

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment for Council Tax Discounts Report 2017/18 **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

The separate EIA guidance notes outline what should be included for each section. Please read them before you begin. If you have any queries, contact your Corporate Equality Group rep, or the Engagement Team on 643 2828.

1. Author, service area, date

Tracy Hunter, Finance 16.08.16. (Updated 14.11.16 to reflect that consultation has now been carried out. Results are shown in Appendix 2 to the Council report 19 January 2017)

2. Who else has been involved in writing this EIA?

Anne Foreman, Policy Research and Data Analyst

3. What proposal is this EIA assessing?

The review of Council Tax (Empty Property) Discounts from 2017/18

4. What is the purpose of your proposal and what is it expected to achieve?

To consider whether to make changes to the Council Tax Discounts available on Empty properties. This will help inform Cabinet as to whether changes to the discounts should be proposed to Council on 19 January 2017. The following options are being considered:

Option 1 - Continue with the current Council Tax Discounts of 50% for two months for Former Class C Exemption (An unoccupied and unfurnished property) and 50% for twelve months for Former Class A Exemption (unoccupied and unfurnished properties which are in need of or undergoing major repairs or structural alteration).

Option 2 - Reduce the Council Tax Discounts for Former Class C Exemption (An unoccupied and unfurnished property) to 25% for two months and reduce the Former Class A Exemption (unoccupied and unfurnished properties which are in need of or undergoing major repairs or structural alteration) to 25% for 12 months.

Option 3 - Remove the discounts totally from Former Class C Exemption (An unoccupied and unfurnished property) and remove the discount totally from Former Class A Exemption (unoccupied and unfurnished properties which are in need of or undergoing major repairs or structural alteration).

5. Is there any relevance to the aims of the public sector equality duty? Write your answers in the table

Aim	Yes, No, or N/A	Details if 'yes'
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment	N/A	
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	Yes	By considering the different characteristics and needs of people in the scheme, in order to ensure that the scheme is fair to all residents.
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	N/A	

6. Analysis by characteristic Write your answers in the table

Protected characteristic	Potential positive or negative impact?	Explanation and evidence
All protected characteristics	Yes	<p><u>Option 1</u> Option 1 will not impact on any residents as there are no changes to the discounts.</p> <p><u>Options 2 and 3</u> The changes proposed under Options 2 and 3 (reduce or remove the Council Tax</p>

		Discounts for empty properties will impact negatively on all residents who will/would have claimed it.
Age	No	The changes to the Empty Property Discounts do not impact on those who leave their property to receive Care as a separate exemption covers this.
Disability	Yes	Potential negative impacts around consulting and communicating the change to claimants.
Gender	No	
Gender reassignment	No	
Marriage and civil partnership status	No	
Pregnancy and maternity	No	
Race	Yes	Potential negative impact around consulting and communicating the change to claimants.
Religion or belief	No	
Sexual orientation	No	

7. Have you carried out any engagement in relation to this proposal? If so, what?

- *Engagement around consulting residents on the potential discounts was carried out from 13 September 2016 to 31 October 2016 following Cabinet instruction on 12th September 2016. The findings from the consultation were published in the 12 December 2016 Cabinet Report on Council Tax Discounts Appendix 1.*
- *SLT, Labour Group, LMB and Cabinet member and Mayor.*

8. Is there any information you don't have that you need to find?

No

9. What actions are already in place, or will be taken, to remove or reduce potential negative impacts? (add more lines to the table if you need to) *Write your answers in the table*

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
The current Discretionary Support Scheme can be used to support people in exceptional circumstances.	Andrew Scott/ Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	In place
Engagement Strategy in place to consult on changes considered by Cabinet	Andrew Scott/ Tracy Hunter	Mid September through to November
Communication Strategy will be developed to share the decision made by Council on the Discounts available to be put in place from April 2017	Andrew Scott/ Tracy Hunter	From 20 January 2017

10. Are there any potential negative impacts that cannot be removed or reduced? If so, why is this?

Government funding reductions to North Tyneside continue to be quite significant and this will impact on the amount of funding available to offer discounts.

11. Based on your conclusions from this assessment, what are your next steps?

Cabinet recommended the options of discount to be consulted on. The consultation was carried out on the options being considered between 13th September and 31st October 2016. The outcomes from the consultation was included (at Appendix 1) in the report to Cabinet for 12th December 2016. Cabinet are now proposing their recommendation to Council for them to consider on 19 January 2017

12. How will the impact of this proposal be monitored after it is introduced?

If the discounts change monitoring of those who require assistance from the Discretionary Support Scheme due to being impacted by any changes will can be carried out.

13. When will this EIA be reviewed?

If the discounts change , an annual review will be carried out in August 2017, to establish impact of the change. .