not sure
Disabled people	x		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Particular ethnic groups	x		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Men or women (include impacts due to pregnancy / maternity)	x		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People of particular sexual orientation/s	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People in a Marriage or Civil Partnership	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People on low incomes	x		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People in particular age groups	x		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs	x		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any other groups that you think may be affected negatively or positively by this project, policy or proposal?				
<i>E.g. vulnerable residents, homeless people, individuals at risk of loneliness, carers or serving and ex-serving members of the armed forces</i>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

If the answer is “negative” or “not sure” consider doing a full EIA

1f. What do you think that the overall NEGATIVE impact on groups and communities will be? <u>Please note that an example of none / minimal impact would be where there is no negative impact identified, or there will be no change to the service for any groups.</u> Wherever a negative impact has been identified you should consider completing the rest of the form.	None / Minimal	Significant
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1g	Using the screening and information in questions 1e and	
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	1f, should a full assessment be carried out on the project, policy or proposal?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1h	How have you come to this decision?	For the 2016/17 CTR scheme, it is proposal to maintain the current levels of support provided through the scheme. There will be no disproportionate impact on particular equality groups from maintaining these levels of support as the proposal is to not make any revision or replacement to the scheme.

Stage 5: Signature



Lead Officer: Amanda Cawdron Date: 19.10.15

Approver signature: Bola Odunsi Date: 19.10.15

EIA review date: October 2016

Appendix (i) to EIA

A number of actions identified in developing the 2014/15 scheme were intended to mitigate the impact of CTR and the wider welfare reform, below are the actions with an update under each.

Activity	Update
Continue to promote existing flexible payments method	<p>Through a range of difference communication channels</p> <p>External:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media (Facebook and Twitter) • Website and web banner • Council Tax booklet • Media release • Promotion on revs and bens letters • Call waiting message • Residents Magazine <p>Internal communications:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles in Team Brief • Cllr and staff briefing •
Review effectiveness and take up of current payment methods and introduce new payment options where appropriate	As at 9th October 2015 the number of CTR recipients paying by Direct Debit are 3,939 which equates to 25.52% of the CTR caseload. 870 are paying by fortnightly Direct Debit which was introduced as a new payment method in 2013



<p>Continue to deliver energy switching campaigns and auctions</p> <p>Identify and establish referral arrangements to a wider range of support services</p>	<p>The energy auctions have all been completed now and there are no plans for anymore, however the Warm Homes Oldham programme is still available which offers energy switching advice to residents in their homes. They can also help residents who are in fuel debt and get prepayment meters removed, as well as completing benefits checks where needed.</p> <p>We are exploring the process of referrals to Step Change national debt charity to refer vulnerable residents to them.</p> <p>We have also used the Personal Budgeting Support team (PBS) to support residents with money management and debt advice.</p>
<p>Further develop the Welfare Rights Service to support residents to maximise their income</p>	<p>The Welfare Rights Service was initially set up with two Officers; the team was expanded to 4 officers in April 2013 using funding from LWP for the two additional officers. The two temporary posts were made permanent and a commitment was given to maintain the service going forward to ensure that we maximise the benefits claimed by residents.</p> <p>The team currently operates with 3 FTE Welfare Rights Officers and 1 FTE Welfare Rights Support Officer.</p> <p>The Welfare Rights Service provides language support to those residents where English is not their first language and can communicate in Urdu, Punjabi, Hindko, and Bengali.</p> <p>The service has recently recruited an apprentice to support the development of the service and provide additional support to residents from eastern European background.</p> <p>The team has continued to be extremely successful and has again this year exceeded its target of £1million income generation, and has generated additional income for the residents of Oldham of over £2.3 million</p>
<p>Work with partner organisations to provide targeted support to residents</p>	<p>Dedicated welfare reform and financial inclusion working groups are in place, delivering coordinated action in partnership with the Council, DWP and the voluntary sector:</p>
<p>Continue to monitor the collection rates on a weekly basis</p>	<p>This allows swift action to be taken if collection slows.</p> <p>Oldham has introduced SMS texting to remind people at an early opportunity to pay on time. It is anticipated that this will improve collection.</p> <p>A take up campaign has been planned for 2015 to improve numbers</p>



