



SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Equality Impact (Initial Analysis)

Budget Proposals 2023/24

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| Service Area: Finance | Lead officer: Richard Wyles Assessors: Alison Hall-Wright Neutral Assessor: Carol Drury | Date of Meeting: |
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1. **Name and description of policy/service/function/strategy**

General Fund Budget and Council Tax Setting 2023/24

The budget proposals for 2023/24 contain a number of considerations that will result in potential changes to service delivery in specific areas. The impact of these potential changes will be considered as part of the decision making at the appropriate time.

The aim of the budget setting process is to establish the Council Tax base for the residents of South Kesteven for 2023/24. The Budget proposals are to financially support delivery of the Council's stated priorities and to enable the authority to deliver on specific service policies. The budget provides a financial framework for Council Tax setting purposes for the financial year 2023/24 taking into account the council's overall financial position and service delivery requirements.

The Council is currently considering options for annual Council Tax increases per a Band D property in 2023/24. These options are detailed below:

- 0% Council Tax Increase
- £5 Council Tax Increase

Depending on the option chosen, the level of increase will vary dependent on the property type; the council tax increase in properties in bands A to C will be less than a Band D property while the increase in Bands E to H will be greater.

HRA Rent Setting 2023/24

HRA Rent Setting is set in line with Government Guidance. The Government directive will see a majority of dwelling rents increasing by 7% which equates to an average increase of £6.08 per week. However this excludes the following rents in relation to garages, service charges and shared ownership where it is proposed to increase the charges by a flat 5%.

Is this a new or existing policy? Annual

2. Complete the table below, considering whether the proposed policy/service/function/strategy could have any potential positive, or negative impacts on groups from any of the protected characteristics (or diversity strands) listed, using demographic data, user surveys, local consultations evaluation forms, comments and complaints etc.

General Fund Budget and Council Tax Setting 2023/24

| Equality Group | Does this policy/service/function/strategy have a positive or negative impact on any of the equality groups? Please state which for each group | Please describe why the impact is positive or negative. If you consider this policy etc is not relevant to a specific characteristic please explain why |
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| Age | Council Tax Freeze will have no impact. Council Tax Increases will have a negative impact. | The protected characteristic of age is not a determinant in the introduction of the budgetary proposals for 2023/24. The local council tax support scheme will help mitigate the impact of increases to council tax for those residents that meet the support criteria. |
| Disability | Council Tax Freeze will have no impact. Council Tax Increases will have a negative impact. | The protected characteristic of disability is not a determinant in the introduction of the budgetary proposals for 2023/24. The local council tax support scheme will help mitigate the impact of increases to council tax for those residents that meet the support criteria. |
| Race | Council Tax Freeze will have no impact. Council Tax Increases will have a negative impact. | The protected characteristic of race is not a determinant in the introduction of the budgetary proposals for 2023/24. The local council tax support scheme will help mitigate the impact of increases to council tax for those residents that meet the support criteria. |
| Gender Reassignment | Council Tax Freeze will have no impact. Council Tax Increases will have a negative impact. | The protected characteristic of gender reassignment is not a determinant in the introduction of the budgetary proposals for 2023/24 |
| Religion or Belief | Council Tax Freeze will have no impact. Council Tax Increases will have a negative impact. | The protected characteristic of religion or belief is not a determinant in the introduction of the budgetary proposals for 2023/24 |
| Sex | Council Tax Freeze will have no impact. Council Tax Increases will have a negative impact. | The protected characteristic of sex is not a determinant in the introduction of the budgetary proposals for 2023/24 |

