

Integrated Impact Assessment

Name of the service, policy, strategy or project being assessed	Council Tax discounts and exemptions scheme
What does the service, policy, strategy or project do?	Changes have been proposed to the current scheme of discounts and exemptions from council tax. The discounts and exemptions are given to certain categories of empty residential properties. The amount of discount given and exemptions are set through this scheme.
Who is it intended to benefit and how?	The discount and exemption scheme is designed to help owners of those properties which are empty for particular reasons, to recognise that they will not be making full use of the service provided through council tax. This, however, needs to be balanced against the issues that can be caused by empty properties within a local area.
Officer responsible for completing the assessment	Chris Sinnott / Julie Riding

Date of Assessment	10 December 2012
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Date of Review	1 October 2013
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Introduction

What is an Integrated Impact Assessment?

The integrated impact assessment is a tool to ensure that any policy, project or service is assessed to consider any positive or negative impacts for Chorley residents with regards to equalities, health or sustainability. It is important that this is done in a timely manner and ideally it should precede the start of the project, policy or strategy concerned.

Why do we need to do Impact Assessments?

Chorley Council is committed as a community leader, service provider and employer that we will work to ensure that everybody is afforded equality of opportunity and good life chances. The Impact Assessment is a tool we use to ensure that we fulfil these commitments, and thus meet our legal duties.

Quick Steps for Completion

1. There are four sections;

- Equality – This section considers the impact on our 7 equality strands, which are; race, age, gender, sexuality, faith, disability and rurality. When completing this section, reference should be made to the Council's [Equality Scheme](#)
- Sustainability – the impact on environmental and sustainability issues. Reference should be to the [Climate Change Action Plan](#)
- Health – the impact on potential health impacts. Reference should be made to the [Health Inequalities Strategy](#)
- Reputation – the impact on the Council's reputation and our ability to deliver our key priorities. Reference should be made to the Council's [Corporate Strategy](#) and Chorley Partnership's [Sustainable Community Strategy](#)

Each section has a number of questions which should be given a rating, and evidence given for why the rating has been selected.

Code	Description
P	Positive beneficial impact
N	Negative undesirable impact
U	Uncertainty over impact
NI	No specific impact/neutral impact

2. Actions – Once a rating is given, actions should be identified to mitigate any negative impacts or maximise any positive impacts of the policy/project/strategy that is being assessed.
3. Once the toolkit has been completed, changes should be made to the policy/project/service to respond to any actions identified.

If you require further information, please contact Sarah James, the Performance, Partnerships and Equalities Manager, sarah.james@chorley.gov.uk on 5348

Equality Impact Assessment	Yes	No	Evidence	Further action required
<p>1. Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that this particular activity will create problems which are specific to them?</p>	✓		<p>Consultation has been undertaken with potentially affected groups. The consultation included; postal surveys sent to all current council tax benefit claimants of working age, to all people who receive discounts and exemptions on empty properties and to a random sample of council tax payers.</p> <p>In addition, the survey was made available on the council's website for completion, and an invite was sent to local advice organisations.</p> <p>Three surveys were undertaken; one for benefits claimants; one for those in receipt of an affected discount or exemption and one for council tax payers. The two surveys that were for directly affected groups included questions that aimed to highlight any issues that may be caused by the proposed changes.</p>	<p>The information gathered through the consultation have been used to inform the judgements in the rest of this impact assessment</p>

What potential impact does this activity make to:						
	P	N	U	NI	Evidence	Further action required
2. Equality of opportunity amongst customer groups of different racial backgrounds (Race)				✓	There is no evidence to suggest that this protected characteristic will be more adversely affected by the changes	
3. Equality of opportunity amongst male and female customers (Sex)				✓	There is no evidence to suggest that this protected characteristic will be more adversely affected by the changes	
4. Equality of opportunity amongst able bodied customers and customers with a disability (Disability)				✓	There is no evidence to suggest that this protected characteristic will be more adversely affected by the changes	
5. Equality of opportunity amongst customers of different ages (Age)			✓		There is a possibility that older people are more likely to own properties that become empty as illness or infirmity mean that they have to move into other accommodation. Properties that become vacant in these circumstances are not included???????	
6. Equality of opportunity amongst customers of different sexual orientations (Sexual Orientation)				✓	There is no evidence to suggest that this protected characteristic will be affected by the changes.	
7. Equality of opportunity amongst customers of different religions (Religion or Belief)				✓	There is no evidence to suggest that this protected	

					characteristic will be affected by the changes.	
8. Equality of opportunity amongst customers that live in different parts of Chorley (Rurality)				✓	There is no evidence to suggest that this protected characteristic will be affected by the changes.	

