

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

Please refer to the current Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this document. If you would like further guidance please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Team on 01443 444529.

An equality impact assessment **must** be undertaken at the outset of any proposal to ensure robust evidence is considered in decision making. This documentation will support the Council in making informed, effective and fair decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

This document will also contribute towards our duties to create a More Equal Wales within the

- Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015.

The [‘A More Equal Wales – Mapping Duties’](#) guide highlights the alignment of our duties in respect of the above-mentioned legislation.

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: Matthew Phillips

Service Director: Ian Traylor

Service Area: Pensions, Procurement & Transactional Services

Date: 10th July 2024

1.a) What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Re-Model/Discontinuation of Service	Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.b) What is the name of the proposal?

COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS – LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES AND SECOND HOMES

1.c) Please provide an overview of the proposal providing any supporting links to reports or documents.

The proposal is to increase the level of the council tax premium to be paid in addition to the normal level of council tax by owners of properties classed as long-term empty that was introduced by the Council in January 2023 (noting that a council tax premium for second homes was also agreed in January 2023 with proposal for this to be maintained at the existing level). Full details of the proposal can be found in the Cabinet reports below:

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=50005056&Ver=4&LLL=0>

1.d) Please outline where delivery of this proposal is affected by legislation or other drivers such as code of practice.

The legislative implications are outlined in the Cabinet report below:

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=50005056&Ver=4&LLL=0>

1.e) Please outline who this proposal affects:

- Service users ☒
- Employees ☐
- Wider community ☒

SECTION 2 – SCREENING TEST – IS A FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups. Please take an intersectional approach in recognising an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age (<i>Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people</i>)	Neutral	The proposal is part of a range of interventions intended to bring empty properties back into use and therefore this could potentially provide more housing options for all, particularly younger people who may otherwise have difficulty in identifying and securing suitable accommodation.	<p>The Local Housing Market Assessment, Empty Homes Strategy and Housing Support Programme Strategy closely align to the proposed policy change and note positive impacts on equality and diversity and socio-economic factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Local Housing Market Assessment 2023 – 2028 - https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=50004671&Ver=4&LLL=0 • Empty Homes Strategy for 2022 – 2025 – https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=50004409&Ver=4&LLL=0 • Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022–26 - https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=50004170&Ver=4&LLL=0 <p>In addition, the previous public consultation undertaken on the introduction of council tax premiums did not identify any impacts on protected characteristics.</p> <p>This will be further considered as part of a new consultation exercise on Council Tax Premiums, as set out earlier (subject to Cabinet agreeing to initiate a consultation).</p>
Disability	Neutral	No impact has been identified	See the Age protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<i>(people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)</i>			
Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)</i>	Neutral	No impact has been identified	See the Age protected characteristic.
Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i>	Neutral	No impact has been identified	See the Age protected characteristic.
Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who</i>	Neutral	No impact has been identified	See the Age protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<i>are pregnant/on maternity leave)</i>			
Race <i>(ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)</i>	Neutral	No impact has been identified	See the Age protected characteristic.
Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i>	Neutral	No impact has been identified	See the Age protected characteristic.
Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys)</i>	Neutral	No impact has been identified	See the Age protected characteristic.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	No impact has been identified	See the Age protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<i>(bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)</i>			

In addition, due to Council commitments made to the following groups of people we would like you to consider impacts upon them:

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Armed Forces Community <i>(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)</i>	No impact has been identified	N/A	See the Age protected characteristic.
Carers <i>(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)</i>	No impact has been identified	N/A	See the Age protected characteristic.

If the initial screening test has identified negative impacts then a full equality impact assessment (section 4) **must** be undertaken. However, if after undertaking the above screening test you determine a full equality impact assessment is not relevant please provide an adequate explanation below:

Based on the Equality Impact Screening, the main findings are as follows:-

- *Positive impact for residents of all ages as housing options improve from the reduction in empty properties as they are brought back into use or marketed for sale/rent*
- *Positive impact for communities which have high levels of empty properties and/or second homes*

Are you happy you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision?

Yes ☒

No ☐

Name: Matthew Phillips

Position: Head of Service – Revenues & Benefits

Date: 10/07/2024

Please forward a copy of this completed screening form to the Diversity and Inclusion Team.

PLEASE NOTE – there is a separate impact assessment for Welsh Language. This must also be completed for proposals.

Section 3 Socio-economic Duty needs only to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. Definition of a 'strategic nature' is available on page 6 of the Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance.

