

Gosport Borough Council
Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Completion Instructions for IIA Leads:

Use this IIA **during development** to initially assess the likely impact, on both customers and staff, of a proposed new policy, strategy, function or service or a proposed change to an existing one. This IIA aims to provide an early warning of any potential issues that could adversely impact our customers or staff or result in costly errors in terms of financial or reputational management. Evaluating the proposed changes against our key considerations regarding equality & diversity and climate change allows us to modify or mitigate any adverse impacts **before** implementation. It also demonstrates transparency in the Council’s decision making. It is a working document with named Subject Expert Officers (SEOs) who can support you - as the IIA Lead, through this process. Please do ask the SEOs for advice about potential impacts.

Impacts in the template are marked: +ve (positive) -ve (negative) or neutral. Once completed the IIA must be signed off by your Head of Service and a summary copy attached to the Board or Committee report. Officers have a Duty to ensure that Councillors/decision makers understand the impact of decisions before those decisions are made.

Policy/Strategy/Function/ Project	New	Existing	IIA Lead	Contact Details	Date
Exceptional Hardship Fund Policy - Review and replacement of existing policy for all LCTS applicants		✓	Stephanie Lucking	023 9254 5338 Stephanie.lucking@gosport.gov.uk	01/02/2023

What is the aim of this policy/strategy/function/project? What will it change ?
A review of the current EHP Policy undertaken for 2023/24

The Council maintains an Exceptional Hardship scheme to protect individuals who experience exceptional hardship. The Exceptional hardship fund (EHF) was created to provide further assistance where an applicant is in receipt of LCTS, but the level of support being paid by the Council does not meet their full Council tax Liability.

The EHP Policy has been created to ensure that a level of protection and support is available to those applicants most in need and is intended to help in cases of extreme financial hardship. The term “exceptional hardship” is not exactly defined in the Policy but should be considered as “hardship beyond that which would normally be suffered”. It is accepted that the cuts made to the level of LCTS may cause financial hardship and the purpose of the scheme is to assist applicants whose circumstances mean they will suffer extreme financial hardship.

The EHP policy has been reviewed for 2023/24 and enables recipients of LCTS to make a claim from the EHF to prevent or alleviate hardship, with each application being treated fairly, equally and on its own merits. The Policy takes account of the individual circumstances of the LCTS recipient and the household. This includes financial, household, family, caring responsibilities and disabilities within the household. The assessment process involves looking at what other help or support is available to the applicant and their family to maximise their income and the support they receive.

From 2023, the policy also encompasses those who have claimed LCTS but that do not qualify due to their level of income. In these cases, there is a ‘time limited’ approach where an application can be made under the EHF within one month of receiving their ‘unsuccessful’ decision from the Council.

The Policy ensures that applicants as set out above, who are affected by the reductions made to the LCTS scheme, will be able to apply for additional assistance should they be suffering financial hardship; thereby mitigating the risks the reductions pose to their financial security.

Has any consultation been undertaken on this proposed change?

yes no

If yes, summarise the methods used and results of the consultation:

A. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The Public Sector Equality Duty is part of the Equality Act 2010. The Duty requires the Council to have due regard to the following three aims:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equal opportunities between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups.

Having due regard means considering how this policy, strategy, project or function has or will advance equal opportunities for each of the protected groups below.

Please note: If this proposal means a change in the availability, degree of provision or access to a service, benefit or facility for any group of people, then this Equality & Diversity impact assessment must be completed to assess if this proposal could be deemed unlawfully discriminatory.

SEO for support to complete this section- Mandy Baggaley, CPCS, x5695 mandy.baggaley@gosport.gov.uk

Protected Characteristic	+ ive	- ive	Neutral	Explanation of Impact
Age	✓			<p>The EHF is available to all groups of claimants:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those <i>receiving</i> LCTS, and • Those who have <i>applied</i> who do not qualify due to their level of income (on the proviso a claim under the EHF is made within one month of receiving their ‘unsuccessful’ decision from the Council) <p>The assessment will take account of all circumstances including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income and expenditure • Personal circumstances including age, and medical circumstances including ill health and disabilities. This includes the circumstances of the whole household not just the claimant.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debts outstanding and the exceptional nature of the applicant and/or their family's circumstances.
Disability			✓	No effect
Gender reassignment			✓	No effect
Marriage and Civil Partnership			✓	No effect
Pregnancy			✓	No effect
Race (ethnicity, nationality, colour)			✓	No effect
Religion or Belief (and lack of belief)			✓	No effect
Sex			✓	No effect
Sexual Orientation			✓	No effect
<p>The Armed Forces Bill places a new duty on public bodies to have due regard to ensure those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved. Please refer to these resources for more information about the needs and characteristics of the armed forces community and our commitment to the Covenant. GBC Covenant Agreement 2020 Local AFC Profile, needs assessment, resources</p>				
Section of the Armed Forces Community	+ ive	- ive	Neutral	Explanation of Impact
Armed Forces with Council Tax liability			✓	No effect
<p>Are there any other groups which could be impacted (e.g. socially or financially excluded) by this item? If yes, identify below:</p>				

