

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Screening Record

Proposal / Brief Title:	Discretionary Rate Relief Policy
Date:	07/08/2019

Type of Strategy, Policy, Project or Service:

What is this Screening Record in relation to? (please put a cross in the relevant box)

Existing:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Changing, update or revision:	<input type="checkbox"/>
New or proposed:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (please explain):	<input type="checkbox"/>

Report Created By:

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1. Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal:

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that a consistent approach is taken when applications for discretionary rate relief are considered.

Councils have the discretion to award up to 100% rate relief to Business Ratepayers who are suffering from hardship. Applications must be considered on their individual merits and awards only made where the Council is satisfied that it is in the interests of the Council Taxpayer to do so, i.e. to prevent the loss a local amenity.

Discretionary Rate Relief will not be awarded unless the organisation is either a charity or is not established to make a profit.

2. What outcomes are you seeking to achieve?

That applications for discretionary rate relief are determined in accordance with the policy i.e.

- All cases should be determined on their individual merits
- Is membership open to all sections of the community? If membership and/or joining fees are charged, are they restrictive?
- Does the organisation actively encourage membership from particular groups (e.g. the young, elderly, disabled, disadvantaged, etc.)?
- Are the facilities made available to others (such as schools, non-members, etc.)?
- Does the organisation provide training or education to its members?
- If the organisation provides a bar for members, is this the main (or ancillary) function of the organisation?
- Does the organisation provide facilities which indirectly relieve the Council of the need to do so, or enhance and supplement those which it does provide?
- Is membership drawn from people mainly resident in the Council's area?

- Is the organisation affiliated to local/national organisations and actively involved in the development of their interests
- Is it in the Council Taxpayer's interest to make the award?

The Council will not generally award discretionary relief in respect of charity shops, however it may consider making an award (up to 20%) where:

- The organisation is local
- The circumstances of the organisation are such that relief is needed in order for it to continue
- It is in the Council Taxpayer's interest to make the award.

The Council will look to award discretionary rate relief in the following specific cases:

- 20% discretionary rate relief will be awarded in respect of village hall that are managed by registered charities with open access policies
- 20% discretionary rate relief will be awarded in respect of properties occupied by scout, girl guide and similar organisations providing they have charitable status
- 20% discretionary rate relief will be awarded to those youth clubs and youth centres which are operated and under the control of a registered charity
- 20% discretionary rate relief will be awarded to pre-schools to those organisations which are operated and under the control of a registered charity
- 20% discretionary rate relief will be awarded to charitable sports and leisure organisations which provide facilities which indirectly relieve the Council of the need to do so, as it is in the Council Taxpayer's interest to make the award
- 20% discretionary rate relief will be awarded to charitable cultural organisations which provide facilities which indirectly relieve the Council of the need to do so, as it is in the Council Taxpayer's interest to make the award
- 20% discretionary rate relief will be awarded to charitable community organisations which provide facilities which indirectly relieve the Council of the need to do so, as it is in the Council Taxpayer's interest to make the award.

Discretionary rate relief will not be awarded unless the organisation is either a charity or is not established to make a profit.

Up to 100% discretionary rate relief may be awarded in respect of organisations which do not hold charitable status but are not established to make a profit. In such cases the application will be considered having regard to the criteria set out above.

3. Screening Questions	Yes	No	Please explain you answer.
Does this proposal plan to withdraw a service, activity or presence?		X	

Does this proposal plan to reduce a service, activity or presence?		X	
Does this proposal plan to introduce, review or change a policy, strategy or procedure that will have new or different impact on people?	X		The policy will ensure that all applications for discretionary relief are determined in accordance with the policy in a consistent manner.
Does this proposal affect service users and/or customers, or the wider community?	X		This policy will affect businesses across Dorset Council who are liable for Business Rates.
Does this proposal affect employees?	X		Employees who are responsible for determining applications for hardship relief will need to adhere to this policy.
Will employees require training to deliver this proposal?	X		In practice it is only the Head of Revenues and Benefits who deals with applications for discretionary relief but other member of the team will receive a briefing about the existence of the policy and its contents.
Has any engagement/consultation been carried out?		X	We did not carry out any engagement or consultation as we are following government guidelines.
Are there any concerns at this stage which indicate that this proposal could have negative or unclear impacts on any of the protected characteristic group(s) below?		X	

4. Protected Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments
Age		X	
Disability		X	
Gender Reassignment & Gender Identity		X	
Pregnancy & maternity		X	
Race & Ethnicity		X	
Religion & Belief		X	
Sex		X	
Sexual Orientation		X	
Marriage & Civil Partnership		X	
Carers		X	
Rural isolation		X	Potentially a positive impact on charitable organisations such as village halls, youth clubs etc.
Single parent families		X	
Poverty (social & economic deprivation)		X	Potentially a positive impact to assist local amenities to continue be provided.
Military families /veterans		X	

5. Please indicate any actions arising from completing this screening form		
Proposed action	Lead person	Timescale
No proposed action		

<p>6. EqlA Screening and Declaration</p> <p>If you have answered yes to any of the screening questions or any of the protected characteristic group(s), a full EqlA should be undertaken.</p> <p>Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance and requirement flow chart before completing this section. If you decide that your 'policy' does not require an EqlA, it is important to show that you have given this decision due regard.</p> <p>Complete the relevant declaration depending on your outcome:</p>	
EQIA Required	<p>Yes / No</p> <p>If yes, please complete a full EqlA template</p>
If no, please explain how you have given this decision due regard:	<p>The policy is aimed at charities and not for profit organisations who are struggling to pay their Business Rates but does not have any negative or unclear impact on any of the protected characteristic groups.</p>

Officer completing this Screening Template	Patrick Lane	Date	07/08/19
Equality Lead	Susan Ward-Rice	Date	30 September 2019
Directorate Board Chair:	Dr David Bonner	Date	30 September 2019