

Service being assessed	Council Tax
Who will be involved in completing this assessment?	Stuart Brabben, Service Manager Enforcement (Revenues)
Date of Review	9 June 2011
Date of Next Review	9 June 2012
What is the purpose of the service?	To bill Council Tax payers accurately and promptly and to recover unpaid Council Tax.
Is this assessment being undertaken because of changes to the service? If so what are they?	Assessment being undertaken as part of Council's annual review of equalities information, not because of change to service/policy.
<p>The purpose of this assessment is to understand how services can help the Council to meet its duties under Equalities legislation. The duties can be summarised as</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eliminate discrimination 2. Advance equality of opportunity 3. Foster good relations between different parts of the community 	<p>Hard copy bills issued to all properties in the Borough once a year with information on what Council Tax monies are used for but also information on discounts, exemptions and how to claim benefits if the householder is unable to pay their bill.</p> <p>Requests for alternative formats / languages are dealt with on an "as requested" basis – so far only a few requests for large print bills have been made by customers.</p> <p>Recovery of overpayments takes into account the customer's personal circumstances and the officers will work with them to arrange how much they can afford weekly/monthly to pay back the overpayment. Officers will refer customers to the Citizen's Advice Bureau to allow them to gain additional advice and support outside of what the Council can offer. They will also</p>

<p>How does this service help the Council to do this, in particular in relation to the categories specifically mentioned in legislation - Race, Gender/Sex, Disability, Age, Religion/Belief, Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy & Maternity and in respect of Duty 1 only – Marriage and Civil Partnerships? issue</p>	<p>work with the Benefits team to work out whether the person is entitled to any benefits they are not currently claiming. The team work closely with support agencies to resolve any concerns that might occur because of the court issuing liability orders. The Debt Recovery Policy is published on the website and is available in hard copy upon request.</p> <p>Recent review of service using Lean thinking has changed the Change of Address process, making it easier for a customer to update their information with the Council. This is now linked into the Benefits information, making changes to benefit much smoother and faster. This helps to cut down on overpayments and ensure that the right benefit is paid at the right time and that the customer knows what is happening with their Council Tax bills more quickly.</p> <p>Visiting officers are used to visit vulnerable customers and those unable to attend the office for advice / assistance. Translators are available to accompany the officer to the interview if the customer needs it.</p> <p>Take-up campaigns to remind customers of the exemptions, discounts and benefits available are run occasionally and it is hoped to refine customer information to be able to target these campaigns in future to the areas where non-payment of bills is highest.</p> <p>Most of the procedures within the service are shaped by legislation and central government policies.</p>
<p>How will you know that service is working as it should?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of money collected against the amount outstanding for collection • The rates of collection • Customer complaints • Feedback from customers and support agencies such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau
<p>What data have you used to help you make this assessment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures • Legislation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance information – targets and indicators including collection rates • Customer feedback / analysis • Reports gained from interrogating the Council Tax processing system – IBS. For example, payment schedules • Results of Lean intervention into service
<p>How have you ensured that this service has been designed from a customer’s perspective and how have you involved customers in that process?</p>	<p>The Council Tax service follows an annual cycle of billing and collection – information is sent out with every bill about the service on offer with an invitation to send in comments.</p> <p>Any customer who visits the Council is invited to submit anonymous or named comments on the service they received during their visit.</p> <p>Feedback from partner agencies and their customers is received on a regular basis.</p>
<p>Has any other consultation been carried out, including to ensure that we have taken into consideration the needs of those not currently using the service?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>What is, or what do you expect to be the impact of the way you work on different parts of the community, including those covered by equality legislation?</p>	<p>Who benefits? The Borough and Council Tax payers of the Borough. The monies to be paid to Norfolk County Council and the Police have to be paid, regardless of how much Great Yarmouth Borough Council receives. Any deficit in collection has to be taken out of the Council’s budget to pay the other two agencies.</p> <p>Who should be expected to benefit but don’t – Why not? Not applicable.</p>

<p>On the basis of what you have found out, which of these options will you now follow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No major changes• Adjust the policy• Continue the policy• Stop and remove the policy <p>This is a review – not a new policy or service. As and when it is proposed to change the service or policies, new assessments will be completed.</p>
<p>Signed off by</p>	<p>Stuart Brabben, Service Manager Enforcement (Revenues)</p>