SECTION 3 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY (STRATEGIC DECISIONS ONLY)

The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single parents and vulnerable families • Pensioners • Looked after children • Homeless people • Students • Single adult households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People living in the most deprived areas in Wales • People with low literacy and numeracy • People who have experienced the asylum system • People misusing substances • People of all ages leaving a care setting • People involved in the criminal justice system
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<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Low Income/Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i>	Positive	Increase in available housing and potentially more affordable housing either to buy or to rent	See links to the Local Housing Market Assessment, Empty Homes Strategy and Housing Support Programme Strategy within the Age protected characteristic
Low and / or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i>	Positive	Increase in available housing and potentially more affordable housing either to buy or to rent	

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<u>Material Deprivation</u> <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i>	Positive	Increase in available housing and potentially more affordable housing either to buy or to rent	See links to the Local Housing Market Assessment, Empty Homes Strategy and Housing Support Programme Strategy within the Age protected characteristic
Area Deprivation <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport)</i>	Positive	Empty properties have a detrimental effect on communities and are a drain on resources, therefore any reduction in these numbers will be a positive step.	See links to the Local Housing Market Assessment, Empty Homes Strategy and Housing Support Programme Strategy within the Age protected characteristic
Socio-economic background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i>	Positive	Increase in available housing and potentially more affordable housing either to buy or to rent	See links to the Local Housing Market Assessment, Empty Homes Strategy and Housing Support Programme Strategy within the Age protected characteristic
Socio-economic disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or</i>	Positive	Increase in available housing and potentially more affordable housing either to buy or to rent	See links to the Local Housing Market Assessment, Empty Homes Strategy and Housing Support Programme Strategy within the Age protected characteristic

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<i>vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i>			

SECTION 4 – FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative/adverse impacts and clearly identify which groups are affected.

- 4.a) In terms of disproportionate/negative/adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impact for each group identified. **Attach a separate action plan where impacts are substantial.**

N/A

- 4.b) If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.

N/A

- 4.c) Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users/staff.

N/A

- 4.d) Give details of how you engaged with service users/staff on the proposals and the steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group. Explain how you have used feedback to influence your decision.

Proposed open consultation exercise for a period of 6 weeks to be undertaken, including a direct letter to the affected property owners inviting them to take part in the consultation.

- 4.e) Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality and Socio-economic Duties?

Yes ☒

No ☐

SECTION 5 – MONITORING, EVALUATING AND REVIEWING

5a) Please outline below how the implementation of the proposal will be monitored:

Monthly monitoring on the numbers of empty properties

5b) When is the evaluation of the proposal due to be reviewed?

No formal review is planned but frequent monitoring will occur to ensure compliance is optimised and avoidance minimised.

5c) Who is responsible for the monitoring and review of the proposal?

The Council Tax Service and Housing Strategy Service.

5d) How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

The results will inform future housing strategies.

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not, you are required to forward this assessment to Diversity and Inclusion team – equality@rctcbc.gov.uk and the Consultation and Engagement team – consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your completed impact assessment, policy proposal/report and consultation report to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. See our guidance document for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in equality/Socio economic considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below in collaboration with the relevant departments.

Subject to Cabinet agreeing to initiate a consultation on the Council Tax Premium proposals set out earlier, the feedback from the consultation will be considered and the Impact Assessment updated, as appropriate, and reviewed as per below.

Diversity and Inclusion team Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
		See above.

SECTION 7 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment, to include some of the main positive and negative impacts along with an overview of actions taken since the impact assessment to better contribute to more positive impacts. This summary must be included in the Equality Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. It is not suitable to only write 'please see full report at Appendix x' in the body of the report. The impact assessment must be published alongside the report.

Based on the Equality Impact Screening, the main findings are as follows:-

- *Positive impact for residents of all ages as housing options improve from the reduction in empty properties as they are brought back into use or marketed for sale/rent*
- *Positive impact for communities which have high levels of empty properties and/or second homes*

SECTION 8 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer:

Name: Matthew Phillips

Position: Head of Service – Revenues & Benefits

Date: 10th July 2024

I recommend that the proposal:

- Is implemented with no amendments ☒
- Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined ☐
- Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on protected groups or socio-economic disadvantage ☐

Head of Service/Director Approval:

Name: Ian Traylor

Position: Service Director

Date: 10th July 2024

Please submit this impact assessment with any SLT/Cabinet Reports.