

Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment v3 - Head of service review

Reference: ECIA576654220

Submitted: 12 March 2024 08:01 AM

Executive summary

Title of policy / decision: Council Tax Sharing Agreement 2024/25 and 2025/26

Policy / decision type: Cabinet Member Action (CMA)

Overview of policy / decision: Agree to enter into a new two-year Council Tax Sharing Agreement contract with all district, borough and city councils in Essex for 2024/25 and 2025/26. The agreement aims to improve the council tax collection and anti-fraud processes throughout Essex, and to increase funding available to all local authorities in Essex.

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: - Improved Council Tax Collection in Essex Authorities
- Improved Anti-Fraud Processes relating to Council Tax in Essex Authorities
- Improved Collaboration between Essex Authorities
- Improved Knowledge and Understanding of Processes, and to Facilitate the Sharing of Best Practice Across all Essex Authorities
- Increased Funding from Local Tax Income for Essex County Council over the MTRS

Executive Director responsible for policy / decision: Nicole Wood (Corporate Services')

Cabinet Member responsible for policy / decision: Cllr Chris Whitbread (Chancellor of Essex)

Is this a new policy / decision or a change to an existing one?: New policy / decision

How will the impact of the policy / decision be monitored and evaluated?: The Sharing Agreement has numerous conditions, which dictate how the money provided from the precepting authorities to the district councils can be spent, how performance metrics will be monitored, and what information needs to be submitted by the district councils. This will enable council tax collection performance to be monitored over the next two financial years so that processes can be continuously built-on and improved.

Will this policy / decision impact on:

Service users: No

Employees: No

Wider community or groups of people: No

What strategic priorities will this policy / decision support?: Strong, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy, High Quality Environment, Health, Independence and Wellbeing for All Ages, A good place for Children and Families to Grow

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Economy?: Good jobs, Infrastructure, Future growth and investment, Green growth, Levelling up the economy

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Environment: Transport and built environment, Levelling up

the environment

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Health: Levelling up health

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Families: Education outcomes, Family resilience and stability, Safety, Outcomes for vulnerable children, Levelling up outcomes for families

What geographical areas of Essex will the policy / decision affect?: All Essex

Digital accessibility

Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?: No

Equalities - Groups with protected characteristics

Age

Nature of impact: None

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: None

Disability - mental health issues

Nature of impact: None

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: None

Disability - sensory impairment

Nature of impact: None

Sex

Nature of impact: None

Gender reassignment

Nature of impact: None

Marriage / civil partnership

Nature of impact: None

Pregnancy / maternity

Nature of impact: None

Race

Nature of impact: None

Religion / belief

Nature of impact: None

Sexual orientation

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The purpose of the Sharing Agreement is to incentive and improve processes surrounding council tax, with the aim to improve funding across all Essex authorities. While the policy itself has no direct impact on these groups of people, any increases to the funding base could ultimately enable the council to maintain or improve services, which would have a positive impact on all Essex residents.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: N/A

Levelling up - Priority areas & cohorts

Children and adults with SEND, learning disabilities or mental health conditions (taking an all-age approach)

Nature of impact: None

Children on Free School Meals

Nature of impact: None

Working families

Nature of impact: None

Young adults (16-25 who have not been in education, training or employment for around 6-12 months)

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Harlow

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Jaywick and Clacton

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Harwich

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Basildon (Town) housing estates

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Canvey Island

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Colchester (Town) - Housing Estates

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Rural North of the Braintree District

Nature of impact: None

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What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: N/A

Equalities - Inclusion health groups and other priority groups

Refugees / asylum seekers

Nature of impact: None

Homeless / rough sleepers

Nature of impact: None

People who experience drug and alcohol dependence

Nature of impact: None

Offenders / ex-offenders

Nature of impact: None

Victims of modern slavery

Nature of impact: None

Carers

Nature of impact: None

Looked after children / care leavers

Nature of impact: None

The armed forces community (serving personnel and their families, veterans, reservists and cadets)

Nature of impact: None

People who are unemployed / economically inactive

Nature of impact: None

People on low income

Nature of impact: None

Sex workers

Nature of impact: None

Ethnic minorities

Nature of impact: None

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities

Nature of impact: None

People with multiple complex needs or multi-morbidities

Nature of impact: None

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What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: N/A

Equalities - Geographical Groups

People living in areas of high deprivation

Nature of impact: None

People living in rural or isolated areas

Nature of impact: None

People living in coastal areas

Nature of impact: None

People living in urban areas

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The purpose of the Sharing Agreement is to incentive and improve processes surrounding council tax, with the aim to improve funding across all Essex authorities. While the policy itself has no direct impact on these groups of people, any increases to the funding base could ultimately enable the council to maintain or improve services, which would have a positive impact on all Essex residents.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: N/A

Families

Family formation (e.g. to become or live as a couple, the ability to live with or apart from children)

Nature of impact: None

Families going through key transitions e.g. becoming parents, getting married, fostering or adopting, bereavement, redundancy, new caring responsibilities, onset of a long-term

health condition

Nature of impact: None

Family members' ability to play a full role in family life, including with respect to parenting and other caring responsibilities

Nature of impact: None

Families before, during and after couple separation

Nature of impact: None

Families most at risk of deterioration of relationship quality and breakdown

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The purpose of the Sharing Agreement is to incentive and improve processes surrounding council tax, with the aim to improve funding across all Essex authorities. While the policy itself has no direct impact on these groups of people, any increases to the funding base could ultimately enable the council to maintain or improve services, which would have a positive impact on all Essex residents.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: N/A

Crime & Disorder

Crime and disorder

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances

Nature of impact: None

Re-offending

Nature of impact: None

Serious violence

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact:

Slight impact on potentially reducing crime, particularly crime in relation to council tax fraud. More control and resources in place to deal with fraud and compliance, as a result of the increased funding and additional incentives to improve council tax collection.

(If negative impact assessed) What actions will be undertaken to mitigate negative impacts, including timescales:

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

N/A

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?:

Through the Sharing Agreement, we will be monitoring performance and benchmarking resources across all

district areas. Therefore, we will be identifying best practice, noticing what strategies and policies are most effective, and then sharing this information with all Essex authorities. The aim here is to encourage those who have lower collection rates to adopt these practices, or at least consider them to see if this would improve collection in their district.

Climate

Does your decision / policy involve development or re-development of buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy take place in, or make use of, existing buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to transport, travel or vehicles? This includes travel needs / requirements of both service users and staff (including staff you're planning to recruit): No

Are you undertaking a procurement exercise?: No

Does your decision / policy involve the purchase of goods or materials?: No

Will any waste be generated by this decision? This includes waste from construction, waste generated by service users / staff, and waste generated by replacing existing products / materials with new: No

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your ECIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more of the groups / areas identified?: No

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date ECIA completed: 11/01/2024

Name of person completing the ECIA: Oliver Taffs

Email address of person completing the ECIA: oliver.taffs@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Corporate Services

Your service area: Finance

Your team: Strategic Finance & Insight Team

Are you submitting this ECIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: No

Email address of Head of Service: adrian.osborne2@essex.gov.uk