Monitor the collection rates in relation to those in receipt of a disability premium	<p>There has been no significant change in the collection rate since last year.</p> <p>On 30th March 2015 Oldham was added to areas that if people report a change of circumstances to DLA they will have to claim PIP and if their DLA award is ending they will also have to claim PIP</p> <p>As at July 2015, DWP data for Oldham shows 2034 PIP claimants.</p>
<p>Continue to monitor the wider impact of welfare reform ensuring effective partnership working continues to support those affected</p> <p>Identify and support those affected by the future changes to welfare reform, particularly the benefit cap and Universal Credit</p>	<p>Universal Support Delivered Locally (USDL) is the new name for the Local Support Services Framework (LSSF) and it will promote new models of partnership working to support UC claimants</p> <p>A series of Greater Manchester pilots and links with Public Service Reform to 'make work pay' and support the most vulnerable (e.g. Troubled Families) are currently being considered</p> <p>The USDL trial has been extended to end of November 2015.</p> <p>Early indications are that the trial is successful in providing a positive outcome for residents who engage. The trial has now developed to include All Ages Early Help and is an integrated intervention that should see greater numbers accessing the provision.</p>
Review approach to debt collection by the Council and seek to develop single view of the debts an individual owes to the Council	<p>The Corporate debt policy has been reviewed.</p> <p>The Fair debt Policy is to be reviewed in 2015 to ensure it remains fair and ethical.</p>
Link to Get Oldham working initiatives	<p>Key achievements for Get Oldham Working between May 2013 and 30th September 2015 have included:</p> <p>3,123 work related opportunities created. 1,755 job opportunities created and 1,229 filled. 477 apprenticeships created and 286 filled. 199 traineeships created and 169 filled. 692 work experience placements created and 616 filled</p>
Undertake an annual review of the Council Tax Reduction scheme	<p>The scheme will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis</p>
Identify how the breadth and quality of the data collected can be improved	<p>We are currently looking at Destin solutions which is a software programme designed to further analyse the data and to identify vulnerability to enable a more proactive approach</p> <p>This is planned to be implemented by April 2016</p>



Oldham
Council

Appendix (ii) to EIA

No	Action	Required outcomes	By who?	By when?	Review date
1	Continue to promote existing flexible payments method	Increase collection rates Increased take up of 12 monthly and fortnightly payment	Keith Daintry	September 2015	April 2016
2	Review effectiveness and take up of current payment methods and introduce new payment options where appropriate	Increase collection rates More flexible options available	Adam Parsey	April 2016	July 2016
3	The energy auctions have all been completed now and there are no plans for anymore, however the Warm Homes Oldham programme is still available which offers energy switching advice to residents in their homes. They can also help residents who are in fuel debt and get prepayment meters removed, as well as completing benefits checks where needed.	All residents are encouraged to sign up to the scheme, to meet our aim of 1200 people out of fuel poverty.	Angela Broadhurst	March 2016	Jan 2017
4	Identify and establish referral arrangements to a wider range of support services	Maximise access to support for residents	Amanda Cawdron	April 2016	July 2016
5	Further develop the Welfare Rights Service to support residents to maximise their income	Ensure the Council can provide help and assistance to those who experience difficulties linking support to outcomes from the Public Health	Amanda Cawdron	April 2016	August 2016

		<p>Transformation Agenda.</p> <p>Allow us to undertake benefit checks and referring residents for budgeting support and debt advice.</p>			
6	Work with partner organisations to provide targeted support to residents	Early identification of residents affected by Welfare Reform changes allows support to be put in place at the earliest point	Amanda Cawdron	April 2016	August 2016
7	Continue to monitor the collection rates on a weekly basis	Increase collection rates and take swift action if collection slows	Bola Odunsi	April 2016	August 2016
8	Monitor the collection rates in relation to those in receipt of a disability premium	Early identification of a worsening in the collection rate for this group. A drop in the collection rate may indicate that this group are being affected by welfare changes to DLA still to be rolled out amongst existing claimants. This will enable us to identify any interventions that might be appropriate for this group.	Bola Odunsi	April 2016	Jan 2016
9	Continue to monitor the wider impact of welfare reform ensuring effective partnership working continues to support those affected	<p>Early identification of residents affected by Welfare Reform changes allows support to be put in place at the earliest point.</p> <p>Following the budget announcement a report has been developed highlighting potential impact to residents from 2016 onwards.</p>	Amanda Cawdron	April 2016	August 2016

		We will continue to monitor the implications			
10	Identify and support those affected by the future changes to welfare reform, particularly Universal Credit	Early identification of residents affected by Welfare Reform changes allows support to be put in place at the earliest point	Amanda Cawdron	April 2016	August 2016
11	Review approach to debt collection by the Council and seek to develop single view of the debts an individual owes to the Council	Increase collection rate across all debts Agree more affordable payment arrangements with residents	Adam Parsey	September 2016	December 2016
12	Link to Get Oldham working initiatives	Reduced number of unemployed	Jon Bloor	June 2016	September 2016
13	Undertake an annual review of the Council Tax Reduction scheme	The scheme is reviewed in light of information gathered from the performance indicators and recommendations for changes are put to Council. Report to Council recommending any changes to the scheme.	Bola Odunsi	June 2016	December 2016
14	Identify how the breadth and quality of the data collected can be improved	A stronger, more robust and comprehensive data base.	Bola Odunsi	April 2016	January 2017