What actions will be taken to address/ mitigate potential negative impacts identified:		
Action	By whom	By when
All applicants may apply for an exceptional hardship payment should they feel that they need to receive additional support	Applications can be made to the Council	Applications will be able to be made through the full financial year.
Undertake in depth analysis of applications made to the EHF to determine particular groups affected	Samantha Foster Benefits Manager	On-going

B. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENT

Consider how this change will have an impact with regard to

- **Greenhouse gas emissions**
- **Ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change**
- **Waste Management**
- **Air Quality**
- **Natural Environment**

SEOs for support to complete this section- Tim Pratt, CPCS, x5573 tim.pratt@gosport.gov.uk

Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Things to consider	+ ive	- ive	Neutral	Explanation of Impact
Emissions from buildings	Gas or electricity use and provision of renewable electricity, by GBC or others			✓	No change to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the reduction in administration, production of documentation, postage due to e-forms/communications • Reduction in the use of natural resources; • Reduced requirement for applicants to visit, contact or provide evidence to the Council.
Emissions from transport	Amount of travel (including goods transportation), travel modes and fuels used, by GBC or others			✓	As above
Emissions from agriculture and land use	Creation or removal of carbon sinks in Gosport, and changes to food consumption			✓	As above
Embedded emissions	Emissions from manufacturing goods and materials used by GBC or others			✓	As above
Climate Change Adaptation	Things to consider	+ ive	- ive	Neutral	Explanation of Impact
Vulnerability to storms	Flood prevention and extent to which buildings, habitats and species would be affected by flooding and high winds				N/a
Vulnerability to heat waves	Provision of shading, ventilation and insulation in buildings, and extent to which habitats and species would be affected by heat				N/a
Vulnerability to drought	Water use in buildings, agriculture, and industrial processes, and extent to which habitats and species would be affected by drought				N/a

Vulnerability to food insecurity	Opportunity for local food production				N/a
Waste Management	Things to consider	+ ive	- ive	Neutral	Explanation of Impact
Amount of waste generated	Levels of consumption by GBC, households and businesses, and extent to which materials used are reusable				N/a
Proportion of waste recycled	Recyclability of materials used by GBC, households and businesses, and provision of recycling services				N/a
Air Quality	Things to consider	+ ive	- ive	Neutral	Explanation of Impact
Emissions of key pollutants from transport	Amount of travel (including goods transportation), travel modes and fuels used, by GBC and others; impacts on congestion and amount of idling of more vehicles				
Emissions of key pollutants from industrial processes	Emissions from chemical processes				
Emissions of key pollutants from other sources	Domestic and other fires				
Impact of key pollutants	Rate at which pollutants are absorbed or dispersed				
Natural Environment	Things to consider	+ ive	- ive	Neutral	Explanation of Impact
Sustainability of public spaces	Amount of vegetation and maintenance				
Biodiversity and quality of habitats	General impacts on habitats and direct impacts on species of concern				
What actions will be taken to address/ mitigate potential negative impacts identified:					
Action	By whom			By when	
No negative impacts identified					

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C. IIA SUMMARY				
Have any positive or negative impacts been identified in sections A and B?				
Subject	+ ive	- ive	Explanation	
A. Equality & Diversity	✓		See comments above. As the change to the policy is to open the HSF to all LCTS applicants (although time limited in some cases), this means that the financial support is now available to a larger cohort	
B. Climate Change & Environment				
Can any negative impacts be mitigated?				
Subject	Yes	No	N/A	Explanation
A. Equality & Diversity	✓			All LCTS applicants can apply (although time limited in some cases)
B. Climate Change & Environment				
Is further assessment in either subject area necessary to conclude this assessment?				
Subject	Yes	No	If yes, timetable for completion	
A. Equality & Diversity	✓		The EHF scheme and its effect on applicants will be constantly monitored throughout 2023/24.	
B. Climate Change & Environment		✓		

D. IIA CONCLUSION

This IIA is complete. No further assessment is required if identified actions are undertaken. This summary can be included with Board or Committee reports.

This IIA identified further assessment should be undertaken in the identified areas before implementation of this proposed change.

Signed by Head of Service: **Stephanie Lucking**

Date: **01/02/2023**