



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Partial Assessment Form

Policy, practice, function or project assessed	Discretionary Rate Relief
Lead Officer	Phil Bird
Team	Revenues
Start date of assessment	03/08/10
Completion of assessment	

Please use this form to record your findings in relation to the assessment of an existing policy, function, service or practice.

A. POLICY, PRACTICE, FUNCTION OR PROJECT TO BE ASSESSED

A1. Please describe what are the main aims, objectives, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy or function?

To grant or award Discretionary Rate Relief to businesses within the South Cambridgeshire District that meet the necessary criteria. The Council has both a statutory and fiduciary duty to ensure that all money that it is owed is collected promptly whenever possible. However, it has power to grant Discretionary Relief.

A2. Is this policy or function associated with any other Council policy or priority?

1. Legislation: Local Government Finance Acts 1988 & 1992
2. Collection & Enforcement regulations 1992
3. Discretionary Part Occupied Relief (S44A) – in conjunction with the Valuation Office
4. Discretionary Charitable Relief
5. Discretionary Hardship Relief
6. Discretionary Rural Rate Relief

A3. Who are the intended beneficiaries/stakeholders of the policy or function? How many people are affected and from what sections of the community?

All businesses within South Cambridgeshire. Currently 4,293 businesses.

Seeks to safeguard the interest of local taxpayers by ensuring that funds allocated for the award of discretionary rate relief are used in the most effective and economic way and in a manner that contributes to the Council's Aims.

Discretionary Relief awards may enable businesses to continue as going concerns to the benefit of residents and employees, particularly during periods of economic downturn.

A4. Is the policy/function corporate and far-reaching?

Yes – see above

A5. Are you expecting to make any significant change to the policy or service in the near future? If so, please give details.

The way we collect Local Taxation is defined and determined by legislation. This legislation is subject to changes that may impact on the criteria for Discretionary Relief and the way it is administered.

A6. Is this a new or existing policy or function?

An existing function and procedures but the first time it has become an official policy

B. EVIDENCE/ DATA and CONSULTATION

It is important to consider all information that is available in determining whether the policy or function could have a differential impact. Please attach examples of monitoring information, research or consultation reports.

B1. What monitoring or other information do you have about relevant target groups, which will show the impact of the policy or function?

Equality Monitoring data from Business Users will shortly be sought. With 2011/12 Annual Bills. The legislation covers all aspects of Billing and Collection of Business Rates and the criteria for Mandatory and Discretionary Relief is laid down within this legislation. The Council is aware of the impact of any changes to the economy and publicises all reliefs that are available.

B2. Have you compared the data you have with the equality profile of the local population? What does it show?

No local information. The Business Rates is levied on all businesses unless otherwise exempt or in receipt of discounts.

B3. Have you identified any improvements or other changes that could be made from monitoring the data?

None

B4. Have you consulted or involved external stakeholders about the policy or function? If so, what were their views?

No. See B2

B5. Have you undertaken any consultation with staff to assess their perception of any impacts of the policy or function? If so, what has been learnt from them?

Staff have input into the writing of the policy. Their experience of the “day job” enables us to adapt our processes accordingly but remaining within the legislation

B6. Please provide information about any other consultation, research, or involvement undertaken in relation to this impact assessment.

None

C1. IMPACT OF THE POLICY OR FUNCTION

Assess the potential impact on each of the equality strands/groups. The impact could be negative, positive or neutral. If you assess a negative impact for any of the groups then you will need to assess whether that impact is low, medium or high. Refer to the evidence you use.

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACT	Nature of Impact (Positive, Neutral, Adverse)	Extent of Impact (Low, Medium, High)
GENDER: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on men and women		
No evidence available to assess if revenue is collected equally from men or women or if discretionary relief is granted more to women than men or more to men than women. It is not relevant to the criteria for the Relief No evidence available assessing level of complaints by gender.	Neutral	
RACE: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different race/ethnic groups		
No translation or interpretation service provided by Revenues but is available (on demand). No up to date information available on the demographic of the community in relation to Black & Ethnic Minority run businesses. No published evidence of the cultural make up of workers employed within the district whose future employment may depend on the granting of reliefs. No publications available in ethnic minority languages. It is not relevant to the criteria for the Relief	Neutral	
DISABILITY: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on disabled people		
There is no discretion in awarding reliefs. We do not assess data to determine the rate of collection from disabled customers. No data available to determine number of complaints from disabled ratepayers. We supply large print and Braille on request. It is not relevant to the criteria for the Relief	Neutral	
AGE: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different age groups		
Do not collect data on age of ratepayers. It is not relevant to the criteria for the Relief	Neutral	
SEXUAL ORIENTATION: potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay men, bisexual or heterosexual people		

Do not collect data on age of ratepayers. It is not relevant to the criteria for the Relief	Neutral	
RELIGION/FAITH: Identify the potential impact the policy on different religious/faith groups		
Do not collect data on age of ratepayers. It is not relevant to the criteria for the Relief. Places of religious worship are exempt from Business Rates.	Neutral	
OTHER		
None	Neutral	

PLEASE NOTE: Following completion of the section above, if the nature of the impact is adverse then you may need to proceed to a full equality impact assessment.

C2. Could you minimise or remove any adverse or potential impact that is high, medium or low significance, in advance of a full impact assessment? Explain how.

No

C3. Does the policy or function actively promote equal opportunities and good community relations? Or could changes be made so that it does so?

The policy is for a function that continually has to find a balance between the legislative requirements of the Council and the need of the ratepayer

C4. Please provide any further information, qualitative or quantitative that does not fit into the questions but you feel has a likely impact on this assessment.

Lack of available data in order to provide benchmark.

D. CONCLUSIONS			
D1. Was there sufficient data to complete the partial assessment?	Yes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If “NO”, what arrangements are in place for evidence gathering and continuing with the assessment?
	No?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
D2. Is the outcome of the partial assessment that the policy or function would have an adverse impact (medium or high impact) on one or more target group?	Yes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	If “YES”, will you proceed to a full assessment? If so, what arrangements are in place to carry out the full assessment?
	No?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
D3. Is the outcome of the partial assessment that the policy or function would have a neutral or positive impact on equalities?	Yes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>If “YES”, have you included proposals in the Action Plan to further improve the impact of the policy or function on equalities? Equality Monitoring data from Business Users will shortly be sought.</p> <p>Do you plan to review the service or policy again in future to assess whether there has been any change? If so, when? No, unless legislation dictates</p>
	No?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Has the Equalities Steering Group and the Consultative Forum reviewed the assessment? If so what were their comments? No</p>
D4. Do you have any other conclusions/outcomes from the partial assessment?			
<p>The policy may require further input via equalities monitoring. Therefore we will need to work with internal stakeholders to identify required data for effective monitoring against the 6 equality strands.</p>			

ACTION PLAN for enhancing existing practice

Recommendation/ issue to be addressed	Planned Milestone	Planned completion of milestone (date)	Officer Responsible	Progress
Explore feasibility of NNDR questionnaire with 2011/12 Annual Bills	December 2010	March 2011	Phil Bird	

RESOURCES

Does the above action plan require any additional resources?

ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING

Please give your plans for monitoring the achievement of the above actions.

SIGN OFF: The officers below confirm that this partial assessment has been completed in accordance with the Council's guidance

Signature of Lead Officer

Date:

Signature of Corporate Manager or Chief Officer:

Date:

Please retain the original form on your service area and return a copy of the completed form to the Equality & Diversity Officer.