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| Sexual Orientation | Council Tax Freeze will have no impact. Council Tax Increases will have a negative impact. | The protected characteristic of sexual orientation is not a determinant in the introduction of the budgetary proposals for 2023/24 |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | Council Tax Freeze will have no impact. Council Tax Increases will have a negative impact. | The protected characteristic of pregnancy or maternity is not a determinant in the introduction of the budgetary proposals for 2023/24 |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | Council Tax Freeze will have no impact. Council Tax Increases will have a negative impact. | The protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership is not a determinant in the introduction of the budgetary proposals for 2023/24 |
| Other Groups (e.g. those from deprived (IMD*) communities; those from rural communities, those with an offending past) *(IMD = Indices of multiple deprivation) | Low income | There will also be a negative impact on people who have income levels that do not qualify under the local council tax support scheme. |
| General comments | <p>The local council tax support scheme will help mitigate the impact of increases to council tax. Council tax payers who fall within one of the groups identified under the scheme who are entitled to 100% support will have the full increase mitigated. The full impact of the increase will not be mitigated for customers who are not eligible for 100% support under South Kesteven's scheme. (The local council tax support scheme was itself the subject of a EIA and the issues arising from that have previously been considered).</p> <p>Should the option to increase the Council Tax be taken there will be a negative impact on people who have low incomes that do not qualify under the local council tax support scheme</p> | |

HRA Rent Setting 2023/24

| Equality Group | Does this policy/service/function/strategy have a positive or negative impact on any of the equality groups? Please state which for each group | Please describe why the impact is positive or negative. If you consider this policy etc is not relevant to a specific characteristic please explain why |
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| Age | Where there are increases in rent and other charges there will be a negative impact for those rent payers who do not see an | Any rent increase has an impact on the individual however the requirement to review charges is not determined by protected |

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| | increase in their household income by a similar increase. | characteristic. Where a rent payer is adversely impacted by the rent increase, then there are a range of welfare support available for those who meet the qualification criteria |
| Disability | Where there are increases in rent and other charges there will be a negative impact for those rent payers who do not see an increase in their household income by a similar increase. | Any rent increase has an impact on the individual however the requirement to review charges is not determined by protected characteristic. Where a rent payer is adversely impacted by the rent increase, then there are a range of welfare support available for those who meet the qualification criteria |
| Race | Where there are increases in rent and other charges there will be a negative impact for those rent payers who do not see an increase in their household income by a similar increase. | Any rent increase has an impact on the individual however the requirement to review charges is not determined by protected characteristic. Where a rent payer is adversely impacted by the rent increase, then there are a range of welfare support available for those who meet the qualification criteria |
| Gender Reassignment | Where there are increases in rent and other charges there will be a negative impact for those rent payers who do not see an increase in their household income by a similar increase. | Any rent increase has an impact on the individual however the requirement to review charges is not determined by protected characteristic. Where a rent payer is adversely impacted by the rent increase, then there are a range of welfare support available for those who meet the qualification criteria |
| Religion or Belief | Where there are increases in rent and other charges there will be a negative impact for those rent payers who do not see an increase in their household income by a similar increase. | Any rent increase has an impact on the individual however the requirement to review charges is not determined by protected characteristic. Where a rent payer is adversely impacted by the rent increase, then there are a range of welfare support available for those who meet the qualification criteria |

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| Sex | Where there are increases in rent and other charges there will be a negative impact for those rent payers who do not see an increase in their household income by a similar increase. | Any rent increase has an impact on the individual however the requirement to review charges is not determined by protected characteristic. Where a rent payer is adversely impacted by the rent increase, then there are a range of welfare support available for those who meet the qualification criteria |
| Sexual Orientation | Where there are increases in rent and other charges there will be a negative impact for those rent payers who do not see an increase in their household income by a similar increase. | Any rent increase has an impact on the individual however the requirement to review charges is not determined by protected characteristic. Where a rent payer is adversely impacted by the rent increase, then there are a range of welfare support available for those who meet the qualification criteria |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | Where there are increases in rent and other charges there will be a negative impact for those rent payers who do not see an increase in their household income by a similar increase. | Any rent increase has an impact on the individual however the requirement to review charges is not determined by protected characteristic. Where a rent payer is adversely impacted by the rent increase, then there are a range of welfare support available for those who meet the qualification criteria |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | Where there are increases in rent and other charges there will be a negative impact for those rent payers who do not see an increase in their household income by a similar increase. | Any rent increase has an impact on the individual however the requirement to review charges is not determined by protected characteristic. Where a rent payer is adversely impacted by the rent increase, then there are a range of welfare support available for those who meet the qualification criteria |
| Other Groups (e.g. those from deprived (IMD*) communities; those from rural communities, those with an offending past) | Where there are increases in rent and other charges there will be a negative impact for those rent payers who do not see an increase in their household income by a similar increase. | Inevitably social housing is generally occupied by people who receive lower levels of income who will therefore be impacted by any level of rent increase unless their rent is fully covered by the level of housing benefit received. |