Sustainability Impact Assessment	P	N	U	NI	Evidence	Further action required
What potential impact does this activity make upon:						
1. The effective protection of Chorley’s environment. Possible issues to consider are; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting waste generation & encouraging recycling • Limiting factors that contribute to climate change • Protection of and improving access to the natural environment 				✓	The proposed changes will not affect this factor.	
2. Prudent usage of natural resources. Possible issues to consider are; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting use of non sustainable energy, water, minerals and materials • Reducing the need to travel and encouraging walking, cycling and low carbon modes of travel 				✓	The proposed changes will not affect this factor.	
3. Social progress amongst all of Chorley’s communities. Possible issues to consider are; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for education and information • Provision of appropriate and sustainable housing • Reduced fear of crime and community safety • Access to cultural and leisure facilities • Encouraging engagement and supporting volunteering 			✓		The changes proposed to the discounts and exemptions should encourage certain types of empty homes to be sold or moved back into occupation (particularly those that have been empty for more than two years). However, some owners may choose to pay the additional charge and leave the property empty.	Monitor the corporate strategy key measure to assess the effect of the change on the number of empty properties in the borough.
4. A vibrant local economy in Chorley. Possible issues to consider are; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting better quality jobs and developing the skills of local residents • Supporting local business by procuring goods and services locally 				✓	The proposed changes will not affect this factor.	

Sustainability Impact Assessment	P	N	U	NI	Evidence	Further action required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening links with public, private and third sector partners 						

Health Impact Assessment	P	N	U	NI	Evidence	Further action required
What potential impact does this activity make upon:						
1. Encouraging healthy lifestyles across Chorley's population. Possible issues to consider are; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diet and nutrition Exercise and physical activity Substance use: tobacco, alcohol and drugs Risk taking behaviour Education and learning, or skills 				✓	The proposed changes will not affect this factor.	
2. Promoting a positive social environment for all of Chorley's residents. Possible issues to consider are; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social status Employment (paid or unpaid) Social/family support Stress/Mental Health Income 				✓	The proposed changes will not affect this factor.	
3. Promoting a positive physical environment across Chorley. Possible issues to consider are; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living conditions Working conditions Accidental injuries or public safety Transmission of infectious disease 	✓				Empty properties (and particularly long term empty properties) are more likely to be affected by anti-social behaviour and arson than those that are occupied. Encouraging houses to come back into occupation should	

Health Impact Assessment	P	N	U	NI	Evidence	Further action required
					help reduce this negative effect.	

Reputational Impact Assessment	P	N	U	NI	Evidence	Further action required
What potential impact does this activity make upon:						
<p>1. Chorley Council's reputation. Possible issues to consider are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proving to local residents that we provide value for money • Informing and engaging with local residents • Building trust and confidence in Chorley Council • Improving customer satisfaction with council services • Chorley Council's role as a community leader 			✓		<p>The council's reputation is likely to be affected by the implementation of the scheme. It is likely that those people directly affected will be unhappy about the changes. However, the council's reputation is also based on handling change competently and efficiently, so some may view the changes positively.</p>	
<p>2. Our ability to deliver the Corporate Strategy. Issues to consider are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A strong local economy ▪ An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area ▪ Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all. ▪ Clean, safe and healthy communities. 	✓				<p>The changes support the delivery of the corporate strategy</p>	
<p>3. Our ability to deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy. Issues to consider are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Family Support • Education and Jobs • Being Healthy • Pride in Quality Homes and Clean Communities • Safe Respectful Communities • Quality Community Services and Spaces 	✓				<p>The changes support the delivery of the sustainable community strategy.</p>	

Reputational Impact Assessment	P	N	U	NI	Evidence	Further action required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vibrant Local Economy Thriving Town Centre, Local Attractions and Villages Sustainable Places and Transport 						

Integrated Impact Assessment Action Plan

If any further actions were identified through the Integrated Impact Assessment then these should be listed in the table below. These should be added to the relevant business/service plan to ensure that any actions are carried out.

Actions needed following Integrated Impact Assessment	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer
Monitor the corporate strategy key measure the Number of long term empty properties, and take action is the target is not likely to be achieved.	ongoing		Gary Hall
Monitor the reasons given for properties being empty and any issues with ability to pay over the first 12 months, and consider cases where a resident finds it difficult to pay on an individual basis	ongoing	Review in October 2013	Julie Riding