

Charnwood Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment 'Knowing the needs of your customers and employees'

■ Background

An Equality Impact Assessment is an improvement tool. It will assist you in ensuring that you have thought about the needs and impacts of your service/policy/function in relation to the protected characteristics. It enables a systematic approach to identifying and recording gaps and actions.

■ Legislation- Equality Duty

As a local authority that provides services to the public, Charnwood Borough Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that we can demonstrate having paid due regard to the need to:

- ✓ Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ✓ Advance Equality of Opportunity
- ✓ Foster good relations

For the following protected characteristics:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion and belief
8. Sex (Gender)
9. Sexual orientation

What is prohibited?

1. Direct Discrimination
2. Indirect Discrimination
3. Harassment
4. Victimisation
5. Discrimination by association
6. Discrimination by perception
7. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination
8. Discrimination arising from disability
9. Failing to make reasonable adjustments

Note: Complete the action plan as you go through the questions

■ **Step 1 – Introductory information**

Title of the policy	Empty Homes Premium and Council Tax Discount for Empty Properties
Name of lead officer and others undertaking this assessment	S. Kinder/ S. Jackson
Date EIA started	October 2016
Date EIA completed	October 2016

■ **Step 2 – Overview of policy/function being assessed:**

Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (Specify aims and objectives)
<p>At its meeting on 19 August 2015, the Scrutiny Management Board resolved that a Scrutiny Panel should be established to investigate what options are available to enable Charnwood Borough Council to bring more empty homes back into use.</p> <p>Council Tax legislation enables local authorities to charge a premium of up to 50% in addition to the Council Tax on dwellings that are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for two years or more. It has been estimated that there are 300 properties that have been empty for at least two years in the Borough.</p> <p>The main purpose of the premium would be to reduce the number of empty homes, and provide an incentive to get empty homes back into use, rather than to generate income. It could be seen as appropriate to apply the premium both in cases where property owners were making economic decisions about leaving properties empty and where empty homes were causing a nuisance or blight.</p>
What specific group/s is the policy designed to affect/impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them?
The policy will directly affect property owners of the empty homes, regardless of protected characteristic.
Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?
<p>As a result of the Scrutiny Panel's work a residents' survey was commissioned to test public reaction to the introduction of an Empty Homes Premium in Charnwood. This survey took place in spring 2016 and had 349 respondents. Salient results were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51% thought that the introduction of an Empty Homes Premium was 'fair' • 44% thought that a maximum charge (50% of the standard council tax liability) was reasonable

■ **Step 3 – What we already know and where there are gaps**

<p>List any existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc.</p> <p>Data/information such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultation ▪ Previous Equality Impact Assessments ▪ Demographic information ▪ Anecdotal and other evidence
<p>Empty Homes Premium- Residents' survey (Spring 2016)</p> <p>Census Data 2011</p>
<p>What does this information / data tell you about diverse group? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (Please list)</p>
<p>Property owners are likely to be from a range of protected characteristics and not any specific diverse group.</p>

■ **Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?**

<p>In light of the answers you have given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not please explain why.</p>
<p>Not applicable. A resident consultation has already taken place.</p>

■ **Step 5 – Assessing the impact**

<p>In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the individuals or community groups (including what barriers these individuals or groups may face) who identify with any 'protected characteristics' and provide an explanation for your decision (please refer to the general duties on the front page).</p>	
	Comments
Age	<p>Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of age.</p>
Disability (Physical, visual, hearing, learning disabilities, mental health)	<p>Generally a neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of disability.</p> <p>Mitigating circumstances may potentially need to be managed in the case of a bereavement where someone may be suffering from mental health issues and require signposting to additional support. However, there is seen to be no adverse impact in administering the premium.</p>

Gender Reassignment (Transgender)	Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.
Race	Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of race.
Religion or Belief (Includes no belief)	Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of religion or belief.
Sex (Gender)	Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of sex.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of sexual orientation.
Other protected groups (Pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership)	Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes.
Other socially excluded groups (carers, low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, health inequalities, rural isolation, asylum seeker and refugee communities etc.)	Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes

Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/ or barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination.

Please note:

- a) If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.
- b) Additionally, if you have identified adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.

Mitigating circumstances may potentially need to be managed in the case of a bereavement where someone may be suffering from mental health issues and require signposting to additional support.

Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

There is seen to be a neutral impact for the Empty Homes Premium and Council Tax Discount for Empty Properties, therefore meeting Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity.

■ **Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation and review**

Are there processes in place to review the findings of this Assessment and make appropriate changes? In particular, how will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/ negative impact?
Any barriers or impacts will be monitored via any complaints received through the Corporate Complaints Process.
How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes? e.g. policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems.
This assessment will be attached alongside the Cabinet paper of 17 th November 2016.

■ **Step 7- Action Plan**

Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan: The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan			
Reference Number	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
001	Monitor barriers/ impacts via complaints received through the Corporate Complaints Process.	S. Jackson	Ongoing

■ **Step 8- Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed?**

	Who needs to know (Please tick)	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
Employees	✓	This assessment will be attached alongside the Cabinet paper of 17 th November 2016 and also published on the Chanwood Borough Council Website.
Service users	✓	
Partners and stakeholders	✓	
Others		
To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?		

■ **Step 9- Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the [Service Head](#))**

Please delete as appropriate
I agree / disagree with this assessment / action plan
If <i>disagree</i> , state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out with timescales:
Signed (Service Head):
Date:

[Please send completed & signed assessment to Suzanne Kinder for publishing.](#)