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| *(IMD = Indices of multiple deprivation) | | To help mitigate this potential impact advice and support is available through the housing services and other agencies to assist tenants sustain their tenancies. |
| General comments | The Council is following Government guidance. The actual rent is calculated on a property by property basis so it is not possible to provide a specific comment as each impact will vary on an individual basis. There is a potential for a negative impact for a number of tenants who will be affected by the increases. The Council will respond to any adverse impact by promotion of Discretionary Housing Payments and other welfare support that is available to eligible groups. | |

3. What equality data/information did you use to inform the outcomes of the proposed policy/service/function/strategy? (Note any relevant consultation who took part and key findings)

General Fund Budget and Council Tax Setting 2023/24

Consultation will be undertaken on the proposals to increase Council Tax with stakeholders.

The Local Council Tax Support Scheme mitigates the impact on those residents considered to be most vulnerable. As the payments for Council Tax support is demand-led the Local Scheme the Council has adopted does not limit the number of awards if residents are eligible for benefit.

HRA Rent Setting 2023/24

We follow Government Guidance when setting rent levels.

In circumstances where there is a negative impact there is a range of financial support available.

If there are any gaps in the consultation/monitoring data, how will this be addressed?

None identified

4. **Outcomes of analysis and recommendations (please note you will be required to provide evidence to support the recommendations made):**

Please check one of the options:

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| a) | No major change needed: equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or for negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>If you have checked option a) you will need to complete a Stage 3 analysis when your policy/service/function/strategy has been implemented</i> | | |
| b) | Adjust the proposal to remove barriers identified by equality analysis or to better promote equality. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>If you have checked option b) you will need to answer questions b.1 and b.2</i> | | |
| c) | Adverse impact but continue | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>If you have checked option c) you will need to answer questions c.1</i> | | |
| d) | Stop and remove the policy/function/service/strategy as equality analysis has shown actual or potential unlawful | <input type="checkbox"/> |

b.1 In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your proposed policy/service/function/strategy to minimise or eliminate the negative equality impacts?

b.2 Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

If you have checked option b) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis

c.1 Please provide an explanation in the box below that clearly sets out your justification for continuing with the proposed policy/function/service/strategy.

General Fund Budget and Council Tax Setting 2023/24

The Council Tax proposals for 23/24 are recommended in the context of maintaining quality services to our residents. The additional council tax income received will enable to council to achieve a balanced budget without any service reductions that could adversely effect our

residents. Should any resident suffer financial difficulties as a result of the proposal then there is a range of financial support packages that the Council will provide.

HRA Rent Setting 2023/24

There is a legal requirement to maintain a financially sustainable housing revenue account. A key element of achieving this is to follow national rent setting guidance which will ensure that income levels are maintained sufficiently to meet the expenditure demands of the service. Should any tenant suffer financial difficulties as a result of the proposal then there is a range of financial support packages that the Council will provide.

If you have checked option c) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis. You should consider in stage 2 whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact.

Signed (Lead Officer):
(Name and title)

Richard Wyles
Chief Finance Officer

Date completed:

15.12.2022

Signed (Neutral Assessor):
(Name and title)

Carol Drury
Community Engagement Manager

Date:

22.12.2022